

Jesus Is Coming: Prepare the Way Study Guide

Luke 3:1–6

Expository Focus: God prepares people for the coming Christ through His Word and repentance.

Key Question: What needs to be prepared in me so that Jesus, rather than fear, sin, pride, or circumstance, has His rightful place?

I. God's PLAN Advances Despite the Powers of This World

Luke 3:1–2a

Luke intentionally names the political and religious authorities of the day: Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, and Caiaphas.

Yet after listing the powerful, Luke turns our attention toward an obscure man standing in the wilderness.

God's plan was not dependent upon the approval of earthly authorities.

HEAD — The Word

Read Luke 3:1–2.

Key Greek word: **ῥῆμα** — *rhēma*

“Word” or “utterance.” Luke tells us that the word of God came to John. The initiative belongs to God. John does not invent the message; he receives it.

A. God cannot be restrained by human authorities.

1. Why do you think Luke names so many political and religious leaders before introducing John?
2. What contrast do you see between the powerful people of vv. 1–2 and the location where God's Word comes?
3. What does this teach us about who is actually directing history?
4. Where else in Scripture do you see God accomplishing His purposes despite powerful human opposition?

B. God always reaches the person He wills.

God's Word comes to John “in the wilderness.”

The wilderness was not wasted space. Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly used wilderness experiences to prepare His people.

HEART — What Is God Saying?

What you fear, you revere.

What currently occupies your thoughts because you're afraid of what might happen?

Is your fear connected to politics, health, finances, marriage, children, grandchildren, work, or the future?

Have you allowed something you fear to become larger in your mind than God's sovereignty?

Complete this sentence honestly: "If _____ happened, I don't know what I would do."

What might that answer reveal about where you are struggling to trust God?

Remember: God sees when you can't see. God knows when you don't know.

HANDS — What Will You Do?

Identify one fear that has been exercising too much control over you.

Each time that fear surfaces this week, deliberately turn it into prayer:

"Father, I cannot control _____, but I trust You with it."

II. God's PROCLAMATION Calls Us to Repentance Through His Word

Luke 3:2b–3

John does not enter the wilderness with self-help advice. He proclaims God's message: Repent.

HEAD — The Word

Read Luke 3:2b–3.

Key Greek word: **μετάνοια** — *metanoia*

"Repentance." It describes a change of mind and direction—a turning away from sin and toward God.

Key Greek word: **ἄφεσις** — *aphesis*

"Forgiveness," "release," or "remission." The word carries the beautiful idea of being released from what held a person.

John proclaimed, "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

A. God calls us to turn from sin.

1. How is biblical repentance different from merely feeling guilty?
2. Why is repentance necessary preparation for receiving Christ?
3. What happens when we want Jesus as Savior but resist His authority over areas of our lives?

B. God calls us to trust in Christ.

John's ministry was never about John. He was preparing people for Jesus. John was the messenger, not the destination.

HEART — What Is God Saying?

Ask God: "Lord, is there something in me that needs to change?"

Don't begin with someone else's sin. Begin with yours.

Is there an attitude you have defended? A bitterness you have justified? A habit you have hidden? A relationship you need to repair? A fear you have allowed to dominate you? A sin you have renamed so you don't have to repent of it?

HANDS — What Will You Do?

Name specifically what God is revealing.

Then take the appropriate step: Confess it. Turn from it. Trust Christ with it.

Don't merely feel conviction. Respond to conviction.

III. God's PROMISE Prepares Us to See His Salvation in Christ

Luke 3:4–6

Luke reaches back to Isaiah 40 to explain John's ministry: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John is preparing the road because the King is coming.

HEAD — The Word

Read Luke 3:4–6.

Key Greek word: **ἐτοιμάζω** — *hetoimazō*
"Prepare" or "make ready."

Key Greek word: **εὐθύς** — *euthys*
"Straight." The imagery is of removing obstacles and preparing an unobstructed road.

Key Greek word: **σωτήριον** — *sōtērion*
"Salvation" or "saving deliverance." Luke's emphasis ultimately points beyond John to God's salvation revealed in Christ.

A. God raises what is low. "Every valley shall be filled."

Where have discouragement, shame, hopelessness, or weariness created a valley in your life?

B. God reduces what is high. "Every mountain and hill shall be made low."

Where has pride made you resistant to God's authority? Where have you begun believing you know better than God?

C. God realigns what is crooked and rough. "The crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways."

What has become crooked that God wants to straighten? What rough place have you simply learned to live with?

D. God calls us to receive the salvation found in Christ. "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

John isn't the destination. Jesus is.

HEART — What Is God Saying?

Imagine your heart as the road being prepared for the King.

What is low that God needs to raise?

What is high that God needs to humble?

What is crooked that God needs to straighten?

What is rough that you need to surrender?

And finally: Am I looking primarily for Jesus to change my circumstances—or am I trusting Jesus Himself as my salvation?

HANDS — What Will You Do?

Choose one specific place God has identified through this passage.

Write it down.

Then write beside it:

TURN — What do I need to turn from?

TRUST — What truth about Christ do I need to believe?

TAKE ACTION — What specific act of obedience will I take this week?