

**Conversations on
 Luke 3:1–6**

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Watch a YouTube video of “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord” from *Godspell*. Discuss: What did the characters in the video do to prepare the way of the Lord? Where in the video did you see or hear Luke 3:1–6?

WHAT is important to know?

This baptism is one of preparation for the impending judgment, an acceptance that repentance alone—not status, blood, or ritual—can bring about forgiveness when the judgment arrives. In Luke’s setting, then, John’s baptism is the preparation for the ministry, life, and death of Jesus, because those who accept John’s call show themselves humble before God and willing to submit to God’s word, ready to acknowledge the Messiah of the Lord. The first step in preparing for the coming of the Lord is repentance from sins, a message that reverberates from the Hebrew prophets and is highly relevant to the Advent season. (*Mariam J. Kamell*)

- ✧ Why might the writer of Luke have chosen to include the information about the rulers and priests in verses 1–2?
- ✧ What is remarkable about framing baptism as an “acceptance that repentance alone . . . can bring about forgiveness?”
- ✧ How does John’s baptism prepare the way for Jesus?

WHERE is God in these words?

The Advent Sunday message is linked with the final advent of eschatological salvation, which includes not only the chosen nation but also the nations. At the day of Pentecost to which our text also points, the Spirit was poured out on “all flesh” as an anticipation of the final salvation. A key theological theme in Luke is the inclusion of all in God’s salvific invitation and reaching out: both men and women, poor and rich, Gentiles and Jews. This Advent Sunday is a great place for us to be reminded of that. (*Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen*)

- ✧ Where is Luke’s theme of inclusion evident in this Scripture passage?
- ✧ How is Isaiah’s prophecy of God’s salvation evident in John’s message?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

The warrant for John’s ministry, from Isaiah 40, reinforces this imperative in its own way. The voice in the wilderness cries out for the way of God to be prepared with relentless urgency. This urgency can be heard as a call to rhetorical sensitivity among those who proclaim the word of faith. Here is dramatic imagery for making connection, for finding available means to communicate so that God’s desire for creation might be known: straightened paths, valleys and mountains made into plains, rocky ways made even (Isa. 40:4–6). (*Wesley D. Avram*)

- ✧ What about preparing the way of God calls us to do so with “relentless urgency”?
- ✧ How might rhetorical sensitivity affect people “who proclaim the word of faith”?
- ✧ Isaiah uses one type of imagery to identify this preparation, but what imagery might speak to people today?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

John did understand how a people ought to welcome their God. His challenging words called people to self-examination, along with a “to do” list, if they were going to be ready to receive the one coming after him. John’s prophetic message called people to get ready to receive Jesus. John’s challenge is to repent and prepare. True repentance (*metanoia* in the Greek) means literally to change one’s mind, turn around, reorient oneself. John calls all people to turn to God and from sin, to seek God’s forgiveness, and to prepare the way of the Lord. (*Kathy Beach-Verhey*)

- ✧ How do you practice self-examination as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- ✧ How is your life reflective of John’s challenge to repent and prepare?
- ✧ When in the life of your congregation do you gather to repent and prepare?

Loving God, help us live lives of repentance as we prepare a way for Jesus in our hearts and in the world. Amen.