



Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus Christ Luke 3

Introduction

After His birth and appearance in the Temple at the age of twelve, we hear nothing more of Jesus, other than His perfection at every stage (Luke 2:40, 51-52; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26; 1 John 3:5), until He went to be baptized by John the Baptist, an act which is regarded as the beginning of His public ministry.

Outline of Luke 3

- I. John the Baptist's Ministry and Preaching - Luke 3:1-20
- II. Jesus' Baptism - Luke 3:21-22
- III. Jesus' Genealogy - Luke 3:23-38

I. John the Baptist's Ministry and Preaching - Luke 3:1-20

A. John The Baptist - 3:1-2

1. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar

Only Luke tells of the birth of John the Baptist. The other gospel writers present him fully grown. All four give his prophetic ministry. Luke alone dates him in reference to secular history. This also connects Jesus to history, "as if to show that He was not an idealized religious figure, but a very real participant in the history of mankind who could be localized in time and space" (New Testament Survey, Merrill Tenney).

At this time, Tiberius was the Roman emperor; Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, was tetrarch of Galilee; Philip, his half-brother, was tetrarch of Iturea; and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene. "With the death of Herod the Great (in 4 B.C.) a new era was born. The semi-independence of Judea was virtually ended, for Herod had made the assignation of his realm subject to the will of Caesar Augustus, who partitioned the domain as he saw fit" (New Testament Times, Merrill Tenney).

Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, was sly and treacherous. Jesus called him "*that fox*" (Luke 13:31-32). He illegally married Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip, which outraged the Jews and drew John the Baptist's fiery condemnation.

Philip was the best of the sons of Herod the Great. His territory was north of Galilee and he built Caesarea Philippi at the springs of the Jordan at the base of Mt. Hermon.

Lysanias' territory, Abilene, was part of Lebanon, north of Iturea. Archeology places all these personages at the time of John the Baptist and Jesus.

2. High Priests - Annas and Caiaphas

Caiaphas was high priest. Annas, his father-in-law, had previously been high priest and wielded a great influence even in his retirement (John 18:13).

3. The coming of the word of God

The word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. A similar phrase, *the word of the LORD came to*, is applied to the prophets in the Old Testament. (See Isaiah 38:4; Jeremiah 1:2; Ezekiel 1:3; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Micah 1:1, and more.) It encompasses the call to ministry, the specific message, and the empowering for ministry based on God's authority. It had not happened for four hundred years. John was the last of the Old Testament prophets, considered as such because he preceeded Jesus.

B. John's Message - Luke 3:3

1. Repentance

John preached near the Jordan River, away from conflict with Jewish leaders. He neither needed nor sought their approval or permission. On the other hand he did not preach under the people's noses. If they wanted to hear him, they had to go where he was. He preached repentance. To repent is literally "to think again" (Greek, "metanoia"). It means to change your mind emotionally, cognitively, and volitionally. Theologically and ethically, it means a heart change away from sin and toward God. It involves a turning away from the practice of sin and a turning to God, who responds with cleansing and forgiveness. See Matthew 3:2 and Mark 1:4.

2. Baptism

John came baptizing...and preaching a baptism of repentance for (or because of) the remission of sins. People went to him confessing their sin and were baptized in the Jordan. A steady stream of repentant sinners went to be baptized, hearing that the kingdom of God was at hand. They wanted to be ready. How ready are you for the next event in God's plan?

3. Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is where God rules. To the Jewish people it had a twofold meaning. It meant universal righteousness, and, more practically, to many it meant the restoration of the monarchy with Messiah seated on the throne of David and reigning over the earth from Jerusalem. Matthew refers to "the kingdom of heaven", avoiding the name of God, which Jews were reluctant to pronounce because it was holy. People were looking for the promised Messiah to deliver them from the Romans. Even after His resurrection, but before Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were still asking, "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel*" (Acts 1:6)?

C. John's Role Prophesied - Luke 3:4-6

1. Forerunner - Isaiah 40:3

Isaiah had prophesied the role of John the Baptist, one of only a few people so foretold. He was *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*, preparing the way of the Lord. His message was, *Make straight in the desert a highway for our God*. He was the forerunner of the Messiah and he knew it.

2. Prophet - Isaiah 40:4-5

Isaiah even predicted John's message. *Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the LORD shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. Amen!*

D. John's Strong Preaching - Luke 3:7-9

1. A nest of snakes - 3:7

John's revival attracted a mixed multitude, as revivals still do. The Pharisees and Sadducees in Jerusalem heard of it and sent a delegation to investigate (Matthew 3:7). Seeing them coming John said, "*Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*" He saw through their respectable demeanor. He knew what lay beneath the polished exterior.

2. Fruits worthy of repentance - 3:8

John was discerning enough to recognize hypocrites. Claiming Abraham as their father was not a reason for pride. John called for changed lives, "*repentance and fruits worthy of repentance*." God could change stones into children of Abraham. What fruits of repentance are visible in your life to show your genuine sorrow for your sin?

3. Unfruitful trees - 3:9

God's test for survival is fruit. The "*ax is laid to the root of the trees*" means that God was ready to act in judgment on the nation which had received more light than any other. The coming of Jesus, the light of the world, would reveal their condition of receptivity and fruitfulness or rejection and unfruitfulness. Judgment would follow accordingly.

E. Responses to John's Message - Luke 3:10-20

1. Four questions from the crowd - 3:10-15

a. "*What shall we do then?*"

The people appropriately asked how to prove their sincerity. John told them to share what they had with those who had less. All the answers have something to do with money or possessions.

b. "*Teacher, what shall we do then?*"

Tax collectors were told, "*Collect no more than what is appointed for you*." Their income would be affected for they were allowed to collect all they could extract in excess of taxes. This meant they worked for the Romans and against their own people.

c. "*And what shall we do?*"

Soldiers were told three things. Do not intimidate anyone. Do not accuse falsely. Be content with your wages. Do you think these are good guidelines for today also?

d. "*Are you the Christ?*"

The people began to wonder if John could be the Messiah. He answered that he baptized only with water, which could not change anyone. Water baptism was an outward sign only. It was traditionally used for converts to Judaism but not for Jews. Those who submitted to John's baptism humbly acknowledged their need.

2. Preparing for the true Messiah - 3:16-18

John prepared the people for Messiah with three statements about Him:

a. One mightier than John

"*One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose*." In comparison to Messiah, John felt he was less than a slave, or a disciple who loosened his teacher's sandal.

- b. One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit

"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

- c. One with a winnowing fan

Messiah would cleanse and separate people as surely as the farmer separates wheat from chaff.

3. Imprisonment by Herod - 3:19-20

Luke also includes Herod's response to John's preaching. Herod was furious at being rebuked for adultery with Herodias, his half-brother Philip's wife. Instead of repenting, Herod compounded his sin by shutting John up in prison. Herod was like many today who resist God's message.

II. Jesus' Baptism - Luke 3:21-22

A. Purpose

Luke's account of Jesus' baptism is the shortest. Matthew writes that Jesus was baptized to *fulfill all righteousness*. Jesus did not need to be baptized, but He honored John's ministry. John in turn introduced Him publicly (John 1:31-34). Jesus began His public ministry validating the practice of baptism for believers (Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:5; Hebrews 6:2).

B. Prayer

Only Luke reports that Jesus was praying during His baptism. For what did He pray? Did He pray that John would recognize Him and announce Him? Was He seeking His Father's blessing? Was He dedicating Himself to God? Perhaps all three are true. His entrance to public ministry was an occasion to be shared with God, His Father. Do you sanctify special occasions in your life with prayer, sharing them with God?

C. Trinity

As Jesus prayed, the Trinity was manifested. *The heaven opened. The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased."* The people thought it thundered, but by these visible and audible signs John recognized this last baptismal candidate as the promised Messiah. Do you recognize Him as the Son of God?

The Son was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended, and the Father spoke. The Father thundered a similar

approval three years later at His Son's transfiguration when His ministry drew to a close (Luke 9:35). Both occasions are recorded by the synoptic writers.

III. Jesus' Genealogy - Luke 3:23-38

A. Two Genealogies - Matthew 1:1-18 and Luke 3:23-38

1. Purpose

Matthew and Luke both give the lineage of Jesus Christ. Matthew's purpose was to verify His royal descent and His right to the title of Messiah. Therefore, Matthew traced Jesus' lineage back to David and Abraham, establishing Him as a Son of the Davidic covenant and a Jew.

Luke's purpose was to link Jesus to all people, so he traced His lineage beyond Abraham to Adam and to God. In this, where would you put evolution? There is no place for it. In fact, it shows, not the ascent of man from lower forms, but man's descent from a higher creation. It is an incredible document. Anyone can claim it, for we all have a common ancestry from Noah back to God.

2. Similarities

Both genealogies are the lineage of Jesus Christ. They are identical past David. They demonstrate how carefully genealogies were preserved until A.D. 70 when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans. All records were lost at that time.

3. Differences

The two genealogies work from opposite directions. Matthew begins with Abraham and continues forward to Jesus. Luke begins with Jesus and continues back to God. Both go through Joseph while maintaining the virgin birth. Matthew traces David's royal line through Solomon to Joseph (Matthew 1:6). Through him, Jesus was the legal heir of David. Genealogies almost always mentioned only men even though we all have two genealogies, paternal and maternal.

A Jew is Jewish through his mother even today. Jesus' bloodline came through Mary. Many commentators say that Luke gives Mary's genealogy, tracing David's line through Nathan, not Solomon (Luke 3:31). It cannot be Joseph's line, so it must be Mary's. Joseph was not the actual son of Heli but the son-in-law. Matthew 1:16 states that Joseph was the son of Jacob. Through Mary, Jesus was the physical seed and heir promised to David by God (1 Chronicles 17:11).

B. Son of Man

The genealogies prove that Jesus is not an ethereal apparition nor a pseudo-human as some heresies allege. He is the true Son of God and the true Son of Man. The gospels present His deity and His humanity, perfectly fused in hypostatic union. We have a Man in heaven today and we have a God who became like us, *in all points tempted as we are yet without sin* (Hebrews 4:15).

Applications

1. Repentance: Have you ever repented of your sin? What sin should you repent of today and what fruit of repentance can you offer God? Do you have anything against anyone? Does anyone have anything against you? Will you ask their forgiveness and will you extend forgiveness to others?
2. Baptism: Have you been baptized? If not, why not? Will you consider following Jesus' example?
3. Consecration: Is your service to God consecrated to Him, or do you serve to please someone else or yourself? What evidence of the indwelling Holy Spirit is seen in your Christian activity? Do at least a few other people endorse your work for God?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. How do you think you might have responded to John the Baptist?
2. Why was Jesus baptized by John?
3. What interested you about the genealogies of our Lord?

DAY TWO: Read Luke 4:1-13.

4. After His baptism where did Jesus go and why? Give verse.
5. From Mark 1:12-13, list all the characters involved in Christ's temptation.
6. How did Jesus feel physically while He was being tempted?
7. What three temptations were presented to Jesus? Give verses.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
8. Match the three items in 1 John 2:16 to a., b., and c. above.

DAY THREE: Read Matthew 4:1-11.

9. a. Do you believe Satan is real? Give reasons.
 - b. How did Jesus answer Satan and resist temptations?
 - c. From references in your Bible, can you find the Old Testament passages Jesus quoted?

10. a. Comparing Matthew 4:11 and Luke 4:13, was the devil totally defeated and did he leave Jesus for good? Explain your answer.
- b. According to Hebrews 2:14, how did Jesus defeat the devil?
- c. According to James 4:7, how can we defeat the devil?

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 4:14 and John 1:35-4:30.

11. a. Where did Jesus go after His temptation (Luke 4:14)?
- b. Where did He perform His first miracle (John 2:1-12)?
12. Name four of Jesus' first followers (John 1:35-50).
13. What two things did Jesus do while in Jerusalem for Passover?
- a. John 2:13-16
- b. John 3:1-21
14. a. Using John 3:22-24 and 4:1-4, why might Jesus have left Judea?
- b. Where did He go on His way back to Galilee?
- c. What happened there (John 4:5-30)?

DAY FIVE: Read Luke 4:15-30.

14. a. According to Mark 1:14, what happened to John?
- b. Returning to Galilee, what did Jesus preach (Mark 1:14-15)?
15. a. Why was Nazareth a special place for Jesus to preach?
- b. What was a habit for Jesus (Luke 4:16)?

c. What passage did He read? Briefly, what did it say?

16. a. From 4:21-23, what was the first reaction of those who were listening to Jesus?

b. What two examples did Jesus give in His sermon (4:23-27)?

c. What do you think was His point (4:24)?

d. What was the final reaction of those who heard His sermon?

DAY SIX: Read Luke 4:31-43.

17. a. Where did Jesus preach next?

b. What was the reaction of the people there?

18. a. What disturbance occurred in the synagogue?

b. How did Jesus handle it?

19. a. Whose mother-in-law did Jesus heal? What was her ailment?

b. What did she do when healed? Give verse.

20. a. What did Jesus do in the evening after a busy day (Luke 4:40- 41; Mark 1:32-34)?

b. What did Jesus do the next morning (Mark 1:35)?

21. Did Jesus do what the crowd wanted? Why or why not?