

PREPARED: THE REDEEMER IS READY

...the ministry of John the Baptist

January 14, 2024

Luke 3:1-20

Luke 3-4: Luke described three events that served to inaugurate Jesus' public ministry. 1) **John the Baptist's ministry to prepare** Israel to receive the Messiah, 2) **Jesus' baptism (and genealogy)** revealed His credentials to fulfill His Father's redemptive purposes, and 3) **Jesus' testing in the wilderness** as a victorious, powerful, and sinless Savior.

Luke 3:1-20: John the Baptist called Israel to repentance. His baptism symbolized Israel's preparation for their salvation. The Messiah would soon offer them a **greater baptism** that would save and incorporate "all peoples" into the body of Christ by the power and fire of the **Holy Spirit**.

Coram Deo: HFC must remain immersed in the powerful working of the Holy Spirit so that we can live as citizens of **Christ's Kingdom now**. We must live in the reality of **transformational obedience** – by faith!

SIX THINGS THEOPHILUS SHOULD KNOW

I. THE SETTING: THE WORLD IN CHAOS.

Luke 3:1–20 *In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.*

Coram Deo: God's redemptive purposes are not thwarted by man's depravity. **God is always working amidst our chaos.** How does this encourage you when looking at the state of our world today?

II. THE SEPARATION: THE WORD IN THE WILDERNESS.

2c *The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'*"

Coram Deo: God calls His people out of self-righteous religion and politics. Many Israelites responded to the call, many did not. How have you responded to Christ's call? Who/what are you trusting for salvation?

III. THE CALLING: THE FRUIT OF TRUE REPENTANCE.

7 *He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

8 *Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 9 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."*

Coram Deo: The **wrath of God** is clearly set against those who reject His call. We "flee" from God's wrath by being found "in Christ!"

IV. THE RESPONSE: THE EVIDENCE OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE.

10 *And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" 11 And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."*

Coram Deo: When left alone, man will always strive to prioritize his personal desires. Sin is always creeping at the door of man's actions. **Sinful man needs spiritual transformation – from God!**

V. THE EXPECTATION: A MESSIANIC BAPTISM IS COMING.

15 *As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."*

Coram Deo: Christ's baptism offered a **work of the Holy Spirit** for salvation and incorporation into the **messianic kingdom**. Life under Christ's rule is made possible by an immersion into the reality of His Presence. To be supernaturally baptized into the **life of Christ** is to be gathered unto Him as His **people/possession**. Those who refuse Christ's baptism will be **separated** as wheat is winnowed from the chaff.

VI. THE COST: THE REALITY OF OPPOSITION.

18 *So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.*

Coram Deo: The gospel **unites** and **divides**. Those who reject Christ also reject those who proclaim Christ. The **cost** of following Christ includes **suffering for the truth** of God's salvation and **separation** from the worldly powers that temporarily oppose the lordship of Christ.

Prayer: May we desire to be filled with the Spirit's work that connects our lives to the life of Christ. Have you heard Christ speaking to you today?