

THE VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

What is that booming voice about coming from the wilderness? After 400 years of prophetic silence, a BOOMING voice was heard emanating from the wilderness saying, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Mt. 3:2) It was the voice of John the Baptist, but he did not come in a vacuum!

Matthew 3:3 (NKJV)

3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.’ ”

This is that most unusual prophet prophesied about 700 years before by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 40:3, who comes crying in the wilderness.

In verse one, it says John the Baptist came “preaching”. Really, the idea of “preach” here means to herald or to publish. Often, royalty in Bible times had heralds that went before them to announce their coming and prepare the way for them to have a grand reception. That is the idea here. The Messiah had His God-ordained herald that went before Him to prepare the way.

“[The wilderness] was a full day’s journey from Jerusalem and seems an odd location to announce the arrival of the King. But it is perfectly in keeping with God’s ways (1 Cor. 1:26-29).” – **John MacArthur**

But note who John the Baptist was preparing the way for. Yes, he was preparing the way for a KING, but much more than just an average king.

Isaiah 40:3 (NKJV)

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD [YHWH]; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.”

John was preparing the way for YHWH – the most sacred name for God in the OT. And just so we don’t miss it the text says he called the people to make a “highway for our God”. Who did John prepare the way for? FOR JESUS Who is GOD – the God-Man! Here we have Jesus identified with YHWH, which is common in the NT (cf. Ex. 13:21 with 1 Cor. 10:4; Isa.. 6:1 with Jn. 12:41; Eph. 4:8 and Heb. 1:10-12 with Ps. 102:25-27). Here we plainly have a reference about YHWH and ELOHIM (God) applied directly to Jesus.

The plain sense is that the God whom John prepared the way before was Jesus. And of course, this is totally consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity as found in the Scriptures. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are equally God – the one Godhead of the Bible.

Repentance prepares the way for a right reception of the Messiah. ***“Make His paths straight”*** is a poetic way of describing get right – getting straight with God on the basis of repentance.

This fact of the prophesied forerunner is a huge deal because it becomes further proof that Jesus is indeed the prophesied Messiah. All four Gospels unanimously preface the ministry of Jesus Christ with the fact of John the Baptist fulfilling the forerunner prophecy.

The Gospel Record of the Forerunner

Matthew 3:1-17

Mark 1:1-8

Luke 3:1-20

John 1:6-8, 15-37

In order to be the true Messiah, Jesus had to have a forerunner. And he could not just be any random forerunner. He had to come heralding the preparatory message in just the right place, saying just the right thing. The timing had to be perfect! It had to be in just the right place! And it had to be in perfect fulfillment of prophecy given 700 years in advance.

We have such a fulfillment in the person of John the Baptist! Only God could do this!