

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JOHN, PREACHER OF REPENTANCE

International Sunday School Lesson for August 20, 1950

Memory Selection: "Bear fruits that befit repentance."—Luke 3:8.

Lesson Text: Luke 3: 7-20

John the Baptist, after a solitary life of preparation, during which time he had ample time to meditate and think and develop his powers of communication with God, suddenly appeared to the Jewish people with startling effect. "Men were conscious that a new power had appeared among them," says Professor A. B. Davidson. "The soft livers in the cities wondered at the unkept shaggy figure whose trumpet tones shook them."

Thus, about twenty-six, A. D., or, as Luke says, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, John began his public career as a preacher and reformer. His activity lasted but two years. That of Jesus was only three. How much can be accomplished in a short time if great spiritual force is behind the man and the message.

During his hermit life, John became acquainted with the cruelty and wickedness of society and witnessed the misery and affliction of the poor. Going farther in his consideration of these things, he realized that these things were the cause of sin and he was impelled by divine power to deliver a message of condemnation and warning to those who were heedlessly drifting through life.

Jesus, himself, paid high tribute to John the Baptist, saying that none had been born of woman greater than he, yet adding to this declaration that the last Christian would be greater, meaning in faith, privilege and insight. However, John the Baptist is not to be neglected nor his message disregarded.

Before anyone can come to know the greater blessings of Christian faith he must pursue the nativity followed by John and pass through penitential experiences. John the Baptist traveled the only spiritual road open to him at that time and went until the road ended. Jesus was the engineer who constructed a further highway for you and men to us in our progress towards the Kingdom of God.

John's methods as a preacher, were not such as would recommend themselves to the modern church pastor today. He was no purveyor of soft and silken phrases but stern in his frankness and uncompromising in his denunciation. One group, who approached him, he addressed as "vipers," his harsh severity being justified by their hypocrisy and insincerity.

We can't imagine a congregation hearing the Baptist preach and then smilingly walk out in conversation with their fellows: "Wasn't it a beautiful sermon?" Instead, his audiences were stirred to conviction of sin because he had the honesty and courage to frankly expose their souls to themselves. Hearing him, men and women wanted to know what they must do.

The line dividing the preacher from the social reformer hardly exists if the preacher believes that religion concerns present day life. Why preach on the generalities of Christian virtues when glaring examples of sin and passion sit in the congregation familiar and known to many?

John, in his evangelism, never hesitated to put his finger on the weak spot and prescribe the medicine necessary to effect a cure. "Divide your coats and food with the poor," he said. Publicans were told to discontinue gouging the public for selfish gain; and soldiers were rebuked for their rowdyism, extortion and blackmailing of defenseless civilians.

Notwithstanding the vigor of his denunciation of wickedness and the perfect assurance which he had for righteous principles, John realized his own position in regard to the expected Messiah. He had no pride or false conceit when he spoke of the One who would follow him. The Sanhedrin could ask if he was the Messiah, the crowds could throng around him to hear his message, but John made no pretense to be anything except one who made ready the way for the King to come.

While he baptized with water, John said, one would soon come who would baptize with the spirit and with fire. While John brought about conviction in the souls of men and awakened an admission of sin, he could not give the satisfaction and the answer to the cravings of mankind that would only be provided through faith in Jesus Christ.

GO TO SOME CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY

LET US BE GLAD

It is a beautiful sight to see a profusion of flowers brightening the landscape with brilliant colors. In a well-kept garden or in some remote meadow or woodland an array of blossoms will not fail to win our admiration.

So great is the love of flowers in the human heart that since the beginning of time men have written of their beauty and sung their praises. Gardens grace most of our homes, and where room or climate does not permit, we cultivate blossoms in small containers in our houses.

And what are these fragile things of beauty that gladden our hearts? We can seek the advice of a botanist or an organic chemist, but even then we know that a flower is just one more of God's creations—just one more of the millions and millions of pleasures that He has given us.

For these and all our blessings, let us be glad. Let us go to Church this Sunday and next, and sing His praises.

THE CHURCH FOR ALL . . . ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Sunday	Genesis	2	5-10
Monday	Isaiah	35	1-10
Tuesday	Matthew	7	15-23
Wednesday	I Corinthians	9	6-11
Thursday	Luke	6	43-49
Friday	I Corinthians	15	35-38
Saturday	Genesis	3	17-24

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Daling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
Church services at 3:00 P. M.
Christian Union, 7:30 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. R. Byerly, Pastor
Church services first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
E. B. Edwards, Pastor
First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:30 P. M.

Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:30 P. M.

Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:30 P. M.

Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:30 P. M.

Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church at 7:30 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
E. R. Meekins, Pastor
Church School, 11:00 O. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Carl Bjork, Pastor
Sunday School, 11 A. M. every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 3 P. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. E. G. Willis, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
Carl J. Yow, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Morning worship—11:00 A. M.
Youth Fellowship, 6:30 P. M.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
G. M. Singletary, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:30 A. M. on first and third Sundays and 2:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.
Church services, 3:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
Ben O. Merritt, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
E. T. Jilson, Rector
Holy Communion, 9:00 A. M.
Every Sunday except first Sunday at 9:00 A. M.
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Prayer and Sermon, 11:00 o'clock.
Holy Communion first Sunday at 11 A. M.

BEREA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor
Bible School 10:00 A. M., except second Sunday, at 10:30 A. M.
Morning worship on first Sunday at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first Sunday at 8 P. M.

CHAPPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
A. H. Outlaw, Pastor
Sunday School, 2 P. M. every first Sunday.
Church Service 3 P. M. every first Sunday.
Sunday School at 11 A. M. every second, third and fourth Sunday.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Go