

# Luke 3:3

## by Chuck Smith

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*To prepare the way for the Lord means to inwardly prepare our hearts for His coming, making straight paths, filling valleys, bringing hills low, and making rough places smooth.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 10:12, Psalm 118:22-23, Psalm 139:23-24, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:2, Luke 3:3, Philippians 4:8, James 4:10

**Topics:** "Humility and Service", "Preparation for the Lord"

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### Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the need for personal preparation to meet the Lord, drawing parallels between John the Baptist's call to repentance and the need for individuals today to prepare their hearts for Christ's return. He highlights the importance of reverence for God, the necessity of humility, and the call to serve others rather than oneself. Smith warns that without this preparation, one cannot stand before a holy God, and he encourages believers to make straight their paths and fill the valleys of selfishness with acts of kindness. The message is a reminder that the moral conditions of society today echo those of John's time, making the call to prepare for the Lord's coming ever more relevant.

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### Transcript

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

Intro. Whenever a king was to visit an area of his domain, they would send servants in advance of his coming to fix the highways so that the king could travel in comfort. The valleys would be filled, the high places would be leveled, the crooked paths would be made straight.

I. John the forerunner to the king. A. It was prophesied of him at his birth that he would called the prophet of the Highest, for he would go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. B. He was calling on the people to repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. C. The preparation was the inward preparation of the hearts of the people for the coming of their king. D. There is a necessary preparation to meet God. 1. Some people are very cavalier concerning God. They make reference to Him in a very irreverent way. a.

The man upstairs. b. The big daddy in the sky. 2. The Bible says "Holy and reverend is His name." 3. The Jews had such respect for His name that they will not even seek to pronounce it. 4. In their writing today, they will not even spell God, but will write G-D. E. God is not your good buddy. He is holy, He is awesome, He is the Creator of the universe. 1. He said, "Fear ye not Me, saith the Lord, will you not tremble at My presence?" 2. The Psalmist said, "Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord." 3.

Again he said, "Let all the earth fear the Lord and stand in awe of Him. 4. Under the law they were commanded, DEU 6:2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee. DEU 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, DEU 10:20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

DEU 13:4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. E. Note some of the things that the book of Proverbs says about the fear of the Lord. PRO 8:13 The fear of the LORD [is] to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate. PRO 9:10 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [is] understanding. PRO 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

PRO 14:26 In the fear of the LORD [is] strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. PRO 14:27 The fear of the LORD [is] a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. PRO 15:16 Better [is] little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. PRO 15:33 The fear of the LORD [is] the instruction of wisdom; and before honour [is] humility. PRO 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD [men] depart from evil.

PRO 19:23 The fear of the LORD [tendeth] to life: and [he that hath it] shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil. PRO 22:4 By humility [and] the fear of the LORD [are] riches, and honour, and life. E.. The people had not been obeying the Lord, they had not kept His statutes and commandments, they had not walked in His ways, to love and serve Him. 1. Now He is coming to earth to walk among men, so the command goes forth from John to prepare ye the way of the Lord. a. Note that the command is personal. It is something that you must do. b. The prophet said, "Prepare to meet your God." 2. Basically John was saying the King is on His way, prepare the way for Him.

II. Why is it necessary to prepare the way for the Lord?

A. No man can stand before the Holy God in His sinful state without being consumed.

1. Jesus was talking to the Pharisee's one day and He made reference to the verse in Psalm 118 concerning the Stone that the builders rejected, had become the head of the corner, He then admonished them that whoever would fall on this Stone would be broken, but upon

whomsoever It shall fall, It will grind him to powder.

2. Jesus was saying that it is better to fall on Him, than to have Him fall on you.

a. Cast yourself on Jesus Christ today, and you will be saved.

b. Seek to resist Him and you will be ground to powder.

B. Their hearts were not prepared for the visitation of the righteous King.

1. I believe that the message of John was very relevant for his time.

2. Josephus describes the social and moral conditions of that day. He speaks of the gangs that actually ruled the streets in Jerusalem, the disregard for the rights of others.

3. You remember that Jesus gave the parable of the man on the Jericho road that was beset by the robbers, and how no one cared for his life.

a. They were a me first generation.

b. They could watch a crime being committed and not move to help the victim.

4. I believe that Billy Graham has been sort of a modern day John the Baptist in that he has been addressing the moral and social conditions of the world today, and calling on the people to "Prepare the way for the Lord."

a. I believe that the King is on His way, that He

will be coming very soon.

b. Many of you are not prepared for His coming.

c. Should He come today for His church, many of you would be left to face the great tribulation.

d. The moral conditions of the world today are much the same as they were at the time that John began his ministry.

e. I cannot believe how relevant the message of John's is for this present time.

III. How are we to prepare?

A. Make straight His paths. John sort of repeated this when he said, "Make the crooked paths straight."

1. Some of you are doing things that are crooked.

a. You have been cheating others.

b. You have been gaining through fraud and deceit.

c. When the tax collectors asked John what they should do he told them not to exact more than was appointed them.

2. You may seek to justify it in your mind, but you are a plain crook.

B. "Every valley shall be filled."

1. A valley is a depression in the surface of the landscape, these were to be filled.

a. Much of our depression comes from selfishness.

We are thinking too much about ourselves.

b. We need to be thinking more of others.

Back in

the days when we had Hi Y clubs on the campuses  
of our schools, we had to learn a poem called  
others. I still remember that poem to the  
present day.

"Lord help me live from day to day,

In such a self forgetting way,

That even when I knell to pray,

My prayer shall be for others.

Help me in all the things I do,

To ever be sincerely true,

And know that the things I do,

Must needs be done for others.

Others Lord, yes others,

Let this my motto be,

Help me to live for others,

That I may live for Thee."

c.

Paul wrote the Phillipians

PHI 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever

things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just,

whosoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are]

lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if

[there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise,

think on these things. and the result will be,

PHI 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,

shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

2.

The people asked John, "What shall we do?" he responded, "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." In other words start thinking about how to help meet the needs of others, rather than how your needs are not being met.

C. The hills were to be brought low.

1. We often hear said of a person, "He thinks he is so high and mighty, you cannot even talk to him."

ISA 2:12 For the day of the LORD of hosts [shall be] upon every [one that is] proud and lofty, and upon every [one that is] lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

2. We are told to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord.

3. The soldiers asked John what they should do, and he told them to not accuse any man falsely.

Do not misuse  
your authority.

D. The rough places shall be made smooth.

1. Can you think of any rough places in your life?

2. There is a lot of smoothing out to be done in each of us.

E. Let us prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord, with King David let us pray, search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

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