



CAPITOL COMMISSION®

John's Preaching to Prepare for The Messiah

MAY 27-28, 2026

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Luke 3:1-9 *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2) while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3) And he went into all the region around Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, 4) as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness; 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight. 5) Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; 6) And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" 7) Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8) Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 9) And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (NKJV)*

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS; PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD; MAKE STRAIGHT IN THE DESERT A HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD. EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED PLACES SHALL BE MADE STRAIGHT AND THE ROUGH PLACES SMOOTH; THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED, AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER; FOR THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HAS SPOKEN.

ISAIAH 40:3-5

Why the seven person emphasis on the timing? Is the first the most precise date? What do all of these have in common? Why is the wilderness significant? What was John's message? Who is John the Baptist preparing them for? Is he seeking to prepare their hearts? What is he most concerned about for all of them? Why the powerful language? Does the hypocrite acknowledge his sin? What were they claiming as descendants of Abraham? Is God's judgment imminent? Are they bearing good fruit? What does the fire picture in their destruction?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 3-4: LUKE 3:10-20 THE PROPER RESPONSE TO THE MESSIAH
- JUNE 10-11: LUKE 3:21-22 THE BAPTISM OF THE BELOVED SON

For thirty years John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had lived in obscurity, John in the desert and Jesus as a carpenter in the town of Nazareth. Probably most of those who had heard of the mysterious birth of John and miraculous birth of Jesus had died, including Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna and Joseph. So, not only was a thirty year silence broken, but especially the silence of no prophet in Israel since Malachi, about 430 BC. Internationally, Israel had allied with Rome from the beginning of their empire because of the prophecies of Daniel. Thus, the first emperor, Caesar Augustus, would only treat the Jews with utmost gratitude and respect. But his prideful son, Tiberius Caesar, promoted emperor worship, which the Jews abhorred. Thus, this wicked tyrant despised them and had nothing but contempt for them. Therefore, this was one of the darkest times for Israel, as they struggled under the cruel tyranny of Rome.

THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; THOSE THAT DWELT IN THE LAND OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM LIGHT HAS SHINED

ISAIAH 9:2

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 8:30 AM – FREDERICKSBURG – PARADISE DINER – 260 WARRENTON RD, NOON – 1660 AIR FORCE PENTAGON, DC

THURSDAY @ 8:00 AM – RICHMOND – SHONEY'S, HULL & COURTHOUSE & NOON – LYNCHBURG – PANERA BREAD, 3901 OLD FOREST RD.

Virginia

John's Preaching to Prepare for The Messiah

I. THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE LUKE 3:1-3

The most precise dating is "*in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.*" Tiberius began his reign with his father in 11AD, thus John begins his preaching in 26AD. Pernicious Pontius Pilate was the fifth Roman governor in Judea since the son of Herod the Great had been exiled for his tyranny over the Jews in 9AD, and was a thorn in their side for the next ten years (26-36AD). Herod Antipas reigned in Galilee and is the one who jailed and murdered John the Baptist and mocked Christ before He was crucified. Philip, his brother, was the most gracious of the Roman rulers and Lysanias represented Rome in the most northern part of Israel. Obviously Israel was divided politically into four regions, severely complicating their tenuous relationship with Rome. Only one office remained of the three (prophet, priest & king), and the high priesthood is so corrupt that it is shared by both Annas and his son-in-law, Caiaphas. Both were rich, making their cut, off the Temple-approved sacrifices and the money-changers. Thus, at a time of open corruption and escalating evil both internally and externally, John the Baptist bursts upon the scene, preaching in the desert, "*a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*" The fact that he is in the desert, rather than in Jerusalem, is a rebuke to the religious leaders and their works based, hypocritical system of righteousness. Only Gentile proselytes to Judaism would be baptized, symbolizing their "unclean" status being washed clean to worship with the Jews. Thus, they are admitting deep sin that makes them unclean, like the Gentiles that they looked down upon.

FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH AND TO SAY,
"REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND."
MATTHEW 4:17 (CF 12-16)

II. THE PATH OF REPENTANCE LUKE 3:4-6

John the Baptist is preaching in the most unusual place where you would expect no one to be, "*the desert.*" Yet

his "*crying*" voice is so powerful, that "*multitudes*" are seeking his baptism. He is requiring that they "*prepare the way of the LORD*" in their hearts and "*make His paths straight.*" This is a spiritual preparation for the coming Messiah! Meaning that He is about to be revealed and it was their responsibility to be spiritually ready for Him. Instead of a life of crookedness, they are to make it "*straight.*" Instead of deep moral failure, pictured by the "*valley*" or walking in obstinate pride, viewed as the height of a "*mountain and hill,*" which shall be "*brought low,*" they are to remove every obstacle in the path of their Messiah, making "*the rough ways smooth.*" Only in this way will they and "*all flesh see the salvation of God.*" Only in the path of repentance is found true salvation.

THEN HE SAID TO THEM, "THUS IT IS WRITTEN, AND THUS IT
WAS NECESSARY FOR THE CHRIST TO SUFFER AND TO
RISE FROM THE DEAD THE THIRD DAY, AND THAT
REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE
PREACHED IN HIS NAME TO ALL THE NATIONS, BEGINNING
AT JERUSALEM." LUKE 24:46-47

III. THE FRUIT OF REPENTANCE LUKE 3:7-9

John has no patience for those who deceitfully want to slither in and be baptized without true repentance or change of life, so he calls them a "*Brood of vipers!*" Since they have taken no heed to his warning to repent, he asks, "*Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*" They didn't get their hypocritical deceit from him! "*Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.*" In other words, a life of repentance is evident, repent. Just like many who attend church, Jews thought association with their father, Abraham, would get them into heaven. John says, "*God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*" Deceivers are fit for destruction, "*the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*" Its either real, God-given fruit of repentance or deceit with eternity in Hell.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you find yourself discouraged with the darkness of our times?
- 2) Have you repented and turned from your sin to Jesus Christ who alone can grant true forgiveness?
- 3) Are you deceiving yourself into thinking you are going to heaven without producing the fruit of true repentance?