

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him....” These are excerpts from today’s scripture:

7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him... 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.

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

14 “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

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.

John's purpose and mission was to move the people away from their sins and bring them to their Savior. John preached the necessity of repentance for the remission of sins. Baptism of water was an outward sign of that inward cleansing and renewal of heart, If we are not really holy, both in heart and life, our profession of religion and relation to God and his church is false. The gospel requires mercy, for us to do all the good we can, and to be just to all men.

John denied being the expected Messiah but promised the people their expectations of the Messiah **WOULD BE MET**. Christ can and will baptize with the Holy Ghost; he can give the Spirit to cleanse and purify the heart.

We can use Luke 3:7-18 in this advent season:

- 1) Go to our Bible and read the Luke selection in its entirety
- 2) Think for at least a minute of that historic moment
- 3) We know that John “prepared the way” and that Christ DID come, but also, that repentance is extremely important
- 4) Say a silent prayer that John’s message from nearly 2000 years ago has meaning and direction in our lives today.

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