

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

The Gospel of **LUKE**

Lesson 8

Chapter Three - Verses 1-14

John's Ministry

Chapter 3, Verses 1-3 - Luke describes the ministry of John the Baptist.

1. John the Baptist started his ministry approximately **29** years after the birth of Jesus, during the rule of Pilate, Herod, and Caesar.
2. John the Baptist's ministry started when John received a **message** from God.
3. John the Baptist's ministry was located in the wilderness country around the Jordan **River**.
4. The ministry of John the Baptist was to **preach** repentance and forgiveness.



Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas were powerful leaders in Palestine, but they were upstaged by a wilderness **prophet**.



Annas and Caiaphas were the religious leaders of that time, but God **bypassed** them and chose to speak through the loner, John the Baptist.



Greatness is not measured by your name or position but by your **faith** in God. Like John, give yourself entirely to God so God's power can work through you.

“John's baptism introducing a new dispensation, it was requisite that we should have a particular account of it.

Glorious things were said of John, what a distinguished favorite of Heaven he should be, and what a great blessing to this earth; but we lost him in the deserts, and there he remains until the day of his showing unto Israel.

And now at last that day dawns, and a welcome day it was to them that waited for it more than they that waited for the morning.”

M. Henry

John's Message

Chapter 3, Verses 4-6 - The preaching of John the Baptist.

1. John the Baptist's preaching was **prophesied** by Isaiah.
2. John the Baptist told the people to **prepare** for the Lord's coming.
3. John the Baptist told the people to **remove** all obstacles in order to let Jesus come in.
4. John the Baptist told the people that Jesus will **change** everything.
5. John the Baptist told the people that all flesh - both Jews and Gentiles - would see the **salvation** of God.



When a king was going to make a royal visit in those days, elaborate preparations were made to smooth the highways and to make his approach as direct as possible. This is what John called upon the people to do, only it was not a matter of repairing literal roads but of preparing their own hearts to **receive** Him.

Slithering Snakes

Chapter 3, Verses 7-9 - John the Baptist does not hold back in his preaching.

1. When people came out to be baptized by John, he realized that they were not all sincere.
2. John the Baptist called these people snakes.
3. John the Baptist told the people that their repentance needs to be real.
4. John the Baptist told the people that real repentance produces fruit.
5. John the Baptist told the people that just because they were related to Abraham does not make them right with God.
6. John the Baptist told the people that God could make children of Abraham out of rocks.
7. John the Baptist told the people that judgment was coming and that when Jesus comes, He will judge the reality of man's repentance.



Some people wanted to be baptized by John so they could escape eternal punishment, but they were not really repenting from sin nor were they willing to change the way they lived.



Many of John's hearers were shocked when he said that being Abraham's descendants was not enough to ensure salvation. For them, religion was inherited. But a personal relationship with God cannot be handed down from parents to children.



If we really mean business with God, we should show that we have truly repented by manifesting a changed life.

People Asked

Chapter 3, Verses 10-14: - When the people heard John's preaching, they were convicted.

1. The people asked John the Baptist how they can show the sincerity of their repentance.
2. John the Baptist told the people they can prove their sincerity by sharing their clothing and food with the poor.
3. John the Baptist told the tax collectors (Publicans), they can prove their sincerity by being honest in dealing with the people.
4. John the Baptist told the soldiers they can prove their sincerity by not doing violent acts to any person, and by not taking anything doesn't belong to them, and to be satisfied with what they have.



John's message demanded at least three specific responses:

1. Share what you have with those who need it.
2. Whatever your job is, do it well and with fairness.
3. Be content with your earnings.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

*"... the people, the publicans, and the soldiers, who knew that they had done amiss, and that they ought to do better, and were conscious to themselves of great ignorance and unacquaintedness with the divine law, were particularly inquisitive:
What shall we do?"*

M. Henry