

1 When have you ever had an account of the things that have been hidden away in you, or they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and narrators of the fact? With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I am decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

In the nation of Palestine King Herod then was a proud man named Zachariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abiathar. His wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God.

Zachariah asked the angel "How can it be that I am old and my wife is still young?"

The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day happens because you did not believe my words, which will come true at this appointed time."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zachariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, so he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. The Lord has done this for you, as he said, "If there can be no shadow for him and yet not a shadow for the people."

to you, and I must still remain because of my birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is now in the sixth month. So other formalized child, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. To tell me back about the people of Israel in the Lord that God had his will on him before the Lord, in the spirit and power of the Holy Spirit, the words of the promise to your child and the abundance in the vision of the righteous. I must really tell a people prepared for the Lord."

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summarized, for everything God will come true. "I am the Lord's servant. My message, 'May you want to be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her."

At that time Mary got up and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zachariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? How is it possible for me to greet my neighbor?"

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbor and relatives heard that the Lord would fulfill his promise to her.

On the eighth day they come to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zachariah, but his mother insisted and said, "No! He is to be called John."

They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

Then they made signs to his father to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's amazement he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered what it was, "What has happened to this child going to be?" for the Lord's hand was with him.

His father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has sent up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets in long ages):

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered down who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped the upright and has been a refuge for the oppressed and the down-trodden. He has sent his word and raised them up.

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And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the time for his purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called both to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came on the Spirit into the temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, so as to him according to the custom of the Law to make him up to his own and to bless God and say,

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for praise among all nations."

And when they had performed these things, Simeon took the child in his arms and began to praise God and to say, "My heart is consoled, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for praise among all nations."

Now his parents were to return every year to the Feast of the Passover. And

THAT YOU MAY HAVE CERTAINITY

Luke

3:1-20

John Prepares the Way

Our Three Questions

1. What does it say?

- Authorial intent to intended audience

2. What does it mean?

- Timeless theological truth

3. How does it apply?

- Landing it in our lives

Luke 3:1-20

¹ 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,

Luke 3:1-20

² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 3:1-20

⁴ 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. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

Luke 3:1-20

and the crooked shall become straight,
and the rough places shall become level
ways,⁶ and all flesh shall see the
salvation of God.””

⁷ He said therefore to the crowds that
came out to be baptized by him,

Luke 3:1-20

“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ 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.

Luke 3:1-20

⁹ 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.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” ¹¹ And he answered them,

Luke 3:1-20

“Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.”¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”¹³ And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.”

Luke 3:1-20

14 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.”

15 As the people were in expectation,

Luke 3:1-20

and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, ¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

Luke 3:1-20

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Luke 3:1-20

¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. ¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰ added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

Luke 3:1-20

Luke 3:1-2 – The context

Luke 3:3-6 – John's purpose

Luke 3:7-9 – John's message

Luke 3:10-14 – Repentance on the ground

Luke 3:15-17 – John and Christ

Luke 3:18-20 – John's fate

Luke 3:1-2

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and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,
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Luke 3:1-2

- **This is anchored in history.**
- **This is later (about 18 years)**
- **John's commissioning with the word**

Luke 3:3-6

³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming 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:

Luke 3:3-6

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ 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, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Luke 3:3-6

- **Preparing the way for Jesus**
 - **Making it easier for them**
 - **This is for all people**

Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Luke 3:3-6

- Preparing the way for Jesus
 - Making it easier for them
- This is for all people

Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Matthew 3:3 & Mark 1:2-3

Luke 3:7-9

7 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? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves,

Luke 3:7-9

‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.⁹ 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.”

Luke 3:7-9

- **You're a bunch of wretches!**
 - **Rhetorical question**
 - **Ritual: not good enough**
 - **Being Jewish: not good enough**
- **Judgment is coming**

Luke 3:10-14

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” ¹¹ And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”

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Luke 3:10-14

An authentic response to rebuke

- **Clothe the naked**
- **Feed the hungry**
- **Tax Collectors**
- **Soldiers**

Luke 3:15-17

¹⁵ As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, ¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming,

Luke 3:15-17

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Luke 3:15-17

Is John the one they need? No.

John – Jesus

Water – Holy Spirit

Might & Worth

Warning of judgment – bringing judgment

Luke 3:18-20

¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. ¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reprovved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰ added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

Luke 3:18-20

- This was “good news”
- Herod sleeping with sister-in-law...
- John thrown in prison
 - Mark 6:20 & Matthew 14:5

What do we learn

John's successful preparation:

- Sin is sin ... and everyone is guilty
- Judgment is coming
 - Love people
- I'm not the savior
- Jesus is who you need!

Application

Our job is not that different than John's

Sin → Judgment → Jesus

Love people – Humility

Questions

Did anything jump out at you from the text or the message?

When you think about John's message that begins with sin and judgment, what is your knee-jerk reaction? Do messages about sin and judgment not sit well with you or do you actually prefer to be called out?

Do you find it difficult to call sin, sin? Do you find it difficult to talk about judgment to come? If so why do you think that is?

Is there a fear of the Herods of the world?

What sub-cultures do you belong to? In those spaces are there normative sins? How are you doing in those spaces with those same behaviors? Do you participate?

Is there someone in your life that you need to talk to about sin, judgment, and Jesus? Who is it and how can you go have that conversation?