

John the Baptist Proclaims God's Message

Key Verse: "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."
—***Luke 3:8***

Selected Scripture:
Luke 3:1-20

'fathers,' or patriarchs, and in a greater sense the world of mankind, whom fleshly Israel represented. This would also typify that all would have the opportunity to come into a condition of harmony with God, which would be similar to that of the fathers. It, as we know, would be a condition of harmony and peace with God.

JOHN, FROM THE BEGIN-ning, was proclaimed to be one who "shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." (Luke 1:15,16) In fulfillment of this, he would come to prepare the way of Messiah by performing a reformation work in preaching repentance from sin and baptism for the remission of sins, declaring that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

His preaching was used to declare that harmony was to be restored between Israel and the

John indeed would serve as a forerunner, introducer, or picture of our Lord. He was a great man, preacher, and prophet. He may be thought of as one of the most honored of all of the prophets in that he was chosen to introduce the Son of God to Israel and the world. John would come “in the spirit and power of Elias.” (Luke 1:17) He was not actually the prophet Elijah returned to the earth, as some had thought to believe. He did do a great work for fleshly Israel, introducing or proclaiming to them Christ in the flesh. As the man Christ Jesus was introduced by the man John doing an Elijah work, so the glorious Christ must be preceded by a great Elijah, making all ready for the returned Lord. This class of footstep followers now calls attention to the present Christ as a true and faithful witness during this Gospel Age.

John’s was “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” (Luke 3:4) But his mission was not successful to his nation, and profited only a few of the people. Our key verse is telling us that the people and nation were being cautioned to not be deceived by the thought that they were God’s specially chosen, elect people, as spoken by the prophets. Through pride they thought that as God’s people who lived by the Law, he would fulfill everything in his plan through them. When John says to them, ‘of these stones,’ he means that God was able to choose others that they considered as far from the possibility of being Abraham’s children as if they were the literal stones at their feet.

The true ‘children’ of Abraham, who would have Abraham’s faith and loyalty of spirit, were to be taken now not only from Jewish believers, but also from among those whom the Lord was seeking from the Gentiles. This was necessary to complete the elect number of Israelites indeed. These ‘children’ would make up the seed of Abraham, through whom all of mankind would be blessed in the coming kingdom. ■