

Luke 3:15-18 Proclaiming Good News: Extolling Jesus Christ

The good news of salvation extols Jesus Christ as the Divine King who comes with blessing and judgment.

1) We can extol Jesus as Christ the Divine King (3:15-16a).

- a) “the Christ”—the anointed Son of David (Luke 20:41-44)
- b) “He is coming! *The One* mightier than I!” (Mal. 3:1; Psalm 118:26; cf. Luke 19:38)—John understood his role as the last prophet to prepare the people for the Final King
- c) “the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie”—in other words, there is no comparison between John and the actual Christ
- d) “Jesus is Lord” was the most basic confession of the early Church. It was a confession that challenged human autonomy at every level.
- e) Are you extolling the authority of Jesus as God by your words and works?

2) We can extol Jesus as the One who comes with God’s blessing (3:16).

- a) “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”
- b) Spirit Baptism—Ezekiel 36:25-27—Sprinkling clean water and putting His Spirit in His people are both indicative of God’s giving them a new heart in which He will “cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules.”
- c) Spirit and Fire—The Spirit is manifest in the Old Testament in the pillar of fire (Isa. 63:11-14; Hagg. 2:5; Neh. 9:19-20); Fire imagery in the OT is both salvific and punitive; in verse 16 the emphasis is on salvation.
 - i) **The blessing of demonstrable presence**—The Spirit, as the pillar of fire by night, was a visible witness to God’s presence with His people in the wilderness. The Spirit is the continuing presence of Christ among us (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).
 - ii) **The blessing of purifying presence**—The Spirit-fire purged Israel of false worship, idolatry, and rebellion (Exod. 32:10; Lev. 10:1-3; Num. 11:1-3; 12:10). The Spirit continues to purify us from the filth of sin by applying to us the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 5:1-11; Titus 2:14; 3:5-6).
 - iii) **The blessing of distinguishing presence**—The Spirit, manifest in the glory cloud and fire, was the distinguishing mark of God’s people (Exod. 33:14-16). The Spirit continues to mark us out as belonging to Christ (Acts 11:15-17; Rom. 8:9)
- d) Are you extolling Jesus as the only one who can provide real forgiveness and cleansing from sin? Are you living a life of purity that speaks of the presence of the Holy God in your life?

3) We can extol Jesus as the Judge before whom the whole world must stand (3:17-18).

- a) “His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor”
 - i) “to gather the wheat into His barn”—salvation of the elect
 - ii) “but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire”—judgment on the wicked
- b) Malachi 4:1-6
- c) “So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.”
 - i) John the Baptist introduced the good news. The “many other exhortations” would include statements such as, “Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). We have the complete story, of which John was an early part. In extolling Jesus Christ we must preach all that John has given us, as well as the cross, the resurrection, the ascension and present session of Christ, and the return of the King.
 - ii) Certain aspects of the work of Christ receive more attention in Scripture than others, the cross and resurrection, for example. But we must know and apply the whole Person and work of Christ, or we will have an imbalanced faith and obedience.
 - iii) “Exhortations” summarizes various arguments, warnings, encouragements and promises, that John used to induce people to repentance and faith. John knew that the conversion of sinners was the Spirit’s work, but this did not keep him from his duty of “preparing the way for the Lord.”
- d) Will you warn people that they must face Jesus one day as their judge? Will you tell them that they can also have Him as their advocate?

The good news of salvation extols Jesus Christ as the Divine King who comes with blessing and judgment. What are you doing so that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God”?