

Welcome to the  
twenty-first week of  
*25 Weeks of Advent!*

*The stories of Advent all give us some insight as to the point and value of Jesus' life for us.*

In those days, John the Baptist appeared: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near."

He was a voice crying out in the wilderness—a voice like thunder in a desert—a booming proclamation of rain and redemption in a dry and empty land, thirsty for God to come and work, and for His long-ago prophecies to be fulfilled in His promised Son.

John appeared out of the desert—his hairy camel skin clothes crunched like the locusts he ate—he walked from town to town with the message of the coming Messiah—"Prepare the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight."

Five weeks until Christmas—it's coming very fast now! What are you proclaiming as it draws nearer? — "Quick, get the windows cleaned—the family's coming! Oh no, my bank account is going to be wiped from all the presents!" Or is it, "Peace! A joyful time to celebrate & share with others—Jesus is relevant & good news for us today!"

## Week 21: Thunder in the Desert

**Read:** Matthew 3:1—12

What was John's message of preparation?

**Repent.** Repent means to turn 180 degrees—a complete life change: and God desires this for us, to be facing His way when he comes, so that we can walk in His direction with Him when he makes his move!

As we come up to Christmas, Advent provides us with the opportunity to prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus. As a Church, we have spent twenty-one Sundays (so far!) dedicated to seeing how the Bible points to Jesus and gives significance to His long-awaited birth. We have appreciated how much of the Old Testament, happening hundreds of years before Jesus, foreshadows how Jesus would be born and what His life would mean for us.

How does your preparation look—beyond the window cleaning and garden landscaping? Does this Advent season call you to repent and realign your priorities with proclaiming the importance of Jesus for us today?



### Readings for your Week

*John testifies about Jesus*  
**John 3:22—36**

*The spirit and power of Elijah on John the Baptist*  
**Luke 1:16—17**  
**Matthew 11:1—19**  
**Matthew 17:10—13**

*Delight in godly sorrow bringing about repentance*  
**2 Corinthians 7:9—11**

