

Luke 3: 1-18

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene— **2** during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. **3** He went into all the country 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:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,

make straight paths for him.

5

Every valley shall be filled in,

every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight,

the rough ways smooth.

6

And all people will see God’s salvation.’

7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. **9** The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 “What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

11 John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

13 “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

14 Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. **16** John answered them all, “I baptize you with^[b] water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. **17** His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” **18** And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.