Introduction

Personal beliefs are hard to change. Many people have religious beliefs that are not based on Scripture or historical evidence, just personal opinion.

When Jesus was born, the Jewish people had strongly held beliefs about the Messiah. Jesus didn’t fit their beliefs.

How did God speak? How did God prepare his people to recognize the Messiah?
He spoke by a voice in the desert and a voice from heaven. Both have something very important to say to us.

I. A Call to Repentance. Matthew 3:1-6

For over 400 years there had been no prophet in Israel and then came John the Baptist.

- His clothes were simple – camel’s hair and a leather belt.
- His food was simple – locusts and wild honey.
- His home was the desert wilderness of Judea.
- His message was simple but powerful – “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.”


- Nahum – to be sorry for one’s actions.
- Shub – to turn around to new actions.
- It is a radical transformation of the person.
II. A Warning of Judgment. Matthew 3:7-12

Large crowds of people came to hear John preach and be baptized.

Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees also came to hear John.

- Pharisees were legalists and separatists.
- Sadducees were more worldly and political. They denied the resurrection and did not believe in angels and spirits.

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”
“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21

“Out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”
Out of these "ebens" God can raise up "bens".

Judgment is near.
“The ax is already at the root of the trees”
Now is the time of decision.
III. A Voice of Affirmation.  
Matthew 3:13-17

Why was Jesus baptized?  
It was to identify with us in our sin and humanity.  
Jesus’ baptism was the beginning of his public ministry.

Jesus came to be baptized by his cousin John.  John tried to deter him.  
Jesus said, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

• This is my Son is from Psalm 2:7.  The King has come.  
• Whom I love is from Isaiah 42:1.  The Suffering Servant is here.  
• With him I am well pleased.  The Greek tense means always pleased

Why do Christians say that Jesus is the only way of salvation?  
It is because that is what God himself has said.  
“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”  
Acts 4:12

Conclusion

God the Father has spoken.  
Will we listen?  
Will we repent of our sin and turn to Christ?  
Will we identify with Jesus like he identified with us?