

God Identified with Man

The Gospel According to Luke, Message #3, Luke 3:21-38

INTRODUCTION

How do you confirm your identity when attempting to accomplish a task where identity confirmation is required? In some instances, picture identification is needed, such as a driver's license, state i.d. card, or passport. In other cases distinguishing facts such as birthdate or social security number may be required. Confirming identity is essential to our lives, especially in this digital age.

After he provided a concise record of John the Baptist's life and ministry, Luke turned his attention back to Jesus through an account that connected Him with the ministry of John. Immediately after that, Luke provided a genealogy for Jesus with unique characteristics compared to the genealogy that Matthew supplied at the beginning of his account of the Gospel. Luke ordered his version of the Gospel to establish Theophilus in the faith firmly and connecting Jesus's baptism with His birth story represented an important identification to Luke.

In connecting the baptism and genealogy of Jesus, Luke identified a perfect Savior with persistent sinners.

We need to know this today. We have a perfect Savior Who came to us and identified with us so that He could save us. We are challenged to see and respond to this identification through Luke's records of Jesus's baptism and birth. His identification with man demonstrates God's love and grace.

Those who follow Christ should never get over the miracle of salvation by grace through faith.

If you still need to become a follower of Christ, trust Jesus for salvation today.

How does Luke identify the perfect Savior with persistent sinners?

He connects them through the baptism and birth stories of Jesus.

1. JESUS IDENTIFIED WITH US THROUGH HIS BAPTISM (VV. 21-22).

BIBLE

“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”

Luke 3:21-22 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/luk.3.21-22.KJV>

EXPLANATION

The previous context sheds light on the baptism of Jesus. Remember John’s message. John called the Jews to repentance and baptism to prepare themselves for the arrival of the Messiah. Jesus did not need to repent because He had no sin to repent of, and He did not need to prepare for the coming of the Messiah because He was the Messiah. As we read earlier in Matthew’s account, John the Baptist initially declined to baptize Jesus.

Why be baptized?

Matthew recorded that Jesus told John they would fulfill righteousness in the act. The Father wanted Jesus to take this step, and Jesus followed through with obedience.

Additionally, this became the beginning of His public ministry. His baptism served as a presentation of Himself to God and the people.

Deeper still, His baptism represented His identification with sinful men that He came to save and His work of redemption to accomplish it.

Looking on, someone may believe that Jesus identified Himself as a sinner by submitting to a baptism that was a baptism of repentance for sins. However, Jesus had no sin to repent of. Instead, He is the spotless Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. God the Father Himself identified His approval of Jesus. Jesus was and is the “beloved Son” in whom the Father was and is “well pleased.”

These statements reveal not only the Father’s approval but something of the identity of Jesus. “Beloved Son” echoes Psalm 2:7, a verse set within the context of a Messianic Psalm that identifies God the Father and the Son. It also reveals the victory that the Father will give to the Son and the response that people should have to Him.

BIBLE

“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way When his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

Psalm 2:12 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/psa.2.12.KJV>

APPLICATION

Friend, your standing with God is tied to and dependent on your belief in the Son. So many think they are good with God, while they dismiss, neglect, or reject the Son. You cannot be good with God apart from the Son.

EXPLANATION

Then, the Father's approval of the Son comes from the Old Testament. Isaiah 42 reveals the suffering servant Who would bring the Gentiles to the banquet.

Through His baptism, Jesus received the recognition of the Father and provided a representation of Himself as the sacrificial Lamb for the world's sins.

2. JESUS IDENTIFIED WITH US THROUGH HIS BIRTH (VV. 23-38).

EXPLANATION

Matthew's and Luke's genealogy differ in many ways, but let me concisely show you two ways and give their reasons.

First, Matthew began at Abraham and worked forward to Jesus. Luke started with Jesus and worked backward through Abraham to Adam and God. Matthew wrote for a Jewish audience and wanted to distinguish Jesus as a genuine Jew. Luke wrote for a Gentile audience and wanted to identify Jesus as a human.

ILLUSTRATION

"A Bible translator to a distant tribe saved the genealogies for last because he thought them the least important part of the gospels. But when he finally finished them last of all, the tribesmen were astounded - they told the translator, 'You mean to tell us that this Jesus was a real person, with real ancestors? We had no idea' (Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary)!"

EXPLANATION

Then, there are many differences in the names. While not taking the time to get into all the particulars and the reasons for my view, I believe Matthew presented Jesus's legal line through Joseph, while Luke presented Jesus's bloodline through Mary. The

difference in names comes because Matthew takes Jesus's line through David's son Solomon, Joseph's ancestor, and Luke takes Jesus's line through David's son Nathan, Mary's ancestor.

Whether you look at Matthew's genealogy or Luke's, there are names that we recognize and names that we don't. Stories connected with some and others without a story that we know.

ILLUSTRATION

Recently, for a class project, I began a family tree or genealogy through a site that helps you discover clues for your ancestors. I could take my family line back on different branches into the late 1400s. In my tree, I found ancestors born in the U.S., Canada, Germany, Prussia, England, Poland, and maybe a few others I have forgotten. Some lived long lives; others lived short lives. Some were born and died in the same place, while others were born and died in very different areas. They all had stories, most of which I do not know.

EXPLANATION

The same is true of this family tree. While we do not know all the stories, something connects them from generation to generation. All of them were sinners.

Consider some of them that we know. Verse 38 speaks of Adam, the first Adam who plunged the world and all his descendants to come into sin. Verse 34 presents people critical to the biblical story - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Did they have their problems? Verse 33 shows Juda, the brother of Joseph involved in selling his brother to slavery and the father of Phares, whom he bore with his daughter-in-law. Verse 32 mentions a man who married a harlot, as well as one who married a woman of Moab. In verse 31, David's son Nathan is the son of Bathsheba, whom David married after sleeping with her and killing her husband...

This is the family tree of Jesus. Whether you look at Matthew's legal line or Luke's physical line, the same reality appears from generation to generation.

From this genealogy, a truth shouts even louder than the sinfulness of the people in it. God's love is seen through His grace. In this family tree, so filled with the demonstrations of man's sinful nature, the grace of God shines through. Jesus came and, with Him, the hope of all humanity. Not just those in the family, for Paul wrote that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). The Savior, born into this family, is not only the Savior of this family but the Savior of all.

Think of the contrast between the stories of His baptism and birth. His baptism story includes the demonstration that God was pleased with Him, while His birth story is filled with people who displeased God. In His baptism story, God's love and grace are wrapped up in a person - the person of Jesus Christ. His birth story demonstrates God's love and grace to people who need Him. Through both His baptism and birth stories, God the Son and God the Father are inextricably linked. He makes up the beginning and the ending. Everything starts with Him, and everything ends with Him. He is the Alpha and Omega, He which was and is to come. He is the Almighty! He came from God divinely, and yet He came from Adam directly.

The first Adam, made a living soul by Almighty God through Jesus, sinned in the Garden, plunging the entire world and his descendants into sin. And, by and because of sin, death came also. That is the heritage that the first Adam passed to all of his descendants. The second Adam, the divine and direct descendent Jesus, went to a world broken by sin and cursed to death to give His life that He might give life. The first Adam turned life into death; the second Adam turned death into life (see 1 Cor. 15:45).

BIBLE

“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 5:18-21 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/rom.5.18-21.KJV>

APPLICATION

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? He came, lived the life we could not, died the death that each of us deserves to die, and rose again by His power from the grave. Every person is a sinner condemned by and in their sin before God, Who is holy and righteous. His justice demands that sin be punished; His grace poured the punishment on His own Son. Now, He invites you to receive salvation through faith in His Son. Believe in Him today.

Followers of Christ, always remember the miracle of salvation by grace through faith. We could never have any hope apart from Jesus. Let your life show that you are a follower of Jesus. Identify with Him in baptism, physically and spiritually.

Physical baptism is not necessary for salvation or equivalent to salvation. It is a symbol of your death with and life in Christ. If you have trusted Christ but not since then followed Him in believer's baptism by immersion, let's talk about it.

Spiritual baptism spoken of by Paul in Romans 6 speaks of the life-transforming power of the Gospel. This baptism takes place at the moment you trust Jesus. Jesus gave you new life. Show it to the world.

CONCLUSION

Jesus identified with us through His baptism and birth stories.

Through these, we see that we have a perfect Savior Who came to us and identified with us so that He could save us.

In these, God's love and grace are revealed. He spared nothing, not even His loved Son, to save us.