



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE- PART 3: Isaiah 40:3-5 and Luke 3:3-6

COLORADO

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James calls us to repent and turn from our sin and this is our first step toward God. We cannot have communion with God when our sin separates us from Him. James demands that we deal with our sin. We must take it seriously. The salvation of a sinner will never happen apart from genuine repentance. It isn't popular to talk about repenting from your sin, but true restoration with God can't happen without it. True repentance isn't momentary or temporary. It is a sincere turning from sin and a turning to God for the rest of your life! Now that's an authentic change and a true transformation. James is calling us to a radical repentance with ten imperative verbs demanding immediate and decisive action in dealing with our sin and our lives before God. Before moving forward in James, let's broaden our understanding about this critical subject, for true restoration with God cannot happen apart from repentance.

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE- PART 3: LUKE 3:3-6

Luke 3:3-6: "And he came into all the district 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, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. (5) Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough roads smooth; (6) and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

I. PREPARE THE HIGHWAY OF YOUR HEART – LUKE 3:3-6

The ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ was clear. At His birth the angel of the Lord announced, "And she will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) Jesus' ministry was about salvation from the debt of sin each of us have. It is a debt we cannot pay for the price was too high, requiring a sinless, perfect, holy life of which we all fall short. Romans 3:23 reminds us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." So God sent us His Son Who came so that we might live and offered the perfect sacrifice on the cross that God required as payment for our sin. Jesus Himself said in Luke 5:32 that He came to call sinners to repentance. All that God requires is that we confess and agree with God that we have sinned and repent, turn from that sin and turn to God. Jesus' purpose on this earth was to provide forgiveness for our sins and then call us to repent. He preached a message of repentance.

James unmistakably preached the same message as we have seen. And all believers in Jesus Christ are called to preach this message for in Luke 24:46-47, Jesus commissioned all who would truly follow Him, with these words, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the

nations, beginning from Jerusalem." What the world needs is forgiveness from their sins, and this is the message we are to proclaim.

John the Baptist had no less of a calling, preparing the way for Christ's earthly ministry. Scripture describes his message for us in Luke 3:3-6 and that is where we will spend the rest of our time in this study.

A. "BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE" – LUKE 3:3

Luke 3:3: "And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;"

Here we find that John the Baptist was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Now baptism refers to a washing with water. Scripture isn't saying that baptism will save us for water will not cleanse anyone from the inside out. But it represents the cleansing God gives to those who truly repent. It is an external action that symbolizes what God does inwardly in our heart. John preached repentance, deliverance from sin and that's what salvation is. It is opening up to God, confessing, agreeing with God about our sin. As we have seen from James 4, it is a deep remorse and sorrow about our sin that causes us to cry out to God. And all that God asks is that we repent. That's why Jesus came, what John the Baptist was all about and what James so clearly declared; a message of repentance. So let's see what more we can learn about repentance.

B. "MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD" – LUKE 3:4

Luke 3:3: "And he came into all the district 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, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord..."

Here we find that John the Baptist quotes from Isaiah 40 to make his message of repentance unmistakable. Everyone would have understood what John was referring to as he tied his message to Isaiah 40. You see, John the Baptist was preparing the people for the ministry of Jesus Christ. He was preparing them for His message of repentance. In those days, when a great leader was coming to visit your village, the people would prepare the road for his coming. Now as you can imagine, the roads were extremely rough and crude. So there was a lot of work to be done. They would do their best to remove the rocks, fill in the holes and uneven parts and make it as straight as possible and a fitting highway for the Monarch. This would express their appreciation and demonstrate respect to the Monarch or King. Of course John wasn't referring to a physical highway, but rather calling for all mankind to make ready, prepare the highway of our heart for the coming King, the Messiah Who is Jesus Christ. And John says that the way to prepare for the Lord is to prepare the highway of your heart through repentance. This was John's message...*get your heart ready for the coming King!* What does that mean? Isaiah will tell us.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0107

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A Message of Repentance- Part 3: Isaiah 40:3-5 and Luke 3:3-6

C. “MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT” – LUKE 3:4B

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the district 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, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.’”

What does it mean to “make His paths straight”? Simply this; get your life straightened out. Prepare the highway of your heart, clear the way, and deal with every sin, on every level and every kind. That’s repentance! This involves some things so how do we do that?

D. “EVERY RAVINE SHALLE BE FILLED UP” – LUKE 3:5A

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the district 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, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. (5) Every ravine shall be filled up,’”

First, preparing the highway of our heart requires that we deal with the things below the surface; every low thing, every ravine, the deep things in our life that no one knows about. They have to be dealt with, confessed and turned from. That’s repentance. We must deal with every low thing! Now keep in mind that this is referring to salvation of course, but our hearts need continual preparing for we must constantly deal with our sin.

E. “EVERY MOUNTAIN BE BROUGHT LOW” – LUKE 3:5B

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the district 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, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. (5) Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low;”

Every high place, everything that contributes to our pride, our selfishness and our sinful pleasures must be dealt with. Anything that exalts our-self must be brought down. Isn’t that what James has been talking about. . .pride and humbling ourselves before God? And this is tough for we want to hold on to these things. But just as everything low and deep thing in our heart must be dealt with, so every high thing must be dealt with. . .pride and every selfish, sinful pleasure. That’s repentance.

F. “THE CROOKED BECOME STRAIGHT” – LUKE 3:5C

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the district 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, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. (5) Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight,”

Every devious, perverse, twisted, deceitful, perverted thing whether in thought or deed, has to be dealt with to prepare the highway of our heart for the coming of the King. The crooked heart becomes “straight” when we

confess and repent of these sinful thoughts or actions. Maybe you and God are the only ones who know the condition of your heart. Get your heart ready and get your life straightened out.

G. “AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH” – LUKE 3:5D

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the district 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, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. (5) Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough roads smooth;”

All the debris must be picked up and removed, every hindrance that might become a stumbling block must be dealt with. Preparation for the King comes only by complete repentance. Salvation comes only to a prepared heart so “make ready the way of the Lord.” (Luke 3:4) Everything in your life must be dealt with, every obstacle. Hebrews 12:1-3 says, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. . .”

H. “AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE SALVATION” – LUKE 3:6

Luke 3:3: “And he came into all the district 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, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. (5) Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough roads smooth; (6) and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

John was saying to prepare your heart for the coming of Christ the King. He was preaching, shouting, crying out to all. . .make your heart ready for the Lord. Deal with your sin on every level, every kind. This was John’s message, James’ message and our Lord’s message because when we deal with sin, then, “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” And the glory of the Lord is seen in a life transformed. The purpose of repentance is to make ready the highway of our heart for salvation and forgiveness. Repent and you will be saved. Salvation never happens without repentance. That’s the message!

And that’s our message as well! But all too often our great commission has an omission. . .repentance. We don’t want to talk about sin, but we must because that’s the message; deal with every sin, on every level and every kind. Turn from your sin and turn to God. Remove the debris, straighten the crooked places, raise the low and bring low the high. For, salvation, forgiveness comes only to a prepared heart. How is the highway of your heart? Take a fresh look at true repentance.¹

¹MacArthur, John, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Luke 1-5*. Moody Press: Chicago, 2009. Pg. 215.