

aired on KALS February 4, 2003

Luke 3:2-9

2. “in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

3. And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

4. as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, ‘THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, “MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.

5. “EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;

6. AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.”

7. So he *began* saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. ‘Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father,” for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

9. ‘Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’”

In this passage we are told that John received the word of God while in the wilderness. His mission from God was to be the fore-runner for the Christ, as the prophet is quoted, “Make ready the way of the Lord.”

To prepare the people for the coming of the Lord, he preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The illustration used here by Isaiah was that “the crooked shall become straight, and the rough roads become smooth.” The teaching here regards Biblical repentance.

Many have been taught that repentance means to be sorry for one’s sins. The concept of repentance as John preached it, and as Jesus also taught, concerned changed lives. John declares in this passage that people are to “bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance.” These fruits are life changes--in our habits, our speech, and our attitudes.

Using the illustration of trees, as Jesus later did in John 15, John states in this passage, “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” In other words--repent or perish.

A functional definition of repentance, as John preached it would be: “A change of heart and mind that leads to a change of behavior.”

John's mission was to preach an immersion of repentance so people would turn away from their sins and be prepared for the coming Messiah. As Jesus would later preach in His first sermon, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

As we also prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus this second time, let us also repent and turn to God.