

Luke Chapter 3

V: 1 Luke gives several references or time stamps for this portion of the story.

- The first one being 15th year of Caesar Tiberius, who began his reign in 14 AD, so 15th year of his reign puts the present time at 29 A.D.
- In the first two verses 8 different important people are named.
- **Caesar Tiberius:** the 2nd of the Caesars, reigned from 14 AD - 37, succeeding his step father Caesar Augustus.
- **Pontius Pilot** was governor of Judea, from 25-37 AD.
- Herod the Great died in 4 BC and four of his sons split the kingdom, tetrarch means “ruler of a fourth part”. His sons were **Herod Antipas**, **Herod Philip**, **Herod Lysanias**, and **Herod Archelaus**.
- Herod Archelaus was so corrupt and evil that the Jews petitioned Caesar to have him removed, which Caesar did and replaced him with Pontius Pilot who ruled his fourth part.
- **Herod Antipas** being tetrarch of the area around Galilee, from 4 BC to 33 AD.
- **Philip** was tetrarch of Syria and the upper Galilee area. He built Caesarea Philippi in honor of Caesar and himself. He ruled his fourth part from 4 BC to 33 AD.
- **Lysanias** was ruler of the area of Abilene, a Small mountainous region located about eighteen miles northwest of Damascus in the Anti-Lebanon mountain range. Its capital was Abila. In AD 37 Abilene came under the administrative control of Herod Agrippa I. Later it was part of the kingdom of his son, Agrippa II.

V: 2 **Annas** and **Caiaphas** being the high priests. Annas was the High Priest from 7-15 AD. Then his 4 sons, then his son in law Caiaphas.

- Annas was the high priest that was acknowledged by the Jews, the power behind the scenes – whereas his sons and son in law were more the figureheads appointed by the Romans – which is why they are both mentioned.
- The Word of God came unto / to - “upon” / “**epi**” **John the Baptist**.
- Re: baptism of the Holy Spirit: para – ene – epi. Upon – in the sense of being overwhelmed, or overflowed.

Like the prophets of old:

Jeremiah 2:1 “Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,”

1 Corinthians 9:16 “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”

- Zacharias & Elizabeth having been very old when John was born are more than likely passed on to the Lord. John being the son of a priest would have begun his priestly duties at the age of 30, just ahead of Jesus. He has instead been serving the Lord in the desert.



- All of this takes place around 28-29 AD.

V: 3 I was surprised to learn as a new Christian that “baptism” was a Jewish rite that Christians later emulated. When a person converted / proselytized to Judaism they were baptized, putting to death the old life, symbolically being raised to new life as a Jew.

Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I will send my messenger (angel), and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts.”

- The message: repentance.
- An oft neglected message today. Repentance means forsaking our sins, turning away from them and walking rightly before God.

Proverbs 8:13 “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil:...”

Romans 12:9 “Let love be without hypocrisy. (our love for God) Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

V: 4-6 Luke is quoting from **Isaiah 40:3-5** acknowledging that this is a fulfillment of prophecy.

- John the Baptist is come to prepare the way:

Amos 4:12 “Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”

“All flesh shall see the salvation of God:

Isaiah 52:10 “The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

- This doesn't mean that the whole world is going to be saved. It means that one way or another, every soul will behold LORD Jesus, the Salvation of God!

Philippians 2:9-11 “⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Great white throne judgment:

Revelation 20:11-12 “¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”

One way or another:

“... *all flesh shall see the Salvation of God.*”

- The question, the issue is will you see Him as your Lord and friend, or will you see Him as your enemy?

V: 7-8 John the Baptist did not speak an easy message, certainly not a seeker friendly message – he got straight to the point.

- Who exactly is John speaking to?

Describing the same situation:

Matthew 3:7-9 “⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, ⁹and do not think to say to yourselves, “we have Abraham as our father.” For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”

- I believe that John is speaking to the religious establishment, to the Pharisees - and the scribes because they were very smug, they really weren't there to repent of their sins, they were there to see what all the commotion was about and to challenge John - “who are you / who do you think you are?” “Are you the Christ?”
- Even though he could call the people or any of us out as sinners, snakes & vipers and so on, it doesn't seem likely that he would call those out like that when they were already coming to him confessing their sins, already coming humbly in repentance - it seems much more likely that he's rebuking the un-repentant in the crowd which would include the Pharisees and the scribes.

John 6:37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”

- He follows up in the next verse with their foolish and in-effective rationalization.
- Show forth fruit of repentance, proof of repentance – is a changed life.

1 John 3:18 “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” (Meaning peace with God.)

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

V: 8b “... *do not begin to say to your selves...*” (Don’t even go there!)

“*We have Abraham*” – essentially claiming that they were saved just because they were Jews. Similar to those who say that they are Christians just because they are Americans.

Matthew 8:11-12 “¹¹And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

2 Chronicles 7:14 “If my people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

- Remembering how God made man - from the dust of the earth (**Genesis 2:7**) He could just as easily do it again using stones.

V: 9 The ax is already at the foot of the old fruitless tree of religion, it’s about to be cast down with all it’s tradition and religiosity.

Mark 7:6-9 “⁶... well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁷And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. ⁸For laying aside the commandments of God, you hold the tradition of men - the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” ⁹He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.””

Fruitless trees are destroyed:

John 15:5-6 “⁵I am the vine, you are the branches: he that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

V: 10 Conviction! The Holy Spirit was already at work. The first step.

Jesus describing the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

John 16:8 “And when He ^(Holy Spirit) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

Peter preaching at Pentecost:

Acts 2:37 “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The Apostle Paul was later asked the same question by the Philippian jailer.

Acts 16:30-31 “³⁰... sirs, what must I do to be saved? ³¹And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house.”

“*What shall we do?*”

Again at Pentecost:

Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said to them, repent,...”

V: 11-14 What shall we do? People, publicans, soldiers.

- John is describing a change in the way they live their lives:

Ephesians 4:28 “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”

1 John 3:18 “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

James 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

- Live life differently, our actions define our faith.

James 2:17-18 “¹⁷Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, you have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

Micah 6:8 “He has shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”

- Give, be honest and don't cheat, do no violence, don't falsely accuse, be content with what you have.

Proverbs 28:13 “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”

- Confess your sins, admit you were wrong, turn away from them, repent, and walk in communion and fellowship with God.

V: 15 “*Expectation*” – they were excited, the 400 years of silence has been broken, a prophet of God is speaking the Word of God to the people. The message is still the same though. “Straighten up and fly right.”

- Their “expectation” is that the Messiah is coming soon, and they want to be ready to meet Him.
- This means that John was effective, they were in expectation, he was preparing the way. They didn't know the time, but they were aware of the season.
- Like Simeon and Anna from chapter 2 who had been waiting and watching for the consolation of Israel, the arrival of the Messiah, there were others who were waiting and watching as well.
- One of the reasons they questioned whether John was the Christ or not is because John was living a Godly life according to God's Word.

V: 16 John articulates very clearly that he is not the One they are looking for, he is not the Christ.

John 1:19-23 “¹⁹Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you? ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹And they asked him, what then? Are you Elijah? He said, I am not. Are you the Prophet? And he answered, no. ²²Then they said to him, who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself? ²³He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the LORD, as the prophet Isaiah said.”

- In a sense John says that the One you're looking for is way above me, I'm not worthy to even wash his feet.

- Like Isaiah before him, John had a right perspective on who he was in relation to Jesus.

Isaiah 6:5 “So I said, “woe is me,” for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Jesus ... “will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the overflowing of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life, enabling them to do in the Spirit that which is not possible in the flesh.

Acts 2:2-4 “²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, like fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

“... and with fire.”

- These are two distinct things same things and I believe that Jesus is going to bring both.
- Fire represents judgment which also purifies - refiners fire:

Malachi 3:2-3 “²But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiners fire and like a launderer’s soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

1 Corinthians 3:13 “Each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.”

- Fire is also used in judgment, the fiery judgement of sin:

2 Thessalonians 1:8 “⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Revelation Ch. 20 Describes the ultimate judgment in the lake of fire.

V: 17 The time is however at hand; “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” judgment is about to begin in the threshing floor of God.

Psalm 1 “¹Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ²But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. ³And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ⁴The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. ⁵Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

V: 18 “Exhortation”? And many other things did he preach in his exhortation. His exhortation is to holiness, to holy living, living according to God’s Word.

1 Peter 1:15-16 “¹⁵But as He who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.””

- A word of warning:

V: 19-20 This is a parenthetical break describing that John’s exhortation seemed to include a rebuke to Herod the tetrarch who was living in adultery with his brother’s wife, which landed him in prison. John called him out.

Matthew 14:3-4 “³For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. ⁴Because John had said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.””

V: 21 Luke is the only Gospel writer that records that Jesus was praying, and that the heaven opened as He came out of the water

- Cause and effect: Not hearing from God, no sense of his will? Prayer works.
- There are 7 different words for “prayer” in Greek. The word used here for prayer encompasses and includes all of them.

“*Prayed:*” (G-4336). “proseuchomai”, pros-yoo'-khom-ahee; to pray to God, to supplicate, worship:--pray earnestly, for, make prayer.

V: 22 The Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove. There is no other description in the Bible of the Holy Spirit that uses this same description “as a dove”. The Talmud (Jewish commentary on the Pentateuch) describes the Spirit of God, which moved upon the face of the Earth, as a dove.

- At the mount of transfiguration and just after the triumphant entry there were similar expressions of affirmation from God the Father to Jesus.

Matthew 17:5 “While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

John 12:28 “Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.’”



- We see a depiction of the Trinity, Jesus praying and getting baptized, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, and the Father is speaking.

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.”

V: 23 If you’ve ever wondered how we know that Jesus started His earthly ministry at 30 years of age, here you have it.

“*As was supposed*” = “according to the Law” or legally.

- Son of Heli, by marriage. Son in law, this is Mary’s genealogy. Joseph’s genealogy is contained in **Matthew 1:1-16**.

V: 24-38

- This is Mary’s genealogy, which is also traced back to the throne of David. Nathan was also David’s son, Solomon’s older brother. Solomon’s son Jeconiah was cursed by God because of his wickedness, part of that curse was that none of his descendants would sit on the throne of David. **Jeremiah 22:24, 30**.

- Matthew’s description of Joseph’s genealogy goes to Abraham, Matthew was writing to the Jews. Being a descendant of Abraham was important to them.

- Luke is writing to the Greeks presenting Jesus as the ultimate man, and his description of Mary’s genealogy goes past Abraham all the way to Adam. Adam is the father of all men, not just the Jews this now includes the Greeks along with everybody else.

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Read ahead for next week.