



Remember it was prophesied by Zacharias, John's father, that *you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;*

*To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins,*

Lu 1:76-77

The forgiveness of their sins.

This is a wonderful message to those who understand it but something to be ignored by those who do not.

Through John, and then through Jesus, we have God's offering of forgiveness and eternal life with Him.

Does that sound like something you would want?

Now;

John is fulfilling that prophecy.

**Mt 3:1** *Now in those days John the Baptist \*came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,*

**v.2** *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

One writer said; (Barclay)

"The emergence of John was like the sudden sounding of the voice of God."

Remember,

God had been silent for the last 400 years closing with the prophet, Malachi.

But,

God is now bringing a message, a message of a new thing.

**v.2** *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

"Repent" *metanoeo* – change one's mind,

Reconsider,

feel compunction

original Latin meaning; to prick sharply

sometimes we think of the word "repent" as a change of thinking and it is, but it is more.

It is a conviction of the heart.

John was coming to people who needed a realignment in their thinking and in their lives.

#### **Four things about John's message:**

##### **1. He fearlessly denounced evil wherever he saw it.**

He rebuked King Herod for his illegitimate marriage to his brother's wife.

He rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for their ritualistic formalism at the expense of helping people.

## The Message Of John The Baptist

He rebuked the common people who were living far from God either through sin or choice.

Like Jesus, he was like a light that lit up the dark deeds of men; like a wind that swept through the country and surely got people's attention.

Even the ancient Greek philosopher, Diogenes, said; "He who never offended anyone, never did anyone any good."

Ie.

Truth is like a sword, it's sharp and stings. Who is brave enough to wield it?

I think the Church today is afraid to offend people with the Truth. But is that a good idea?

Look at our society, it is depraved.

- Homosexual marriage
- Gender surgery on children
- Abortion
- Immorality in entertainment and even the media
- The destruction of our children and youth through the educational system

And the Church is afraid to stand against it.

Secondly concerning John's message:

### **2. His call to righteousness was urgent**

He not only denounced the evil but he pointed to the good.

He said; "*Look, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*"

He was bringing them to a higher place.

You can stay on the earth in your sins or you can ascend into Heaven with God.

Moses made a similar call:

*Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,*

Sometimes the Church fails in another way also.

1. It is too polite, not wanting to offend
2. It is too occupied with the "don'ts" of life

Even in the days of Jesus, the messages were about restrictions and demands on the people.

Today we have manmade rules and regulations which have no basis in the Word of God.

So John set a positive option before the people.

Thirdly;

### **3. John actually came "from God."**

Remember we saw;

He was prophesied:

*Lu 1:15 "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord;*

He was filled with the Spirit in the womb:

*Lu 1:15 and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.*

## The Message Of John The Baptist

From the womb he then appeared out of the desert. The unrecorded years must have been time spent with God.

He spent so much time with God that whatever he said, it was God speaking!  
So why would he fear what he said, when he knew it came from God.  
John was the voice of God.

### **4. John did not point to himself**

Not only was he a:

- Light to illumine evil
- A voice to call to repentance

He was also a signpost to point people to someone else; to the One who was to come.

**v.3** *For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'"*

Isaiah also prophesied of the ministry of John:

*Is 40:3 A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.*

The roads in Palestine were very rough and at times difficult to travel. If the king or a visiting dignitary came to town, the call would go out to "Prepare the way of the coming king."

Remove the rubble, fill the voids, smooth the paths. The king is coming.

Well,

John had the True King in mind

And the road was the path that led to their hearts.

What is there that would hinder this King's entrance? Remove it! Repent!

### **v.3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS**

"crying" to speak in a strong, tumultuous way

Do you think this was important?

It was to John.

So,

This was John's message:

1. He denounced evil where he saw it
2. He called people to righteousness through repentance
3. He actually did come from God
4. He cried, get ready, the True King is coming. Make your heart right.

This is a message, not just for then, but for all time. People would do well to heed it.