



Luke 3

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Tape #8047
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter three as we continue our journey through the New Testament and through the entire Bible.

Now Luke gives to us six dating factors for the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist. He tells us first of all that it was,

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (3:1),

We mentioned this morning that Tiberius Caesar was described as cruel, he was described as licentious, he was an evil man and he began to reign in the year 14 A.D. The fifteenth year of his reign actually began on the 19th of August in the year 28 A.D. So sometime between the year 28 A.D. and 29 A.D. John the Baptist began his ministry.

Later on in this chapter, Luke will tell us that Jesus began His ministry when He was about thirty years old. We know that John the Baptist was a few months older than Jesus. Maybe a half a year or so older than Jesus. But Jesus began His ministry when He was about, not exactly but about thirty years old. Not only was Tiberius Caesar the emperor of Rome but,

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judaea (3:1),

When Herod the great died in about the year 4 B.C., and here is an interesting thing, we know that Herod the great was alive at the birth of Christ, and so he died in 4 B.C. which places the birth of Christ somewhere around the year 6 or 5 B.C. When they established the calendar, the man who was given the commission to establish the calendar, in working out the dates it used to be that the Roman calendar was dated with the beginning of Rome. But then when Christianity became powerful and the Roman emperor ordered a new calendar, the man that was ordered to do it made a mistake as far as the date of the birth of Christ. And the idea was to date the new calendar with the birth of Christ but he missed it by a few years. So it gives you a little discrepancy there, but it isn't a biblical discrepancy, it's one of man and that's very common.

So Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judaea. When Herod the great died, his kingdom was divided to his three sons. Philippi had the northernmost part of the kingdom, Syria and in the upper areas of the Galilee. He built Caesarea, Philippi which is right at the base of Mount Herman just up the north of the country, head waters of the Jordan river.

Antipas had the area around the Galilee and Archelaus his son was given Edom and Judah and Samaria. But Archelaus was such an evil ruler that the Jews petitioned Rome and he was deposed and the Roman government sent Pontius Pilate to be the governor over Judaea in the place of Archelaus. And he governed in Judaea from 25, 26 A.D. to 37 A.D.

Now it is interesting that in secular history for a long time, they found no account of Pontius Pilate. There are people who spend their life trying to prove that the Bible is not the word of God. It's not the inspired word of God. And so, they'll jump on every little thing to try and prove that there is some discrepancy, some error, in order that they might disprove the inspiration of the scriptures. And for a long time, those men who are really enemies of the word of God jumped on the issue of Pontius Pilate and they made a big case out of there is no record of history concerning Pontius Pilate, the whole story is just a myth, it's all made up and he is just a mythological character. And there are many people that bought into this until they were doing some archaeological diggings around Caesarea there on the coast and here they found this stone with the inscription of Pontius Pilate.

And so again, the critics prove to be wrong and the Bible stands right. They sent this to the British Museum. They have a copy of it to the present day in Caesarea and you can see the copy of the stone. The actual stone today is in the British Museum. But the name of Pilate on it and thus confirming that Pilate was the governor, he reigned in Caesarea. During the holidays he would come to Jerusalem and bring a company of Roman soldiers with him because it was during the holidays that the national spirit was very high among

the Jews and more tendency towards revolt. So that's why we find him in Jerusalem when Jesus was brought before him to be judged. So "Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judaea,"

and Herod was the tetrarch of Galilee (3:1),

Tetrarch means ruler of a fourth part literally. But it was changed and the word tetrarch just means governor. He was the governor of the Galilee region. This is the Herod Antipas, son of Herod the great, the one who we are told a little further down in the verses here, nineteen and twenty, he was the one who imprisoned John the Baptist because John spoke against his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife and she became angry with him and urged her husband to imprison him. And then of course later asked for his head, the head of John the Baptist, and so this is the Herod who was the tetrarch of Galilee. He ruled in that area from 4 B.C., the death of his father, unto the year 39 A.D.

His brother Philip [we are told] was the governor over Ituraea (3:1)

The northern portion, up into Syria. He reigned from 4 B.C. to 33 A.D. As far as Lysanias, we don't really know much about,

Lysanias who was the tetrarch of Abilene (3:1),

But we are told that,

Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests (3:2),

Here is an interesting situation in history where you had two high priests. Actually, Annas was the older, he began his high priesthood at the year 7 A.D. and he was the high priest until 14 A.D. But he angered the Roman government and so the Roman government replaced him with one of his sons after another. And there were actually four of his sons who for a time were appointed by the Roman government as high priest, but all four of them sort of came into ill repute under Rome and so finally, his son-in-law Caiaphas was a collaborator with Rome and so he was finally appointed by the Roman government as the high priest.

He was a political appointee of Rome. And as such, not really recognized by the Jewish people. But they did recognize Annas. And so Annas was in the minds of the Jews still the high priest though the actual office was being fulfilled by Caiaphas, the Roman appointee. But the very fact that Rome had a part of it made the Jews angry and they really didn't recognize Caiaphas as their high priest. But they recognized Annas and thus he was still sort of the man, the power behind the office. And thus, you have an unusual situation where there were two high priests at the same time. And so it was at this time in history around the year 28, 29 A.D. that we read that,

the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness (3:2).

The word unto is translated from the Greek word hepi which is literally came upon him. There was an anointing of God that came upon his life. His parents who were very old when he was born, probably died very early. He was probably quite young when they died and he probably, when he was about twenty years old, moved to the wilderness to just wait upon God. You see, at twenty years, he should have begun his priestly ministry. He was the son of a priest and thus at twenty years they began their duties as priest. But instead of going to the temple and doing the priestly duties, he went to the wilderness and was there probably for about twelve years as he was just waiting upon the Lord, opening his heart unto God and "the word of God, we read, came upon John the son of Zacharias there in the wilderness."

And he came into all the country roundabout Jordan (3:3),

Down by the Jordan river, not very far from Jericho, he began his public ministry as he was,

preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (3:3);

Baptism was a Jewish rite. When you proselyted into the Jewish faith, you were baptized into the Jewish faith, and it signified your becoming now a Jew. The old identity is dead, you now become a Jew through baptism. John was preaching that baptism was for the repentance of sins. And coming now a new life in the Spirit as you would now be cleansed through your sins through repentance and through baptism. So it was called the baptism of repentance. It means a changed life.

Much as it does in the Christian realm where it is the burying of the old life of the flesh and the beginning of the new life of the Spirit. It's a change and it signifies a changed life. The old life is dead, it's buried. There's now a new life that we intend to live. A new life after the Spirit. So he was "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," and Luke says,

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth (3:4,5);

When a king was to visit a part of his realm or domain, the couriers would be sent out in advance to prepare the way for the king. The people would be commanded to repair the roads, straighten out the crooked places. Fill in the ditches, the chuck holes. To level out the steep areas and to smooth out the rough places in order that the king might be able to travel in ease and in comfort through the area. You don't want the king being jostled around, so smooth things out, straighten out the crooked paths and fill in the valleys and bring down the steep areas that they might prepare the way for the king. Thus, John the Baptist was declaring that the King is coming. Prepare for the coming of the King, and in the taking of the symbolisms, there's the application to the person's personal life and that is, making the crooked paths straight.

There are people who are guilty of doing a lot of crooked things. And what he is saying is straighten out your life. Don't live a crooked life anymore but straighten out your life, the valleys or depressions in the landscape. And this is not the time for depression, the King is coming. It's a time for joy and rejoicing. And so he's telling them to prepare by having a heart that is filled with rejoicing and praises for the coming of the King.

The high and lofty places are those areas of man's pride where he is lifted up and exalted and he is saying, Come on down. Take down that pride by which a person is lifted up. And of course, making the rough places smooth. And in all of our lives there are still those rough places. I'm certain that all of us are aware of the rough places in our lives and we seek the Lord to smooth them out. Because we want the Lord to come, we want to walk with Him in comfort. And thus we need to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Amos cried unto the people, "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12). There are so many people who are totally unprepared to meet the Lord. You dare not meet the Lord in your sinful state. You must come and ask forgiveness and receive that forgiveness, preparing your heart that because the Lord is going to come again and the King is coming.

The message of John the Baptist was very relevant for that day but it's relevant for the day in which we live. In those days, there was political corruption. Tiberius Caesar was a horrible man, extremely corrupt. And the political system was just corrupted because of that. The religious system was corrupted. Annas and Caiaphas were Sadducees. They were materialists. They were the humanists. They looked at religion as a way of profiteering off of people. They were sort of like some of the TV evangelists that they look at it as a means of just taking advantage of people who are wanting God and seeking God and promising miracles. If you'll just send in your dollar you'll get the little carpet upon which he knelt and a miracle will happen. This kind of stuff and so these men had learned ways to profiteer off of religion. And thus, the whole religious scene was messed up and it was corrupt. And so it was a time of spiritual and moral chaos.

Josephus, of course, speaks of how in Jerusalem when it was under the siege of the Roman troops led by Titus, how desperate was the situation within Jerusalem, the gangs, the anarchy, the gang wars and how that more Jews were killed by their fellow Jews than were actually killed by the Romans. And it was a time of just chaos. And in that time the Lord came to bring order. John is saying, Prepare for the Lord.

And certainly today, we see political chaos, we see religious chaos and the message of John is extremely relevant for today also. Because he said,

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God (3:6).

The coming One will bring the salvation of God. "His name will be called Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sin" (Matthew 1:21). And all people will see the salvation of God. Later John, the gospel writer, tells us that John the Baptist was standing with his disciples when Jesus passed by and John said, "Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the earth" (John 1:29). And the disciples left John and began to follow Jesus. And so the world is going to see God's salvation.

Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him (3:7),

I love this, he's a fiery guy. He reminds me a lot of Romaine. Because here a multitude comes to be baptized. Oh, let me just make this plain for you that are listening on tape and on radio across the country.

Romaine isn't my wife. We had some people come to Calvary one time and they were being shown around the church, had been listening to us on the radio and they finally said, We'd like to meet your wife Romaine. And I said, Oh, no, no, no. Because they had heard me mention him on occasions and sort of on occasions like this.

But here they came forth to be baptized and he said,

O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come (3:7)?

I mean, very direct. Very straight. Who moved you, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? And he calls to them for action.

Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance (3:8),

In other words, it isn't just coming. And it's interesting that whenever there is a move of God, there are those who are genuinely moved by God and respond, and then there are those that just come because there's a crowd. Just because there's a lot of people doing it. And there isn't a real true commitment, a real true repentance but is just everybody's going, it's the thing to do and it becomes the thing and so they just sort of follow on. But it isn't something that is genuine in their own heart. And so John is sort of addressing these. He calls these "generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits that are worthy of repentance," that really demonstrate that you have repented.

There is a great difficulty many times with the person who has developed a pattern in life of doing things that are very detrimental, say in a marriage. Their attitudes and their whole demeanor is destructive in a marital context. The husband is always angry, always upset, always downing his wife, always negative, and she finally has her fill of it. And she says, I don't need to live the rest of my life like this, and she finds an attorney and files for divorce. And then he comes and is devastated because she's filed for divorce. And she won't talk to him. When he calls her on the phone, she just hangs up. And so, you'll say please call her, she respects you, she'll listen. Tell her I've changed. I'm a different man, I've changed. Well, yeah, for a whole two days, you're a different man. But she won't believe it. You see, what they want to see is some fruit of the change and that's basically what John was saying.

Let's see some evidence that proves that changes have actually been made. And that takes sometimes a period of time. You see, if you've been a long time years in a particular kind of a bent, it's awfully hard to believe that you've changed. Now I do believe that you can change. I believe that that's what the Gospel is all about. I believe that there can be an immediate drastic change in a person's life through the entering of Jesus Christ. That's what salvation and the Gospel is all about. And I have seen these dramatic changes that do take place when a person truly accepts the Lord.

But a lot of times, you need just a little space to see if the change is genuine or not. And so John is saying, let's see the fruits, let's see the evidence that changes have been made. "Bring forth the fruits that are worthy of repentance."

And don't just say, We are the children of Abraham, don't rest upon your relationship, your nationality because the Jews sort of felt that because they were Jews, they were saved. Much like a lot of people in the United States. Because they're U.S. citizens, they're Christians. It's not so. And therefore,

Don't say we have Abraham as our father because: God is able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (3:8).

So he declares that,

the ax is now laid to the root of the trees: and every tree therefore which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast in the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then (3:9,10)?

His message brought conviction. You're to make the crooked paths straight, you're to bring down the mountains and the hills, you're to fill in the valleys, and you're to make the rough places smooth. You're to bring forth fruit that demonstrates that you've really changed. And if you don't bring forth fruit, you're going to be cut down. Cast into the fire. It's either repentance and change or you're through with. So they asked him, "What shall we do then?"

He answered and said unto them, If you have two coats, give to him that has none; and if you have meat, do likewise (3:11).

In other words, consider the poor and the needy. Don't be self-centered. Oftentimes, the depressions that

people experience come from self-centeredness. It's because you're constantly thinking about yourself and relating everything to yourself. You're not happy with yourself, you're not happy with your condition, you're not happy the way people are treating you, you're not happy with your job, and it's me, me, me. I don't like this, I don't like that, this is hurting me, this upsets me. And you're into yourself and as I said, if you think about yourself too much, you're bound to get depressed.

Every time I start thinking about me, I get depressed. There are a lot of changes I'd like to see if I could remake me. But a person who is into himself gets depressed. So the people said, What shall we do? He said, Get out of yourselves, start thinking about others. If you have two coats, give one away. If you have extra meat, give it away. Start living for others and considering others and thinking about others. A great way to get out of yourself is to begin to minister to others.

Then came also the publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Master, what shall we do (3:12)?

The publicans were the tax collectors, some of the most hated people in the land. They were considered by the Jews traitors. They were collaborators with Rome. And the tax collectors were over a certain territory and the Roman government would levy a certain amount of tax for that territory and it was the duty of the tax collector to collect the amount that Rome required for that particular territory. Say Orange County, there would be the tax collector and he would have to, the Roman government would say we want so much taxes from Orange County, and it would be his duty to deliver to Rome each year that amount of tax that Rome had considered the county should be paying into the Roman government.

However, the Roman government gave a bonus to the tax collector in that once he had delivered to Rome all of the taxes that they required, anything that he could collect over that amount he could keep personally. And so they were noted to be cheats and to be shysters and to actually push people and overtax people, over assess their goods. And thus, they were wealthy people but they were hated extremely by the people because they were so crooked. So they said to John, "What shall we do?"

And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you (3:13).

In other words, don't try to raise the bonuses by crooked taxation and false assessing the goods of the people but be honest, be fair in your practices.

And the soldiers likewise demanded of John, saying, And what shall we do (3:14)?

He's asking, Bring forth fruit. Alright, what shall we do? Well, the fruit of the change is thinking about others, giving to others, the fruit of the change is not cheating people anymore.

And to the soldiers, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages (3:14).

You've been given authority and authority so often lifts a person. You become arrogant with authority. You've got the power and you're going to exercise and show people that you have the authority and power. And oh, government to me is a pain because you give some of these people a little power and they just make life miserable for everybody else. If you've gone to try and get a building permit lately, it's just terrible the things that you have to go through to do anything anymore. Because people have been given a little authority and a little power and a lot of times, people. Anyhow, he's just saying to them, Look, don't misuse your authority.

And as the people were in expectation (3:15),

Because of the ministry of John, they were excited. There's something happening. You see, the Lord hadn't spoken for about 400 years. From the time of Malachi unto the time of Zacharias, the Lord had not spoken. And now God is speaking and God is beginning to move and they recognize that the word of God is upon this man, the anointing of God is upon his life. And they're drawn, they're hungry for a true move of God. And they're drawn down there to the Jordan river where this fellow who is not polished, he's not wearing a three-piece suit, and he doesn't have white shoes. This guy, he's rugged, he's rough, he's very ruddy individual, coming out of the desert, eating locusts and wild honey. And yet, there's something there that is attracting the people. He's very direct, very straight, calling them to repent, baptizing people and there's a move that is taking place and the people are in a spirit of expectancy. Something's happening. God is moving.

and all men were musing in their hearts concerning John, whether he was the Messiah, or not (3:15);

Could he be the Messiah? There's an anointing on his life. There's something happening. People are being attracted and drawn. Could he be the Messiah?

But John answered [this musing], by saying unto them, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he's going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (3:16):

So to the musing, Is he the Messiah? No. There's One who is coming after me, Who's mightier than I am. I am not really worthy to untie His sandals. And He's going to baptize you, not with water but He'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable (3:17).

In those days, you know that when you harvest wheat that it has a husk around the kernel. And that husk is very unpalatable, it doesn't dissolve in your mouth, it will choke you. It's hard and sort of stiff and thorny almost. Thus when they would harvest the wheat, they would put it out on the floor and then they would walk on it and trample it to break the husk away from the kernel. And then they would sometimes be on a top of a hill and they would throw the wheat into the air and the chaff or this husk is light and the wind would blow it away and just the wheat would fall back down on the floor. Or if they didn't have a windy place, they would take a fan and they would fan the wheat and blow the chaff off with the fan and thus just the wheat would be left. The idea was the separation of the chaff from the wheat, the chaff which was worthless and was burned. To get rid of it, they'd just burn the chaff but the wheat was what they were really interested in.

And so as John is talking about Jesus, He's going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. And His fan is in his hand, and he's going to thoroughly purge the floor, and gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff will be blown away.

In Psalm one, the psalmist talks about "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But whose delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law he meditates day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; whatever he does will prosper. But the wicked are not so: The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which is blown away by the wind" (Psalm 1:1-4). And so here the same kind of an allegory is used concerning Jesus but with the fan in His hand blowing away the chaff which will be burned with an unquenchable fire and the wheat He will gather into His garner.

The King is coming and the King is going to gather the wheat into His garner, into the barn. And yet the chaff, now the main thing then is to determine, Are you wheat or are you chaff? It is important that that distinction is made. There's a lot of chaff and then there is the true wheat and by the grace of God and the work of Jesus Christ, we are the wheat that will be gathered by Him.

And many other things in his exhortation he preached unto the people (3:18).

He's very direct, very straight with them and he exhorted them. He was quite an exhorter.

But Herod the tetrarch (3:19),

That is, Herod Antipas who was over the area around the sea of Galilee, *being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all of the evils which Herod had done (3:19),*

Herod was an evil man, done a lot of evil things. He abused his position of power. He went to Rome and enticed his brother's wife to move back with him to Galilee that she might be the queen. And in fact, they did seek to get him the title of king which sort of put him on the outs with the Roman emperor. But John the Baptist, straight shooter, he said that's not right. What you've done is evil, it's wrong, it's a sin. And it upset Herodias and hell hath no fury like a woman scorned and she was scorned by the prophet and so she was after John. So "Herod was rebuked by John for all the evils he had done," he

Added yet this above all [that he had done thus far], in that he shut up John in prison (3:20).

Now the other gospels tell us how that Herodias' daughter, that would be the stepdaughter of Herod, danced for him and his friends and he was moved lustily for her and said he'd give her anything she wanted,

and she asked for the head of John the Baptist. So this is that Herod.

Now when the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized (3:21),

Luke doesn't tell us how that John first of all objected to Jesus being baptized or baptizing Jesus. He said I need that You should baptize me. But Luke doesn't tell us that, he just tells us that "when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized,

and praying, the heaven was opened (3:21),

This word for prayer, and there are probably seven Greek words or so for prayer, that are supplication, are different aspects and types of prayer, intercession and so forth, this word is all-encompassing. It is a worship and adoration kind of a thing so that, and it's only Luke that tells us that while Jesus was baptized, He was standing there just worshipping. Just in adoration when the heaven was opened. The heaven there is singular which would be the third heaven or the dwelling place of God. There are heavens; there is atmosphere around the earth which is called heaven, there is the celestial heaven—the stars, the moon, the planets and so forth, then there is the heaven which is the actual dwelling place of God. And so it's called the third heaven to distinguish it from the atmosphere around the earth and from the celestial heavens, the dwelling place of God, "the heaven was opened,"

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him (3:22),

Now here is the only place in the scripture that the Holy Spirit is in the form of a dove. In the Talmud, the Hebrew commentary more or less, upon the Pentateuch, when it speaks of Genesis chapter one where the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters, the Talmud in its description and translation talks about how that the Spirit of God in the form of a dove moved over the face of the waters. So that it is in the Talmud but it isn't found in the Bible itself except for here. And here is the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. Interesting that Jesus said, "You're to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Harmless not meaning not being vicious but it's being without guile. It's a way of just saying that you're to be gentle, without guile, like a dove.

And then we know that the dove was the accepted sacrifice for the poor. If they could not afford to bring a lamb, they could bring doves. Now the Spirit of God in the form of a dove, Jesus is to be the sacrifice. And the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, one of the sacrificial animals, descends and lights upon Him.

and the voice of the Father speaks declaring, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased (3:22).

Luke in showing to us the human side of Jesus is the only writer who mentions that Jesus was praying when He was baptized. And Luke tells us that Jesus was praying when He was transfigured. He tells us that Jesus was praying when the disciples came back and were reporting the glorious things that God had done.

In the twelfth chapter of the gospel of John, there are three times when God spoke: at the baptism, and in the twelfth chapter of the gospel of John when the Greeks had come to see Jesus and this is really just before His crucifixion. Jesus there in John chapter twelve beginning with verse twenty-seven said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him" (John 12:27-29). Three times God spoke from heaven.

One, at His baptism. Two, when He was on the mount of transfiguration. And then just before His crucifixion when He was praying that the Father would glorify the Son in His submission to the Father to the cross. In all three instances, it was in relationship to the death of Christ and His obedience to the Father in the death. In Philippians two, as it talks about Jesus emptying Himself, coming in the form of a servant, "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him" (Philippians 2:8,9).

So here at the baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The beginning of His ministry but His whole purpose in coming is that He might submit to the will of the Father and go to the cross and die for our sins. And the interesting thing of Jesus being baptized, it was right what John said, You don't need to be baptized. I need that you should baptize me. But Jesus said, Suffer to be so because it fulfills Me to become all righteousness. Even there He was baptized in John's baptism which was for the repentance of sin. But He

had done no sin. But He was being baptized because He was going to take upon Himself our sin. And for that He was then going to die. So the whole idea of the cross is tied together with the voice of God from heaven declaring His pleasure in His Son.

And then of course on the mount of transfiguration, Moses and Elijah were talking to Him of His death when He went to Jerusalem. Again, the Father spoke from heaven declaring, "This is my beloved son; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). And then when Jesus was submitting there in the last hours, saying "What shall I say? Father, deliver me from this hour: but for this cause I came to the world. Father, glorify thy name. And the voice from heaven again, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:27,28). So that the voice of God from heaven three times confirming Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

John in his gospel talks about John the Baptist was a witness to Jesus. Then his works were a witness. And then how the Spirit bore witness and how that God bore witness. There are people that say I have problems with Jesus. Well then you have a problem with God because He bore witness this is My Son. You have a problem with the Holy Spirit Who testifies of the Son. And you have problems with the works of Jesus and with the Bible itself because this is really the declaration of the Bible that Jesus is the Son of God Who was manifested to take away our sins through His death on the cross for us.

So here we find the three; the Son being baptized, the Holy Spirit descending upon Him, and the Father speaking from heaven. The triunity of the Godhead.

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as it was supposed) (3:23)

Literally in the Greek is according to the law,

the son of Joseph (3:23),

He wasn't actually the son of Joseph but was adopted. Thus by the law He was the son of Joseph.

who was the son of Heli (3:23),

In Matthew's genealogy, he tells us that Joseph was the son of Jacob. Here he is called the son of Heli, a difference. Because here in Luke, we have actually the genealogy of Mary. He was the son of Heli by marriage. In Matthew you have the actual genealogy of Joseph. Here the genealogy of Mary, a son of Heli by marriage, by virtue of his marriage to Mary.

In Matthew's gospel, they trace his genealogy back to Abraham because through David, because the Messiah was to be the descendant of the seed of Abraham. He was also to be of the seed of David. So they traced him back to Abraham through David. In Mary's genealogy, it's traced all the way back to Adam who is the son of God. Luke was writing basically to the Gentiles. And He's not just the Saviour of the Jews, He's the Saviour of the world, all mankind. And thus, he goes back to Adam. And from Adam to David, the genealogies are the same. But at David, the genealogies then change.

In Matthew who is giving the genealogy of Joseph, from David the line comes through Solomon. And on down then to Joseph. In Mary's genealogy, from David it comes to David's son Nathan. And so from David on you're following in Mary a little different genealogy than that of Joseph in that Joseph comes through Solomon and the kingly line of Solomon. Whereas Mary's comes through another son of David, Nathan. So both of them could trace their ancestry back to David, only through different lines of David's family.

But the important thing to really note is in Matthew's genealogy. Coming through Solomon onto Joseph, we have there in the genealogy the, verse eleven, "*And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel*" (Matthew 1:11,12). And it brings it on to Joseph. But the one I wanted to point out was this guy, Jechonias.

Turn back in your Bible to Jeremiah chapter twenty-two, verse thirty, "*Thus saith the LORD [and this is concerning Jechonias], Write you this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah*" (Jeremiah 22:30). So he's called Coniah here which is a shortened form of Jechonias, actually Coniah the Je is Jehovah. And so Coniah, Jeremiah won't recognize it, he's related to Jehovah, he was a wicked king. And so, verse twenty-eight, "*Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?*" [As he was taken to

Babylon.] O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write this man childless, for none of his seed will prosper, or sit on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. (Jeremiah 22:28-30).

Had Jesus been the son of Joseph, He would have been disqualified from sitting on the throne of David which the prophecies declare concerning the Messiah. *"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to order it, and to establish it"* (Isaiah 9:6,7). But you see, He will sit on the throne of David rightfully so because He is a descendant of Nathan who is the son of David. And thus, He can sit upon the throne. If He was through Joseph He could not because of Jechonias' and the curse upon Jechonias because of his evil ways, none of his seed would sit upon the throne of David anymore, ruling in Judah.

So interesting that we have the two genealogies, the one that takes us from Joseph through Jechonias, disqualifying Jesus from the throne. But He's not the son of Joseph, He's actually the Son of God and through Mary, whose line goes back through David through Abraham and traces all the way back to Adam.

So you have your interesting genealogies and as I said, except for a few interesting notes, they're just a lot of names and that's why we told you didn't have to read them because you can't even pronounce half of them.

So next week, we move on into the fourth chapter.

Father, again we thank You for sending Your Son, for His coming into the world to take upon Himself our sins and to give His life as a sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the world. Lord we're so grateful for that which You have done. Lord we pray that our hearts might be prepared for the coming of the Lord. Lord if there are places in our lives that are not pleasing to You, show us Lord what You would have us to do. Search us, Lord, know our hearts. If there are places where we are being lifted up or exalted, Lord bring us down. If there are those Lord who are depressed, bring them up. Lord those that are crooked, make them straight. And help us Lord that we might show forth the fruit of a changed life. May people be able to see the difference in us so that even as with Your disciples, they took stock of them that they had been with Jesus. O Lord, may our fellowship with You and may our walk with You be evidenced by the fruit that comes forth from our lives that others, when they see us and see our good works, will glorify You Lord for what You have done in and through us. And so Lord here we are. We're needy people but we thank You that You're the God of all supply. And that You are able to abundantly meet our needs tonight. And so we come to You Lord, asking that work of Your Spirit to transform and to make us into the image of Jesus Christ our Lord. In His name we pray, Amen.