

Get more out of the message



LUKE

Luke 3:1-22

How can we become the Christ-centered church our world so desperately needs? Join us in Luke's Gospel, the most expansive biography of Jesus in the Bible. With the beloved physician as our guide, we hope to experience Jesus so we can participate with the new reality God is bringing into our world.

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The Big Idea

In what way does John the Baptist prepare the way for Jesus? He challenges our empty religiosity, urges us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance and exalts Jesus—the Beloved and well-pleasing Son of God.

Good to Know

- John is the forerunner described by Isaiah (Is. 40:3-5) and Malachi (Mal. 4:5-6).
- John is the final old-testament-style prophet in the entire Bible. He's like a "bridge" connecting God's Old Testament promises to their New Testament fulfillment.
- His message is all about calling people to a radical kingdom ethic in preparation for the arrival of the king.
- **Pontius Pilate (vs. 1)** was a Roman ruler installed by Augustus after the ousting of Herod's son Archelaus, who was a murderous tyrant. Pilate will have an important role to play later in the gospel!
- Because Luke named so many rulers, we can pretty accurately pinpoint the start of Jesus' ministry to around 28 AD.
- **Annas (vs. 2)** was officially retired, but still wielded a ton of influence behind the scenes. The fact that Luke knew this and mentioned him shows how good of a historian he was.
- **Baptism (vs. 3)** in Greek is "baptizō" which means "dip" or immerse." The culture was "Israelites-in-name-only" and John was using baptism to invite them to be washed and renewed as God's true people.
- **Crowds (vs. 7)** flocked to hear John. He was a phenomenal preacher and a force to be reckoned with. Think Billy Graham and you're getting close. Because he was such a big deal, lots of people thought he may be the Messiah. Even in Luke's day, confusion remained, which is why he emphasized that he wasn't.
- **"You brood of vipers" (vs. 7)** was John's way of saying to his fellow Jews, "you think your ancestry proves that you're in God's family, but your lifestyles prove you're in the devil's family." What a gut punch right?
- **Tunics, tax collectors and soldiers (vs. 10-14)** - John calls on God's people to repent of their stinginess and corruption and embrace a life of generosity and integrity.

- **Herod and Herodias (vs. 19)** - John publicly critiqued Herod Antipas for divorcing his wife and marrying his niece (I know, ew...) and in retaliation, Herod had John executed.

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some [icebreaker questions](#).
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. Have you ever participated in a meaningful outdoor worship service or baptism?
2. Have you ever heard a preacher so compelling you took a break from your day-to-day to go hear what they had to say?
3. Look at verse 3. What was John's basic message?
4. Put yourself in the crowd. What would you be feeling as John called out the stinginess and corruption that was so common in verses 10-14? What about when he described Jesus in verses 16-18?
5. John connected repentance to the daily life of his audience. How might you connect his message to your life?
6. What surprises you in this story?
7. Where is the Holy Spirit nudging you toward renewal and repentance this week?

Prayer Prompts

Lord, give us eyes to see where our religious resumes are out of alignment with our lived behavior. Thank you for the invitation to be cleansed and forgiven. Give us the boldness to be forerunners of Jesus everywhere as we go through our words and deeds. Amen.

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