**The Way of the Lord!**

**Luke 3:1-20**

John the Baptist’s message: Repent, so that your sins may be wiped out, for the great and awesome Day of the Lord is coming—a day of wrath!

Three questions:

1. **How** did John prepare the way of the Lord?
2. **Why** did John proclaim such a foreboding message filled with warnings?
3. **Why** do we not hear similar messages today from the pulpits of churches with warnings of the same coming judgment?
4. **How did John prepare the way of the Lord?**
5. John the Baptist proclaimed a two-fold message:
6. He preached a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins!
7. He followed that with a warning of coming judgment and wrath.
8. Both the political and religious climate was evil when John came on the scene.
9. John was sent by God into the wilderness! Why? It was representative of the heart of Israel—without The True Living Water!

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (**John 4:13-14**). —Jesus Christ!

1. Notice **the word of God** came to John. Thus, when John began to preach it was the word of God people were hearing.

**2 Peter 1:21** “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit**.”

The Bible is God’s Word. Every single word in it. Thus, when you open your Bible and begin to read it, you are reading the Word of God and he is speaking to you.

1. John preached a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

What does it mean to repent? It means to look squarely at your sins and confess them to God; then turn away from them and turn to Jesus.

Repentance is absolutely necessary if you want to prepare the way for the Lord to enter your heart.

In **Acts 3:19-20**, Peter preached, “**Repent**, then, and **turn to God**, so that your **sins may be wiped out**, that **times of refreshing** may come **from the Lord**, and that **he may send the Christ**, who has been **appointed** for you—**even Jesus**.”

1. John’s message was first, and foremost, a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. However, it was also **a message warning of coming wrath and judgment**.
2. The Jews believed they were God’s chosen people because they were the **physical descendants** of Abraham. And they pointed to their **circumcision** as outward proof.

“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

1. The Jews were sinners just like the rest of us. We are all sinners. This explains why John baptized both Jews and Gentiles.
2. Why don’t we have preachers today who will stand up in their pulpits and warn people about the coming wrath of God? There are two main reasons:
3. Many ministers today, don’t really believe in a God of wrath, which points to the fact that they don’t really believe the Bible.
4. These same ministers are more concerned about pleasing man than pleasing God.

**John 12:43** says this about the religious leaders of Jesus’ day: “They loved praise from men more than praise from God.”

1. ‘Produce fruits in keeping with repentance.’ What did John mean by this?
2. He did **not** mean that salvation comes by your good works.
3. SALVATION COMES BY GRACE ALONE, THROUGH FAITH ALONE, IN CHRIST ALONE.
4. “Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” John warned his audience of the coming wrath of God! What fire was John referring to?
5. John referred to two baptisms:
* John’s baptism was simply an **outward baptism** by water. It was only symbolic of a man’s decision to repent and turn to God.
* Jesus’ baptism was an **inward baptism** of the heart by the Holy Spirit, and it came with the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. The fire of the Holy Spirit burns away the sinful dross in our lives.

1. John was also referring to a second fire which is reserved for the end of the world. It will be the fire of God’s final judgment against all evil and all those who refuse his grace and mercy.
2. **Matthew 25:31-41**—The Day of the Coming Son of Man to judge the world.

**Repent**, **turn to God**, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ to live in your heart.