

Investigating Jesus

John Prepares the Way

January 7, 2023 / Dan Solofra

How do I prepare myself to meet with God?

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—²during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a **baptism of repentance** for the **forgiveness of sins**.
Luke 3:1-3, NIV

John encouraged people to change their minds

about sin. We call this repentance.

⁴As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.

⁵Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.

⁶**And all people will see God’s salvation.”**

Luke 3:4-6, NIV

Repentance paves the way for the good news about Jesus.

⁷John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸**Produce fruit** in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”
Luke 3:7-9, NIV

Without change, devastation is coming.

¹⁰“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

¹¹John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

¹³“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

¹⁴Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.” **Luke 3:10-14, NIV**

A changed mind leads to a changed heart which leads to a changed life.

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. **Luke 3:15-18, NIV**

The good news of Jesus is what has life-changing power to bring lasting change.

¹⁹ But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison. **Luke 3:19-20, NIV**

Sharing this message will most likely get you in trouble.

MEMORY VERSE

¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. **Luke 3:18, NIV**

My next step:

I will let God change my mind and heart and life with the good news of Jesus. I will attend Christian Essentials 2 – Grow, to learn how to change my life through God's Word.

What's your next step?

Mark it on your connection card.

How does holding on to sin keep God from coming into my life?

What is a sin in my life that I need to change my mind about and admit that it is wrong and ask God to forgive?

How does the fact that I know that God loves me and Jesus has forgiven all of my sins, lead me to want to change and to remove sin from my life?