

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (January 9, 2022)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

As we settle in to 2022 we shift our attention to the third book in the New Testament section of the Bible, the book of Luke. The writer, a physician, was an active participant in the life of the early Christian movement. Beginning around the year 50 Luke traveled across the Mediterranean world with the well-known leader and evangelist Paul. He had a front row seat as Christian faith shook the Roman world. This morning we meet one of the major characters in the Christian story, the one who prepared the way for Jesus, John the Baptist. He was a fire-breathing, hold nothing back, uncompromising preacher ... Hold on tight, his message and manner are uncomfortable and true.

### **God of the Impossible** (Luke 3:1-20)

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, <sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

<sup>7</sup> He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'

<sup>8</sup> Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, 'What then shall we do?' <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, 'Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.' <sup>12</sup> Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, 'Teacher, what shall we do?' <sup>13</sup> And he said to them, 'Collect no more than you are authorized to do.'

<sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.'"

<sup>15</sup> As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, 'I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

<sup>18</sup> So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison."

### **What Does it Say?**

1. What does this passage say about John the Baptist's role?
2. What does this passage say about John the Baptist's style?
3. What does this passage say about John's message?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What was the central theme of John's preaching?
5. What was significant about WHO came to hear John preach?
6. How would you compare the style and message of John the Baptist with what you know about Jesus' message and style?
7. How did John's preaching prepare the way for Jesus?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

8. Would you have gone out to hear John? Why or why not?
9. What would John tell you if you asked him, "what must I do"?
10. What kind of preachers do you listen to? Why listen to them?
11. What is most attractive for you in John's preaching?
12. Is John's message harder for you to follow, or is Jesus' message harder to follow? Explain and discuss.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is not supposed to be a burden. Prayer is not supposed to be "out of reach." Prayer should be the most natural, easy, and empowering part of your day. Prayer is talking to God, knowing He is your friend, that He hears you, and that He loves you. In your prayers tell God how you are feeling about Him, about life. Admit your failings, your questions and doubts, your fears. Be honest ... He welcomes honesty. Ask Him to speak to you. Ask Him to direct you as you go through your day. He will!