

Luke 3:1-22
John the Baptist Prepares the Way

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.³ He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁴ As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the desert,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.

⁶ And all mankind will see God’s salvation.”

⁷ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ “What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

¹¹ John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.”

¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

¹³ “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

¹⁴ Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. ¹⁶ John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them.

¹⁹ But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

²¹ When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Luke 3

1. Under Jewish law, there was only one high priest appointed from Aaron's line. Why does Luke mention two high priests in Verse 3:2?
2. What was the basic message of John the Baptist? (Luke 3:3) Exactly what is repentance? What are its two sides?
3. (Review) Who was the book of Luke written to? Is this echoed by Isaiah? (Isa 40:3-5, Luke 3:6).
4. How sensitive was John to the crowds that came to hear him? (Luke 3:7-8) Why was John harsh with them? How would you feel if your pastor or a teacher called you a vicious snake?
5. What attitude did John warn the people NOT to have? (Luke 3:8-9, James 2:14)
6. John's message in Verses 11-14 had at least three practical examples of how we should conduct our lives. What are they?
7. John probably answered questions from many people, but Luke singled out his replies aimed to rich people (3:11), tax collectors (12-13), and soldiers (14). Why these?
8. Why might some people think that John was the Christ? (3:15) How did John describe Jesus? (3:16-17) Who are the "wheat" and the "chaff" in Verse 3:17?
9. If baptism was a sign of repentance from sin, why did Jesus ask to be baptized? (3:21)
10. This is one of the few places in scripture where all three members of the Trinity are mentioned—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is also just one of two occasions where the Father is heard to say, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." When was the other occasion? (Matt 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22, Matt 17:5, 2 Peter 1:17)
11. The genealogy of Jesus is listed in Luke 3:23-37 and Matthew 1:1-17. There are several differences. Luke traces the genealogy back to God while Matthew traces it back to Abraham. Why? Luke has 15 additional people coming after Abraham. Why? The next to last person in Luke's listing is Heli, Mary's father. Why?