



Lesson 4 December 26th, 2020

Called to Prepare the Way

JUNIOR LESSON

Study Scripture – Matthew 3:1-12

Background Scripture – Matthew 3; Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3

Key Verse:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!

Matthew 3:3

Have you ever been asked by mom to help her get ready to bake a beautiful cake that will be delicious and out of which you will certainly make a scrumptious feast? Has dad ever asked you to get ready to come along or to repair some part of the house? Has your teacher ever asked you to put some material together before you can start your lesson?

When you think about it you know that **preparation** before you can do anything successfully is very important. It is three- quarter of what is needed for a success in life.

When you begin to prepare for a very important task you have to put your mind to it and turn away from the other things that you have been doing before. You see, preparation is an action word. When you accept that preparation is necessary the things that you do will be very important.

You have to make sure that whatever you are doing wrong will stop. You will have to start doing things right so that everything would come together properly.

Sometimes we know that things that we are doing are not quite right and we have to get our minds thinking in a different way as we prepare to make a change for the better.

This was what was happening in the days after Jesus was born. The people had expected someone like Jesus to come and deliver them. This person who they called the Messiah would always do things for the sake of the poor and the suffering and He would change the way the country was running so that the people of Israel would be freed from all kinds of oppression and suffering. God the Father had told them that He would send someone to change things and the people looked forward to this great person coming.

But like everything else sometimes we do not make the changes we need to make, and it takes someone like mother or father or the teacher to shake us up a little and remind us of what we have to do.

God the Father understands everything about people, how they think, what is in their minds, why they do the things they do, the mistakes they make, and what has to be done to correct how they approach life.

So, God in His wisdom sent a man called John the Baptist to prepare the way, to put the people on the right road or path. Things were so bad that they had to be shocked into making a drastic change in how they lived.

John was a kind of scary person. He wore a robe made out of rough camel hide or skin. He lived in the wilderness, a place where not very many people lived and where life was tough. He ate locusts (something like grasshoppers). You might not think that locusts are nice to eat but in fact it was very nutritious, and some people today like to eat them, and they fry them. I think they taste like fried chicken. God had given the people of Israel permission to eat those and the people of Israel were taught that they were clean and were good for you. John the Baptist also ate wild honey, something that was also very nutritious and of course sweet.

John had a loud voice and when the people heard him preach, they were scared about what they were doing wrong. John told them that the Messiah, the person that God promised He would send to help them out of their suffering and their difficult life, was coming very soon and they should look out for Him.

But they had to prepare to meet the Messiah and to having good things that God promised He would do. The people would have to go back to remember that they were in the Covenant that God had established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In this covenant or agreement God had promised to look after the nation of Israel and to protect them from their enemies and one day He would give them tremendous blessings and save them from whatever sins they were committing. This is very important because their sins and their behaviour were damaging them badly. They definitely had to go back to behave the way the Covenant required them to behave.

This is also very important for us because when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour who would take away our sins on the Cross we have a special relationship with Him. In this relationship we have to behave in a different way from what we used to do for we have to begin to learn to behave like Jesus.

John's work was therefore very important for it showed people what the Gospel, the good news that Jesus was coming to save the people from their sins was all about. John's work was therefore a good foundation. Jesus complimented him for his work by saying that no prophet was as great a prophet as John the Baptist. He was the greatest prophet. Nobody that was a human being was as great as John the Baptist. He was the greatest man.



John the Baptist therefore did a great work in preparing the people. He did his work with great strength and vigour. He was obedient to God the Father. When the people came to him, he told them to repent, which means that they would make a 180° turn and begin to do things very different according to what God had told them. Then John the Baptist baptized them, put them completely down in the water in the River Jordan as a sign to everyone that they had really repented and would now begin to do what was right.

Some people did not like what John was preaching because they were afraid that when the Messiah Jesus came, He would change things up and they would not be able to continue giving the bad leadership that they were offering to the people and they would have to stop the bad way they were treating the people. These leaders were not showing real good love to their own countrymen. That was certainly not right, and John the Baptist rebuked them for what they were doing.

We therefore must understand that we have a great job to do to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. We have to tell them to prepare to change their hearts, change their way of behaviour, turn around, stop doing the wrong things that they were doing, behave as if they understand that they had to behave in a way that showed the special relationship that they had with Jesus.

So, you like John the Baptist have a great task ahead of you. You must be guided by the Holy Spirit in what you do. He will tell you how to witness to other people about Jesus. He will help you to do what is right. He will give you the strength to do what you have to do. You do not have to worry that you do not have the strength to do what God wants you to do.

So, you have to learn to be kind to the people. John the Baptist taught those that came to him in the wilderness that they had to be kind to people. They had to help those that did not have enough food or clothing.

So, learn to help others to prepare to meet Jesus, to hear from Him, and to accept Him as their Saviour. Then you and those persons you help will be in a Covenant with Him which will give you and they eternal life and eternal blessings.

