

FBC POWELL, 3-5-17 PM NOTES
"John, Jesus, and Genealogy"
Luke 3:18-38
8 in Series, "The Gospel According to Luke"

I. John's Persecution (vv. 18-20)

Matthew 14:7-10 "But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Having been prompted by her mother, she said, 'Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.' Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison."

"John was fruitful in his ministry to prepare the hearts of the people and then to present their Messiah to them. He clearly stated that Jesus was 'the Lord' (Luke 3:4) and the Son of God (John 1:34). Because John rebuked Herod Antipas for his adulterous marriage to Herodias, he was imprisoned by the king and finally beheaded. However, he had faithfully finished his God-given assignment and prepared the people to meet the Messiah, the Son of God."
—Warren Weirsbe

II. Jesus' Baptism (vv. 21-22)

Luke 3:3 "...a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

Matthew 3:13-14 "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?'"

2 Corinthians 5:21 "He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

"God treated Jesus as if He had lived believers' sinful lives and treated them as if they had lived His sinlessly perfect life. Obviously, if He had merely come down from Heaven, been crucified, and raised three days later, there would have been no righteous life to impute to believers. It was because He did live such a life that Paul could speak of, 'not having a righteousness of [his] own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith' (Philippians 3:9)."
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Matthew 17:5b "a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'"

"All Three Persons of the Godhead are equally concerned in the deliverance of our souls from hell. The thought should cheer us, when we are disquieted and cast down. The thought should hearten and encourage us, when weary with the conflict of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The enemies of our souls are mighty, but the Friends of our souls are mightier still. The whole power of the triune Jehovah is engaged upon our side."
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III. Jesus' Genealogy (vv. 23-38)

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Became a son of Adam
That we sons of Adam
Might become sons of God.*
—Kent Hughes

Chapter 8: John, Jesus, and Genealogy

Luke 3:18-38

In chapter 4 of Luke we will begin a focus that will take us through the end of the book (24 chapters) on the ministry and the teaching of Jesus. Before we get to chapter 4, there are a few more truths that must be focused on, to finish the foundation on which the ministry and teaching of Jesus stands. Going into this lengthy series, I actually dreaded covering these first three chapters. I knew that they were absolutely necessary as a foundation for what follows, but maybe a little boring. But as I studied and prepared these messages, I was pleasantly surprised. As we examined these three chapters, adding up to 170 verses (counting this message), I found myself excited and blessed as I prepared the messages on the supernatural announcement of both John and Jesus' birth, the connection between Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Mary, the ministry of John the Baptist, the birth and childhood of Jesus, the baptism of Jesus, and the biggest surprise of all – the genealogy of Jesus that we will examine at the end of this message. Next week we will look at the temptation of Jesus and in two weeks we begin His public ministry. Admittedly, the public ministry of Jesus is the most important and most exciting part of the book of Luke, but when we see the foundation of His public ministry, we are better able to understand and appreciate what He taught and what He accomplished.

I. John's Persecution (vv. 18-20)

In previous messages we examined why John was sent by God. In fulfillment of prophecy, John became the forerunner of Jesus – the one who prepared the way for the promised Messiah. We not only focused on the message of John, but also on his character, especially his humility and his boldness. In this text, we see John as he goes through suffering for proclaiming the truth. American Christians (for the most part) have never suffered physical persecution. All Christians who live godly lives will be persecuted at some level (2 Timothy 3:12), but in America that persecution is normally physical. For much of the rest of the world, physical persecution is the norm.

In the book *The Insanity of God*, the author, Nik Ripken, interviews Christians all over the world who have undergone horrific persecution for their faith and for their sharing with others the liberating Gospel. After interviewing an older man who in the Soviet Union had undergone sadistic torture (both mental and physical) over a long period of time, he was asked why he had not told others what he had been through. He took Ripken to a window facing the east where the sun rose each day. He asked Ripken why he did not tell others about the sunrise. The answer was something along the lines of, "because it happens every day – it is normal." The elderly man then said that is why he talked so little of the persecution – it was a normal occurrence for those who loved and proclaimed Christ.

In combining what the Scripture says, what we know from history, and for the most part what seems to be reliable tradition, it seems that all of the apostles suffered and died for their proclamation of the Gospel. The only exception was the apostle John who was exiled to the Island of Patmos and was doubtlessly protected from death by the Lord so that we would have the New Testament book of Revelation.

What follows is a summary of what happened to each of the apostles (mostly from what seems to be reliable traditions). Peter was crucified upside down, at his request, because he felt unworthy to die as His Lord had died. Peter's brother Andrew reportedly was also crucified. James, the brother of John, is the only one of the apostles whose death is recorded in Scripture. We read in Acts 12:1-2: "Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword." Philip was said to have been stoned to death in Asia Minor after multitudes came to Christ through his preaching. Nathaniel (also called Bartholomew) reportedly died when he was thrown into the sea (though some traditions say that he was crucified). Matthew was reported to have been burned at the stake. It seems that Thomas took the Gospel all the way to India and there was killed with a spear. The other James (son of Alphaeus) was reportedly stoned to death by Jews for preaching Christ. There are several traditions concerning the death of Simon the Zealot. One is that he preached the Gospel in Persia where he was killed by being sawn in two. Thaddeus (also known as Judas the son of James) reportedly took the Gospel to what is modern day Turkey and was clubbed to death for preaching Christ. Paul was almost certainly beheaded by the evil Roman Emperor Nero. In addition to the apostles, the Bible tells us of the

martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:58-60) and Antipas, the pastor of the church at Smyrna (Revelation 2:13). In addition, Christian history tells us of martyr after martyr (both men and women) who chose to die rather than deny Christ or stop proclaiming the Gospel to others.

Lest we think that all of the martyrs were hundreds of years ago, it is estimated, by experts on the subject, that in the last century, or at least in the last 125 years, there have been more martyrs than all the previous centuries since Christ! Even today, much of the world's population is being persecuted and some facing death for believing in and following Jesus.

Let's examine the martyrdom of John the Baptist. In Luke 3:19, Herod the tetrarch (also known as Herod Antipas) was the son of Herod the Great. Herod the tetrarch was not a Jew. His father was an Idumean (an Edomite and thus a descendent of Esau) and his mother was a Samaritan. Here is what brought John the Baptist's *reprimand* of Herod (the grammar indicates multiple *reprimands*). Herod Antipas was married to the daughter of Aretas, who was the King of Nabatea. Herod Antipas, on his way to Rome, had stopped to visit his half-brother, Philip (not the Philip mentioned in Luke 3:1). While staying with his brother, he became infatuated with his brother's wife, Herodias. Herodias was an ambitious woman. Her husband Philip had no big title and she wanted to be the wife of a "tetrarch" (ruler of a fourth of a country). She agreed to leave Philip and marry Herod Antipas if he would divorce his current wife. Herod agreed, and now he had a new wife. This man had a lot of political power, but John the Baptist was fearless. He confronted Herod the tetrarch (Antipas) multiple times. Herod put John in prison and we see what happened from Matthew's Gospel. We read in Matthew 14:7-10: "But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Having been prompted by her mother, she said, 'Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.' Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oath, and because of his dinner guests. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison."

Don't ever believe that if you obey God, He will protect you from physical harm. Ask the thousands of martyrs about that! Ask John the Baptist about that! Our promise is that He is in control and that He will be with us through the trial to strengthen and comfort us. That is the opposite message of the one proclaimed by the "health, wealth, and happiness" false teachers. John the Baptist obeyed God and was put in prison. That fits fine in my theology, because I know that God is good, God is sovereign, and God is love. But because He is omniscient (all knowing) he often allows some of His choice people to go through trials so that the name of the Lord could be glorified.

Warren Weirsbe gives a good summary of John the Baptist. "John was fruitful in his ministry to prepare the hearts of the people and then to present their Messiah to them. He clearly stated that Jesus was 'the Lord' (Luke 3:4) and the Son of God (John 1:34). Because John rebuked Herod Antipas for his adulterous marriage to Herodias, he was imprisoned by the king and finally beheaded. However, he had faithfully finished his God-given assignment and prepared the people to meet the Messiah, the Son of God."

II. Jesus' Baptism (vv. 21-22)

This passage is one of the clearest Trinitarian texts in the New Testament. Those who deny the Trinity hate this passage. You don't have to be a seminary graduate or know Greek to see the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – in this account of Jesus' baptism.

Let's examine this baptism that John was performing. It was called in Luke 3:3: "...a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism tells us that John was reluctant to baptize Jesus. Matthew 3:13-14: "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?'"

Here is a really important question. If John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and Jesus was sinless, why was He baptized? That is a good question. I believe that the primary that Jesus was baptized was that He was identifying Himself with the people He came to save. On the cross He would take their sins and here He identifies with them and gives them an example of obedience. Let's take that a little further. In John 1:33 God commanded John the Baptist to baptize. It was God's will for the people to be baptized and those who would be righteous (right with God) would do so. Whatever the Father told the righteous to do, Jesus did – even things that He, the sinless Son of God, personally didn't need to do. For Jesus to live a perfectly righteous life was not optional.

Here is what happened in our salvation. 2 Corinthians 5:21: “He [God the Father] made Him Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” On the cross, God imputed the sins of all who would believe on Jesus and then God imputed Jesus’ perfect righteousness to those who would look in faith to Him. John MacArthur gives a great illustration of this:

God treated Jesus as if He had lived believers’ sinful lives and treated them as if they had lived His sinlessly perfect life. Obviously, if He had merely come down from Heaven, been crucified, and raised three days later, there would have been no righteous life to impute to believers. It was because He did live such a life that Paul could speak of, ‘not having a righteousness of [his] own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith’ (Philippians 3:9).

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 1-5*, page 237]

There were three things that happened at Jesus baptism that we need to examine. First, heaven was opened. Second, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove. This was symbolically indicating in a public, visible, way that Jesus was now empowered for ministry. Third, the Father spoke in an audible voice, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.” All three of these amazing things happened “while He was praying.”

As the perfect Son of Man, Jesus the Messiah completely depended upon the Father. We are told that when the eternal Son of God left the glories of Heaven, He emptied Himself (Philippians 2:7). He did not empty Himself of deity, but He emptied Himself of the independent exercise of the attributes of Deity. As the perfect man (though He never ceased being God) He lived in total dependence on the Father. One way that dependence on the Father was manifested was in His praying. At His baptism, we find Him praying. Actually Jesus lived in an atmosphere of prayer. We are going to see that Luke tells us more about His praying than any of the other Gospels. This is why prayer is so important! If the perfect sinless Son of God, while in flesh, needed to pray, how much more do we?

In the last part of verse 22, the Father speaks. The first two amazing things that happened at Jesus’ baptism were visible. The third thing that happened was audible. God spoke! The Father’s proclamation concerning the Son is really the main point of verses 21 and 22. We actually see that public approval of the Son a second time at the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew 17:5b: “a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

There are so many amazing things in Luke 3:21-22 that we could spend the rest of our life studying them and feel like we had just scratched the surface. But perhaps the most important thing in this passage is the clear presentation of the Trinity. My good friend, Dr. J. C. Ryle (though he has been dead over one-hundred years) summarized it this way:

All Three Persons of the Godhead are equally concerned in the deliverance of our souls from hell. The thought should cheer us, when we are disquieted and cast down. The thought should hearten and encourage us, when weary with the conflict of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The enemies of our souls are mighty, but the Friends of our souls are mightier still. The whole power of the triune Jehovah is engaged upon our side.

[Dr. J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Volume Two - Luke*, page 103]

III. Jesus’ Genealogy vv. 23-38)

Today there is a renewed interest in genealogies. You have multiple web sites that, for a price, will search out legal documents such as birth and death certificates. You can also have your DNA analyzed to find the part of the world that most of your ancestors are from. I have a cousin who has traced my maternal grandmother’s relatives (Davidson) back to the 1100’s in England. I admit that though I used to make fun of people who were always looking for ancestors’ records, as I get older is a little more appealing. I am not sure what motivates this curiosity; it is probably to see if perhaps there are some famous ancestors that we can brag about. One man I know started tracing his genealogy and got back to Scotland and found that his ancestors were all sheep thieves.

In the Bible, genealogies are very important. Christianity is rooted in history and so all through the Bible genealogies have a prominent place. The Bible is not a history book, but when it speaks of events and people in

history, it is totally accurate. Since there were many prophecies concerning the Messiah that involved His ancestors according to the flesh, Luke gives considerable space to the genealogies.

We are going to spend the remaining time in this message comparing and explaining some of the differences in Matthew and Luke's presentation of the genealogy of Jesus. When we have finished, you will see that there is no contradiction. The most obvious difference is that the genealogies are in reverse order. Luke starts with Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, and goes all the way back to Adam. Matthew, who was writing primarily to a Jewish audience, starts with Abraham and goes down to Joseph, Jesus' legal father. That doesn't cause the critics any problem, but there are some names in the genealogies that have caused scholars a lot of problems. All of the differences between Matthew's account and Luke's account are between Joseph and David. The genealogies agree between David and Abraham (except Adam that Matthew skips).

Let's examine some differences in the genealogies given by Matthew and the genealogy given by Luke. Keep in mind that genealogies don't have every person in the lineage. It is not a mistake; it is acceptable to skip several generations. Some of the major differences are as follows:

- Luke identifies Jesus' grandfather as Eli while Matthew identifies him as Jacob.
- Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back through David's son Nathan while Matthew traces it through David's son Solomon.
- All but two of the names between Joseph and David are different.

Over the years, Bible scholars have put forth various explanations for this difference. For instance, some have put forth the explanation that both genealogies are through Joseph, but where there are different names, it can be explained through the Old Testament practice of levirate marriage. Levirate marriage is when there are two brothers and a brother who is married dies before he has children, the other brother marries his widow and the children of that union are considered children of the dead brother. Thus Matthew could be naming the deceased brother and Luke could be naming the biological father or vice versa. That is possible, but it is based on conjecture and that is a lot of Levirate marriages in one person's genealogy.

A better, and much simpler, explanation is simply that Matthew traced the genealogy through Jesus' legal father Joseph, and Luke traced it through Mary. Since all Jewish genealogies were through the father, Luke likely omitted her name in deference to customs of the day. Notice the wording in Luke 3:23: "When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli." The NIV says "so it was thought." The HCSB says "thought to be." Objectors say that all genealogies were through the father. But this one was a special circumstance that was not true of any other birth – ever! Jesus had no biological human father; He was born of a virgin. Also, Luke was writing to a primarily Gentile audience, so the traditions were not as important.

Here is the main point. The prophecy that both Matthew and Luke were focused on is that the Messiah was prophesied to be a descendent of David. Jesus was a "double descendent" since his lineage could be traced to David through His legal father, Joseph, and his mother, Mary.

Conclusion

Here is the bottom line. It is summarized well by Kent Hughes.

*Christ the Son of God
Became a son of Adam
That we sons of Adam
Might become sons of God*
— Kent Hughes