

*Encountering Jesus: Studies in the Gospel of Luke (1-28-18)*

## **PREPARING FOR A DIVINE VISITATION – PART II**

(Luke 3:1-10)

### **I. THE WILDERNESS (VS. 1-2)**

- A. Setting: Tiberius Caesar's 15<sup>th</sup> year as the ruler. Pliny the Elder, a Roman author, called him "the gloomiest of mankind."
- B. John was the son of Zacharias. He was sent before Jesus' appear as a voice of one crying in the wilderness. Jesus calls him a "bright and shining lamp" (John 5:35). Jesus says that there is no greater prophet than John. (Luke 7:28)
  - 1. John was to be like a Nazirite (Num. 6). To separated, consecrated, and dedicated to God. No wine or strong drink, no razor on the head, etc...He would be filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb.
  - 2. John's message is one of preparation. "Prepare the way of the Lord: Make His paths straight" (Isa. 40). Jesus is coming after John and people needed to prepare through repentance.
  - 3. The Spirit of Elijah is the anointing to turn hearts. God brings conviction, resulting in true repentance that bears fruit. Turn: to turn or change direction.
- C. The word of the Lord came to John in the wilderness. The wilderness is where God sends all His choice servants. It's not a punishment, not a "time-out" but a time of learning to lean on the Beloved. The greater the mandate from God, the more intense the testing. In Luke 4, Jesus, the Son of God, is led by the Spirit into the wilderness. God leads you into the wilderness because He cares for you and wants you to partner with Him in His purposes on the earth.
  - 1. The wilderness is a season to lean on the Beloved. Do I want only the power of the resurrection, but not the fellowship of the cross?
  - 2. Don't wait for the next season in your life. Say "yes" to God right now.
- D. The pattern: God's people enter the wilderness and begin to cry out to God with a holy desperation that goes beyond themselves and their own needs. It's the wilderness that strips us of all the fancy, the comfortable, creating in us a hunger for the real. It causes us to go beyond our barrenness and look beyond ourselves to God.

## II. BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE (VS. 3-6)

- A. Baptism of repentance. John was calling people to a ritual of immersion and cleansing as a sign of their turning from their sin. For the remission of sin. 1) forgiveness of sin 2) released from bondage and imprisonment of sin.
- A. Spirit of Elijah: The anointing to turn hearts. God brings conviction, resulting in true repentance that bears fruit.
- B. Every great move of God is preceded by a great work of preparation. We want to welcome a great work of God, so we are entering into a season of setting ourselves aside for God and His purposes. Consecration.
- C. Repentance is turning of our life and heart to God, so that we become aligned with Him and His purposes.

## III. TRUE REPENTANCE (VS. 7-10)

- A. **Motives:** “Who warned you to turn from the wrath to come?”
  - 1. What are your motives? Is it self-centered, not out of the revelation of God? Many people say “yes” to eternal life and the acceptance by God, not to Jesus as the King, and truly enter His Kingdom. They were just fleeing “from the wrath to come” but not truly repentant and thus not ready to enter the Kingdom.
    - a. There are many motivators in life: fear, shame, etc.. Love is ultimate motivator.
- B. **Humbly acknowledging our sin:** Don’t begin to say: “We have Abraham as our father”
- C. **Bears fruit:** It manifests in our daily choices that determine the course of our lives.