

## PROPHETS OF REPENTANCE AND LIFE

16/10/16

*Repentance is much more than feeling bad about your failings and shortcomings. Rather, it defines a willingness to obey God and to be directed by his principles of life. Feeling sorry or guilty is not what God expects, he wants people to make changes, to make commitments and stand by them. We need to obey his directives to receive the Holy Spirit and to use it to build a truly Christian lifestyle; full of mercy and blessings. A walk with God means submission to him and a change of direction. It also means that we will take responsibility for our own actions... not blaming others nor pretending to be spiritual. Thus we agree to both live by God's word and to offer the gospel to the unsaved. We are God's prophets; a living walking testimony.*

**The duty and message of the prophet.** **LUK 1:17** And he (John) shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to **turn the hearts** of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to **make ready** a people prepared for the Lord. God uses prophets to reveal his will to sinful and saved people alike. The words are explicit and very personal, sometimes offensive and grievous. John called people to account, he made them reflect upon their lives and attitudes, particularly their relationship with God. John both prepared people for the coming of the Lord and revealed the standard of behaviour that is required and blessed by God.

**Johns simple message included the following...** **1. Judgment is near.** **LUK 3:7** Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the **wrath to come?** **8** Bring forth therefore **fruits** worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. *All other religious opinions are void, faithful obedience is required. Your personal beliefs, church history and family ties, are all irrelevant to your spiritual duty... obey the Gospel.* **9** And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: **every tree** therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and **cast into the fire.** *This reference is to the judgment that every single person must face before the Lord... that is the cost of being given your life and a planet live on. Those who reject Christian values will lose all and any hope of future life.*

**2. Repentance means a willingness to learn to treat others well.** **LUK 3:10** And the people asked him, saying, **What shall we do then?** **11** He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. **12** Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, **what shall we do?** **13** And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. **14** And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And **what shall we do?** And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages. *A casual approach won't work... John expresses what repentance means in very sharp and explicit terms. Remember these verses explain what he had just said in v3* And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the **baptism of repentance** for the remission of sins; *Water baptism is not a once off action, rather it is a commitment to live life according to God's principles and purposes... the Holy Spirit empowers us to do so.*

**3. Repentance also means the willingness to be baptised, receive and be directed by the Holy Spirit.** **LUK 3:15** And as the people were in expectation, and all men **mused in their hearts** of John, whether he were the Christ, or not (*still not quite sure of what to do next*); **16** John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed **baptize you with water**; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall **baptize you with the Holy Ghost** and with **fire**: *John clearly reveals the next step to these people... the pattern of true Christian salvation. Any confusion over the meaning of these words was revealed at Pentecost.*

**The day of Pentecost revealed the meaning of John's ministry.** **ACT 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to **speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance. *The meaning of this God given event is revealed in clear and obvious terms.* **&37** Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, **what shall we do** (*the same as John was asked in Luke 3 above*)? **38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *Who does this apply to and how long is this revelation valid for?* **39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to **all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.** *This is the Gospel of salvation.*

**Like John, we are also directed by God to do likewise.** **MAR 16:15** And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel to every creature.** *Signs will follow if you speak the truth.* **&20** And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and **confirming the word with signs following.** *Repentance involves Godly service to fellow saints and builds the church on a signs based gospel!!*