

Lesson III.

THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

January 21, 1900

Luke 3 : 1-17—Memory Verses, 3-6

Golden Text—Prepare ye the way of the Lord.—Luke 3 : 4.

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis and Lysanias the tetrarch of A'bile'ne,

2 An'as and Cai'phas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zachari'as in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jor'dan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins ;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esai'as the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye 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.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have A'braham to our father : for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto A'braham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then ?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized and said unto him, Master, what shall we do ?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do ? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely ; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not ;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water ; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire :

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner ; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

THE LESSON RETOLD

While Jesus was growing up at Nazareth, there was a man called John living in the wilderness country among the caves and rocks. He had never seen Jesus, but he knew from God's word that He must soon come, and so he was looking for Him.

John was so good a man that some thought he must be the Savior that everyone was expecting. But he said, "I am not fit even to untie his shoes."

John used to preach beside the river Jordan and people came in crowds from the cities and towns to hear him. He was a strange-looking man, with a strong voice, and he wore rough clothes and ate queer food—locusts and wild honey, and he always used the same text—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

