Advent: Preparation Begins

John 1:19–23

# Context

This week, we are studying our proper response to Jesus’ first coming or first Advent. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies about Israel’s Messiah, which can easily be a whole other sermon. In today’s text, we will focus on the prophetic response to Jesus’ first Advent. The Old Testament passage referenced in today’s text was written 700 years before the Advent of Jesus. It was written to Jews in Babylonian captivity, exiles or slaves to a foreign superpower. The passage is found in Isaiah 40. It was a message of hope. That God’s King will come and deliver His people. After Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus’ disciples understood this passage in two lights. The first was God had King Cyrus of Persia release His people from Babylonian Captivity. The second was that God’s King had come down, visited, and dwelled with His people. Notice how Jesus’ disciples interpreted the event.

# Bible Verse

**John 1:19–23 CSB**

This was John’s testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, “Who are you?”   
  
He didn’t deny it but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.”   
  
“What then?” they asked him. “Are you Elijah?” “I am not,” he said. “Are you the Prophet?” “No,” he answered.   
  
“Who are you, then?” they asked. “We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself?”   
  
He said, “I am a **voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord**—just as Isaiah the prophet said.”

# The Question

› How do we prepare for Jesus’ first Advent?

**Mark 1:5 CSB**

The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

**Malachi 4:5 CSB**

Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

**Deuteronomy 18:18–19 CSB**

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.   
  
I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name.

**Matthew 11:11 CSB**

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

• We should ask ourselves, especially in the holy season of Advent, “ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? ”

### So what does John say about himself?

**Isaiah 40:3 CSB**

A voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert.

John declares he was the forerunner of God Himself, and what was John commissioned to do? To preach **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.

**Luke 13:4–5 CSB**

Or those eighteen that the tower in Siloam fell on and killed—do you think they were more sinful than all the other people who live in Jerusalem?   
  
No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.”

**Luke 24:46–47 CSB**

He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day,   
  
and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

**John 10:40–41 CSB**

So he departed again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there.   
  
Many came to him and said, “John never did a sign, but everything John said about this man was true.”

# **Big Idea: Preparation for Advent begins with  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .**

## What is repentance?

**Isaiah 55:7 CSB**

Let the wicked one abandon his way and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, so he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will freely forgive.

**Mark 1:15 CSB**

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

**Acts 26:17–18 CSB**

I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them   
  
to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

## How do we show repentance?

**Luke 3:7 CSB**

He then said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

**Luke 3:10–15 CSB**

“What then should we do?” the crowds were asking him.   
  
He replied to them, “The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same.”   
  
Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?”   
  
He told them, “Don’t collect any more than what you have been authorized.”   
  
Some soldiers also questioned him, “What should we do?” He said to them, “Don’t take money from anyone by force or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”   
  
Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were questioning in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah.

• a public display of mourning over sin, such as weeping ([Ezra 10:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ezr10.1)), tearing garments and/or hair ([Ezra 9:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ezr9.3)), and wearing sackcloth ([Joel 1:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Joe1.13))

• making restitution for wrongs committed ([1 Chr 21:22–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Ch21.22-26)). Zacchaeus making restitution for the fraud he committed as part of his occupation ([Luke 19:1–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk19.1-10))

• humble oneself before the wronged party ([Gen 33:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge33.3))

• Paul preaching the faith he once tried to destroy ([Acts 9:1–28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac9.1-28))

• Onesimus, the runaway slave, returning to his master, Philemon, to face the consequences of his actions ([Phlm 8–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Phm8-16))

• In [Revelation 3:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re3.19), the glorified Christ commanded the lukewarm church in Laodicea to repent. Also, in [Revelation 2:5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re2.5), the church at Ephesus, which had “forsaken its first love,” was told to repent. All these sinful churches needed to change their minds and bring forth the fruit of repentance ([Luke 3:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk3.8); [Acts 26:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac26.20)), turning again to Christ.

## True and False Repentance?

# Pray

“Dear Jesus, I confess I am a sinner and deserve judgment and hell, but I believe You love, came to this earth for me, lived a sinless life, and died on the cross for my sins. I believe God raised you from the dead to forgive me. Please forgive me, come into my life, and grant me eternal life in You name. Help me to glorify you in all I do. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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Grant, Almighty God, that seeing we are so sleepy, yes, and so fascinated by our sins, that nothing is more difficult than to put off our own nature and to renounce that wickedness to which we have become habituated—O grant that we, being really awakened by your scourgings, may truly return to you, and that, having wholly changed our disposition and renounced all wickedness, we may sincerely, and from the heart, submit ourselves to you, and so look forward to the coming of your Son, that we may cheerfully and joyfully wait for him, by ever striving after such a renovation of life as may strip us of our flesh and all corruptions, until, being at length renewed after your image, we become partakers of that glory, which has been obtained for us by the blood of the same, your only begotten Son. Amen. - JOHN CALVIN Ritzema, E. (Ed.). (2012). 400 Prayers for Preachers. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.