

The Good News About Jesus as Luke Wrote It

Chapter 3

HoneyBee base version for oral translation

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Background

- “Tiberius Caesar was the second Roman emperor, who ruled from AD 14 to 37.” Wikipedia
- Pontius Pilatus was the 5th Roman governor (prefect) of Judea between AD 26 and 36.
- “Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great ... was tetrarch (governor) of Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.” Ibid.
- Lysanias began ruling over Abilene district sometime between AD 40 and 36.
- “Annas, or Ananus, had been made high priest by Quirinus, the Governor of Syria, who filled the office A.D. 7-15... He was the father-in-law of Joseph Caiaphas [who] was appointed high priest in A.D. 17.” www.biblehub.com
- “In Greek society, men often entered public service at the age of thirty; Levites’ service in the temple also began at thirty (cf. Num 4:3-47 et passim).” IVPbbc

History

- John and Jesus were conceived and born less than a year apart. They were cousin-brothers.
- King Herod Antipas had divorced his wife and married his half-brother’s divorced wife, Herodias.
- Jesus was a legal son of Joseph, though not his biological son.
- Judea had been under Roman dominion since Pompey sacked Jerusalem in AD 63, establishing Syria a Roman province, which included Judea.

Themes

- “Avoid God’s wrath which will come!”
- “Repent so God will forgive your sins.”
- “As it is written in the book of the words of the prophet.”
- “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

¹ Licensed for use under Creative Commons. Text in *italics* is implied from historical or cultural context. Superscripted ^(pl) means plural, ^(sg) singular, ^(inc) inclusive, ^(exc) exclusive pronoun.

John's ministry

¹⁻² This report is about John, the priest Zechariah's son. This happened while these men ruled the Jews' land: King Tiberius had been ruling the Roman Empire² for 15 years. Pontius Pilate was Governor ruling over the Judea district. Herod Antipas was Governor ruling over the Galilee district. Herod's brother Philip was Governor ruling over the Iturea and Trachonitis districts. Lysanius was Governor ruling over the Abilene district. Annas and Caiaphas were the Jewish Chief priests *ruling over the temple* in Jerusalem. At this time, John was living in the wilderness near Jordan River. While he was there God gave a message to him.

³ So John started traveling along the Jordan River, telling people *God's message*, "If you repent, by *admitting the evil things that you have done, and that you are turning from doing those sinful things*, then I will baptize you,³ and God will forgive you those bad things!"⁴ *By doing so*, John was fulfilling these words which the prophet Isaiah had spoken long, long ago:

"In a wilderness, people will hear someone shouting:

'Make yourselves ready to receive/welcome the Lord Yahweh when he comes.

⁵ Be like workers who repair/prepare a road for a king to travel on, removing bumps, filling holes straightening the way and making the surface smooth.

⁶ Then people everywhere will see God save his people.'"

⁷ People began coming in large groups *from towns and cities*, asking John to baptize them. He always said to them, "You people are as evil as poisonous snakes. I warn you that you must repent/change your life, so that God will not punish you when he comes!"⁸ After you repent, you must live and behave in ways that God approves. So, do not think that God will approve/save you because you are Abraham's descendants. God can take stones *from this river* and change/cause them to become Abraham's descendants.⁹ God is already punishing⁴ people who do not repent/change their life, in the same way that you chop down a tree that no longer bears fruit, by cutting its roots with an ax."

¹⁰ Everywhere John went, people were asking him, "So, what must we do, *to please God?*"⁵ ¹¹ And he was replying to them, "If you have two coats/tunics/shirts, then you must give/donate one coat/tunic/shirt to someone who has no coat/tunic/shirt. If you have more food that you need to eat, then give some food to someone who has no food."

¹² When some tax collectors came to ask John to baptize them, they asked him, "Teacher, what must we(exc) do to please God?"¹³ John replied to them, "Do not take from people more money than the amount that the government tells you to take!"¹⁴ When some military soldiers asked John, "We soldiers, what must we do *to please God?*" John replied to them, "Do not demand money/bribes from people, and do not threaten to harm them. Instead, be content with your wages/pay."

¹⁵ *In those days*, many people were expecting *a great king called Messiah to come save them from their enemies*. Many people were thinking/asking, "Is John the Messiah?"¹⁶ When they asked him,

² OR at Rome city over many lands. OR the Kingdom belonging to Rome.

³ OR wash you *with water in the (Jordan) river*.

⁴ The present-tense verbs imply that national troubles (which the Jews were experiencing at the time) are part of on-going divine judgment.

⁵ OR *to show that we have repented?*

John answered to everyone, “*No, I am not the Messiah. The Messiah will come soon, and he is much greater/more important than I am! I am not important enough to remove his sandals/shoes from his feet, like a slave does for his master!* And I only baptize people with water, but the Messiah will baptize with God’s Holy Spirit you who repent/change your behavior! And he will baptize with fire you who do not repent, *like a man⁶ who burns useless chaff!*”⁷

¹⁷ *The Messiah will separate righteous people who have repented, from unrighteous people who have not repented.* He will be like a man who comes to a threshing floor⁸ with a pitchfork⁹ in his hand. After he separates wheat/grains from chaff,¹⁰ he stores the wheat/grains in his granary/barn, but he burns the chaff with fire. ¹⁸ John kept telling people many good things that they could¹¹ do to please God, while proclaiming¹² the good message/news that Messiah will/would come soon.

¹⁹ *One day,* John rebuked the district ruler, named Herod Antipas, who had married his brother’s wife, named Herodias, while his brother was still alive, *which is against God’s law.* John also rebuked him for many other evil things that he had done. ²⁰ So Herod ordered his soldiers to put John in a prison. That was another evil thing that Herod did.

John baptizes Jesus and God speaks from the sky

²¹ *Another day,*¹³ before Herod put John in prison, while John was baptizing many people, he also baptized Jesus. Then, while Jesus was praying to God, the sky opened up.¹⁴ ²² God’s Holy Spirit, looking like a dove,¹⁵ came down from the sky and stopped on Jesus. And God spoke to Jesus from heaven with a voice, saying, “You (sg) are my Son/Child, whom I love dearly. I am very pleased with you(sg)!¹⁶”

⁶ OR a farmer.

⁷ OR *useless dried grass stems (left after harvesting the grain).* OR *useless dried grain hulls/skins.*

⁸ OR a place for cleaning grain.

⁹ OR a tool [used for throwing grain in the air to clean it or to cause the chaff to separate from it].

¹⁰ OR the useless inedible stem and hull particles. OR the grain trash.

¹¹ OR can. OR must.

¹² OR telling to them.

¹³ OR *One day, when Jesus was 30 years old.* According to Luke 3:23.

¹⁴ OR clouds in the sky cleared away like a door/window opening. OR he and John saw a vision from God. (In Ezek 1:1, ‘open sky’ = see/hear a heavenly vision/message.)

¹⁵ OR pigeon. OR bird.

¹⁶ OR You(sg) please me very much.

Jesus' lineage via Joseph

²³ When Jesus began his own *work*¹⁷ for God, he was about 30 years old. People accepted that he was Joseph's son.¹⁸ Joseph was Heli's son,¹⁹ ²⁴ Matthat's son,²⁰ Levi's son, Melchi's son, Jannai's son, Joseph's son, ²⁵ Mattathias's son, Amos's son, Nahum's son, Esli's son, Naggai's son, ²⁶ Maath's son, Mattathias's son, Semein's son, Josech's son, Joda's son, ²⁷ Joanan's son, Rhesa's son, Zerubbabel's son, Shealtiel's son, Neri's son, ²⁸ Melchi's son, Addi's son, Cosam's son, Elmadam's son, Er's son, ²⁹ Joshua's son, Eliezer's son, Jorim's son, Matthat's son, Levi's son, ³⁰ Simeon's son, Judah's son, Joseph's son, Jonam's son, Eliakim's son, ³¹ Melea's son, Menna's son, Mattatha's son, Nathan's son, David's son, ³² Jesse's son, Obed's son, Boaz's son, Sala's son, Nahshon's son, ³³ Amminadab's son, Admin's son, Arni's son, Hezron's son, Perez's son, Judah's son, ³⁴ Jacob's son, Isaac's son, Abraham's son, Terah's son, Nahor's son, ³⁵ Serug's son, Reu's son, Peleg's son, Eber's son, Shelah's son, ³⁶ Cainan's son, Arphaxad's son, Shem's son, Noah's son, Lamech's son, ³⁷ Methuselah's son, Enoch's son, Jared's son, Mahalaleel's son, Cainan's son, ³⁸ Enos's son, Seth's son, Adam's son, God' son.

¹⁷ (The empathic pronoun *autos* seems to contrast Jesus' work with that of John's. He was neither a disciple of John, nor continuing John's work. Unless this is Luke's stylistic way of shifting the subject from John to Jesus.)

¹⁸ OR He was Joseph's legal (adopted) son. OR People assumed/supposed that he was Joseph's son. OR People thought that he was Joseph's son. (Pres pass participle of *nomizo*, from *nomos*, law.)

¹⁹ OR Jesus was *really* Heli's descendant (*Mary's father*). (Grammatically, 'Jesus ... being a son' goes most naturally with '... of Heli', for all the names have a genitive definite article except Joseph, an indeclinable genitive proper noun. Was this Luke's subtle way of signaling that Jesus' natural male descent came through Heli? as Heli Mary's father?)

²⁰ OR who was Matthat's son, who was Levi's son, who was Melchi's son [and so on...] Translate this list of ancestors in the common way that you do in your culture.