

## Lesson I.

## JOHN, THE FORERUNNER OF JESUS

January 2, 1910

Matthew 3 : 1-12—\*Memory Verses, 2, 3.

**Golden Text**—The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.—Matthew 3 : 3.



1 In those days came John the Bap'tist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæ'a,

2 And saying, Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esai'as, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jeru'salem, and all Judæ'a, and all the region round about Jor'dan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jor'dan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Phar'isees and Sad'ducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance :

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have A'braham to our father : for I say raise up children unto A'braham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire :

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

## THE LESSON RETOLD

Jesus had a cousin named John. During the years that Jesus was growing up in Nazareth, John was being taught by God the message he was to deliver to the people of Israel,—that they were to be sorry for their sins, and that they were to prepare to meet very soon the long-promised Messiah.

Now ever since John had grown to be a man he had lived in the "wilderness" or wild country near the Jordan and the Dead Sea, dressing, like the old prophets, in a rough coat of cloth made from camel's hair, with a girdle of leather, and having for his only food, locusts and wild honey. At last John began to preach in the wilderness, and people flocked to hear him from all the places round about ; and to all who heard him, his message was the same,—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. I am the one whom the prophet

Isaiah foretold would be sent, and who would cry in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' "

All those who heard John's words and were willing to give up their sins, were baptized by him in the river Jordan. And because he baptized those who came to him, he is called John the Baptist. Amongst the crowds who flocked to the wilderness, were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees ; and John told these, that they, too, if they wished to have their sins forgiven, must give them up and live good lives. They must, like a good tree, bring forth good fruit, or they would be destroyed.

John also told the people that his baptism with water could not wash away their sins, but that Jesus, when He came, would give them the Holy Spirit, who could make their

\*The Scripture Memory Passages of the Supplemental Leaflets are recommended as a substitute for those here given Sabbath by Sabbath. Their recitation leads to the obtaining of a beautiful Certificate or Diploma.