LUKE 3

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

> *“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 3:22

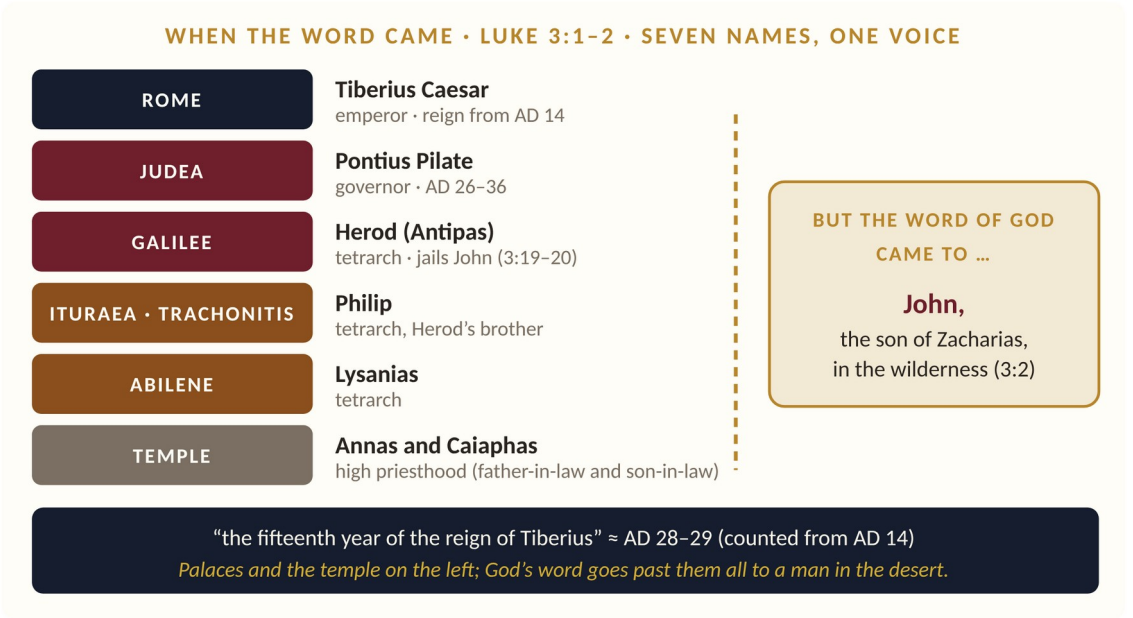
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where we are in Luke

1. 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…

2. The list in verses 1–2 is a who's who of power.

3. Behind John stand the last pages of the Old Testament.



The Word of God Came to John

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

LUKE 3:3

And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

DAVID GUZIK

Not "once upon a time"; things can be set right; the problem is me.

R.C. SPROUL

Meticulous history; 400 years of silence end; prepare for God Himself.

MATTHEW HENRY

The word is not lost in a wilderness; bring them home to God.

ῥῆμα
RHĒMA · "WORD"

Luke does not say John found a message; he says "the word (rhēma) of God came to John."

Fruits in Keeping with Repentance

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

LUKE 3:7

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?

DAVID GUZIK

A family of snakes; true repentance always has fruit; integrity in ordinary things.

R.C. SPROUL

Contrition, not attrition; "If you are converted, show me."

C.H. SPURGEON

Like Elijah — no honeyed phrases; wonderfully practical charity.

MATTHEW HENRY

No escape but repentance; discontent makes men oppressive.

γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν
GENNĒMATA ECHIDNŌN · "BROOD OF VIPERS"

Gennēma is offspring, what is born of something; echidna is a poisonous snake.

“What shall we do?”



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.

One Mightier Than I

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

LUKE 3:16

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Every reason to be proud, yet humble; a purifying power.

R.C. SPROUL

The Messiah's fork is in His hand — judgment is at the door.

C.H. SPURGEON

Point to Jesus; nothing trivial for the Lord; the lower the better.

MATTHEW HENRY

The Sun after the morning-star; John promises safety, Christ makes it.

πτύον

PTYON · "WINNOWING FORK"

A wooden fork or shovel for tossing threshed grain into the wind, so the heavy wheat falls back and the light chaff blows off.

You Are My Beloved Son

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

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."

DAVID GUZIK

Not baptized as a sinner; the Trinity at once.

R.C. SPROUL

Fulfilling all righteousness; the second Adam's active obedience.

MATTHEW HENRY

Prayer opens heaven; a new and living way for us.

εὐδόκησα

EUDOKĒSA · "I AM WELL-PLEASED"

From eu (well) and dokeō (to think): to think well of, to take delight in.

The Son of Adam, the Son of God

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

LUKE 3:23

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,

DAVID GUZIK

Best explanation: Mary's line; back to Adam for all mankind.

R.C. SPROUL

One list incomplete; hopes it is Mary's; to Adam and to God.

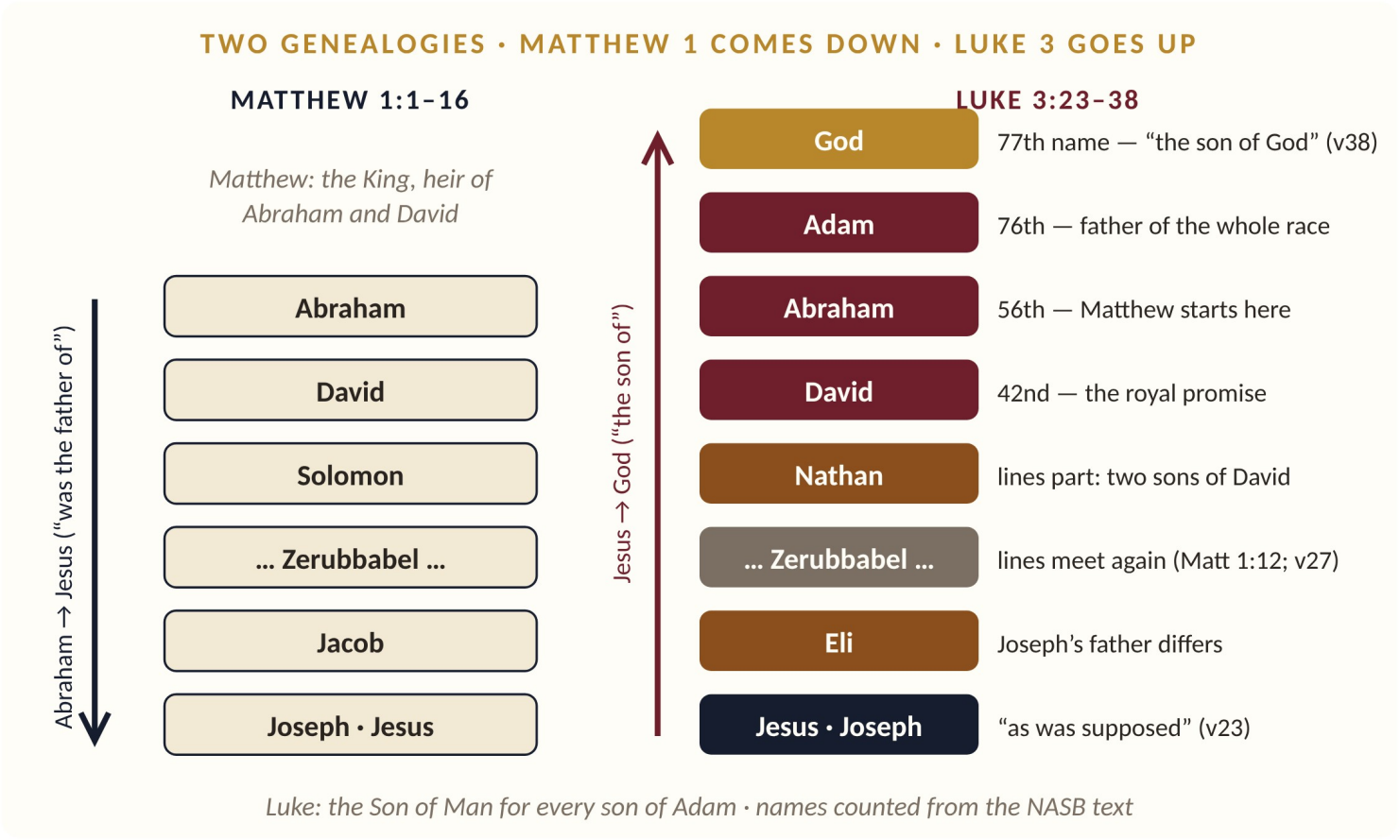
MATTHEW HENRY

Son of Adam and Son of God — a proper Mediator.

ἐνομίζετο
ENOMIZETO · "AS WAS SUPPOSED"

From nomizō, to think, to hold as customary.

Two genealogies



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

What to carry from this chapter

1

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."

2

Silence broken.

Sproul: "after four hundred years of prophetic silence, out of the wilderness came a man."

3

The highway is for God.

Isaiah 40 is a road for the LORD Himself; John prepares for Jesus.

4

Repentance bears fruit.

Guzik: "True repentance will always have fruit."

More to carry

5

Holiness starts at your post.

Crowds share, tax collectors stop padding the bill, soldiers stop bullying and are content (vv10–14).

6

The lower the better.

John was not fit to untie a slave's strap (v16).

7

Fire purifies and fire judges.

The same Christ baptizes with the Spirit and fire and burns the chaff with unquenchable fire (vv16–17).

8

Truth to power costs.

John rebuked Herod for Herodias "and … all the wicked things" — and Herod "added this to them all" (vv19–20).

Talk it through

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?

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

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

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

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?

CLOSING

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

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Luke study page.