**The Voice: John the Baptist on Jesus Christ**

In all four Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), Jesus’ ministry begins with the story of John the Baptist—the one who prepares the way for Jesus.

John was kind of a crazy guy. **Check out Mark 1:6 to get a little description** **and draw your best John the Baptist here:**

Now, this type of description has already appeared before. Back in the Old Testament, in 2 Kings, we hear a story about King Ahaziah, the 6th king of the Jews. His messengers met a man along the road who insulted the king. Ahaziah asked the messengers what the man looked like. They answered: “He wore a garment of haircloth, with a girdle of leather about his waist.” And the king said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite” (2 Kings 1:8).

The prophet Elijah was recognizable because of his clothing. Well, Elijah was really the first of the prophets in the Old Testament, and the last prophet in the Old Testament, Malachi, said that Elijah would return. Malachi says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:5).

The people thought Elijah was going to come back from the dead. But, God actually provided the people with a “new Elijah” named John who dressed like the old Elijah and baptized people—turning their hearts away from sin and toward God. John came to prepare the way for Jesus.

Let’s think about preparation for a moment. **Why is it important to prepare for things? What can happen when we’re unprepared? (Give examples!)**

**What do you do to prepare your house for guests? Why?**

Now, let’s take a look at what John says about Jesus as he’s preparing the way:

**-Read Mark 1:2-8. How does John describe Jesus? What words does he use?**

**-Next, read John 1:19-28. How does John describe Jesus, here? Does anything differ from what he says in Mark’s gospel?**

**-Now, read John 1:29-34. What does John say here? How does he describe Jesus? (Note: John’s testimony is becoming clearer.)**