

Luke 3:1-20

Celebrate the gifts the Bulgarian church with pictures.

Who is Jesus? This is the question we are asking as we walk our way through the gospel of Luke.

1. We have already seen that Luke's account of the life of Jesus is reliable
  - a. He researched the accounts that were recorded
  - b. He interviewed numerous eyewitnesses
  - c. He put it all together into a 2 volume account of Jesus (Luke's Gospel) and His church (The book of Acts)
2. We learned that the 400 years of silence was broken by God with
  - a. 2 Angelic visits
  - b. 2 miraculous events
  - c. 2 promised births
3. We learned that Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and favor with man.
4. Now today, we see the scene set for His arrival and the launching of His earthy ministry in 3:1-20

***3:1** Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **2** in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. **3** And he came into all the district around the Jordan,*

1. The things we claim as Christians were not done in secret.
  - a. Luke gives specific historical dates and figures as he tells us the story of Jesus.
  - b. Luke 1:5, Luke 2:1-2, Luke 3:1-3
2. It was if you were say Kevin Ivy became pastor of First Baptist in 2017 when Donald Trump was president of the United states, and Bill Haslam was governor or TN, and Lane Curlee was mayor or Tullahoma.
3. Randy Davis was Executive Director of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board and Mark Puckett was Director of Missions for the Duck River Baptist Association.
4. This is reliable, verifiable, factual history!
  - a. Archaeology and history both confirm the accuracy of Luke's account.
  - b. Sir William Ramsay, regarded as one of the greatest archaeologists ever to have lived, concluded after 30 years of study the following: "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy....this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians." "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness."

*3 And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;*

Baptism was not common in OT history leading up to the time of John the Baptist.

1. In fact, the only people who were baptized were Gentiles who decided to become followers of God...so what are these Jews doing?
  - a. Baptism was saying, I am not an insider just because I was born Jewish
  - b. I am outsider because of my sin and I must repent and look to God for salvation just like everyone else!
  - c. These Jews from Jerusalem and Judea were admitting that their Jewishness and their religiosity did not guarantee them a right standing before God.
2. This made John's baptism very offensive.
3. It implied that unless the Jews were willing to repent, they were not really Jews and could not count on the promised blessings God had made to his chosen people.

*4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,*

*“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. 5 ‘EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH; 6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.’” 7 So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

1. Matthew 3:1-2 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
2. Repentance is a change of mind, heart, and action...he is calling for a drastic change so that they can get ready for the coming of the Kingdom of heaven.

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance for judgment and the judge is coming.

1. They, even as Jews, must repent and be sure that they bear fruit in keeping with repentance.
2. John the Baptist makes it clear that true repentance will be accompanied by fruit!

*10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?” 11 And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” 12 And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” 14 Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”*

Jesus makes this clear too.

Luke 13:6-9 *And He began telling this parable: “A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. 7 And he said to the vineyard-keeper, ‘Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?’ 8 And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.’”*

1. A fig tree is planted in a vineyard. Notice.
  - a. This is not a fig tree farm.
  - b. It is a vineyard...vines...not trees.
  - c. This was intentional.
2. A vineyard has vine dressers that work in the vineyard to produce optimum fruit and the fig tree benefited from this care. It had the greatest care.
3. In spite of the intentionality of the vineyard owner...in spite of the care...it bore no fruit. Cut it down!
  - a. Because it is unproductive!
  - b. Because it is counter-productive. It is taking up valuable space!

Vinedresser steps in...wait! Give me one more year. If it doesn't bear next year, then cut it down!

1. THE END. There is no answer given.
2. There is no ending. It leaves us hanging.
3. **Immediate interpretation** is for the people of Israel.

*9 Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

- a. John the Baptist comes warning them that the vinedresser is coming...the one who is mightier than he and his winnowing fork was in his hand.
- b. Would they bear fruit in keeping with repentance?

*15 Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ,*

1. The people were in a state of expectation.
2. Some translations say they were waiting expectantly.

*16 John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” 18 So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.*

1. John put the emphasis on Jesus!

2. It was all about Christ and the gospel.
3. That should be the case for us as well...and we know that with that comes persecution, suffering and the attacks of the evil one.

*19 But when Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the wicked things which Herod had done, 20 Herod also added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.*

#### Matthew 14:3-12

At the heart of this text is v4-6.

*4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. 5 'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH; 6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.'"*

This really summarizes John's message and ministry and Jesus purpose for coming.

#### **1. Preparation**

*4 "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.*

- a. The imagery here in ancient times is of a herald who would come before a king, announcing the king's coming and making sure the road on which the king would travel was smooth and ready.
- b. In essence, the Messiah King is coming on the scene!

#### **2. Devastation**

*5 'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;*

- a. Barriers like the law and circumcision will come down
- b. Barriers like race will come down: Jew or Gentile
- c. Barriers like sacrifices will come down: the veil was torn.

#### **3. Salvation**

*6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.'"*

- a. The way is open for Gentiles to repent and be forgiven.
- b. If Jewishness does not save, then Gentilishness does not necessarily condemn
- c. Salvation is for all!