

CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. Take a few minutes to review and discuss last week's sermon.
2. What do increase and decrease mean?

At this time in history, during the reign of the Roman Empire, rulers were appointed as governors to lead sections of the land. They were called Tetrarchs. Herod Antipas, ruled in Galilee and Perea (4 BC – AD 39). Herod Philip ruled the Northeastern regions; Herod Agrippa I was considered the King over all Palestine; Herod Agrippa II ruled Chalcis and Northern Territories (AD 48 – 70). The people who lived there were under Roman Rule, which they considered to be harsh and unfair. Consequently, they began to look for a king to come and release them from this Roman Rule.

READ Luke 3:1-20.

DISCUSS

Verses 1-2 say a great deal about the Kingdom of God. Read them again and pay attention to the many powers that are named and how God's Word came to, not any of them, but to John.

1. What does this tell you about God's Kingdom and worldly power structures?

John the Baptist was a foreteller of the coming of the Christ. He lived in the desert, wore rough clothes and sandals, and ate locusts and wild honey.¹ However, we learn John the Baptist was a humble man of prayer with much integrity. The people of that region had a great deal of respect for him, and even thought he himself might be the Christ. His message was one of conviction and sharing the Good News with all those who listened.

2. According to John the Baptist's message, what are the means of all people experiencing the Lord's salvation?
3. Who were the many groups of hearers and what were his instructions to each of them?

4. Given John the Baptist's appearance, what would your reaction to this man have been if you had lived during this time? Would you have been offended by his attire? Why do you think he wore these clothes?
5. Would you have believed his message? Why or why not?
6. Why do you think God sent such a man as John the Baptist to proclaim the coming of His Son? What does this tell you about God?

John the Baptist fully understood his role to usher in Jesus' ministry.² The life he led after Jesus' birth and the beginning of Jesus' ministry was one of moving on and allowing Jesus to do His work in the way God had planned it. In his message in verses 3-18 we see the promise to Zechariah being fulfilled (1:16). He was anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

APPLY

1. When in your life have you acted in a way just to escape ridicule or judgement (v. 7)?
2. What does it look like in your context to produce fruit (v. 8)?

The goal that each of us should set is to live our lives giving glory and honor to the Almighty God and striving to spread the Good News. Truly, Jesus is the "greater" and we, like John the Baptist, need to put Him first, follow His teachings, and let everyone know that we, as Christians, are followers of the Christ and have a magnificent story to tell!

This week, look for opportunities to tell this amazing story to others. Please share your experiences with your small group the next time you meet.

¹ Matthew 3:4.

² John 3:27-26.