

I. Chapter 3

(Luke 3:1-9) 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.'"

A. This has already been said in the speeches but Luke repeats it for those who skip the speeches—it's important.

B. John had quite a following when Luke was written. It was important for his disciples to see that he was pointing to Jesus and was not himself the Messiah.

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 ax 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."

C. John is delightfully direct. Whether you've repented depends not on who your ancestors are but how you act today.

D. The Jewish culture of the day was to be self-satisfied, and to relish in their status as the chosen people. John says God judges your heart, so get your heart right.

(Luke 3:10-14) "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."

E. A brief summary of John's ethical teaching.

1. Share with others, especially those in need

2. Do not abuse the power of government
3. Don't take bribes

F. God gives us power and wealth to be used for his glory. Using it for ourselves is a deadly mistake.

G. This seems to call into the question the idea Lipscomb taught that it's wrong to work for the government. John didn't tell the government employees to quit.

H. It also raises a question re pacificism. John didn't tell the soldiers to leave the military.

(Luke 3:15-18) 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.

I. "Holy Spirit and with fire" is not a reference to Pentecost, as he was speaking to everyone there, not just the 12 (who weren't necessarily even present). Rather, you get one or the other. Baptism with fire is damnation—as he plainly states in v 17—the "fire" is the fire that burns the chaff. It's hellfire. It's not a mixed metaphor. John was capable of expressing himself quite clearly.

J. John did say "and" but fire is plainly hellfire—he says so in the same sentence! It's not the tongues of "fire" on Pentecost as the context plainly contradicts this.

K. Rather, I envision John looking the penitent crowd in the eyes and saying "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit ..." and then turning to the Pharisees who refused baptism and saying "and with fire! His winnowing fork ..." etc.

L. Therefore, all Christians receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This normally occurs when we receive water baptism. (Eph 4 says there's only one baptism). The two notable exceptions are the apostles on Pentecost and Cornelius and his household (Luke wrote Acts, too!), and in both cases Acts says they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, that is, baptized by the Holy Spirit rather than water.

(Luke 3:19-20) 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.

M. John spoke truth to power and paid the price—as did Jesus much later. Neither one acted prudently and practically. They just told the truth.

N. We tend to think that “people aren’t ready for the truth” or whatever. We look for excuses to avoid confrontation with the world and the worldly. Now confrontation is not a good thing. It’s just that silence can be worse. We don’t look for confrontation but neither do we sit quietly by while the world goes to hell. However, where other options are available, it’s fine and perhaps wise to go another path. But when the powers have to be confronted to change, we confront them.

(Luke 3:21-22) When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 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.”

O. This is a typology of our baptism. Jesus did not need to receive the Holy Spirit, to become God’s son, to become well pleasing. But WE do. And this is precisely the nature of our own baptism.

P. Before John, the baptisms administered by the Jews were self-administered. You walked down the stairs into a pool and back up out of the water to become ritually clean. However, John changed the practice. The converts had to come to John for baptism? Why??

1. This makes baptism an initiation into a community. You can’t baptize yourself because you are joining a community of disciples.
2. Just so, we have to confess so the community know we have faith and can be accepted.
3. Christianity is not only about me and God but also me and the community of faith. Luke will tell us more.

II. The genealogy of Jesus

(Luke 3:23-38) Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. **He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph**, the son of Heli, *24* the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, *25* the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, *26* the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, *27* the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, *28* the son of Melki, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, *29* the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, *30* the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, *31* the son of Melea, the son of Menna,

the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, ³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, **the son of Adam, the son of God.**

A. This genealogy differs from Matthew's. Different explanations are offered. It's likely that Matthew gives the blood genealogy, that is, the genealogy of Mary, while Luke gives the genealogy of Joseph, the legal genealogy—or the other way around. Other explanations are possible. The genealogy was easily researched in Jerusalem, which had kept records going back for centuries.

B. The point of the reference to Adam is to emphasize his humanity—in common with all mankind.