

# Make His Paths Straight



Luke 3:2–9 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 04, "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord," on Gospel Library**

## START

In the ancient Near East, a road could be cleared and leveled before a king came. John the Baptist said he was a voice in the wilderness, calling people to make the Lord's way straight (John 1:23).

## READ TOGETHER

The word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness (Luke 3:2). He preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3:3).

### LUKE 3:4–6

<sup>4</sup>As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; <sup>6</sup>And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

## WHAT IT TEACHES

Luke quoted Isaiah to describe John's work. "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight" (Luke 3:5; Isaiah 40:3–4). Repentance is road work. We fill in what is missing, bring down our pride, and straighten what has gone crooked.

President Russell M. Nelson taught that the Greek word for repentance points to a change of mind, knowledge, and spirit. He also said this about how it happens. "*Repentance is not an event; it is a process.*"

President Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," General conference, April 2019

The road has a purpose. "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). We straighten the road so the King can come in.

John's call was for everyone, including people who thought they were already fine. He told them to stop counting on Abraham as their father (Luke 3:8). Each of us has some road work to do.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**John said valleys get filled, hills come down, and crooked roads get straightened. Which picture fits a change you want to make, and how can the Savior help?**

## TAKE TO CHURCH

John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord the way workers prepare a road for a king. Repentance straightens our road so the Savior can come into our lives.

# What Shall We Do?



Luke 3:7–14 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

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## START

After John preached, the people asked him a plain question. “What shall we do then?” (Luke 3:10).

## READ TOGETHER

John had told the crowds, “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). A tree is known by its fruit, and a changed heart shows in changed actions (Luke 6:44).

### LUKE 3:10–14

<sup>10</sup> And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? <sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? <sup>13</sup> And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. <sup>14</sup> 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.

## WHAT IT TEACHES

John gave each group an answer that fit their daily life. To everyone he said, “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none” (Luke 3:11). People with food were to share it too.

Publicans collected taxes and often took extra for themselves. John told them, “Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Luke 3:12–13). Soldiers were told to stop bullying people and lying about them and to be content with their wages (Luke 3:14).

Repentance shows up in ordinary places, like the dinner table, the classroom, a job, or a phone. The question “What shall we do?” has a different answer for each person.

John warned that a tree without good fruit would be cut down (Luke 3:9). The Savior is patient with us, and he still looks for fruit.

## TALK ABOUT IT

If you asked John “What shall we do?”, what do you think he would tell someone your age today?

## TAKE TO CHURCH

When the people asked John what to do, he gave each group one practical change, like sharing a spare coat or taking only fair pay. Repentance shows in what we do on Monday.

# Fulfil All Righteousness



Matthew 3:13–17 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

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## START

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John, and John tried to talk him out of it (Matthew 3:13–14).

## READ TOGETHER

John knew Jesus had no sins to wash away. He said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14).

### MATTHEW 3:13–16

<sup>13</sup> Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

<sup>14</sup> But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? <sup>15</sup> And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. <sup>16</sup> And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

## WHAT IT TEACHES

Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Suffer it means allow it. The sinless Son of God obeyed every commandment his Father gave.

Nephi saw this event in vision and explained it. Jesus was baptized to show his humility and his

obedience to the Father, and to show us the gate we must enter (2 Nephi 31:5–9). If he needed baptism, Nephi reasoned, we need it even more.

Jesus "went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16). He had gone down into the water and come up out of it. Baptism by immersion is a picture of burial and new life (Romans 6:4).

John had authority from God to baptize, given to him when he was eight days old (Doctrine and Covenants 84:27–28). The same ordinance is done today by the same authority, restored in 1829.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**Jesus was baptized even though he had never sinned. What does that teach about why baptism matters, and what do you remember or look forward to about your own?**

## TAKE TO CHURCH

Jesus went into the Jordan to be baptized, though he had no sin, to fulfil all righteousness. If he needed baptism, Nephi said, we need it even more.

# Like a Dove



Matthew 3:16–17; Luke 3:21–22 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

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## START

At the baptism of Jesus, all three members of the Godhead were present, each in a different way (Matthew 3:16–17).

## READ TOGETHER

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell this story, and each adds a detail. Luke says Jesus was praying when the heavens opened (Luke 3:21).

### MATTHEW 3:16–17

<sup>16</sup> And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: <sup>17</sup> And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

## WHAT IT TEACHES

The Son had just come up out of the water. The Holy Ghost descended “in a bodily shape like a dove,” a sign that he was there (Luke 3:22). The Father spoke from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

These are three separate beings, united in purpose. Jesus said he would pray to the Father, and he promised that the Father would send the Comforter (John 14:16; 14:26).

Others have seen the Father and the Son together. Stephen “saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). In 1820, Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son standing above him in the air (his account).

The Father’s first words in the Gospels are about his love for his Son. He feels that love for each of his children too.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**The Father said he was well pleased with his Son. How do you think it felt to hear that, and how can we tell each other what we love about one another?**

## TAKE TO CHURCH

At the Savior’s baptism the Son came up out of the water, the Holy Ghost came like a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven. The Godhead is three separate beings, united in love.

# With the Holy Ghost



Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

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## START

John told the people that someone was coming who would baptize them "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

## READ TOGETHER

John baptized with water. The baptism of fire is the gift of the Holy Ghost, given after baptism by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17). Latter-day Saints receive it when they are confirmed.

### LUKE 3:16

<sup>16</sup> 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 14:26

<sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

## WHAT IT TEACHES

Fire burns away what is impure, the way a refiner purifies silver. Nephi taught that after baptism comes a remission of sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost (2 Nephi 31:17). The Holy Ghost cleanses us as well as comforting us.

Jesus called the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who "shall teach you all things, and bring all things to

your remembrance" (John 14:26). He helps us remember what we have learned when we need it.

Elder Gary E. Stevenson described how the Holy Ghost speaks. *"He can be our constant companion, but He speaks in subtle, quiet tones."*

Elder Gary E. Stevenson, "Promptings of the Spirit," General conference, October 2023

Fire also gives light and warmth. Two disciples who walked with the risen Lord said afterward, "Did not our heart burn within us?" (Luke 24:32). That burning is one way the Spirit testifies.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**Jesus said the Holy Ghost would teach us and help us remember. When has the Spirit helped you remember something right when you needed it?**

## TAKE TO CHURCH

John promised a baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The gift of the Holy Ghost cleanses us, comforts us, and helps us remember what the Savior taught.

# One Mightier Than I



Mark 1:1–8 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

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## START

Crowds came from all over Judea to hear John, and he kept telling them about someone greater (Mark 1:5–7).

## READ TOGETHER

John was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the baby we read about at New Year’s. He lived plainly in the wilderness, wore camel’s hair, and ate locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6).

### MARK 1:6–8

<sup>6</sup>And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; <sup>7</sup>And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. <sup>8</sup>I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

## WHAT IT TEACHES

John said, “There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose” (Mark 1:7). A latchet is a sandal strap. Untying someone’s sandals was a servant’s task.

John was famous, and many people wondered if he was the Christ (Luke 3:15). He could have kept the attention for himself. Instead he pointed every crowd to Jesus.

Jesus later said that among those born of women there was no greater prophet than John (Luke 7:28). The greatest prophet of his time saw himself as a servant.

John’s whole mission was to make the Savior easier to find. The Lord still does great work through people who keep him at the center.

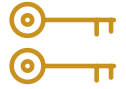
## TALK ABOUT IT

**John could have kept the crowds for himself, and he sent them to Jesus. Where do you see people today pointing others to the Savior?**

## TAKE TO CHURCH

John the Baptist was a great prophet who said he was unworthy to untie the Savior’s sandals. His whole mission was to point people to Jesus.

# John Came Again



Mark 1:4–5 · This week: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord, Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

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## START

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist came back to the earth as a messenger from heaven and laid his hands on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (his account).

## READ TOGETHER

Joseph and Oliver were translating the Book of Mormon and read about baptism for the remission of sins. They went into the woods to pray about it (his account).

### MARK 1:4–5

<sup>4</sup> John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. <sup>5</sup> And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

## WHAT IT TEACHES

In the New Testament, John baptized “in the wilderness” and preached “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4). He held the Aaronic Priesthood, the authority to do that work.

In 1829 he gave that same priesthood to Joseph and Oliver. It holds the keys of the ministering of angels and of the gospel of repentance. It also holds the keys of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins

(Doctrine and Covenants 13:1). Then Joseph and Oliver baptized each other (his account).

Today, young men in the Aaronic Priesthood prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament. Priests can also baptize (Doctrine and Covenants 20:46).

Each Sunday the sacrament lets us renew the promises we made at baptism (Doctrine and Covenants 20:37; 20:77). The authority John brought back to the earth is at work in our ward every week.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**John the Baptist came back to restore the authority to baptize. How does knowing where that authority came from change the way you see the sacrament?**

## TAKE TO CHURCH

The same John who baptized Jesus in the Jordan restored the Aaronic Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829. That authority blesses the sacrament in our ward today.