

## Luke 3:1-18 **Ministry of John the Baptist**

### Time John Began his Ministry

<sup>1</sup> Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests,

### Commissioned by God to preach a Baptism of Repentance

the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the LORD,  
Make His paths straight.  
<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough ways smooth;  
<sup>6</sup> And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

### Call for the Multitudes to Repent

<sup>7</sup> Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

### The Judge is coming with Power

<sup>9</sup> And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

### Righteous living for the People.

<sup>10</sup> So the people asked him, "What shall we do then?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."

### Advice for Tax Collectors

<sup>12</sup> Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

<sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you."

### Advice to Soldiers

<sup>14</sup> Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?"

So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

### About the Messiah (Christ – The Anointed by God)

<sup>15</sup> Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not,

16 John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

17 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

18 And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

### Time John Began his Ministry

✠ The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip was tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas were High Priests (Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas and the position of High Priest rotated between them year by year). [Luke 3:1-2, John 18:13]

### Commissioned by God to preach a Baptism of Repentance

- ✠ John was in the desert from childhood till the day of his manifestation to Israel. [Luke 1:80]
- ✠ The Word of Yehowah came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. [Luke 3:2, Mark 1:4]
- ✠ John went into all the region around the Jordan River, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. [Luke 3:3, Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:4, Acts 13:24, 19:4]
- ✠ Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of Yehowah (the LORD),  
Make His paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough ways smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of Eloheynov (God).' " [Luke 3:4-6, Isaiah 40:3-5]

✧ In this prophecy Jesus is referred to as "Yehowah," "the Salvation of Eloheynov."

### Call for the Multitudes to Repent

- ✠ To the multitudes John spelled out the desperate need for evidence of repentance.
- ✠ Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [Luke 3:7, Matthew 3:7-12]
  - ✧ John called the Pharisees and Sadducees in the multitude a "**brood of vipers**" because of their rejection of his call to the baptism of repentance, and this also applied to the Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders. [Matthew 3:7, Luke 3:7, Matthew 21:23-25, Mark 11:27-31, Luke 20:1-5]
  - ✧ There is a Wrath coming on the earth and a way to flee from it.
  - ✧ Baptism of Repentance is the first step toward this escape.
  - ✧ However to be effective it must be accompanied with evidence in fruits worthy of repentance, demonstrating that the repentance is real and life changing. [Luke 3:8]
  - ✧ Confidence in genealogy as descendants from Abraham is not sufficient in itself to merit escape from the Wrath to come, "For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones." [Luke 3:8]

- ✧ The stones that were present are the memorial stones the Children of Israel placed in the Jordan river as testimony to the fact that they had crossed on dry ground when the Jordan was at flood stage as they entered the promised land. [Joshua 4:1-9]
- ✧ The message of both John and Jesus was a call to repentance:
  - ✧ "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" [Matthew 3:2, 4:17, Mark 1:15, 6:12]
  - ✧ To become a part of the Kingdom of Heaven, God requires us to live holy lives of righteousness and justice.

### The Judge is coming with Power

- ✧ John then gave warning that judgment comes first before the Kingdom. [Matthew 25:31-46, 34, 41]
  - ✧ Even now, the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." [Matthew 3:10, Luke 3:9]
    - ✧ As the Kingdom is at hand, so also is the judgment that removes all that offend God out of the Kingdom at the beginning of the Kingdom. [Matthew 13:40-42]
    - ✧ The Judgment results in the tree bearing bad fruit, or no fruit, will be cut down and cast into the fire. [Matthew 3:10, 7:19, 13:40-42, Luke 3:9]

### Righteous living for the People.

- ✧ So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?" [Luke 3:10]
  - ✧ He answered and said to them, "**He who has** two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and **he who has** food, let him do likewise." [Luke 3:11, Matthew 25:31-46]
  - ✧ We need to help others as much as we are able, God does not ask us to give beyond our means.
  - ✧ Jesus said, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. [Matthew 25:40]

### Advice for Tax Collectors

- ✧ Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" [Luke 3:12]
  - ✧ The Jews who were collecting from the Jews, taxes levied by the Roman occupation force, were called publicans and hated by the Jews.
  - ✧ John did not advise them to leave their service to the Romans, but to be honest in their work and authority; "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." [Luke 3:13]
  - ✧ This is quite in keeping with the teaching of Jesus Who said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." [Matthew 22:21]

### Advice to Soldiers

- ✧ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" [Luke 3:14]
  - ✧ John answered; "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."
  - ✧ The advice for those working for the state is, do your job honestly and don't take advantage of the people for your own enrichment, but to be content with the wages that accompany the Job you perform.
  - ✧ Do not use the power afforded you by the office you hold to oppress anyone unjustly.
- ✧ God requires righteousness and justice no matter what job we have, whether we serve a foreign power, or to serve our own nation and community.

### About the Messiah (Christ – The Anointed by God)

- ✧ The time was right according to the prophecy of Daniel for the arrival of the Messiah (Christ – Anointed by God). [Daniel 9:24-26]
  - ✧ So the people were watching expectantly for one who would fulfill all the prophecies regarding the Messiah.

- ✧ They considered in their hearts if John might be that long awaited Messiah (Christ). [\[Luke 3:15\]](#)
- ✚ John said: "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. [\[Luke 3:16\]](#)
- ✧ John was faithful to the purpose of his call and commission from God, to prepare the way of Yehowah and introduce the true Messiah to the people of Israel.
- ✧ John described the superiority of the One he was to introduce.

He will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit** and **fire**.

His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." [\[Luke 3:16-17\]](#)

- ✧ **Baptism with the Holy Spirit** is God's provision of **power to enable** His believers to live victorious lives and accomplish His will in the ministry of the Church, being witnesses to all the world of Jesus, God's plan of Salvation. [\[Acts 1:8\]](#)
- ✧ **Baptism with fire** is the test of the believers commitment to endure faithfully to the death. [\[1 Corinthians 3:12-13, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:3-9, 4:12-13\]](#)
- ✧ His **Winnowing Fan** is a reference to the day of **Judgment** when Jesus will separate the good from the bad and invite the righteous into His Kingdom, and send the unrighteous into the torment of the Lake of Fire. [\[Matthew 25:31-46\]](#)
- ✧ Jesus the Messiah, Whom John is introducing, is the One with all Authority in Heaven and on earth to provide Salvation and Judgment. [\[Matthew 28:18, John 5:26-27, 17:1-3\]](#)
- ✚ John included many other exhortations as he preached to the people. [\[Luke 3:18\]](#)