

Luke 3a: HG Bishop Youssef

His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاين تاطع • LUKE 3: 1 - 20 ~ Bible Study (Eng/Arabic -
يبرع)

Outline of the Chapter

00:00-00:54

- 1-6: St John the Baptist Prepares the Way
- 7-20: St John the Baptist Preaches to the People
- 21-22: St John the Baptist Baptizes the Lord Jesus Christ
- 23-28: Genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ

St John the Baptist Prepares the Way

00:55-22:35

¹ Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,

- Historical Context
 - Characteristic of St Luke's writing
 - He is giving the historical context of the ministry of St John the Baptist
 - He did the same in Chapter 2 when he spoke about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - He mentions the names of the rulers of any regions that are affected directly or indirectly by the events he narrates
 - He mentions five political leaders and two religious leaders
 - Tiberius Caesar
 - Succeeded Augustus Caesar in 14AD
 - This means John the Baptist's ministry started approximately 29 AD.
 - Pontius Pilate
 - Entered office in 26AD and was the Roman Commander of Judea, Samaria and Idumea
 - He was in office from 26AD-36AD

- Herod and Philip
 - Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great (the one who killed the innocent children of Bethlehem)
 - Philip, the son of Herod the Great
 - Herod Antipas is the one who beheaded St John the Baptist
 - Pontius Pilate sent the Lord Jesus Christ to Herod Antipas when he knew that He was from Galilee (because Herod was tetrarch of Galilee)
 - Tetrarch means ruler over 1/4 of a country
- Lysanias
 - Tetrarch of Abilene
- Annas and Caiaphas
 - Annas and his son-in-law Joseph Caiaphas
 - These are the two high priests that Jesus was tried before in the Crucifixion trials
- In the Wilderness
 - St John was brought up and lived in the wilderness (Luke 1:80)
 - He lived a solitary life and did not learn his doctrine from men: but His ministry, mission, baptism, etc. he learned all from heaven.
 - The reputation of John the Baptist preceded the divine calling
 - He was the son of a very well-known family
 - The marvelous circumstances around his birth
 - He was long looked upon by the people as set apart for a great work
 - His ultimate calling is to be the Forerunner of the Messiah
- Baptism of Repentance
 - There was nothing strange about baptism - purification through water was normal.
 - What was strange was that the Jews submitted to baptism... it was a common ritual for Gentiles who wanted to become Jews! For a Jew to submit to baptism was like saying "I am as bad as a heathen Gentile who worships idols."
 - So baptism by John was a true mark of humble repentance, and a radical rededication to the Lord
 - The message of St John was a call to repentance
 - What is repentance?
 - Some people think it's about "feeling" sorry about your sin
 - Repentance is an action word, not just a feeling
 - It is a change of mind and change of purpose
 - - = change
 - = mind
- All the region around the Jordan
 - This is not a small area... the district alluded to here is 150 miles long
 - The Jordan is convenient for baptism

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

"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 brought low;

The crooked places shall be made straight

And the rough ways smooth;

⁶ And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

- Forerunner
 - Isaiah 40:3-5
 - John's Ministry is to proclaim repentance and baptism in preparation for the Messiah
 - This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of St John the Baptist
 - The same prophecy is quoted in all four gospels, but only St Luke records the whole thing
 - Forerunner: The one running before Christ to prepare the way for Him
 - John is the voice of Christ before Christ came
 - Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight
 - The imagery here is like an unpaved road. It has bumps and ditches, ups and downs... how do you make the road straight?
 - Valleys (i.e. ditches) shall be filled
 - Mountains and hills (i.e. bumps) are brought low
 - Crooked places shall be made straight
 - Rough ways made smooth
 - Who are these?
 - Who are the valleys? The humble people that God will lift up
 - Who are the mountains and hills? The prideful that God will bring them low
 - Who are the crooked? Those who are sneaky like serpents, whose hearts God will change
 - Who are the rough? Those who are harsh in their attitude, God will smoothen their heart
 - So every person will be ready for the coming of the Messiah
 - The image here is very simple, and is very well-understood in the East and especially in those days
 - When great kings are coming, they usually have people coming before them (i.e. pioneers) to pave the roads for them
 - If the roads are good, no pioneers or forerunners are needed...
 - Jesus the Messiah and the King is coming very soon (Jesus starts His ministry six months after John the Baptist) and a forerunner is needed because the state of the Jews at the time was corrupt above measure, confusion like a wilderness
 - John the Baptist is awakening the sleeping conscience of the people
 - At least, the crowds who followed Jesus

St John the Baptist Preaches to the People

⁷ Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" ⁸ Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ⁹ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"

¹¹ He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."

¹² Then 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 what is appointed for you."

¹⁴ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?"

So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

¹⁵ Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, ¹⁶ John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸ And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. ¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, ²⁰ also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

- Brood of vipers!
 - John the Baptist was not interested in quantity, but in quality
 - He didn't want to preach a soft message or an easy message or to satisfy "itching ears"
 - He compares them to the worst of all serpents
 - Vipers harm the people and are fatal... so he is saying to them that their behavior is harming others. He is referring to their hypocrisy, which turned religion itself into an evil
- Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
 - The Jews had been taught by prophecy that the Advent of their Deliverer should be preceded by a time of anguish, which they call "the woes of the Messiah"
 - "But who can endure the day of His coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He *is* like a refiner's fire
And like launderers' soap." (Malachi 3:2)

- These kinds of prophecies' primary fulfillment happened at the Destruction of Jerusalem,
- Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance
 - True Repentance always bears fruit - the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22)
- We have Abraham as our father
 - The Jews were prideful, considering themselves greater than any other nations
 - The Jews believed that none of them would be lost because they were the children of Abraham
 - St John the Baptist is teaching here - don't trust in being a member of the church or in having the title of servant, or in attending lots of Sunday School... God wants your repentance and your heart. No matter what titles you have or how often you go to church, repentance is what is needed.
 - Who are the children of Abraham?
 - Those who live like Abraham
 - Who have the faith and works of Abraham
 - The Jews did not behave like children of Abraham
 - God can create from these stones, children for Abraham
 - Stones signifies the Gentiles who had a stony heart
- Now the ax is laid to the root of the trees
 - Any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire
 - The patience of God is very near to come to an end (with respect to the Jews)
 - The judgment of God is at hand
- What shall we do then?
 - The words of St John touched the hearts of the people who replied: "What shall we do then?"
 - After every sermon, Bible Study, lesson, ask yourself this question: "What shall I do?"
 - John told them to bring forth fruits appropriate to repentance and lead a life that shows their repentance is genuine
 - This question is asked by several groups and answered differently, but the common denominator is mercy
 - People:
 - Sharing, be merciful, don't be selfish for it is the root of all evil!
 - Practical teaching:
 - If you have two tunics and your brother has none, give him one
 - If you have more food, give some to your brother
 - Tax Collectors:
 - Romans wanted to collect taxes from the people. They would hold an auction for the tax-collectors. The person who bids the most is given permission to go and collect taxes from the people. They were hated by all the people because they were violent, took money by any means, and supported by the government.
 - St John did not see tax-collecting as evil in itself, so he did not tell them to leave the occupation... but to be honest in their jobs. Collect no more than what is appointed to you.
 - Soldiers:

- They were probably Jews who were paid by the Romans to serve as soldiers in Jewish places.
- The temptation of the soldier is to terrify the poor by violence and authority, or to undermine the rich by acting as informants or false accusations.
- St John, again does not ask them to abandon their jobs, but gives them three instructions:
 - Restraint: Do not intimidate anyone
 - Truthfulness: Do not accuse falsely
 - Contentment: Be content with your wages
- Is this the Messiah?
 - John's call to repentance was through water purification
 - He warned the people of divine judgment
 - These reminded the people of prophecies about the Messiah (Ezekiel 36:25-28, Malachi 3:2-5)
 - The widespread extraordinary success of his preaching is partially explained by this idea that many wondered whether he was the Messiah
 - The Pharisees even sent a delegation to see if he is the Messiah (John 1:19-27)
 - St John wanted to invalidate this growing conviction that he is the Messiah
 - He told the people plainly that Another far greater than he was coming
 - He compared the baptism by water with the baptism by Fire and Holy Spirit
 - He humbled himself in saying that he was not worthy to loose His sandal strap (considered to be the most humiliating task that a master could not even ask his servant to do)
- He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire
 - This is fulfilled at Pentecost
 - Fulfills the prophecies of the characteristics of the Messiah in Ezekiel 36:25-28 and Malachi 3:2-5 as Purifying and Refining
- Winnowing Fan
 - At the threshing floor after a harvest of wheat, they would need to separate the good wheat from the uneatable chaff
 - They would use a winnowing fan which was like a big fork and it would help separate the wheat grains from the chaff
 - The wheat was thrown into the air with the winnowing fork as a breeze blew away the chaff, so the good wheat grains fell to the ground. Then the chaff was burned with fire.
 - This was well-known imagery in those days
 - It is the image of the final judgment and the separation of the righteous from the wicked, with the wicked going into the everlasting fire
 - Job 21:17-18; Isaiah 41:16; Jeremiah 15:7; Wisdom 5:14, 23; Matthew 3:12, Matthew 13:30, 40, 42, 50; Luke 3:17; John 15:6
- Many other exhortations and preaching to the people
 - The Person and Office of the Messiah
 - The Nature of the Kingdom of God
 - The Gospel
 - Faith in God

- The Gospel
 - Imprisonment of John
 - Luke is not pausing to giving us the story of the death of John the Baptist, but giving us an idea of the wickedness of Herod Antipas - the adultery with his brother's wife, the rebuke of St John, the imprisonment of John.
 - Later on, Herod would behead John the Baptist
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