

# The Weight of Our Sin and the Hope of Christ

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January 12, 2025 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

John \_\_\_\_\_ God's people to our need to \_\_\_\_\_ from sin. (2-6)

John calls us to \_\_\_\_\_ repentance, which \_\_\_\_\_ into every aspect of our lives. (7-14)

John sees the \_\_\_\_\_ Savior as the only \_\_\_\_\_ hope for humanity. (15-17)

## Luke 3:1-20

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<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup> As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

*"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

*'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.*

<sup>5</sup> *Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall become straight,  
and the rough places shall become level ways,*

<sup>6</sup> *and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

<sup>7</sup> He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." <sup>12</sup> Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" <sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

<sup>15</sup> As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

<sup>18</sup> So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison. (ESV)

### ***Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions***

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**Open:** Share about an experience that led you to make a change in how you lived.

#### **Read & Discuss Luke 3:1-20.**

1. List the different types of people mentioned in verses 1-2. Why do you think God chose to work through John rather than through more powerful options? How has this same theme appeared in Luke so far? How should understanding this about God shape how we view ourselves and others?
2. The language in verses 3-9 should have been familiar to Jewish listeners at the time. How could we rephrase these ideas to make them more accessible to people today? What approaches have you found effective in helping people recognize their sinfulness before God?
3. From verses 7-9 (and possibly verses 10-14), how would you expect John the Baptist to define the word "repentance"? Why do people often resist being told to repent? What might have led many in John's audience to respond positively to his calls to repentance (v. 9)?
4. In verses 15-17, John is quick to point people away from himself toward Jesus. What portrait of Jesus does John paint in these verses? Why is the judgment that John describes in verse 17 an essential component of the "good news"? How can we help others understand this?
5. Verses 19-20 remind us that not everyone will respond positively to the Gospel. How do you think John felt about people rejecting his message? How much should we allow someone's possible response to shape how we go about sharing the Gospel message with them? Explain.

**Apply:** What can we learn from John the Baptist's example as we consider sharing the Gospel ourselves?

**Pray:** Pray for specific people you know who have yet to embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior. Ask God to be at work in our church family to make us bold, wise, and loving proclaimers of the Good News.