

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (December 9): "The word of God came to John"

Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:1-6*

1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; 3 and he went into all the region about 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: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Old Testament Reading: *Baruch 5:1-9* (Deutero-canonical)

1 Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. 2 Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; 3 for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. 4 For God will give you evermore the name, "Righteous Peace, Godly Glory." 5 Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look toward the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. 6 For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. 7 For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. 8 The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. 9 For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

Meditation: Do you recognize the voice of the Lord speaking to you when you listen to the word of God in Scripture? Luke the evangelist tells us that the "word of God came to John in the wilderness" (Luke 3:2). Who was John the Baptist and what is the significance of the word which he received and delivered to the people of his day? Luke tells us that John was the son of Zechariah, a priest who served in the temple at Jerusalem. John stood at a pivotal juncture in the history of God's dealing with his people. He bridged the Old and New Testaments, also known as the Old and New Covenants which God made with his people.

John was filled and led by the Spirit

John's prophetic calling and mission preceded his conception and birth. The angel had announced to Zechariah that his barren wife will conceive a son, and "you shall call his name John," and "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:13,15). When John received his name shortly after birth, his father prophesied that he would be "called the prophet of the Most High who will go before the Lord to prepare his ways" (Luke 1:76). John was called to be a prophet, a spokesman for God.

In dramatic fashion Luke tells us when John appeared on the world scene. Luke lists a few of the key reigning rulers in John's era, including Tiberius Caesar of Rome (Luke 3:1). These rulers pale in reference to the man who now stood at the door of a new era of grace and salvation for the world. John's mission was to prepare the way for God's Anointed King who would come to establish God's rule above all other kings and authorities. Luke emphasizes the universal call of the Gospel to all peoples without

distinction. He quotes from the prophet Isaiah that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Isaiah 40:5; 52:10).

John was a servant of God's Word

How did John prepare for the coming of the Anointed (Messiah) King and Saviour of the world? Luke tells us that "the word of God came to John" when he was dwelling in the wilderness of Judea (Luke 3:2). John was called from an early age to devote himself to prayer and to the word of God. John not only took the Scriptures to heart, he moulded his life according to them, and made himself a servant of the Word of God. John was led by the Spirit into a barren and lonely place away from the noise and distractions of everyday life. There God taught John in the solitude of the desert and prepared him for a prophetic ministry that would turn the hearts of his people to receive their long-awaited Messiah.

In the ancient world when a king decided to tour his kingdom, he first sent his courier ahead to prepare the way. John is the courier and great herald of the Messiah King who proclaims to all the peoples that the impending reign of God is now very close at hand. Isaiah had long ago prophesied the role of the Forerunner of the Messiah (Isaiah 40:3-5). John undoubtedly took this word to heart as he searched the Scriptures and reflected on the word of God in the wilderness. When John began his public ministry he travelled throughout the region of Judea and preached a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3).

Do you allow God's Word to transform your life?

How can we, like John the Baptist, prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus Christ - today and everyday and when he comes again to bring us fully into his everlasting kingdom? John the Baptist tells us that the first step is conversion and repentance (Matthew 3:2; Luke 3:7). Conversion involves receiving God's word into our heart and mind and allowing his Word to change our attitudes and wrong ways of thinking and judging. Repentance is the deliberate turning away from sin (wrong-doing) and turning to God to receive his pardon, healing, and strength to do what is good and reject what is wrong.

John saw from a distance what Jesus the Messiah would accomplish through his death and resurrection - pardon for our sins, healing and restoration, and eternal life for all who would believe in the Lord Jesus. Are you hungry for the Word of God and do you allow God's word to transform the way you think, speak, and live your life?

source: www.dailyscripture.net, author [Don Schwager](#)

OPENING PRAYER:- (You are the Word of God)

"Lord Jesus, you are the Word of God and the Saviour of the world. Help me to receive your Word with expectant faith, and to live it with confident hope, and to proclaim it joyfully with love and boldness to all I meet." Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER: - "Obey Thy Commandments"

O God, from whom all holy desires, all right counsels and all just works do proceed; give unto Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that both our hearts may be set to obey Thy commandments, and also that we, being delivered from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time, under Thy protection, in rest and quietness. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**