

All Will See God's Salvation, In the City and In the Desert!

December 9, 2018 – Luke 3:1-6

(See Also Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8)

“In 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 – during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's Salvation. (Isaiah 40:3-5)”

Luke, the inspired writer of this book of the Bible was a doctor. He was very precise and exact and very well educated. He lists the rulers of the day in the government as well as the leaders in the synagogue in Jerusalem. He is not one of the 12 disciples, yet God used Luke to be one of the inspired writers of two books of the Bible – LUKE & ACTS.

After Luke lists the leaders who live in palaces, Luke then makes a distinct contrast by telling us about John the Baptist. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness, dressed in camel hair, and ate locust and wild honey.

Pastor Johan Ylvisaker – (1845-1917) points out in his book entitled *“The Gospels”* Published originally in 1905 in the Norwegian Language – Reprinted in 1932 by Augsburg Publishing and again in 1977 by Northwestern Publishing House. His Alma Mater = Concordia Theological Seminary – St. Louis Missouri. Pastor Johan Ylvisaker points out that the Region of Israel was in a deplorable state – Politically and Spiritually at the time.

It is into the world of that time that the Lord God brought John The Baptist into this World. John the Baptist was called by God for ONE purpose, that purpose was to be the forerunner of Jesus.

Zechariah, the Father of John the Baptist, (Mother – Elizabeth) Zechariah prophesied in what we call the Benedictus –The Song of Simeon what his son John would do:

Luke 1:76-79 – An you my child will be called a prophet of the Most High for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for HIM, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

In the days of Jesus and in some parts of the world today when a king would travel through the land, it was customary for an entourage to go ahead of the king / leader to prepare the way, to make things safe.

Even as there are those who go ahead of the U.S. President to make sure that it is safe for whatever area he will be traveling to.

John the Baptist would be the forerunner of a KING, only John the Baptism would be the forerunner of the KING of the Universe, the King of all creation, the KING over Sin, death and the Devil.

John the Baptist would prepare the way for the coming of Jesus by his message to level and prepare the hearts of the listeners.

Vs. 3 – He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Vs. 4 – As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.

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

This Baptism of John was not just a symbolic baptism, but a baptism that had power. *“For the forgiveness of sins”*

And this message applies to us today and NOW. Without the forgiveness of sins, there is no way we can enter the kingdom of heaven.

In this text we also hear that John the Baptist was called by the Lord God to Preach.

“Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!” (Matthew 3:2)

Repentance is a turning away from sin, TO God. In Repentance we Recognize our sin – we have sorrow over our sin, the Holy Spirit enables us to stop sinning – and by God’s grace we know we are forgiven.

REPENTANCE is all God’s Work for us and in us. Repentance is a humbling of oneself to the fact that our salvation, my salvation is not my work, but God’s.

In Repentance God wants someone who is hooked on alcohol to stop being hooked on alcohol. Someone having sex outside of marriage - stop having sex outside of marriage. Someone who is filled with hate, anger or resentment towards your fellow human being - let go of that anger and hate.

John the Baptist is the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is preparing the way for the Lord Jesus.

As Christmas approaches, many preparations are being made by many people. They decorate their house inside and out, buy gifts, send out cards, prepare for family gatherings by purchasing the food and trimmings.

But are people preparing for the Kingdom of Heaven?

How do we prepare to celebrate Christ’s first coming as we look forward to Christ’s Second coming?

WATCH and PRAY.

Read – hear and inwardly digest the Word of the Lord. Privately and with others, including those family members who may not wish to hear the word of the Lord.

Pray – individually and together with fellow Christians.

John the Baptist went preaching according to God’s Time and a message of God’s Will.

That message is the message of Salvation in Christ Jesus our Risen Savior. It is a message for those in king’s palaces and those in the desert. **AMEN**