

# Salvation History: John

(Luke 3)

## “In those days...” – Mt.3:1

- Lk.3:1 – Luke the historian is very specific
  - Other writers show John preparing way for Jesus by the call to repent
  - Luke alone tells us how John replied to questions about specifics

# I. People, Lk.3:1-2

# Six items describe this period

- 15<sup>th</sup> year of reign of Tiberius
  - Historians: ab urbe condita – 765.
  - His fifteenth year – AD 28-29.

Luke is ‘first writer who frames the Gospel History into the great history of the world’ – Ewald

# Six items describe this period

- 15<sup>th</sup> year of reign of Tiberius
- Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea
  - 10 year term, AD 26-36
  - Failure: subjects petitioned Rome to remove him.

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  - Married Salome, his niece (Mk.6)

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- Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene
  - For years, Luke's statement stood alone. (Lysanius who??)
  - Found in inscription on rock west of Damascus. He was tetrarch at this time.





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- Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene
- **Priests: Annas / Caiaphas**
  - Annas deposed by procurator Valerius Gratus
  - Jews still regarded him as high priest (Nu.35:25). Jn.18:13. Ac.4:6

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  - Jesus will soon begin His ministry.
  - Will He use one of these ‘great’ men to introduce Him?

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- Priests: Annas / Caiaphas
- Word of God came to John, 2 [wilderness]
  - John is great contrast to others.
  - Luke features John, not world rulers.

# John is not like others who . . .

- Put full weight on world. 1 Pt.2:11-12.
- Play at work, work at play. 1 Co.15:32.
- Pursue 'things' and forget souls. Hb.11:25-26.

# John preached unpopular message: change your ways! (3)

- Our way is wrong (sin). Jer.10:23.
- We are lost in sin, doomed without repentance. Ac.17:30.
- We can change and be saved. V.3, *baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.*

Many despised John's message.

Lk.7:29-30

- . Some do not take orders well.
- . Some follow the majority, not Scripture.

# John's preaching required humility, 15-17

- Exalts Lord to His rightful place; puts us in ours.

John never forgot who he was  
because he remembers Who Jesus is

- John could boast of unique birth, fulfilled prophecy, view job as beneath him.



I. People, Lk.3:1-2

II. Plan, Lk.3:3

# Baptism for forgiveness of sins

- Forgiveness: act of freeing from guilt or punishment, *pardon, cancellation*. Mt.26:28
- Baptism of repentance

“...is equivalent to an adjective, repentance-baptism, baptism which implied and symbolized a ‘change of mind’ as regards both past and future; and if real repentance was there, forgiveness followed” – A. Plumer

# Baptism for

- Forgiveness
- Baptism of repentance
- For forgiveness

Repentance both preceded (Mt.3:7-8) and followed (Mt.3:11) baptism.

- 3: preached repentance. Why?
- 4-6: wilderness drew people from homes...
- 5: crooked must become straight
- 6: enemies of God can receive salvation...
- 7: brood of vipers . . . Flee wrath
- 8-9: judgment threatens. Ax – tree
- 8: children of Abraham: a false hope

# Children of Abraham: a false hope

- Should have lived like Abraham
- Instead, they seek false security in parentage (Jn.8)
  - God will keep His promises... Lk.4:25-27
  - Ac.2:39 . . . .
  - Ac.13:...46, history would repeat

# Baptism for forgiveness of sins

- Forgiveness
- Baptism of repentance
- For forgiveness of sins: not already saved
  - 3: preached repentance. Why?
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  - 8: children of Abraham: a false hope
  - 10-14: specific changes must occur

# Overall context

- Baptism was a common practice for Gentile proselytes, not for Jews!
- Jews submitted to baptism, saying, in effect, “I’m no better than a filthy Gentile!”

# No doubt about “for forgiveness of sins” (Lk.3)

- Compare Acts 2:38
  1. Sinners: crucified Christ, 34-36
  2. Cry of desperation, 37
  3. Plan, 38: repentance and baptism for forgiveness of sins.

## Repentance by itself shows purpose here

- ATR: admits purpose of prep. in Mt.26:28, but says Mk.1:4 & Ac.2:38 require interpreter to decide (Grammar, 595).
- ATR: ‘...Theological bias will inevitably det. how one interprets the Greek idiom...So in Ac.2:38, eis does not of itself express design...but it may be so used. When the grammarian has finished, the theologian steps in, and sometimes before the grammarian is through’ (ib., 389).



I. People, Lk.3:1-2

II. Plan, Lk.3:3

**III. Product, Lk.3:3**

# Other writers say John prepared for Jesus by a call to repent

- Luke alone tells us how John replied to questions about specifics
- 11-14: the cry of convicted hearts. Ac.2:37
- John's answers show that each calling in life has its own temptations.
- True repentance learns to resist

## Three groups...

10-11: selfish, glutton: 'What's mind is yours if you need it.'

12-13: 'scum of earth' (tax collectors): the most hated. Be honest.

14: soldiers: 'might makes right...' (14). Mt.5:41, Power over people often leads to pride, abuse.

1. Do not intimidate by threats; shake . . .
2. Do not accuse falsely, harass, squeeze
3. Be content with wages

# Josephus sums up teaching of John

“He commanded the Jews to practice virtue both in righteousness to one another and piety to God” – Ant.XVIII.v.2