

HERE COMES HEAVEN

talk it
over

KEY SCRIPTURE

Mark 1.1-8

PURSUE GOD

In the Bible, the story of Jesus' life is recorded in four separate books called the gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each of the gospels give us a similar but different perspective of Jesus. The below is from the beginning of the Gospel of Mark. It is not a traditional Christmas story with wise men, shepherds, or a manger scene, instead it provides us with a unique perspective of the announcement of Jesus' birth, and how God is working in all things across hundreds of years to bring His will into our lives.

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

**"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"—
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make
straight paths for Him.'"**

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The beginning of the good news, or gospel, about Jesus wasn't a huge announcement by modern standards. There weren't any cameras or photographers. No lights, media, and no live band. There wasn't a red carpet, a group of A-listers, or any members of the press. No one Instagrammed about it, or FACEBOOK Lived the moment. In fact the announcement itself was given and recorded some 740 years prior to the actual birth of Jesus. The gospel writer, Mark, quotes the words of the prophet Isaiah who made many prophecies concerning the birth and life of the coming Messiah, Jesus. And one of the prophecies surrounded Jesus' cousin, the man we know as John the Baptist. So as Isaiah made the announcement of Jesus' birth, we read in the gospel of Mark how John the Baptist made the announcement of Jesus' arrival.

LOVE LIFE

Why do you think it was important for Isaiah to make the announcement of John?

What role does the fulfillment of prophecy play in the story of Jesus?