

Dateline

"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, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,
Luke 3:1-2a ESV

14-37AD Tiberius Caesar - a great general but a terrible leader (Peter Principle) (he was promoted through the ranks and acquired a position that was out of his sweet spot)
Pontius Pilate – we hear more about him later of course.

Tetrarch – referred to four sections of a territory. Luke mentions that Philip (Herod's son by his fifth wife, Cleopatra from Jerusalem-not the Cleopatra you're thinking though.)

Luke gives the detail on the Roman leaders and the Jewish leaders to give an accurate, historical account.

The Word of God Came

v. 2b-3 the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

(John was indwelt with the Holy Spirit before he was born. Luke 1:15 - *for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.*)

There is no record that John studied or was schooled, but that the Word of God came to Him. And he went and proclaimed a baptism repentance and forgiveness of sins.

- John was saying I'm not the Christ but the Christ is coming.
- A baptism of repentance - get your act together now, confess. This is a strong proclamation. John pointed to the One who was coming to take away the sins of the world.

The Delayed Prophet

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. 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, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Luke 3:3-6 ESV

All flesh shall see the salvation of God. - Jews and Gentiles will see Him. John baptizing Jews which was unusual for the Jews of that time. The promise of Christ coming to redeem all is proclaimed again and about to be fulfilled.

It is good to be reminded of Repentance- life change. Repentance means a turning from the old way and going in a completely different direction.

He is on the way and you will see Him
John is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

v. 7-9 "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? 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. 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."

Chop off your sin at the root. John is pretty emphatic here that no ancestry, no deeds of your own doing, but through Christ alone.

v. 10-14 "And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?"" And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." 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."

Interestingly enough, the people ask John "What shall we do?"

John gives them specific instruction that all require them to relinquish control and surrender. Following Christ always requires us to surrender. (We see this very soon when Jesus calls His first disciples in Luke 5.)

- Give to those who need it.
- Be honest in your financial dealings.
- Do your job honorably.

John calls them to give us their double life. John was calling them to faithfulness.

Where is my double life? What am I saying and what am I doing? Do these match up? How am I living faithfully to the call of God on my life?

The evidence of repentance and faithfulness is the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is not manipulated or manufactured by us. These fruit only come through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Allow the group to share prayer requests and pray.

