

Teaching Plan for January 7, 2018
"Repentance and Anticipation" Luke 3:1-20
Dr. Williamson

CREATE INTEREST

1. ASK: What are some things you've done to help plan your direction for 2018? In other words, did you set any goals (or resolutions) that you would be willing to share with the group? Are there some personal projects you are working on in 2018 or some things you would like to see accomplished? Discuss.

SAY: Let's assume someone asked you to help them with spiritual goals. ASK: What would be some possible "spiritual goals" you might suggest? Discuss.

ASK: How about work goals. Are any of you required to set "goals" at work? (Or, if retired, were you required to set goals while employed)? What was the purpose of these work goals? Discuss.

2. SAY: Dr. Williamson has asked each of our Adult Departments to set Department Goals for 2018. (Teacher: talk with your Department Director about these goals, or contact Brad Williamson if they know nothing about this).

If you (or your director) have already made goals, share them with your class; If these are still in process, ask the class to help you brainstorm three "Kingdom goals" for your department. Ideas:

- goal for having x # of new members in 2018;
- fellowship goals (having x # of fellowships in 2018);
- ministry & missions goals (i.e. participating in x # of new class ministry projects).

Reminder: All goals need to be "Kingdom minded." (Helping advance God's cause on earth).

3. SAY: During December, we looked in great detail at what God did to prepare for His son's coming to the earth to be our Savior. This included:

- God had his angels announce Jesus' coming.
- He had prophets foretell about the coming Messiah hundreds of years in advance.
- God sent a star to announce His son's birth to Stargazers/Wise Men;
- God used a secular Roman Caesar, Augustus, to announce a census in order to get Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.

SAY: Seeing all God did to announce Jesus' coming, imagine the planning that went into what Jesus' actual ministry would be. That's our study today: How God prepared and announced Jesus' earthly ministry.

GUIDE BIBLE STUDY

4. Have volunteer read Luke 3:1-2. SAY: Dr. Luke was very good at including historical details in his writing. ASK: Why do you suppose Luke included these historical details throughout his book (i.e. "15th year of reign of Tiberius Caesar;" "Pontius Pilate, and Herod the Tetrarch)? Discuss. Possible Answer: So that people (his readers and audience) would know that Jesus' birth and life were real. They were set in a time and place. It was not something "made up." Luke wanted his audience to believe the account of Jesus.

5. SAY: Bible researchers say that the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar was probably around AD 28. Herod the Great ruled Judea from 37BC to AD 4. After Herod the Great died, his territory was divided among his four sons (see Study Guide for details). There was only one high priest at a time. Annas was the first High Priest during Jesus' life time. Then he was followed by his son-in-law, Caiphas. Our Study Guide says Annas was still present, even after Caiphas became High Priest, to wield his influence over religious matters. It was appropriate that Luke lists both of them as High Priests.

SAY: This description of political and religious leadership in Judea and Rome served as a historic backdrop for the life of Jesus. These rulers are what the country was "known for."

ASK: What are we "known for" in this day and time in America? If you had to put a "description" on America today, what descriptive words would you use? What significant events have we seen in our life time? Discuss. Answers will vary: Computer generation; Social-media generation. "Post-modern" world. 9-1-1 world.

SAY: While we don't completely understand Jesus' world, neither would they completely understand our world. Luke writes these historical descriptions to give us a background of their world at the time of Jesus.

6. Have volunteer read Luke 3:2b-6. SAY: If anyone has been to a movie recently, you know that the first thirty minutes are simply "coming features." Theaters want to whet your appetite for you what's coming next. That's also a good way to describe John the Baptist's ministry. God was setting the stage for Jesus' ministry. Luke was quoting Isaiah 40:3-5. It's amazing that God was preparing for His Messiah's ministry several hundred years earlier by telling Isaiah what was coming next. Now God does it again thru John the Baptist. There were several hundred years since God had given Israel a prophet. The people were hungry to hear from God, and they were expecting God to do something. They were expecting a Messiah. So when John began preaching, many were eager to hear him. John's message was one of calling for "repentance."

7. ASK: What have you been taught about this word, repentance? What does it mean? Discuss. Answer: The biblical teaching is that it means a complete change in direction. It's sort of doing a U-Turn in your life. Repentance means what you were once doing--if it wasn't following God-- was to do a U-Turn and follow Him; do what He wants you to do, not doing things based on your own thoughts.

8. SAY: To indicate to others they had accepted John's message, they were baptized by John. The word Baptism is actually the word, "immerse." And that's why we, as a church, practice baptism by immersion in water. Let's read John's message:

9. Read or have volunteer read Luke 3:7-9. SAY: Don't answer this aloud, but how long would you keep coming to this Bible study class if that's the message I delivered week in and week out? Probably not long. John's message was harsh. He was stepping on toes. He called them snakes. He was saying "just because they claimed to be children of Abraham, that did NOT make them children of God." Even Jesus said, "not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 7:21). John was telling his audience they needed to follow God, and repent of the current lifestyle they were living.

SAY: The people, for the most part, LOVED John's message! Read vs. 10: "What should we do then?" The crowd heard John's message. Because they were looking for a prophet in their day and time, and because that was their culture, they received John's message, even though we might call it "negative."

10. Have volunteer read Luke 3:11-14. SAY: If you want to know what “repentance” looks like, John gives real-life examples. It’s about our actions, not only our words. Refer to the Study Guide box: Repentance involves change of Mind; change of Heart, and change of actions (pg. 22).

11. Read vs. 15. SAY: The people not only received John’s message, they began to wonder if he could be the Messiah. That’s a very high compliment to John the Baptist. But John set them straight:

Read vs. 16-18. Notice that Dr. Luke calls these words of John, “good news.” It may not have seemed “good” to us, but it was “good news” to the Israelites at the time.

12. SAY: Just like we have experienced in our culture, not everyone received John’s words about repentance with joy. Have volunteer read vs. 19-20.

APPLY TO LIFE

13. SAY: John was a wonderful example of following Jesus Christ, no matter how the world reacts. Most of us are in Bible study today because we’ve received Jesus into our lives. We know He is good news. We know Jesus is our savior. But as John reminded the Israelites, following God is not about making our own decisions. We have to repent when we are doing things on our own, and consciously make decisions to follow and do what Jesus wants us to do.

14. SAY: And as John reminded, there is ALWAYS room for change and improvement. Let’s spend a few minutes in prayer asking God what needs changing in our lives. Silently pray a prayer of repentance.

Teacher can close in prayer.