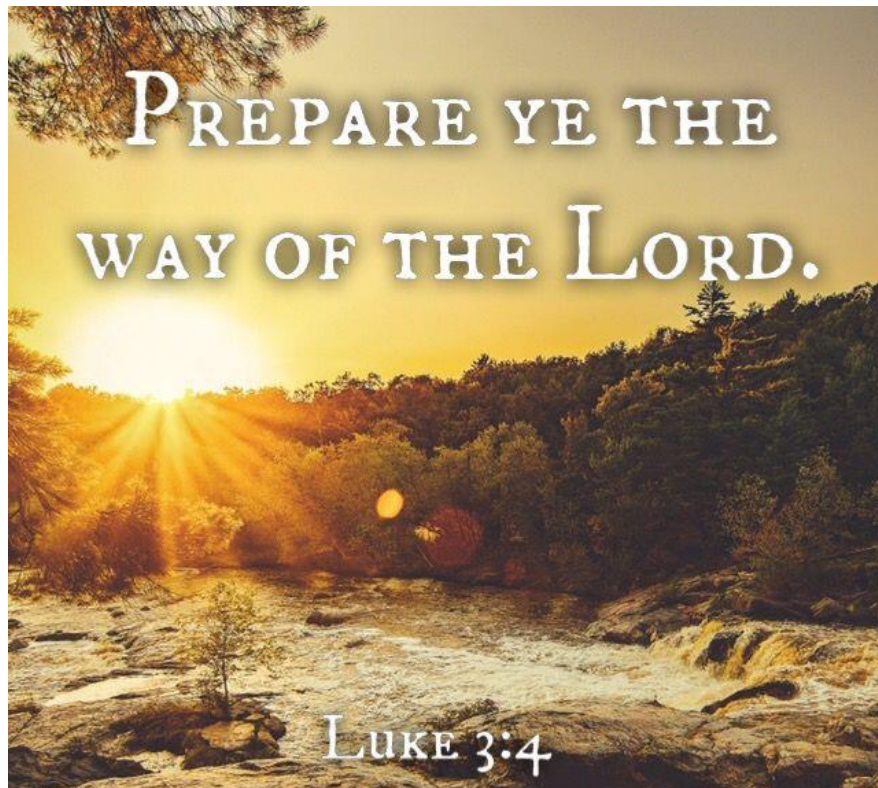


# Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

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17/01/2021 -- Prepare the Way for the Lord

## Preparing for 2021



As we move into 2021 we are going to try and have fortnightly zoom  
"Church & Chat"

This will be a short church reflection with a hymn, reading, (children's activity), prayer,  
"thought for the week" and then a time to chat.

Join us next week at 10 am:

Topic: Church and Chat

Time: This is a recurring meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75124173520?pwd=QVB4WUx6QXg3Y3hQc1NQYkxINmozZz09>

Meeting ID: 751 2417 3520

Passcode: Bethel2021

All lockdown services can be found at: [www.mbccs.co.uk](http://www.mbccs.co.uk)

A voice of one calling:

'In the wilderness prepare, the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert, a highway for our God.

**Isaiah 40:3**

**Good morning and welcome to this week's thoughts.**

Our hymn for today is "These are the Days of Elijah."

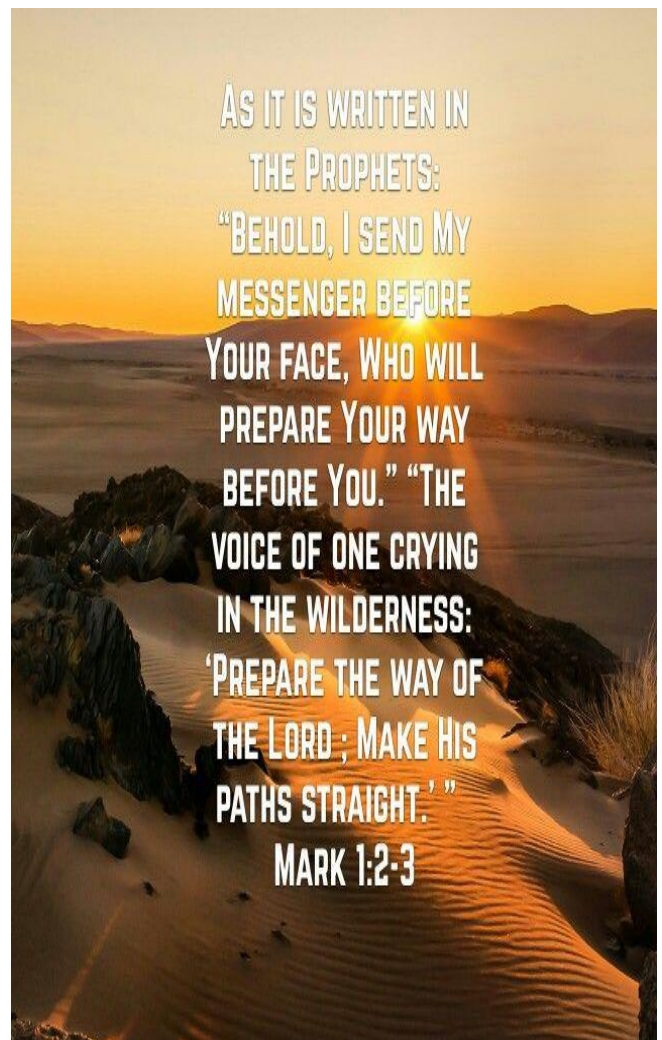
[These Are The Days of Elijah with Lyrics Robin Mark - YouTube](#)

These are the days of Elijah  
Declaring the word of the Lord:  
And these are the days of Your servant  
Moses  
Righteousness being restored  
And though these are days of great trial  
Of famine and darkness and sword  
Still, we are the voice in the desert crying  
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'

Behold He comes riding on the clouds  
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee  
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes

And these are the days of Ezekiel  
The dry bones becoming as flesh;  
And these are the days of Your servant David  
Rebuilding a temple of praise  
And these are the days of the harvest  
Oh, the fields are as white in Your world  
And we are the labourers in Your vineyard  
Declaring the word of the Lord!

Behold He comes riding on the clouds  
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee  
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes



## The reading today is Matthew 3

[Matthew 3 NIVUK - John the Baptist prepares the way - In - Bible Gateway](#)

**3** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

'A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
"Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.'"

<sup>4</sup> John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt round his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not think you can say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> 'I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'

<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented.

<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.

## Preparing for 2021

Whilst preparing for this week I was searching the internet for all things about being prepared and I came across these words:

***So, prepare for the chance of a lifetime  
Be prepared for sensational news  
A shining, new era  
Is tiptoeing nearer  
And where do we feature?***

Bizarrely these very appropriate words were from a Lion King song, sung by the baddies and preparing the downfall of good guy! This had me thinking about when we prepare, are we preparing for our own gain or are we preparing for God in our lives and shining that onto others?



Its interesting that we can so often start with our preparation with the goal in sight and then sometimes get lost in the process.

This head lamp has many great uses. I might use it if I want to walk or run outside when it's a bit dark. Or maybe I want to go down into a cave or somewhere that does not get much light. Or perhaps I want to look for something in the under stairs cupboard, or maybe the power goes out in the house, and I use it to be able to see! There are lots of great ways I can utilize it...

But what if I put it on the wrong way with the lamp facing my forehead? Will I be able to see very well? Will the light serve the purpose of showing my way or helping me find something? No, of course not, if I want to use the light, I have to point it at something away from me.

That's what we want to do with our lives. We need to ensure that what we do is going to point back to God and His amazing work in our lives. Our goal should not be making ourselves look good, or be in self-interest, but showing people how important Jesus is.

That's what John the Baptist did. He, a slightly strange man who wore itchy clothes made out of camel's hair and ate locusts honey, had a special and extremely important job to get people ready for Jesus. John was also a bit loud, and he wasn't afraid to tell people that what they were doing was wrong. He'd shout things at people sometimes, and was not always too popular because of all this. However, those around him knew he was very important. In fact, some thought he was the Messiah that they had been waiting for. They wanted to know if he was the special one. John was quick to point out that his role was different. He had come to prepare for Jesus, but Jesus was so great John couldn't even carry His sandals. John pointed to Jesus and told people that He was the one they needed to follow. John got some attention, but his goal was always to show others that their attention should go to Christ. And that's what we want to do. We want to live in a way that does draw attention, and so that people notice there's something different and special about us. But we don't want to keep that spotlight shining on us. Instead, we want to let people know that our lives are different because of Christ. All that we say and do should bring glory to God. We want to let others know how wonderful and full of love He is. We want to point to Jesus. We want to prepare our hearts for Him, and other people's hearts as well. So as we continue through 2021, let's remember to live joyfully whatever the situation and to share His light with one another!

***To, prepare for the chance of a lifetime, Be prepared for sensational news  
A shining, new era, Is tiptoeing nearer***

***And ask where do we feature?..... In God's great story.***

## Today's Pray:

Dear God,

Thank you for coming to Earth for us Help us, this year to live in a way that brings glory to You. Help us point others to Christ and shine His light on the world.

Amen

Help Jesus get baptized by John.

