

July 13
Time to Turn

He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. – Malachi 4:6

[Luke 3:1-18, Jordan River] *The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets,*

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you. [Malachi 3:1]

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!’ [Isaiah 40:3]

Now 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, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the Baptizer, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness of Judea. He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for remission of sins; saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” 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.

Every valley will be filled.

Every mountain and hill will be brought low.

The crooked will become straight, and the rough ways smooth.

All flesh will see God’s salvation.’ [Isaiah 40:3-5]

Now John himself wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. Then people from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. He said therefore to the multitudes of Pharisees and Sadducees who went out to be baptized by him, “You offspring of vipers, who warned

**Bring forth therefore fruits
worthy of repentance**

you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and don’t begin to say among yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father;’ for I tell you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones! Even now the axe also lies at the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doesn’t bring forth good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire.”

The multitudes asked him, “What then must we do?”

He answered them, “He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise.”

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what must we do?”

He said to them, “Collect no more than that which is appointed to you.”

Soldiers also asked him, saying, “What about us? What must we do?”

He said to them, “Extort from no one by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully. Be content with your wages.”

As the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he was the Christ, John answered them all, “I indeed baptize you with water, but he comes who is mightier than I, the latchet of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down to loosen. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor, and will gather the wheat into his barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Then with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. [Matthew 3:1-7, Mark 1:1-2]

1. How did John the Baptizer embody the spirit of Elijah? (see 1 Kings 18:21, etc.)
2. How are you like the Pharisees, the tax collectors, or soldiers? How can you repent?
3. Father, I want to have my heart turned back to you today; so, to bear fruit, I will...