

The Ministry of John the Baptist Luke 3:1-18

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon on John the Baptist emphasizes the call to repentance and the significance of preparing for the coming of Christ.

Scripture: Luke 3:1

Topics: "Repentance", "The Role of John the Baptist"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the ministry of John the Baptist, emphasizing his role as the forerunner of Christ and the importance of repentance. John preached in the wilderness, calling people to bear fruit worthy of repentance and warning against false security in heritage. He addressed various groups with tailored messages, urging them to live righteously and prepare for the coming Messiah. Torrey highlights John's humility in recognizing the superiority of Jesus, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire, and the necessity of faith in Him for salvation. The sermon underscores the urgency of repentance and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.

Transcript

(Compare Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, vv. 1-6 What evidence have we in verses 1 and 2 of the accuracy of this story? Where had John been educated? (1:80). Who was his teacher? What led him to begin his ministry at this time? From whom had he obtained his message? What had God told John? (John 1:33). Where did he do his preaching? In what sort of a building was every great sermon recorded in the Bible delivered? What did John preach? What is repentance? (Matt. 12:41; see Jonah 3:8-10; Is. 55:7).

What is the baptism of repentance? (Acts 2:38). Did Paul preach any other baptism than this? (Acts 19:3-5). What was the exact form of John's message as delivered by him? (Matt. 3:2). Had there been any prediction of this ministry of John? By whom? (Is. 40:3-5). How long before? Had anything seemed to come of this prediction? Why did it come true at last? (Is. 40:5, last clause). What may we be sure of as regards every prediction of God's Word? 2. "O Generation of Vipers," vv. 7-9 In what terms did John address those who came to hear him?

Who was it that he especially addressed in this way? (Matt. 3:7). Why did he address them in this way? Is it ever right to speak to men in this severe way? (Matt. 23:33; John 8:44; Acts 13:10). What is it evident from verse 7 that these men were relying upon? What other false hope does John shatter in the 8th verse? What is hinted at in the words: "God is able of these stones, etc."? (Gal. 3:28, 29). In what way was a true repentance to be manifested? What are "works meet for repentance"? (Is. 1:16, 17).

Whose else preaching resembled John the Baptist's in thus demanding repentance and works meet for repentance? (Acts 26:20; see Matt. 4:17). What other delusion of the Jews is shattered in the 9th verse? What is meant by the ax being "laid unto the root of the trees"? What trees in Jehovah's orchard are to come down? Is it enough that a man does not bear bad fruit? For what had Jehovah been waiting for a long time from His orchard? For what is He waiting from us? Suppose He does not find it, what then?

What is fruit? (Gal. 5:22, 23; Col. 1:10; Ro. 15:28; Phil. 4:17; Ro. 1:13; John 15:16). How can we bear fruit? (John 15:5). 3. Fruit Worthy of Repentance, vv. 10-14 What was the result upon the hearers of this faithful preaching of John? What is one of the best proofs that a man has preached well? (Acts 2:37; 9:6; 16:30). What was the substance of John's answer? Is the spirit of "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none" binding to-day? To whom is it to be given?

Why did John give different directions to publicans and to soldiers? What is the substance of his directions to the different classes? What suggestions may we draw from John's words as to our preaching to different classes of men? What part of John's preaching is particularly applicable to laboring men to-day? How much ought a man desire in order to be content? (1 Tim. 6:8). Is there any gain in this contentment? (1 Tim. 6:6). What part of John's preaching is particularly applicable to the capitalist today? (v. 11).

Is this part at all applicable to the poor man? What thought will enable a man to be content? (Heb. 13:5). 4. "One Mightier Than I Cometh," vv. 15-18 What did John preach besides repentance? (vv. 16, 17). To what temptation was John peculiarly subjected by his immense popularity? Did he yield to this temptation? (See John 3:29, 30). What is the comparison that John drew between himself and Jesus? Do professedly Christian men nowadays all think that it is an honor of which they are not worthy to do the lowliest service for Christ?

Do you think so? What contrast between his own baptism and that of Jesus did John draw? What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit? (Acts 1:5, cf. 2:4; 10:44-46, cf. 11:15, 16; 1 Cor. 12:4-13). Is the baptism in water a symbol of the baptism in the Holy Spirit? (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Ro. 6:4). What is the baptism in fire? (Jer. 23:29; 20:9; Acts 2:3; 2 Tim. 1:6, R. V. margin; Is. 4:4). What does fire do that the Holy Spirit also does? (1 Cor 3:13; Mal. 3:2, 3; Ezek. 24:9-11).

What other offices should Jesus Christ perform? (v. 17). Who, in the Old Testament, is represented as doing this work? (Micah 4:12; Is. 21:10). What is the significance of this fact? What becomes of the chaff? What else was cast into the fire? (v. 9). Where else do these two figures occur together? (Ps. 1). Is the fire literal? (Matt. 13:42). Between what two fires do we have our choice? Was this the whole of John the Baptist's preaching? What were some of the "other things" he preached? (John 1:29, 34; 3:29-36). What was the general character of this other preaching? (v. 18, R. V.). CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus Christ

(1). His person:

Divine, 17.

(2). His work:

Gives the Holy Spirit, 16; judges, saves, damns, 17.

(3). Exalted privilege of serving Him in lowliest service, 16.

2. The Model Preacher

(1). In what he preached:

Judgment on sin and fruitlessness, 9, 17; heart repentance the one condition of forgiveness, 8 (see Mark 1:4); holy living the sole evidence of true repentance, 8, 11-14; the coming Saviour and the necessity of faith in Him (see Acts 19:4), the dignity of Christian service, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, 16; the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins, 3; the eternal security and blessedness of the saved, 17.

(2). In the way in which he preached:

Outspoken, 7; easily understood, 9, 11, 13; adapted himself to his audience, 12, 13, 14; fearless, 19; put self in the right place, exalted Christ, 16.

(3). What he got for his preaching, 19, 20 (see Phil. 3:10).

3. The Scriptures

Their Author--God, the certainty of their fulfillment at last, 4-6.

4. The Holy Spirit

(1). Who bestows the Holy Spirit:

Jesus Christ, 16.

(2). What the Holy Spirit does:

Searches, cleanses, consumes, illumines, makes to glow, energizes, 16.

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