

Prepare to Meet Jesus

International Bible Lesson

Luke 1:57-58, 67-79

Sunday, December 15, 2013

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“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins” (Luke 1:76-77—KJV).

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins” (Luke 1:76-77—NRSV).

The angel Gabriel told Zechariah in the temple that his son John would preach in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). After John was born, the Holy Spirit inspired Zechariah to foretell before family and friends the future of his son. He prophesied that as the prophet of the Most High, John the Baptist would preach to prepare people to meet Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the Most High. Because the scribes taught that Elijah must come before the Messiah, during Jesus' ministry His disciples asked about John, and Jesus replied, “Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him” (Matthew 17:10-12).

During the Advent Season, people can be reminded to prepare and stay prepared to meet Jesus. People need to prepare today in the same way John told his listeners to prepare. We can prepare ourselves by listening to the truth. John preached the truth about God and the Messiah, and when people believe the truth about God, God will “turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). When people believe the truths John preached, they receive the knowledge of salvation and the forgiveness of their sins. When John preached, many believed, repented, were baptized, and bore “fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Those who obeyed John's message opened their hearts to believe in Jesus when they met Him and they followed Him as the Way of Salvation. —© Copyright 2013 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. In what way did God show mercy to Elizabeth?
2. What evidence does Luke give that Zechariah was probably deaf as well as mute, unable to speak?
3. Why did Zechariah give a prophecy about his son, John, and the Messiah who was yet to be born?
4. How does God want you to serve Him?
5. How does Zechariah say John will prepare people to meet the Lord? Can believers do this today? Give a reason for your answer.