

Collect / Prayer (pg. 25)

Benediction

Hymn **C.W. 12** / TLH 66

SERMON TEXT: **Mark 1:1-4** (Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 3:1-23; John 1:1-34)

Vs. 1 – The beginning of the **Gospel** about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Vs. 2 – It is **written in Isaiah** (740-681 B.C.) **the prophet:** I will send My messenger - Αγγελον - ahead of you, who will **prepare** - κατασκευαζω - [build, construct, furnish, equip] **your way** – (See also Malachi 3:1 – 400 B.C.)

Vs. 3 – **a voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare** - ετοιμαζω - [make ready] **the way for the Lord**, make straight paths for Him.

Vs. 4 – And so **John came**, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a **baptism** of repentance **for the forgiveness of sins**.

GREETING: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to Whom be glory and power, forever and ever. Amen.

Road Construction Ahead!!! When you are driving down the road and you see this sign, what type of thoughts go through your mind? AAAHHHH!!!! You then continue your trip by following the *Detour* signs hoping that you will be able to follow the Orange signs and arrows without getting lost.

Today as we continue our journey through the ADVENT Season (Coming) we see John the Baptist as he is preparing the way for our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Mark 1:5 – it is written that “**The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.**” Jerusalem to the Jordan River was about a 22 mile hike. Remember no automobiles in the days of Jesus. The region where John the Baptist was preaching was the “Desert” or “Uninhabitable Region”.

Yet the people made the trek to hear the man named John the Baptist, who was dressed in the rugged attire of “**camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist**” (vs. 6)

People went out of their way to hear and see John the Baptist. They were a long ways away from their jobs and their recreation, yet they went to hear what John the Baptist had to say.

What message did the people hear? The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each give us this information, some give more information than others, but the message is the same.

Mark 1:4 – “And so **John came**, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a **baptism** of repentance **for the forgiveness of sins.**”

Matthew 3:2 – “**Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.**”

Matthew 3:7-8 – To the Pharisees & Sadducees – “You brood of vipers! – Produce fruit in keeping with repentance!

Luke 3:9 – “The 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.”

John 1:20-23 – John the Baptist said – I am NOT the Christ, I am Not Elijah, But I am the voice of one calling in the desert, Make straight the way for the Lord.

When you see Road Construction, you see roads that are tore up and all types of heavy duty equipment preparing the ground and pouring whatever type of Road surface that is being put down whether it be concrete or black top.

John the Baptist uses the Word of God. He uses the Law to break up our hearts of sin and prepare those once stone hard hearts (Ez. 11:19) for the Good News of Jesus Christ our Risen Savior.

John the Baptist was and is a fulfillment of the Promises of God given in Isaiah 40:3-4 & Malachi 3:1.

When John the Baptist was asked, “Who are You?” John the Baptist quoted the prophet Isaiah.

Vs. 2 – It is **written in Isaiah** (740-681 B.C.) **the prophet:** I will send My messenger - Αγγελον - ahead of you, who will **prepare** - κατασκευαζω - [build, construct, furnish, equip] **your way** – (See also Malachi 3:1 – 400 B.C.)

Vs. 3 – **a voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare** - ετοιμαζω - [make ready] **the way for the Lord**, make straight paths for Him.

God spoke through His Old Testament Prophets, and it was so:

Vs. 4 – And so **John came**, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**.

As you watch the News on TV, read it on the internet, listen to it on the radio, you hear about people dying.

You might have read a story about a young woman in her 20’s, full of life, married, an internet sensation, but her body was found dead in a ditch.

You might have heard about the young man in his 20’s, simply going about his business, taking a walk when he was hit by a vehicle and killed.

Perhaps you heard about the man in his 70’s who was successful in life, had a loving family but contracted COVID-19 and after receiving all the possible treatments available – he died.

There was the story of the woman in her 50’s who was diagnosed with cancer, and after a long valiant battle, going through all the best possible treatments for cancer – she died.

Or the heart wrenching story of the 12 year old child who had leukemia and after months of treatment, the sweet child died.

The bottom line is, unless Jesus returns before we die, sooner or later we will all die.

What is the final and only correct answer to death?

It is the same Gospel message, the Good News message, which John the Baptist Proclaimed in the uninhabitable region of the Jordan desert region in his clothes of camels hair and a leather belt, living off of locust and wild honey.

The message which is recorded for us very clear and plain in the Gospel of John where he records the words of John The Baptist:

John 1:29 – **The next day John (The Baptist) saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Behold, the LAMB of God, Who taketh away the sin of the World!”** (Objective / General Justification)

When Jesus died on the cross, He paid for the sin of all people of all time, in all the World.

This does not mean that everyone will automatically be in heaven. That is the false teaching of “Universalism” which falsely says: “Everyone will be in heaven no matter what they believe.”

Our Salvation is God’s Free gift to us, given through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

“Whoever believes (Subjective Justification) and is baptized shall be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

“For God so loved the World, that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes (Subjective Justification) in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (Jn. 3:16)

And so, as you go through the Road Construction of Life. Keep following the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sin of the World. Jesus our Risen and Living Savior. AMEN

THEME: Road Construction – By John The Baptist.