

John Prepares the Way

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Second Sunday in Advent) is Matthew 3:1-12. This text depicts John the Baptist out in the desert preaching repentance and pointing to the coming of Jesus.

John, from his conception, had been called to point to Jesus as the Savior of the world. We first meet him here in the desert of Judea, about 20 miles from Jerusalem near the Jordan River.

The people had heard of the powerful preaching of John and they came out droves. The Israelites had been waiting, for a long time, for the promised Savior and many of crowds thought that John was Jesus the Redeemer of the world.

John quotes Isaiah to give proof that what he is doing has long been forecast in their Scriptures. It shows that he was not doing this on his own.

Traveling anywhere in Israel was filled with many challenges and dangers. Israel was and is for the most part desert or mountains. The desert had its heat and wild animals. The mountains had rock strewn paths and thieves. Our path through life is also filled with many spiritual dangers that are meant to lead us away from the road to eternity.

John's solution to the spiritual needs of the people who had come to hear him was to preach repentance. This would get them ready for ministry of Jesus. This season of Advent affords a time to reflect on what is going on in our lives and bring the need for repentance to the Lord.

As we look to the coming Babe of Bethlehem we are much assured that this baby fulfilled all that was said of him by John and all of the Scriptures concluding with his suffering death and resurrection. That means all of our sins past, present and future are covered with his redeeming and innocent blood.

We are baptized into his eternal kingdom and will be gathered into his eternal kingdom of everlasting life. There we will celebrate with him and all the redeemed the everlasting feast.

Almighty God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Burn my chaff, but quench my sinful passions in the daily washing of Holy Baptism. Amen. (TLSB)