SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Luke

Chapter Three, Verses 1–38

Prepare the Way of the Lord — a voice in the wilderness, fruit that fits repentance, the heavens opened, and a Son traced back to Adam

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius the word of God comes, not to Rome or the temple, but to John in the wilderness; he calls a nation to repent, points past himself to One mightier, and at the Jordan the Father names Jesus His beloved Son — the Son of Adam, the Son of God. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Luke 3:1–38

voice · fruit · fire · Son · line

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from the wilderness voice to the line that runs back to God

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"AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD." — Luke 3:6

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Luke 3:1–38

Prepare the Way of the Lord — The word of God passes the palaces, comes to John at the Jordan, and points to the beloved Son

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 3 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED △ God — His character & actions Command / instruction Key repeated word Sin / warning ☆ Promise / blessing Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 3:22

"and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "△ You are My beloved Son, ☆ in You I am well-pleased.""

† Before the Passage

Luke 1–2 told the two birth stories side by side — John to old Zacharias and Elizabeth, Jesus to Mary — and closed with Jesus at twelve in His Father's house (2:41–52), then years of quiet growth in Nazareth (2:51–52). Chapter 3 jumps about eighteen years. John, who "lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel" (1:80), now appears, and Luke dates it the way the prophets dated their books: names of kings, and then "the word of God came" (compare Jeremiah 1:1–3). Sproul: "Luke is very careful and meticulous to give us the historical framework in which John the Baptist appeared."

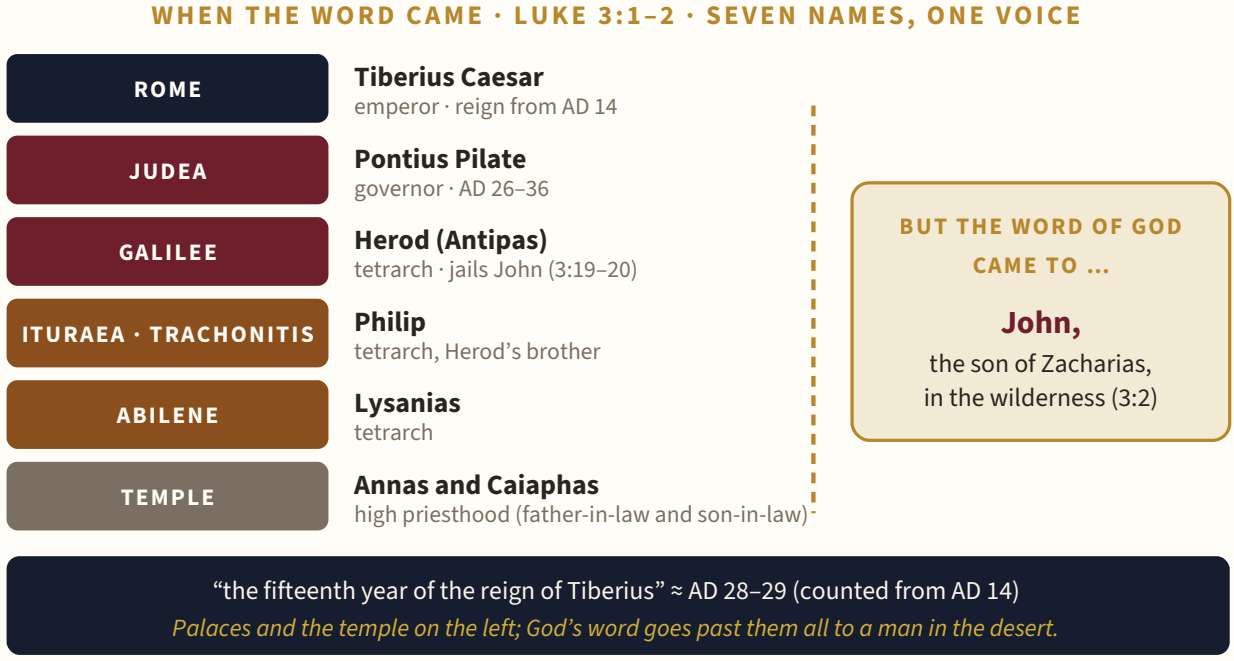
The list in verses 1–2 is a who's who of power. Tiberius had ruled since AD 14, so his fifteenth year falls about AD 28–29. Pontius Pilate governed Judea for Rome (AD 26–36). Two sons of Herod the Great held tetrarchies: Herod Antipas in Galilee and Perea, and Philip in the northeast; Lysanias ruled Abilene north of Damascus. The temple had two high priests at once: Annas, deposed by Rome years before but still the power behind the

office, and his son-in-law Caiaphas (John 18:13). Guzik: “This is not a fairy tale beginning with “once upon a time.””

Behind John stand the last pages of the Old Testament. Isaiah promised a voice preparing a highway for the LORD (Isaiah 40:3–5, quoted in vv. 4–6), and Malachi promised a messenger to clear the way (Malachi 3:1) and Elijah before the great day of the LORD (Malachi 4:5–6). The angel had said John would go “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (1:17). Sproul notes the gap: “Suddenly, after four hundred years of prophetic silence, out of the wilderness came a man…”

The scene is the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea, below Jerusalem and Jericho, at the edge of the Judean wilderness. Luke gives three panels: John’s preaching (vv. 1–20), Jesus’ baptism (vv. 21–22), and Jesus’ genealogy (vv. 23–38). He finishes John’s story first — even his arrest (vv. 19–20) — before he tells of Jesus’ baptism, so the stage is clear for the One John announced. John 3:24 shows John was in fact still free for a time after Jesus began; Luke is arranging by topic, not by calendar.

FIGURE · WHEN THE WORD CAME



Luke names the powerful of Rome, Judea, Galilee and the temple, then tells us God’s word passed them by and came to John in the wilderness.

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 3:1–6

The Word of God Came to John

Seven rulers, one wilderness voice, and Isaiah’s highway for the Lord

> [1] *Now* ◷ *in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,* [2] *in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,* △ *the word of God came to*

John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. [3] *And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;* [4] *as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.* [5] *'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;* [6] *AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.'"*

LUKE 3:1–6

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts."

MALACHI 3:1

ῥῆμα

RHĒMA · "WORD" · G4487

Luke does not say John found a message; he says "the word (*rhēma*) of God came to John." *Rhēma* is a spoken word, a thing said. The Greek Old Testament uses this kind of phrase for the prophets — the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, to Hosea, to Jonah. Luke has used the same noun already: "nothing will be impossible with God" is literally "no word (*rhēma*) will be impossible" (1:37), and Mary answers, "may it be done to me according to your word" (1:38). The prophetic word that had been silent for centuries is speaking again.

μετάνοια

METANOIA · "REPENTANCE" · G3341

From *meta* (after, change) and *noeō* (to think): a change of mind that turns the whole man around. John preached "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (v. 3) — the washing was the outward sign of a turned heart, and forgiveness was the goal. Sproul: "This was not New Testament baptism"; it prepared Israel for the One who was coming. Verse 8 shows repentance is not only inside: it bears fruit you can see.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik stresses that Luke anchors the gospel in history: "This is not a fairy tale beginning with "once upon a time."" The men named were powerful and, in his reading, corrupt — Rome cruel, Herod immoral, the high priests more interested in power than in God. Into that world John came with good news, not only bad: "John's great message was that things can be set right." Isaiah's picture of valleys filled and mountains brought low is the work of repentance in a heart, and Guzik notes where John put the problem: "John made them see that when you got right down to it, the problem was really with me, not them."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's sermon "The Ministry of John the Baptist" (5 February 2012) starts with the dates: "Luke is very careful and meticulous to give us the historical framework in which John the Baptist appeared." He sets that against theologies that cut the faith loose from real history. Then he turns to the wilderness: "The Word of the Lord arrived during John's wilderness experience," and "after four hundred years of prophetic silence, out of the wilderness came a man." John's baptism, he says, differed from the proselyte washing: "This was not New Testament baptism." Isaiah's highway is for God Himself — "So, John says, "Prepare the way," not of the king, but the way of God." Getting ready means humbling pride and clearing away the obstacles of a sinful heart: "This is the message—to prepare for the presence of Jesus."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry explains why Luke dates John so carefully: "John's baptism introducing a new dispensation, it was requisite that we should have a particular account of it." He takes comfort in where the word landed: "As the word of the Lord is not bound in a prison, so it is not lost in a wilderness." John's whole aim was "to bring all the people of his country off from their sins and home to their God." Isaiah's leveled road is the heart made ready: "John's business is to make way for the entertainment of the gospel in the hearts of the people," and the gospel "has made the way to heaven plain and easy to be found, smooth and easy to be walked in."

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 3:7–14

Fruits in Keeping with Repentance

Vipers, an axe at the root, and three plain answers to "What shall we do?"

7 *So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* 8 *"Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.* 9 *"Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* 10 *And the crowds were questioning him, saying, "Then what shall we do?"* 11 *And he would answer and say to them, "The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise."* 12 *And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"* 13 *And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."* 14 *Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."*

LUKE 3:7–14

FIGURE · "WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

"WHAT SHALL WE DO?" · THREE QUESTIONS, THREE ANSWERS · LUKE 3:10–14

THE CROWDS v10–11	TAX COLLECTORS v12–13	SOLDIERS v14
Two tunics? Share with him who has none — food likewise.	Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.	No money by force, no false accusation; be content with wages.
greed → generosity	theft → honesty	force → contentment

No one is told to quit his job. Each is told to stop sinning in the place where he already stands.

Three groups ask the same question; John gives each a plain answer that turns the sin of his station into its opposite.

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν

GENNĒMATA ECHIDNŌN · "BROOD OF VIPERS" · G1081, G2191

Gennēma is offspring, what is born of something; *echidna* is a poisonous snake. John calls the crowd the children of snakes — the opposite of what they claimed: "We have Abraham for our father" (v. 8). Behind it may stand Genesis 3:15 and the serpent's seed. Jesus later uses the same words to the Pharisees (Matthew 12:34; 23:33). Guzik: "Addressing your audience as a family of snakes is not a customary way to begin a sermon."

ἀρκεῖσθε

ARKEISTHE · "BE CONTENT" · G714

From *arkeō*, to be enough, to be satisfied with. John's last word to the soldiers is "be content with your wages (*opsōnion*, G3800)" — the soldier's ration-money. Paul uses the same verb: "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" (1 Timothy 6:8), and Hebrews 13:5 ties contentment to the promise "I will never desert you." A man who is content does not need to bully or lie for more.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes John's opening was no flattery: "Addressing your audience as a family of snakes is not a customary way to begin a sermon." He hears the warning about Abraham as a warning against trusting heritage, and he presses the fruit: "True repentance will always have fruit," and that fruit is chiefly love. What strikes him about the answers is how ordinary they are: God "often, He instead looks for integrity in the ordinary things." Tax collectors and soldiers are not told to quit: "John did not see tax collecting or soldiering as inherently evil."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "John Preaches" (19 February 2012) distinguishes contrition — real sorrow for offending God — from attrition, sorrow that only fears the punishment. John will not let heritage cover a fruitless life: "Do not talk to me about Abraham when I tell you about fruits worthy of repentance." He puts it bluntly: "If you are converted, show me. Bring forth the fruit worthy of repentance," and "You cannot be converted and be a thief." Sproul also draws from John's "prophetic criticism" the duty of the church to be the conscience of the state.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In his exposition of Luke 3, Spurgeon hears the old prophet in John: "Does not John the Baptist speak like Elijah? Here are no honeyed phrases to delight the popular ear." He admires how down to earth the answers are: "John was wonderfully practical in his advocacy of a holy charity and benevolence." The publicans' sin was well known — "They were accustomed to gather the taxes unfairly, and to increase the rates by oppressing the people" — and John named it. So with the soldiers: "John does not mince matters with any of his hearers; he speaks with wonderful plainness and courage."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry presses the warning: "There is no way of fleeing from the wrath to come, but by repentance." Pedigree is no shelter — "What will it avail us to be the children of godly parents if we be not godly," and "Barren trees will be cast into the fire at length." Repentance must be lived: "Those that profess repentance are highly concerned to live like penitents." To the publicans he applies a public rule — "The public revenues must be applied to the public service, and not to gratify the avarice of private persons" — and he sees the soldiers' root sin: "It is discontent with what they have that makes men oppressive and injurious."

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 3:15-20

One Mightier Than I

Water and fire, the winnowing fork, and a prophet locked away

15 *Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to*
whether he was the Christ, 16 *John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but*
△ One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; ☆ He will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 *"His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and*
to gather the wheat into His barn; but ⚠ He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 18 *So with many*
other exhortations ☆ he preached the gospel to the people. 19 *But when Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by*
him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of ⚠ all the wicked things which Herod had done,
20 *Herod also added this to them all: ⚠ he locked John up in prison.*

LUKE 3:15-20

πτύον

PTYON · "WINNOWING FORK" · G4425

A wooden fork or shovel for tossing threshed grain into the wind, so the heavy wheat falls back and the light chaff blows off. Only here and in the parallel, Matthew 3:12. The threshing floor was a flat, beaten place, often on a hill to catch the breeze. John pictures the Messiah already holding the fork — the sorting is near. The same Christ who gathers wheat into His barn burns the chaff "with unquenchable fire" (v. 17): the fire of verse 16 both purifies and judges.

ἱκανός

HIKANOS · "FIT" · G2425

Sufficient, worthy, qualified. Untying sandals was a slave's job — the lowest task in the house — and John says he is not even fit for that. The centurion of Luke 7:6 uses the same word: "I am not worthy for You to come under my roof." Spurgeon preached on the latchet: "Nothing is dishonourable by which Jesus may be honoured." Verse 19's "reprimanded" is *elenchō* (G1651), to expose and convict — what John did to Herod, and what it cost him.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sees John's greatness in his smallness: "John had many reasons to be proud, yet he was humble." The crowd wondered whether he was the Christ, and he turned every eye to the One coming. The baptism with the Spirit and fire is God's cleansing work — "God's power is always a transforming power, a purifying power" — and it separates, like the winnowing of wheat from chaff. Then Luke reports the cost of John's faithfulness: "Because John made such a bold stand for the truth, Herod, who was steeped in immorality, punished him."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul reads verses 15–17 in "John Preaches": John knows his water is only preparation; the One coming "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire," and "His winnowing fan is in His hand." For Sproul the point is urgency — judgment is not far off but at the door, and the sorting of wheat and chaff is the Messiah's own work.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Loosing the Shoe-Latchet" (No. 1044, 31 March 1872) admires a strong man bowing low: "It was not John's business to attract followers to himself but to point them to Jesus." From the sandal-strap he draws three lessons — no holy service is too small, "nothing is trivial for the Lord"; our unworthiness is felt in all real service; and that sense should drive us to work, not to quit. "Oh, for high thoughts of Christ, and low thoughts of ourselves!" "Anything for Jesus, the lower the better." And John proved it: "Never a more indefatigable worker than John the Baptist."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry hears the dawn coming: "We are now drawing near to the appearance of our Lord Jesus publicly; the Sun will not be long after the morning-star." He sets John's work beside Christ's: "John can only promise them that they shall be safe; but Christ will make them so." The threshing floor belongs to Christ — "He will thoroughly purge his floor; it is his own." Then the prison: Herod was rebuked "not only for living in incest with his brother Philip's wife," and "he could not bear it, but contracted an antipathy to him for his plain dealing." Henry grieves: "Must he be silenced who is the voice of one crying in the wilderness?"

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 3:21-22

You Are My Beloved Son

Jesus baptized and praying, the heavens opened, the Spirit and the Father's voice

> 21 *Now when all the people were* ⟲ *baptized*, *Jesus was also* ⟲ *baptized*, *and* △ *while He was praying, heaven was opened*, 22 *and* △ *the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove*, *and a voice came out of heaven, "* △ *You are My beloved Son*, ☆ *in You I am well-pleased*."
>
> LUKE 3:21-22

> *"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations."*
>
> ISAIAH 42:1

> *"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."*
>
> PSALM 2:7

εὐδόκησα

EUDOKĒSA · "I AM WELL-PLEASED" · G2106

From *eu* (well) and *dokeō* (to think): to think well of, to take delight in. The aorist speaks of a settled delight. The words gather two Old Testament lines into one sentence — "You are My Son" (Psalm 2:7, the King) and "My chosen one in whom My soul delights" (Isaiah 42:1, the Servant). The angels used the noun at His birth: peace among men "with whom He is pleased" (*eudokia*, 2:14). The Father's pleasure rests first on the Son, and only in Him on us.

προσευχομένου

PROSEUCHOMENOU · "WHILE HE WAS PRAYING" · G4336

Only Luke tells us Jesus was praying when heaven opened. It is the first of many prayer scenes he alone records — before choosing the Twelve (6:12), before Peter's confession (9:18), at the Transfiguration (9:28–29), on the cross (23:34, 46). The present participle pictures Him in the act of prayer. The Son who did not need cleansing still needed communion with His Father, and Luke wants his readers to see it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik answers the old question directly: "Jesus did not receive baptism because He was a sinner that needed to repent and be cleansed from His sins." He was identifying Himself with the sinners He came to save. Guzik notes that Luke alone says Jesus was praying, and that the scene shows God as He is: "The three Persons of the Trinity were all manifested at once." He hears Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42 in the Father's words and a foretaste of Pentecost in the Spirit's coming. "This wasn't just another sinner being baptized; this was the sinless, Eternal Son of God."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Baptism of Jesus" (26 February 2012) builds on Matthew's report of Jesus' words: "It's necessary to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus is the second Adam, obeying every demand of the law that Adam broke, so that His active obedience can be credited to His people. "Only one person has ever satisfied the law of God, and that's Jesus." Sproul tells of J. Gresham Machen's dying telegram — "Grateful for the perfect active obedience of Christ." At the Jordan, "The heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove to empower Him for His redemptive mission," and the Father declared His pleasure.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry fastens on Luke's detail that Jesus was praying: "Prayer is an ordinance that opens heaven," and "sin had shut up heaven, but Christ's prayer opened it again." What opened over the Son opens for His people: "Thus was there opened to Christ, and by him to us, a new and living way into the holiest." The sign was also for the Baptist — "It was intended to be a notification to John" that this was the One — and it marks the start of the ministry: "When he begins to preach, the Spirit of the Lord is upon him."

V
MOVEMENT

LUKE 3:23-38

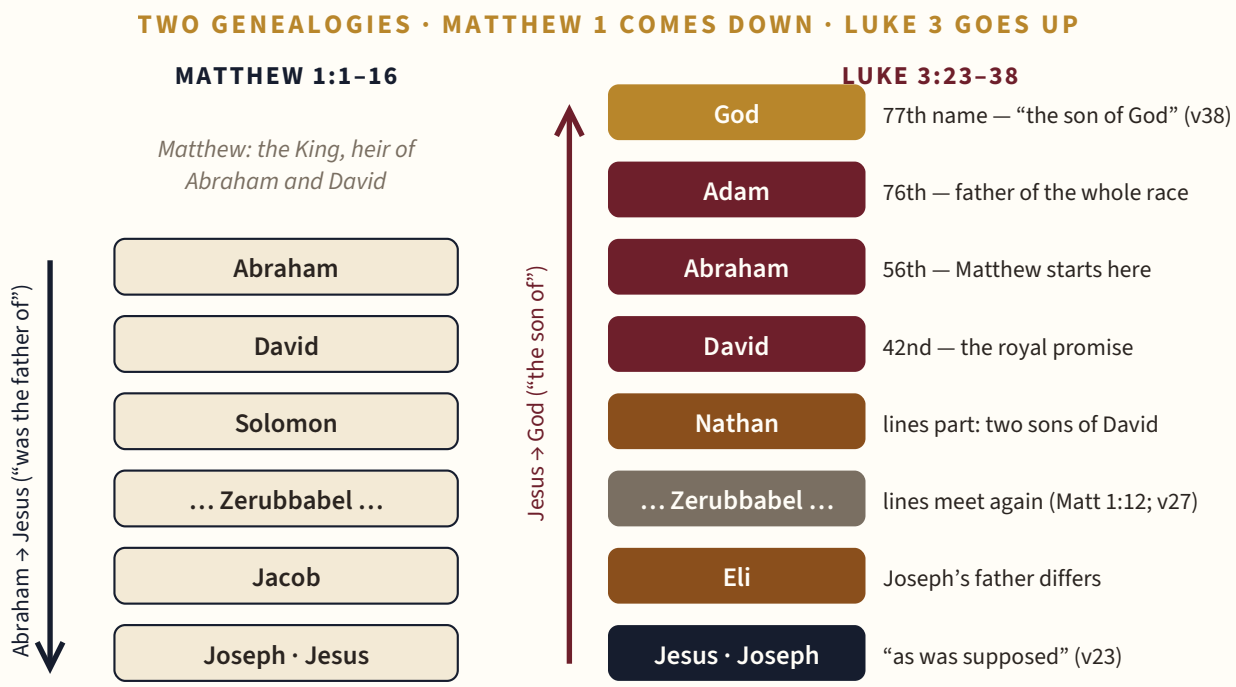
The Son of Adam, the Son of God

About thirty, "as was supposed" the son of Joseph — and seventy-seven names to God

23 *When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,* 24 *the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,* 25 *the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Naggai,* 26 *the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda,* 27 *the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri,* 28 *the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,* 29 *the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi,* 30 *the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,* 31 *the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,* 32 *the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon,* 33 *the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,* 34 *the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,* 35 *the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah,* 36 *the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,* 37 *the son of MethuSelah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,* 38 *the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*

LUKE 3:23-38

FIGURE · TWO GENEALOGIES



Matthew counts down from Abraham to Jesus through Solomon; Luke climbs up from Jesus through Nathan, past Abraham and Adam, to God.

ἐνομίζετο

ENOMIZETO · "AS WAS SUPPOSED" · G3543

From *nomizō*, to think, to hold as customary. Luke has already told the virgin birth (1:34–35), so he guards it here: Jesus was the son of Joseph in the eyes of the law and the town (4:22), not by blood. Sproul adds that after Joseph the Greek simply says "of Eli, of Matthat …" — "The word "son" doesn't occur in the original language," so the links can mean son, grandson or legal heir.

ἀρχόμενος

ARCHOMENOS · "WHEN HE BEGAN" · G756

Luke's phrase is "Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, beginning" — *archomai*, to begin. Thirty was the age Levites began service (Numbers 4:3), Joseph stood before Pharaoh (Genesis 41:46), and David became king (2 Samuel 5:4). Luke uses the same verb for the start of the gospel story in Acts 1:1 — "all that Jesus began to do and teach."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that thirty marked full maturity in Jewish thinking, and he faces the difference from Matthew: "According to ancient custom, genealogies were almost always traced through the father, not the mother." Still, he concludes, "The best explanation for this seems to be that Luke followed Mary's line," with Matthew giving Joseph's legal, royal line. He presents that as the best explanation, not a certainty. And the direction matters: "Luke traced his genealogy all the way back to Adam," because Jesus belongs to all mankind.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Genealogy of Jesus" (11 March 2012) treats the list as inspired and worth study. He is candid: "Obviously, at least one of these genealogies is by no means complete," and on the Mary view, "I'd like to think that his version is from Mary's side of the family, but I can't prove that beyond a shadow of a doubt." He asks the key question: "Why does he go to Adam, who is the representative of the whole human race?" Matthew writes for Jews; Luke shows a Savior for Jew and Gentile. "So, Jesus' lineage is traced to Adam and to God," and the next scene follows: "Even as the first Adam was tempted in the garden, so now the new Adam is tempted by Satan in the wilderness."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry contrasts the two lists: "Matthew designed to show that Christ was the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed," while Luke "traces his pedigree upward as high as Adam." He does not pretend every difficulty is easy, and he does not let them shake him: "It is well for us that our salvation doth not depend upon our being able to solve all these difficulties." The last line of the list is the point: "He was both the Son of Adam and the Son of God that he might be a proper Mediator between God and the sons of Adam."

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the serpent's seed and Isaiah's highway to the Son who is the last Adam

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

GENESIS 3:15

"A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."

ISAIAH 40:3

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD."

MALACHI 4:5

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

JOHN 1:29

"I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'"

JOHN 1:33

> *"For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."*
>
> ROMANS 5:19

> *"So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."*
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul links the genealogy to the scene that follows and to Paul: Luke never states the "second Adam" idea in so many words, but "The Gospels tell us what happened, and the Epistles tell us the meaning or significance of what happened."

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and its history; Sproul presses doctrine — real history, true repentance, Christ's active obedience; Spurgeon preaches John's humility and plain speech; Henry turns each line into counsel. They differ gently on the genealogy — Guzik leans to Mary's line, Sproul hopes so but cannot prove it — and agree that John's whole work was to point away from himself to Jesus.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The voice	Not "once upon a time"; things can be set right; the problem is me.	Meticulous history; 400 years of silence end; prepare for God Himself.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	The word is not lost in a wilderness; bring them home to God.
II · Fruit and the axe	A family of snakes; true repentance always has fruit; integrity in ordinary things.	Contrition, not attrition; "If you are converted, show me."	Like Elijah — no honeyed phrases; wonderfully practical charity.	No escape but repentance; discontent makes men oppressive.
III · Spirit and fire	Every reason to be proud, yet humble; a purifying power.	The Messiah's fork is in His hand — judgment is at the door.	Point to Jesus; nothing trivial for the Lord; the lower the better.	The Sun after the morning-star; John promises safety, Christ makes it.
IV · The beloved Son	Not baptized as a sinner; the Trinity at once.	Fulfilling all righteousness; the second Adam's active obedience.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Prayer opens heaven; a new and living way for us.
V · The line to God	Best explanation: Mary's line; back to Adam for all mankind.	One list incomplete; hopes it is Mary's; to Adam and to God.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Son of Adam and Son of God — a proper Mediator.

LUKE 3:1–38 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The word skipped the palace.** Luke names an emperor, a governor, three tetrarchs and two high priests (vv1–2) — and then "the word of God came to John … in the wilderness." God's word is not owned by the powerful. THE TEXT
- **Silence broken.** Sproul: "after four hundred years of prophetic silence, out of the wilderness came a man." Malachi's last promise — a messenger and Elijah — begins to come true. SPROUL
- **The highway is for God.** Isaiah 40 is a road for the LORD Himself; John prepares for Jesus. Sproul: "This is the message—to prepare for the presence of Jesus." SPROUL
- **Repentance bears fruit.** Guzik: "True repentance will always have fruit." Sproul: "You cannot be converted and be a thief." Heritage ("We have Abraham") is no substitute (v8). GUZIK
- **Holiness starts at your post.** Crowds share, tax collectors stop padding the bill, soldiers stop bullying and are content (vv10–14). No one is told to quit; each is told to quit his sin. THE TEXT
- **The lower the better.** John was not fit to untie a slave's strap (v16). Spurgeon: "Nothing is dishonourable by which Jesus may be honoured." SPURGEON
- **Fire purifies and fire judges.** The same Christ baptizes with the Spirit and fire and burns the chaff with unquenchable fire (vv16–17). Guzik: "God's power is always a transforming power, a purifying power." GUZIK

- **Truth to power costs.** John rebuked Herod for Herodias "and … all the wicked things" — and Herod "added this to them all" (vv19–20). Prison was the price of plain speech. THE TEXT
- **Heaven opened to a praying Son.** Only Luke says "while He was praying" (v21). Father, Son and Spirit appear together, and the Father says, "You are My beloved Son." THE GREEK
- **A Savior for every son of Adam.** Matthew starts with Abraham; Luke climbs to "Adam, the son of God" (v38). Sproul: the first Adam was tempted in the garden; the new Adam will be tempted in the wilderness (4:1–13). SPROUL

† Questions for the Table

1 **God's word passed by the emperor and the high priest and came to a man in the desert. Where has God met me — in what "wilderness" of my life?**

The word of God came to John in the wilderness.

3:1-2; Hos 2:14

2 **What "mountains" of pride and "ravines" of neglect in me need to be leveled or filled so I am ready for Jesus?**

Every ravine will be filled, every mountain brought low.

3:4-6; Isa 40:3-5

3 **What am I tempted to lean on instead of real repentance — my family, my church, my past, my baptism?**

Do not begin to say, 'We have Abraham for our father.'

3:8-9

4 **If I asked John, "What shall I do?", what would he name in my job, my money, or the way I treat people?**

Integrity in the ordinary things (Guzik).

3:10-14

5 **John said, "I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals." What small, unseen service could I do for Jesus this week?**

Anything for Jesus, the lower the better (Spurgeon).

3:16; Phil 2:5-8

6 **The Father said to Jesus, "in You I am well-pleased." What does it mean for me that God's pleasure rests on me only in Christ?**

Only one person has ever satisfied the law of God (Sproul).

3:21-22; Eph 1:6

Luke 3 begins with seven powerful names and ends with seventy-seven names that climb to God. Between them a plain-spoken prophet tells ordinary men to turn from their sin, points away from himself, and goes to prison for the truth — and the heavens open over the praying Son. Prepare the way: bear the fruit, take the low place, and look to the beloved Son in whom the Father is well-pleased.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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