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A “prelude” is a preliminary to an action, event, condition, or work of a broader scope and higher importance.

<sup>4</sup> “Remember to obey the Law of Moses, my servant—all the decrees and regulations that I gave him on Mount Sinai for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> “Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. <sup>6</sup> His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.” **Malachi 4:4-6 NLT**

<sup>11</sup> While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. <sup>12</sup> Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. <sup>14</sup> You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the gospel.” **Luke 1:11-17 NLT**

<sup>67</sup> Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy: <sup>68</sup> “Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. <sup>69</sup> He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of

his servant David, <sup>70</sup> just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. <sup>71</sup> Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. <sup>72</sup> He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant—<sup>73</sup> the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. <sup>74</sup> We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live. <sup>76</sup> “And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. <sup>77</sup> You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. <sup>78</sup> Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, <sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.” <sup>80</sup> John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel. **Luke 1:67-80 NLT**

<sup>1</sup> This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began <sup>2</sup> just as the prophet Isaiah had written: “Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. <sup>3</sup> He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming! Clear the road for him!’” <sup>4</sup> This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. <sup>5</sup> All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup> His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. **Mark 1:1-6 NLT**

<sup>7</sup> John announced: “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!” **Mark 1:7-8 NLT**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He existed in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. <sup>4</sup> The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. **John 1:1-5 NLT**

<sup>6</sup> God sent a man, John the Baptist, <sup>7</sup> to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. <sup>8</sup> John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. <sup>9</sup> The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. <sup>13</sup> They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a

birth that comes from God. <sup>14</sup> So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. <sup>15</sup> John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'" <sup>16</sup> From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us. **John 1:6-18 NLT**

**Takeaways:**

- 1. God is at work in the darkness. He is at work in the wilderness. No matter how bad life might seem, God is at work and wants the best for you.**
- 2. Jesus is the light in the darkness, Jesus is the source of life, abundant and eternal, and forgiveness.**
- 3. If we are a follower of Jesus, we are to be his witness.**