

The Gospel of Luke
Chapter 3
(Luke 3:1-38)

Outline of the Chapter:

- I. Preface: The Method and Purpose of Writing, **Luke 1:1-4.**
- II. The Identification of the Son of Man with Men, **Luke 1:5-4:13.**
 - A. The Announcement of the Birth of John the Baptist, **Luke 1:5-25.**
 - B. The Announcement of the Birth of the Son of Man, **Luke 1:26-56.**
 - C. The Advent of John the Baptist, **Luke 1:57-80.**
 - D. The Advent of the Son of Man, **Luke 2:1-20.**
 - E. The Adoration of the Baby, **Luke 2:21-38.**
 - F. The Advancement of the Boy, **Luke 2:39-52.**
 - G. **The Baptism of the Son of Man, Luke 3:1-22.**
 - H. **The Genealogy of the Son of Man, Luke 3:23-38.**
 - I. The Temptation of the Son of Man, **Luke 4:1-13.**

In **Chapter 3**, we have two main sections:

- G. The Baptism of the Son of Man, Luke 3:1-22.**
- H. The Genealogy of the Son of Man, Luke 3:23-38.**

The first section, **The Baptism of the Son of Man, Luke 3:1-22**, includes:

1. A historical reckoning of both John the Baptist's and Jesus' ministry beginning, **vs. 1-2.**
2. The prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in John, **vs. 3-6.**
3. John's fiery preaching, **vs. 7-14.**
4. John preaches the Gospel and coming of Jesus's ministry, **vs. 15-18.**
5. John preaches against Herod and Herod's retribution toward John, **vs. 19-20.**
6. Jesus' Baptism by John, **vs. 21-22.**

The second section, **The Genealogy of the Son of Man, Luke 3:23-38**, includes:

1. Jesus' genealogy through His mother Mary's family tree.

So, we begin with the first section:

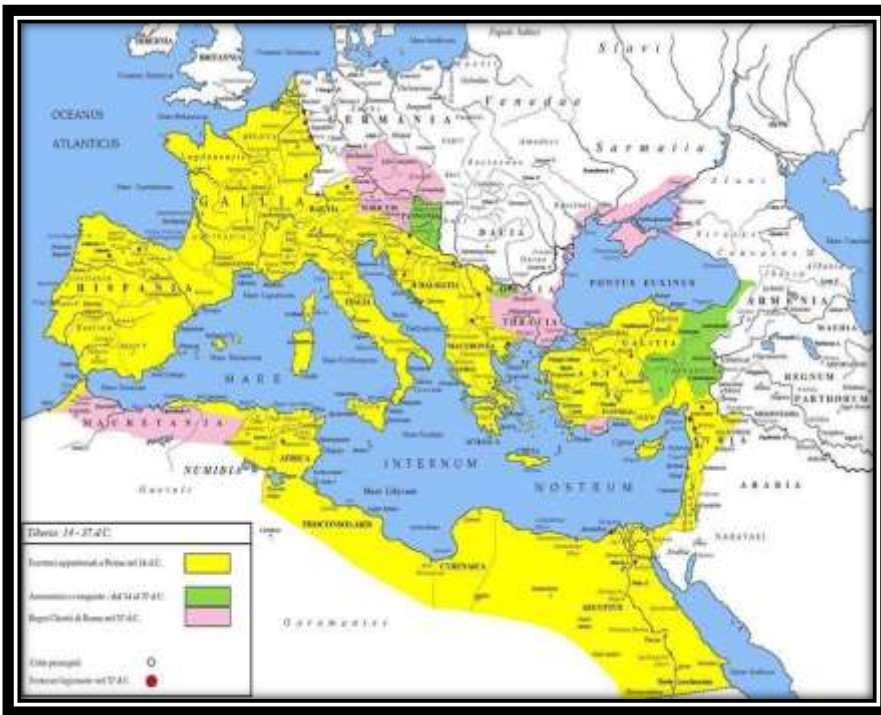
G. The Baptism of the Son of Man, Luke 3:1-22.

1. A historical reckoning of both John the Baptist's and Jesus' ministry beginning, **vs. 1-2.**

Vs. 1

Luke 3:1, "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."

Note the careful details of Luke the historian. In **vs. 1-2a**, he makes a seven-fold, (7 is the number of Spiritual Perfection), attempt to indicate the time when John the Baptist began his ministry, and prove the historicity of these events.



“Fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,” uses the Ordinal number PENTEKAIDEKATOS, πεντεκαδέκατος meaning, “15,” it is a hapaxlegomena, meaning it is only used here in the NT. It is from PENTE, “five,” KAI, “and,” DEKATOS, “tenth.”

1. The Reign of Caesar Tiberius, Emperor of the Roman Empire:

“Reign” is the Noun HEGEMONIA ἡγεμονία that means, “leadership, government, or rule.” This too is a hapaxlegomena. The typical word for “king or ruler” is BASILEUS that we noted in **Luke 1:5**, for Herod the Great, which is not used here.

“Tiberius” TIBERIOS, Τιβέριος is also a hapaxlegomena. It is the name of the “Caesar,” KAISAR, Καῖσαρ “Caesar or Emperor” that was the 2nd Emperor of Rome from 14-37 AD, succeeding his adoptive father Augustus. He was born November 16th 42 B.C. Tiberius Caesar was ruler in the provinces two years before Augustus Caesar died. His father, of the same name, (Tiberius Claudius Nero), had been an officer under Julius Caesar and had later joined Antony against Octavian (Augustus). His mother was Livia, who after Tiberius’ birth, became the 3rd wife of Augustus. Thus, Tiberius was a stepson of Augustus. He became emperor at age 55, after having distinguished himself as a commander in various wars and having displayed notable talents as an orator and an administrator of civil affairs. Tiberius was thought to be one of the greatest Roman generals; his conquest of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Raetia, and temporarily, parts of Germania, laid the foundations for the northern frontier. Even so, he came to be remembered as a dark, reclusive, and somber ruler who never really desired to be emperor. He had rulership from 11 or 13 AD as co-regent, but became Emperor in 14 AD. His full name was Tiberius Claudius Nero. His official name as emperor was Tiberius Caesar Augustus. He is said to be a well-respected man in his beginning but later fell into debauchery. In 26 A.D., he retired to Capreae, but did not give up the office, where rumor attributed to him every excess of debauchery. On March 16, 37 A.D., he died at Misenum at the age of 78, after a reign of 23 years. When Tiberius died, he was succeeded by his grand-nephew and adopted grandson, Caius Caligula.

Caesar Tiberius



Tiberius and his mother Livia



He was the Caesar during John the Baptist’s ministry, Jesus’ ministry, and during the early Church, as he is the “Caesar” mentioned in the Gospels in connection with Jesus’ public ministry, **Mark 12:14; Luke 3:1; 20:22-25; 23:2**, that parallels, **John 19:12, 15**. Herod Antipas, who we will note below, built the city of Tiberias in honor of Tiberius.

(Josephus, Antiquities, 18.2.3).

A Denarius coins found with the figure and inscription of Tiberius.



In **Luke 3:2-3**, John the Baptist's ministry was in the 15th year of his reign. That would place John's ministry and the beginning of Jesus' ministry around 29 A.D.

2. The Reign of Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea:



At that time, Luke notes that “**Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,**” PONTIOS PILATOS HEGEMONEUO IOUDAIA.

We noted HEGEMONEUO, “**leader, ruler, or govern,**” in **Luke 2:2**, for Quirinius governor of Syria during the birth narrative of Jesus Christ. It is only used in these two places. “**Judea,**” IOUDAIA was the central province in Palestine ruled by the Roman procurator. The office of the Roman governor in the first century A.D. was the most prominent and distinctive expression of the dominion of Rome over the land and people of the Jews.

Pontius Pilate, PONTIOS, Πόντιος, PILATOS, Πιλᾶτος was the 5th or 6th Roman procurator of Judea serving under Emperor Tiberius from 26/27-36/37 A.D., succeeding Valerius Gratus as prefect of Judaea in 26 A.D. His appointment was probably sponsored by Tiberius's anti-Semitic praetorian commander Sejanus, (Philo Leg. Gai. 24).



Among the sources for Pilate's life are an inscription found in Caesarea in 1961, known as the Pilate Stone, which confirms his historicity and establishes his title as prefect. He is also briefly mentioned by the ancient historians Tacitus, Philo of Alexandria, and Josephus.

Probably connected with the Roman family of the Pontii, his family name Pontius indicates that he was connected, by descent or adoption, with the clan of Pontii, and suggests that Pilatus was from the region of Samnium in central Italy. His name means, “armed with a spear,” which was indicative of his cruel treatment towards the Jews during his rulership.

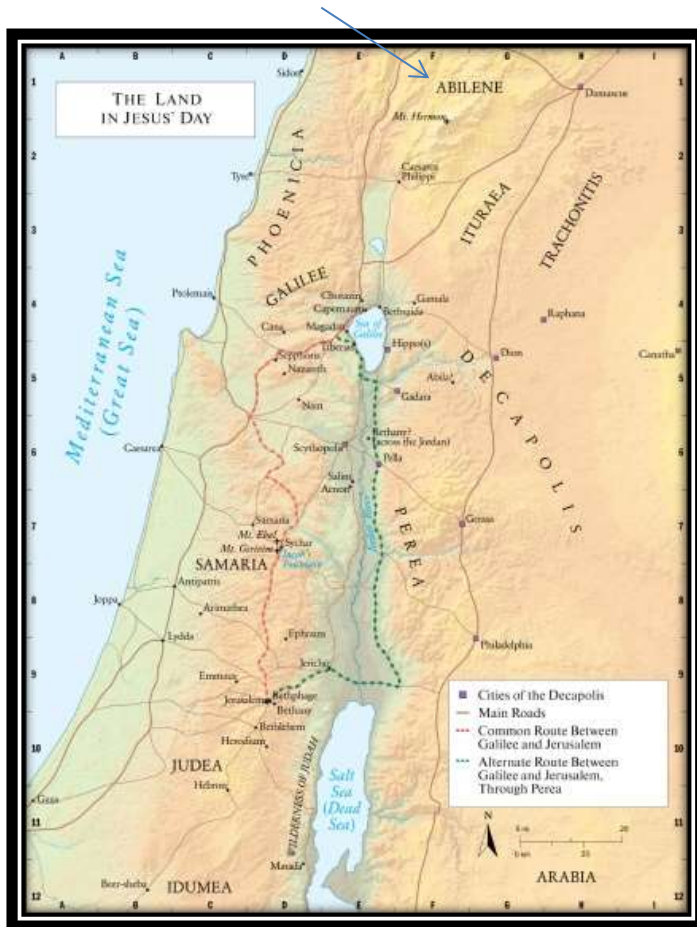
He is remembered in history as a notorious anti-Semite and in Christian creeds as the magistrate under whom Jesus Christ “suffered,” **1 Tim 6:13**; cf. **Mat 27:2**; **John 19:37**.

1 Tim 6:13, “I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate.”

The NT refers to him as “governor,” while other sources call him “procurator” or “prefect,” as the Pilate stone mentioned above notes. Pilate was removed from office as the result of yet another outrage against Jews and

Samaritans, when the Samaritans complained to Vitellius, the governor of Syria, about his antagonisms. Pilate was ordered to Rome to account for his actions to the emperor and is not mentioned again in reliable contemporary sources. He was replaced by Marcellus. We will see him again in **Luke chapters 13 and 23**.

3. The Reign of Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee:



“**Tetrarch,**” TETRARCHEO, τετραρχέω is used only three times in the NT, all in this passage. It is used for Herod Antipas, then for “**his brother Philip II,**” and finally for, “**Lysanias of Abilene.**” This word is not found in the Septuagint, nor does it appear in Greek literature before Christian times. It comes from TETRA “four,” and ARCHE “ruler or authority.” It refers to someone who has been made a tetrarch, a governor, or ruler over a tetrarchy. A tetrarchy was one division of a region that had been divided into four sections, each governed by a tetrarch. Technically, it is a ruler of the fourth of a country or region. The Greeks first used this title upon the breakup of Alexander the Great’s empire into four regions under his four lead generals, and later the Romans adopted the term and applied it to any ruler of a small principality, whether it was one fourth or not varied. The term came to be used for any “petty, dependent prince,” whose rank and authority were below the level of a king.

The title of tetrarch was at this time probably applied to petty tributary princes without any such determinate meaning. But it appears from Josephus that the tetrarchies of Antipas and Philip were regarded as each constituting a fourth part of their father’s kingdom, (Antiquities of the Jews. 17.11.4). From these two cases, it seems the title was used in its strict and literal sense.

Of the three “tetrarchs” noted here, the first was Herod Antipas, **Mat 4:1; Luke 3:1, 19; 9:7; Acts 13:1**, who is commonly distinguished as “Herod the tetrarch,” although the title of “king” is also assigned to him both by Matthew, **Mat 14:9**, and by Mark, **Mark 6:14, 22-28**.

Herod Antipas was born before 20 B.C. died in 44 A.D. He was the son of Herod the Great and Malthace, a Samaritan woman. Half Idumean, half Samaritan, he therefore had not a drop of Jewish blood in his veins. On the death of his father, although he was younger than his brother Archelaus, he contested the will of Herod. Antipas was not Herod’s first choice of heir. That honor fell to Aristobulus and Alexander, Herod’s sons by the Hasmonean princess Mariamne I. It was only after they were executed, c. 7 B.C., and Herod’s oldest son Antipater was convicted of trying to poison his father, 5 B.C., that the now elderly Herod fell back on his youngest son Antipas, revising his will to make him heir. Because of Judea’s status as a Roman client kingdom, Herod’s plans for the succession had to be ratified by Caesar Augustus. The three heirs, (Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip), travelled to Rome to make their claims. Antipas argued he ought to inherit the whole kingdom and the others maintaining that Herod’s final will, ought to be honored. Despite qualified support for Antipas from Herodian family members in Rome, who favored direct Roman rule of Judea but considered Antipas preferable to his brother, Augustus largely confirmed the division of territory set out by Herod in his final will. Archelaus had, however, to be content with the title of ethnarch rather than king. Therefore, Rome sustained the final will of Herod the Great and assigned to Antipas the “tetrarchy” of Galilee and Perea, as it had been set apart for him by Herod, (Josephus: Antiquities, 17.9.4f; Wars, 2.2.3).

He ruled from 4 B.C. - 39 A.D., as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He was known as “Herod the Tetrarch” or “Herod,” who married his brother’s wife, **Mark 6:17**, and ordered the death of John the Baptist, **Mat 14:1ff.**, and is the one who mocked Jesus when Pilate sent Jesus to him prior to the crucifixion, **Luke 23:6-12**.

As we noted above, Herod the Great’s kingdom was bequeathed to three heirs, of which Herod Antipas received both Galilee and Perea. He dedicated the city Livias in the north of the Dead Sea to Tiberius’ mother.

As to his marriages, Antipas divorced his first wife Phasaelis, the daughter of King Aretas IV of Nabatea, Arabia, in favor of Herodius / Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip I, Herod Philip I, whom he had met and seduced at Rome. Antipas was Herod the Great’s son by Malthace, while Herod II was his son by Mariamne II. Since Herodius was the daughter of Aristobulus, his half-brother, and therefore his niece, and at the same time the wife of his half-brother Philip I, the union between her and Antipas was sinful, especially according to the Law of Moses. (See chart below.)

The Mosaic Law prohibited a man from marrying a brother’s wife, **Lev 18:16; 20:21**, except in the case of levirate marriages, **Deut 25:5; Mark 12:19**. Since Antipas’s brother Herod Philip I had a daughter with Herodius named Salome, (who danced for Antipas for John the Baptist’s head, and later married Philip II), and, more pointedly, his brother was still living, the levirate marriage did not apply.

In 39 A.D., Galilee and Perea were transferred from disfavored Antipas to Agrippa I by Caligula. With his death in 44 A.D., Agrippa’s merged territory was made province again, including Judaea and for the first time, Perea. From that time, Perea was part of the shifting Roman provinces to its west.

Antipas was a frivolous and vain leader, and was chargeable with many infamous crimes, **Mark 8:15; Luke 3:19; 13:31-32**. He is most famous for the beheading of John the Baptist, **Mat 14:1-12**, at the instigation of his wife Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Herod-Philip I, and their daughter Salome.

Coin of Herod Antipas

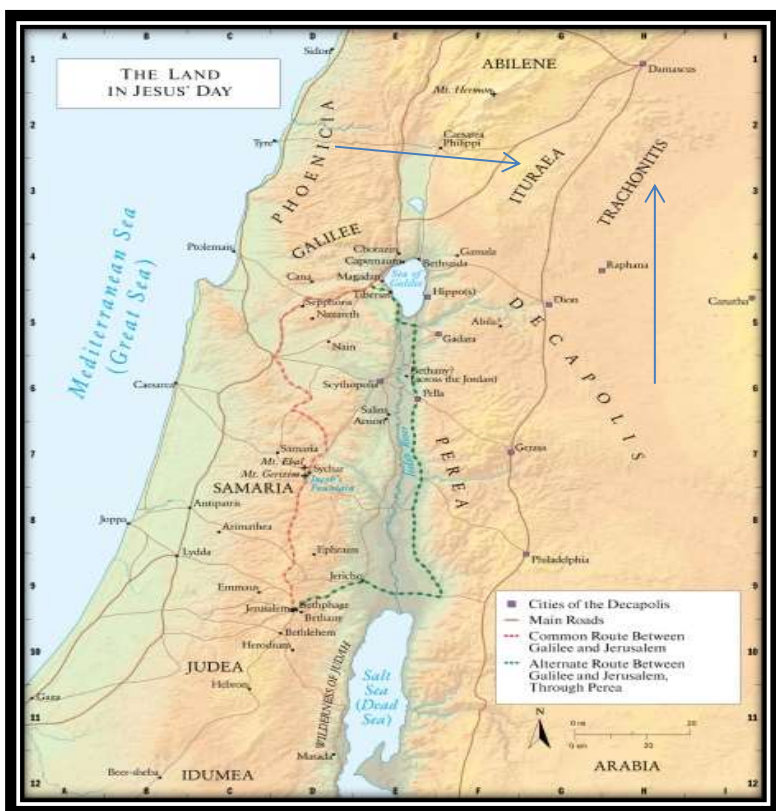


He was a great builder of cities and built both Sepphoris and Tiberias, the latter named after the Emperor of Rome.

We will see that when John directed his preaching at Herod Antipas, the result was imprisonment, **Luke 3:19-20**; cf. **Mat 14:3-4; Mark 6:17-18**.

4. The Reign of Herod Philip II, Tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis:

This Herod was also known as Philip, or Herod Philip II, who Luke says was the, “tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis.”



Herod Philip II was the son of Herod the Great and his 5th wife Cleopatra of Jerusalem, (see chart above). She was called Cleopatra of Jerusalem, to distinguish her from the Ptolemaic Greek Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt, (Josephus Antiquities 17.1.3; and Wars 1.28.4). He was born around 22/21 B.C. As a result of the debate over Herod’s will, Augustus made him tetrarch over the northeastern part of Herod the Great’s domain, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Batanea, Trachonitis, Paneas and Iturea, (Josephus Antiquities 17.9.4; Wars 2.6.3). His subjects were mainly Syrian and Greek, (i.e., non-Jewish), and he was the first and only Herodian to have the emperor’s, as well as his own image on his coins.

At the death of his father, he inherited region Gaulonitis, made up of Traehonitis and Ituraea, and Paneas (renamed to Caesarea Philippi), (Antiquities, 17.8.1).

Philip built two cities, (Josephus Antiquities 18.2.1; Wars 2.9.1). The first city was a rebuilding and enlarging of Paneas (near the source of the Jordan), which he renamed Caesarea Philippi in honor of the Roman emperor and to distinguish it from the coastal Caesarea. It was there that Peter made his confession of faith to Jesus, **Mat 16:13–20**; **Mark 8:27–30**. The second city was the rebuilding and enlarging of the fishing village of Bethsaida, where the Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee. Philip gave it the status of a Greek polis and renamed it Julias in honor of Augustus’ daughter Julia. There Jesus would heal the blind man, **Mark 8:22–26**, and in a nearby desert place Jesus would feed the five thousand, **Luke 9:10**. Also, it may have been in the southern portion of Philip’s territory that Jesus fed the four thousand.

Philip did not possess the ambitious and scheming character of his brothers. He ruled his domain with moderation and tranquility and was well liked by his subjects, (Josephus Antiquities. 18.4.6). He married Herodias’s daughter Salome, whose dance led to the beheading of John the Baptist, **Mat 14:3-12**; **Mark 6:17-29**; **Luke 3:19-20**; Josephus Ant. 18.5.2). They had no children, (Antiquities 18.5.4). When Philip died in 34 A.D. the emperor Tiberius annexed his territory to Syria, and when Caligula became emperor in 37 A.D., Philip’s territory was given to Herod Agrippa I, brother of Herodias.

There are 8 Herod’s known to us and five are mentioned in the NT, (#’s 1, 3, 4, 6, 8):

1. Herod the Great, born c. 74 B.C., ruled 37 - 4 B.C., client king of Judea who built the Second Temple in Jerusalem. He ruled in Judea when Jesus was born, **Mat 2:1**, and ordered the death of the children in Bethlehem, **Mat 2:16ff**.
2. Herod Archelaus (born 23 B.C., ruled 4 B.C. - 6 A.D., died c. 18 A.D.), Ethnarch of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea. He is not mentioned in the Bible.
3. Herod Antipas, born before 20 B.C., ruled 4 B.C. - 39 A.D., tetrarch of Perea and Galilee, known as “Herod the

Tetrarch” or “Herod,” who married his brother’s wife, **Mark 6:17**, and ordered the death of John the Baptist, **Mat 14:1ff.**, and is the one who mocked Jesus when Pilate sent Jesus to him prior to the crucifixion, **Luke 23:6-12**. This is the Herod mentioned in our verse.

4. Philip the Tetrarch or Herod Philip II, born c. 20 B.C., ruled 4 B.C. - 34 A.D., tetrarch of Iturea, Trachonitis, and Batanaea, **Luke 3:1**.
5. Herod II or Herod Philip I, c. 27 B.C. - 33 A.D., the father of the Salome in **Mark 6:21-29**; did not rule over any territory, and is not mentioned in Scripture.
6. Herod Agrippa I, 10 - 11 B.C., ruled 41 - 44 A.D., the grandson of Herod the Great, client king of Judaea, called “King Herod” or “Herod” in **Acts 12**, who killed the apostle James and imprisoned Peter, **Acts 12:1ff**.
7. Herod of Chalcis, died 48 A.D., also known as Herod V and listed by the Jewish Encyclopedia as Herod II. He was the son of Aristobulus IV and grandson of Herod the Great. King of Chalcis, that was made up of Iturea, Trachonitis, Gaulantis, Batanaea and Auranitis. He ruled 41 - 48 A.D. He is not mentioned in Scripture. Around 41 AD, at the request of his brother, Herod Agrippa, emperor Claudius granted him the rule of Chalcis, a territory north of Judaea, with the title of king. Three years later, after the death of his brother, he was also given responsibility for the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as the appointment of the Temple’s High Priest. During the four years in which he exercised this right he appointed two high priests, Joseph, son of Camydus, 44 – 46 A.D., and Ananias, son of Nedebeus, ca. 47 - 52 A.D.



He died in 48 AD. After his death the kingdom was given to Herod Agrippa II. Coin of Herod of Chalcis, showing Herod of Chalcis with brother Agrippa of Judaea crowning Roman Emperor Claudius I.



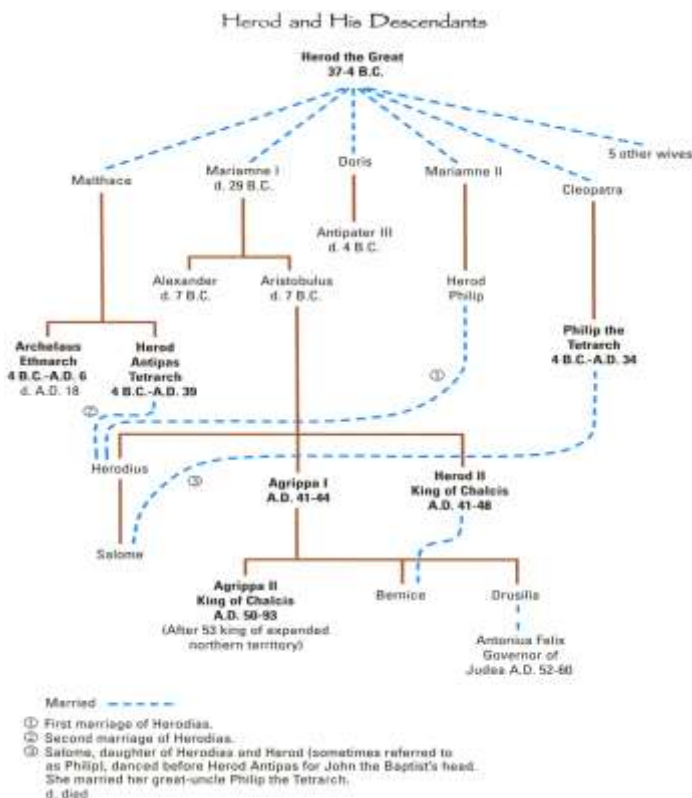
8. Herod Agrippa II, born 27 A.D., ruled 48 - 93 A.D., his official name was Marcus Julius Agrippa. He was the son of Agrippa 1. He was the eighth and last ruler from the Herodian dynasty. He was the fifth member of this dynasty to bear the title of king, but he reigned over territories outside of Judea only as a Roman client.

On the death of king Herod of Chalcis in 48 A.D., his small Syrian kingdom of Chalcis was given to Agrippa, with the right of superintending the Temple in Jerusalem and appointing its high priest, but only as a tetrarchy. In 53 A.D., Agrippa was forced to give up the tetrarchy of Chalcis but in exchange Claudius made him ruler with the title of king over the territories previously governed by Philip, namely, Batanea, Trachonitis and Gaulonitis, and the kingdom of Lysanias in Abila. In 55 A.D., the Emperor Nero added to Agrippa's realm the cities of Tiberias and Taricheae in Galilee, and Livias (Iulias), with fourteen villages near it, in Peraea. The tetrarchy of Chalcis was subsequently in 57 A.D., given to his cousin, Aristobulus.



He is the Agrippa who was involved in Paul's trial, **Acts 25:13ff**, as he is described in the apocryphal book, "Acts of the Apostles," as "King Agrippa" before whom Paul the Apostle defended himself, possibly 59 A.D.

He was overthrown by his Jewish subjects in 66 A.D. and supported the Roman side in the First Jewish–Roman War. Agrippa had a great intimacy with the historian Josephus, having supplied him with information for his history, *Antiquities of the Jews*. Josephus preserved two of the letters he received from him. According to Photius, Agrippa died, childless, at the age of seventy, in the third year of the reign of Trajan, that is, 100, but statements of historian Josephus, in addition to the contemporary epigraphy from his kingdom, cast this date into serious doubt. The modern scholarly consensus holds that he died before 93/94. He was the last prince from the House of Herod.



5. The Reign of Lysanias, Tetrarch of Abilene:



Lysanias, Λυσανίας whose name means, "that drives away sorrow," is said in **Luke 3:1**, to have been "tetrarch of Abilene," a small district of Palestine on the eastern slopes of Anti-Lebanus, of which Abila on the river Darada was the capital. His rulership is dated to be 25-30 A.D. Not much is known about this individual. Abilene is a small mountainous region. It was located about 18 miles northwest of Damascus in the Anti-Lebanon mountain range. Its capital was Abila.

There is another more known Lysanias, who was the son of Ptolemy of Chalcis, ruler of the same small realm on the western slopes of Mount Hermon, mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus, (*Antiquities* 14, 7, 4 and 13, 3; 15, 4, 1; b. j., 1, 13, 1, cf. b. j. 1, 9, 2), and in coins from c. 40 B.C. He is also noted by Josephus as having been slain by Mark Antony at the instigation of Cleopatra. As this happened around 34-36 B.C., this could not be the Lysanias of Luke. As a result, Luke has been charged with inaccuracy. Yet, two inscriptions, (Böckh, C.I.G. 4521 and 4523), have been found on the site of Abilene that mentions "Lysanias the tetrarch," which corroborates the view that the Lysanias of Luke was probably a descendant of the Lysanias mentioned by Josephus, or the Lysanias mentioned in, (*Antiquities*, 19.5.1), was the same as Luke noted. As A.T. Roberts notes, "so Luke is vindicated again by the rocks." (Word Pictures in the New Testament.)

We also see that in 37 A.D., the emperor Caligula appointed Herod Agrippa I king of the tetrarchy of Philip, and added the region of Lysanias to the tetrarchy, (*Wars of the Jews*, 2.12.8). Later, Abilene was part of the kingdom of

his son, Agrippa II.

6-7. The Reign of Annas and Caiaphas, High Priests of Israel:

Vs. 2a

Luke 3:2, “In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas...”

Here we have our 6th and 7th historical figures pointed to by Luke for the historicity of his writings. He turns to the religious leaders of that day, and combines these two high priests because both were involved in the ministry of Jesus, especially His trials prior to His crucifixion. As we will see, Annas was the deposed high priest working “behind the scenes,” while his son-in-law Caiaphas held the office at this time.

6. The Reign of Annas:

“**Annas**” in the Greek is Ἄννας, Westcott and Hort, (The New Testament in Greek) spell it “Hannas,” and Josephus “Ananos.” It is the Greek form of Hebrew אָנָן, HANAN meaning, “merciful or gracious.” In Greek it means, “one who answers; humble.”

He was born 23/22 B.C., and the date of his death is unknown, but thought to be around 40 A.D. He was the son of Seth, Josephus uses Sethi, (Antiquities 18.2.1). He was appointed to the high-priesthood by Quirinius, governor of Syria, **Luke 2:2**, about 6 A.D, as the first High Priest of the newly formed Roman province of Iudaea, just after the Romans had deposed Herod Archelaus, Ethnarch of Judaea, thereby putting Judaea directly under Roman rule. At that time, the office of high priest was filled and vacated at the whim of the Roman procurators, as Annas was deposed at the age of 36 in 15 A.D., by Valerius Gratus, the predecessor to Pontius Pilate. Gentile innovations had made sad havoc with the Jewish law as to this office. In the last 107 years of the temple’s existence, there were no less than 28 high priests.

Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was also an appointed high priest, as we will see below. Annas is mentioned in our verse and **John 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6**; cf. **John 18:19**.

Though he was deprived of official status, he remained as one of the nation’s most influential political and social individuals, as he continued to wield great power as the dominant member of the priestly hierarchy, using members of his family as his willing instruments. His five sons and one son-in-law Caiaphas all served as high priests of Israel, (Antiquities, 10.9.1), though he did not survive to see the office filled by his 5th son Annas or Ananus II, who caused James, the Lord’s brother, to be stoned to death, circa 62 A.D. His son Annas the Younger, also known as Ananus (Annas) the son of Ananus (Annas) was assassinated in 66 A.D., for advocating peace with Rome.

Long after he had lost his office, he was still called “high priest,” as it was customary to attribute the title to former living high priests since the high priesthood according to the OT was a “life office,” even though the Romans played havoc with the office. This is similar to the practice for addressing a former president of the United States as “Mr. President.” In addition, his name appears first wherever the names of the chief members of the priestly faction are given, cf. **Acts 4:6**.

Acts 4:6, “And Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.”

Note especially the phrase in our verse, “in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,” as if they were joint holders of the office. In fact, Caiaphas was the actual high priest at this time, yet Annas was the virtual while Caiaphas the titular high priest.

It is thought that both Annas and Caiaphas may have sympathized with the Sadducean aristocracy, a religious movement in Judaea that found most of its members among the wealthy Jewish elite. And, like others of that class, Annas seems to have been arrogant, astute, ambitious, and enormously wealthy. *“The chief source of his and his family’s wealth seems to have been the sale of requisites for the temple sacrifices, such as sheep, doves, wine, and*

oil, which they carried on in the four famous “booths of the sons of Annas” on the Mount of Olives, with a branch within the precincts of the temple itself. During the great feasts, they were able to extort high monopoly prices for theft goods. Hence, our Lord's strong denunciation of those who made the house of prayer “a den of robbers” (Mark 11:15-19), and the curse in the Talmud, “Woe to the family of Annas! Woe to the serpent-like hisses” (Pes 57a).” (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

Annas appears in the Gospels as a high priest before whom Jesus is brought for judgment, prior to being brought before Pontius Pilate. Although he does not figure very prominently in the gospel narratives, he seems to have been mainly responsible for the course of events. Caiaphas, indeed, as actual high priest, was the nominal head of the Sanhedrin which condemned Jesus, but the aged Annas was the ruling spirit. The officers who arrested Jesus first led Him to Annas according to **John 18:12-13**. Assuming Annas is the high priest of **John 18:19-23**, as seems most likely, he questioned Jesus concerning His disciples and teaching. This trial is not mentioned by the synoptic gospels, because it was merely informal and preliminary and of a private nature, meant to gather material for the subsequent trial(s). Failing to gain anything to his purpose from Jesus, “**Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest,**” **John 18:24**.

It is highly likely, that Annas was present at the subsequent trials of Jesus, but no further mention is made of him in the NT, except that he was present at the meeting of the Sanhedrin after Pentecost when Peter and John defended themselves for preaching the gospel of the resurrection, **Acts 4:6**.

Acts 4:6, “And Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.”

The terms of Annas, Caiaphas, and the five brothers were:
Annas, the son of Seth, 6 - 15 A.D.

1. Eleazar, the son of Annas, 16 - 17 A.D.
Caiaphas - properly called Joseph son of Caiaphas, 18 – 36 A.D.
2. Jonathan, the son of Annas, 36 - 37, and 44 A.D.
3. Theophilus, ben Annas, 37 - 41 A.D.
4. Matthias, ben Annas, 43 A.D.
5. Annas, ben Annas, 63 A.D.

To the right is the Statue of Annas in the Bom Jesus sanctuary in Braga, Portugal.



7. The Reign of Caiaphas:

Caiaphas, Καϊάφας, KAIAPHAS, also Kephas, meaning, “rock or a depression,” was the son-in-law of Annas, **John 18:13**, and high priest during the ministry of Christ. His full name was Joseph Ben (son of) Caiaphas, yet known simply as Caiaphas. He was born c, 14 B.C. and died c, 46 A.D.

He was high priest from 18 - 36 A.D., and ruled longer than any high priest in NT times. The comparatively long eighteen-year tenure of Caiaphas, suggests he had a good working relationship with the Roman authorities, even though Josephus relates that Caiaphas became a high priest during a turbulent period. Caiaphas was appointed in 18 A.D., by the Roman prefect who preceded Pontius Pilate, Valerius Gratus, and was reappointed by Pontius Pilate and served under him from 27-36 A.D. He was deposed in 36 A.D. by Vitellius, the president of Syria, (Antiquities, 18.2.2; 18.4.3).

Little is known about Caiaphas beyond what can be learned from the NT. He is mentioned in our verse and **Mat 26:3, 57; John 11:49; 18:13-14, 24, 28; Acts 4:6**.

Christ before Caiaphas, by Matthias Stom.



Caiaphas played a leading role in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. It was in his court or palace that the chief priests (Sadducees) and Pharisees, who together constituted the Sanhedrin, assembled, **“and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him,”** **Mat 26:3-4; John 11:49**. In order to expedite the removal of Jesus, he led the plot to capture Him at the appropriate time and in doing so, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, **John 11:49ff.; 18:14**; cf. **Mat 26:5, 57-68**. Caiaphas was the one who asked Jesus if He were **“the Christ, the Son of God,”** **Mat 26:63**. When our Lord answered in **vs. 64**, **“you have said it yourself,”** Caiaphas **“tore his robes and said, ‘He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy,’”** **vs. 65**. Upon this charge, Jesus was found to **“deserve death,”** **vs. 66**.

Caiaphas, like Annas above, is also mentioned in **Acts 4:6**, as being among those who presided over the trial of Peter and John.

Lastly, I found an interesting article on Wikipedia’s page regarding Annas called, “The plot to kill Lazarus of Bethany,” that speaks to Annas, Caiaphas, and Annas five sons.

The plot to kill Lazarus of Bethany:

The involvement of the family of Annas may be implied in the plot to kill Lazarus of Bethany, in **John 12:10-11**, whom Jesus raised from the dead. Although Annas is not mentioned by name in the plot to kill Lazarus, several 19th-century writers such as Johann Nepomuk Sepp and the Abbé Drioux, considered that there may be a concealed reference to Annas in the parable by Jesus of the Rich Man and Lazarus, **Luke 16:19-30**, which points at a “rich man” with five brothers, **Luke 16:28**. It is considered that the rich man dressed in purple and fine linen, (as **Ex 28:8** indicates was the traditional garment for the high priest), was probably representative of Caiaphas, as figurehead of the Sadducees. As such, Annas is intended by the term “father” in **“my father’s house”** in **Luke 16:27**, and the **“five brothers”** are intended in **Luke 16:28**, as Annas’ five sons. In support of this is the coincidence that the father and five brothers, who will not be convinced even if the parable Lazarus is raised from the dead, **Luke 16:31**, predicts that Caiaphas, Annas, and the five unbelieving sons of Annas plot to have the real Lazarus killed when he was raised, **John 12:10**.

In conclusion, we see that *“Luke is the only one who fixes the time when Jesus began his ministry. He locates it by emperor and governor, tetrarch and high priest, as an event of world-wide importance, and of concern to all the kingdoms of men. He conceives of it as Paul did—Acts 26:26.”* (The Fourfold Gospel: or A Harmony of the Four Gospels.)

Vs. 2b

Luke 3:2, “... the word of God came to John, the son of Zachariah, in the wilderness.”

Given the historical statements noted in **vs. 1-2a**, this is about 18 years after the young Jesus visited the Temple.

This **“Zachariah,”** John the Baptist’s father is only mentioned in Luke’s Gospel, and this is the last time John’s father is mentioned in Scripture.

“The Word of God came to John,” RHEMA THEOS EPI IOANNES, indicates that John’s Divine commission has begun. God had appointed him to this position and work from eternity past and now it has begun, as he enters his career as a prophet, **Jer 1:2; Ezek 6:1; Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1; Haggai 1:1**, and the forerunner to Jesus Christ. All four gospels give insight into John’s ministry in various fashion, but Luke provides more detail of the type of message he delivered, as we will see, cf. **Mat 3:1-17; Mark 1:2-11; John 1:19-34**.

Luke sought to portray John the Baptist as a God-sent prophet. Prophets gave temporary and limited manifestations of God’s will, **Heb 1:1-2**. John’s commission as prophet and forerunner was to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus Christ to enter His public preaching ministry. So, John began preaching in preparation for the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry.

As we will see in this chapter, his message included hope for the spiritually hungry, **Luke 3:3-6**, and a stern warning to the unrepentant, **Luke 3:7-18**, as the Jews could not consider themselves accepted by God simply because they were Abraham’s children. Good deeds must demonstrate their true repentance, **Mat 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; John 1:6-8, 15-34**.

We too, must show good works, Divine Good Production, as a demonstration of our repentance to Christ. Yet, Satan has done a great job in lulling the church to sleep regarding their everyday lives and their works towards others. We live in such great times of peace and prosperity that we think we are holy and righteous because of what we have or have been given. That is the lie of Satan, we are holy and righteous when we do good deeds and produce the fruit of the Spirit. So, do not let the great snake charmer lull you to sleep walking in your spiritual life. Live in the light of Jesus Christ and do good works towards others as you **“love your neighbor as you love yourself.”**

Eph 5:14, **“For this reason it says, ‘Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you’.”**



Next, we have, **“in the wilderness,” EN HO EREMOS**, **“desolate, abandoned, desert, or solitary place,”** was how the narrative of John’s birth ended, **Luke 1:80**. So now, Luke picks up where he left off, cf. **Mat 3:1; Mark 1:4; Luke 7:24-28**.

The wilderness of Judea is an almost uninhabitable area of barren ridges extending the whole length of the Dead Sea, and a few miles further north following the River Jordan. It is five to ten miles wide, and extends from a little north of Jericho down to the south end of the Dead Sea. Even as desolate as it was, it was not destitute of vegetation and some people lived in it. This ties in with **vs. 3**, below, regarding his teaching being in the Jordan district.

G. The Baptism of the Son of Man, Luke 3:1-22.
2. The prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in John, vs. 3-6.

Vs. 3

Luke 3:3, **“And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”**

“All the district around the Jordan” uses the Adjective PERICHOROS that means, **“neighboring region or surrounding country.”** It is used 9 times in the Gospels and once in Acts. It is a general geographical term. The area in view is the **“Jordan”** IORDANES, Ἰορδάνης, which is not a city or town but a major river flowing from Mount Hermon in the north, through the Sea of Galilee, to the Dead Sea in the south. It is one of the main features of Israel. The Jordan valley is called in the OT the Arabah, and by the modern Arabs the Ghor. It is the deepest valley in the world, its lowest part being about 1,300 feet below sea level. So, this is speaking of the areas around the Jordan River, including both sides.

From this we see the extent of John’s ministry. It was not tied to one specific town or city, but moving up and down the Jordan River. Since he was baptizing, the river provided many inlets to perform his work. Although this is a geographical designation, its main function is not to designate a physical place, but to indicate that John was the

promised prophet of **Isa 40:3**, i.e., the one who was the voice calling “**in the desert,**” **Luke 3:4**.

The Jordan is also pertinent because it was the place where the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land!!! In fact, they crossed near Jericho. We will see more of this below.

John’s ministry included, “**preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**”

“**Preaching**” is the Verb KERUSSO κηρύσσω that means, “proclaim aloud, publicly preach, herald, announce, tell, or declare.” It speaks to crying out a message as a king’s herald making a proclamation, and emphasizes the content of the message rather than, in this case, the rite of baptism.

“**Baptism**” is the Noun BAPTISMA βάπτισμα that means, “baptism, the rite or ceremony of baptism.” It means identification or association with something or someone, **Mat 3:7; 21:25; Luke 3:3; 7:29; 12:50; 20:4; Rom 6:4**. The ritual of baptism finds its roots in the OT ritual of purification. Yet, there is an unmistakable distinction between the OT purification rites and the baptism of John. The same holds true for John the Baptist’s baptism and that of the early Church.

The Greek meaning of baptism began in Homer’s time, who wrote of the giant Ulysses who took a piece of hot metal and rammed it into Cyclops’ one eye, and called it “baptizing.” Homer’s *Odyssey*, Book 9, used baptism for hot metal identified with water when a smith dipped a piece of hot iron into water. Other ancient Greek writers like Xenophon said that the Spartans baptized their spears by putting them into a bowl of blood, and Euripides used the word for a ship identified with the bottom of the sea when it sank.

So “baptism” in the classical Greek meant to identify one thing with another thing, so that the characteristic of the original thing was changed into another characteristic by what it was identified with. Therefore, the interpretation of the word “baptism” is identification.

There is a family of Greek words used for baptism in the NT:

1. The Verb BAPTIZO βαπτίζω has been transliterated, “to cleanse by washing, to immerse, to dip, to baptize,” cf. **Luke 3:7; 11:28; 12:50**.
2. The Verb BAPTO βάπτω means, “to identify, to intimately unite, to dip, or immerse,” **Luke 16:24; John 13:26; Rev 19:13**, (i.e., to dye a piece of cloth.)
3. The noun BAPTISMOS βαπτισμός means, “cleaning or washing; of dishes,” **Mark 7:4, 8; Heb 9:10**. In **Col 2:12; Heb 6:2** it means, “baptism.”
4. The Noun BAPTISTES βαπτιστής means, “Baptist,” and always refers to John the Baptist; the one who performs the ritual of baptism, **Luke 7:20, 28, 33; 9:19**.

We will come back to the topic of baptism below, but first we need to note the rest of this verse for the context of John the Baptist’s baptism.

John’s baptism is said here to be a “**baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**” The idea of a “**baptism of repentance**” ties the concept of baptism (dipping or water immersion) with the overall theme of repentance.

“**Repentance,**” is the Noun METANOIA μετάνοια that means, “remorse, repentance, turning about, or a change of mind.” It comes from the Verb METANOEO μετανοέω that means, “to repent, change one’s mind, be converted.” So, a change of mind or a change of thinking is related to this baptism of John.

Then Luke adds, “**for the forgiveness of sins**” EIS APHESIS HAMARTIA. “**Forgiveness**” is the Noun APHESIS ἄφεσις that means, “release, forgiveness, deliverance, a suspension of punishment, pardon, etc.” So, a release, forgiveness, or pardoning is related to this baptism.

“**Sins**” is the Plural of HAMARTIA ἁμαρτία that means, “sin, a sinful deed, sinfulness, wrong, injustice, iniquity, etc.” It comes from the root Verb HAMARTANO that means, “to err, to miss the mark, or goal.” So, sin and wrong doing is related to this baptism.

We noted both of these words in **Luke 1:77**, Zachariah’s prophecy about the knowledge his son would bring to the people of Israel and Gentiles, “**The knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.**”

Sin is the subject that they had to change their minds about, i.e., “repent.” The change of thinking they had to make about their sins was related to how their sins are forgiven; through their good works by keeping the Law or by the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior, the Lord? When they changed their minds / their way of thinking about sin, and accept the Christ, the Savior, as the One who would pay for their sins, they would receive forgiveness or be pardoned of their sin. Forgiveness is not the result of baptism. Forgiveness is the result of the change in their way of thinking. Baptism was just the identification with God’s plan of forgiveness of their sins.

Interestingly, Luke was predominately writing his gospel for the Gentiles. But Matthew, who was predominately writing to the Jews, writes about John’s baptism as one necessary to enter the Kingdom of heaven, **Mat 3:1-2**.

Mat 3:1-2, “Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying ²‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’.”

They are saying the same thing, yet in different ways, to different audiences. Both say, “**repent**,” i.e., change your way of thinking. Matthew says, “**for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**” (This is the only record of John preaching the “kingdom.” All other references to the “kingdom of heaven” or “kingdom of God” are by Jesus). Yet, Luke says, “**for the forgiveness of sin,**” as Luke states, to repent means forgiveness of sins.

Well, to get to the kingdom of heaven, one must first have his sins forgiven, and to have your sins forgiven you must believe in the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior, the Lord, as the One who would pay for your sins. As we now know, Jesus Christ paid for our sins at the Cross.

Matthew also noted that “repentance” involved “**confession of sin,**” **Mat 3:6**, which does not mean they recited all their sins to John, but that they recognized they were sinners and need a Savior. **Mat 3:6, “And they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins** (i.e., sinfulness).” Therefore, anyone who believes in Jesus Christ and His work upon the Cross, receives forgiveness of their sins and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

So, John’s baptism was a means of identification with Jesus Christ, the Savior / Messiah, by changing their way of thinking regarding how their sins were forgiven and confessing their sinfulness, (recognizing they needed a Savior, who was to come, i.e., Jesus Christ, the Lamb)!

When we change our mind about Jesus Christ, recognizing that He paid for our sins upon the Cross and through Him we have salvation, we have the forgiveness of our sins, positionally. This is what John’s father Zachariah prophesied regarding the ministry of his son in **Luke 1:77**, he would, “**give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.**” Therefore, we see that this “baptism” by John had the meaning of “people changing their mind to receive forgiveness or pardoning of their sins,” with the result of entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

From an OT standpoint, as John was using, this change also meant a change in thinking away from sin and worldliness, (i.e., living a sinful life), to living for God in righteousness. This change of mind was then demonstrated through the ritualistic worship noted in the Law, that was now substituted with John’s Baptism. It demonstrated the new relationship man had with God. John’s baptism, normally performed on the adult Jew, was an immersing, which signified death and burial with respect to sin, and a raising, which signified a new life. This new life was to be marked with “fruits of repentance,” **Luke 3:8-14**.

John’s water baptism was not the key to a person’s salvation or new life, just as it is not today. The key is the change of thought / heart towards the Christ, Savior, Lord, Jesus, that come with “knowledge,” **Luke 1:77**, i.e., Bible Doctrine in the soul! John’s baptism was a sign or demonstration of the person changing their mind regarding God’s

plan of salvation for their life.

The law required self-baptism or washing for purification of all persons who were unclean, **Lev 14:9; Num 19:19; 8:7; Leviticus 15, 16**. More than twenty distinct cases are specified in which the law required bathing or self-baptism, and it is to these Paul refers when he states that the law consisted in part “**of various washings / baptisms,**” **Heb 9:10**. The type of baptism John was preaching was not found in the Law. Therefore, Luke shows that God authorized John’s baptism as a demonstration of asking for and receiving forgiveness of sin, which results in eternal salvation, (gaining the kingdom of heaven). Jesus confirmed John’s baptism. And, the ritualistic water emersion was the demonstration of someone accepting the Messiah as their Savior, giving them the forgiveness of their sins that resulted in their eternal salvation.

Now, regarding Baptism as a form of identification with someone or something, there are two categories of identification in Scripture:

1. An actual identification; called a “Real Baptism.”
2. A representative identification; called a “Ritual Baptism.” It uses water.

There are four real baptisms in the Bible, meaning there is an actual identification with something that has significance:

1. The Baptism of Moses, **1 Cor 10:1-2**. This was a real identification in which Moses was identified with the open path through the Red Sea and the Jews were identified with Moses. Though water was around them, the Israelites were not immersed in it. Only unbelieving Egyptians were immersed in the water as a means of judgement and death. This was an identification with the mandates of true leadership. Moses was identified with the cloud or Shekinah Glory, (i.e., Jesus Christ), and the people were identified with Moses. Therefore, the people were identified with Jesus Christ.

Though not mentioned in Scripture as a separate baptism, this also reminds us of the second miraculous river crossing of the Israelites, when they crossed the Jordan River where John the Baptist was teaching, **Joshua 1:2-14; 3:14; 4:1-7**. As God led them into the Promised Land at the crossing near Jericho, under the leadership of Joshua, (whose name means, “God saves or savior,” and the Greek translation is Jesus), they were identified with God and His Kingdom that is found in the Savior Just as John was preaching with his baptism.

2. The Baptism of the Cross, **Mark 10:38-39**. This baptism is our Lord Jesus Christ being identified with our sins. This refers to the judicial imputation of personal sins to Jesus Christ on the Cross. Jesus Christ was identified with our personal sins and judged for them, so that Christ became our Savior.
3. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, **1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28**. This occurs at salvation for Church Age believers only. This baptism is God the Holy Spirit identifying us with the Lord Jesus Christ forever. It is the means of forming the Royal Family and breaking the back of the Old Sin Nature as the ruler of human life. We are positionally changed. No water is involved in this baptism. We are identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, **Eph 4:5; Acts 1:5**. The Holy Spirit enters us into union with Christ at the right hand of the Father, making us positionally higher than angels.
4. The Baptism with Fire, **Mat 3:11; Luke 3:16; Rev 19:11**. This is the real identification of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation with fire in Hades. The unbeliever is identified with fire forever. The Tribulational unbeliever is identified with the defeat of Satan. All unbelievers are removed from the earth for the start of the Millennium and placed into Hades / Hell.

There are three Ritual Baptisms. None of these are extant at the present time. They are representative identifications in which water is used as a training aid to represent some principle of doctrine. Water represents something else in a ritual baptism, and the person going into the water must have knowledge of the meaning of the water and ritual.

1. The Baptism of John, **Mat 3:1-10; Luke 3:3-18; John 1:25-33**. John lived in the ritual Age of Israel. The water represented the kingdom of God.

- a. Because the King, Jesus Christ, was present, there had to be a ceremony never used before to identify a person with the kingdom of God. The water represented the kingdom of God as John was preaching it. Putting a person in the water showed that he was identified with Messiah and that kingdom. It was an encouragement and means of relating Bible doctrine to the fact the kingdom was being offered during the first Advent. The kingdom was postponed, but this did not change the significance of John's baptism.
 - b. There was no spiritual advance in this baptism; only doctrine advances the believer.
 - c. This baptism was never practiced after John's death. John and his ministry and his baptism were unique.
 - d. In the water the person testified to his belief that the Messiah would go to the Cross to die for his sins, recognizing that because he accepted Christ as Savior before He died and accepted Him as King, he was saved and identified in the Jewish kingdom forever.
2. The Baptism of Jesus Christ, Mat 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22. This was a unique baptism. John recognized Jesus Christ's impeccability and refused to baptize Him. Jesus told him the water represented something new, (i.e., the Father's plan and will for Jesus' public ministry was to begin culminating with Him going to the Cross and receiving the personal sins of mankind and being judged for them). So, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Christ identified Himself with the Father's will.
- a. In the water, Jesus was saying He would fulfill God's plan and live a perfect life under the greatest testing and then go to the Cross and receive the imputation of all personal sins, **Mat 3:13-17.**
 - b. As He came out of the water, Jesus recognized that when He completed the plan of the Father by being judged for our sins and then dying physically, He would be resurrected, followed by His ascension and session. Coming up out of the water was a picture of His resurrection.
3. Christian water baptism. This is the ritual testimony of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There had to be a testimony before the Canon was written to explain the baptism of the Spirit. From the beginning of the Church Age until the completion of the Canon, this baptism was necessary to teach the principle of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at salvation. But once the Canon was completed, this ritual was no longer necessary, since the explanation for the baptism of the Spirit is now in writing.
- a. The purpose of Jesus Christ on the cross, His resurrection, ascension and session, and the beginning of a new Church Age had to be portrayed with ritual until the Canon was completed.
 - b. Water baptism was used as a training aid for new, weak believers, just as certain temporary spiritual gifts were used to teach until the Canon was completed.
 - c. In the water, the believer recognized that he was identified with Jesus Christ in His spiritual death, physical death, and burial, (i.e., retroactive positional truth). Identification with His spiritual death meant rejection of good and evil. Identification with His physical death and burial meant separation from good and evil.
 - d. Coming out of the water was recognition of being identified with Christ in His resurrection, ascension, and session, now seated at the right hand of the Father, (i.e., current positional truth).
 - e. Paul tells the Corinthians he stopped using water baptism because it was a means of dividing believers, cf. **Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 16:15, 33; 1 Cor 1:11-17.** So, before **Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 12** were written to explain the baptism of the Spirit and identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, water baptism was used to represent what had happened at salvation to those who did not yet have the completed Canon.

Vs. 4-6, The preamble to John's Ministry.

In fulfillment of the prophecies of **Luke 1:14, 76**, and quoting the prophecy of Isaiah in **Isa 40:3-5**, from 700-750

years earlier, Luke is identifying John the Baptist as the fulfillment of this prophecy along with his message. All three Synoptic Gospels identify the ministry of John as its fulfillment.

Yet, only Luke quotes the longer version of the Isaiah prophecy by including **Isa 40:5**. Matthew and Mark stop short of this verse. We will see its importance below. Also, in **vs. 7**, Luke identifies the recipients of John's scathing rebuke as the crowds in general, while Matthew tells us more specifically that it was addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees. These may be the mountains and valley's this preamble to John's ministry refers to. Nevertheless, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **Rom 3:23**, and sin is what needs to be brought low and smoothed out, cf. **Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14**.

Luke 3:4-6, "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 (*TRIBOS, path or beaten track is only used in this narrative in Mat., Mark, and Luke*) straight. ⁵every ravine, (*PHARANX – valley, only used here in the NT*), will be filled, and every mountain and hill, (*mountains and hills and other high places were typically places of worship and belonged especially to God, but they were often places of pagan worship*), will be brought low (*TAPEINOO, humbled*); the crooked (*SKOLIOS, crooked, full of obstacles, disorganized, devious, corrupt, evil, unjust*), will become straight, and the rough (*TRACHUS, rough or jagged. Used figuratively of the actions of crude persons*) roads smooth (*LEIOS, smooth or level, only used here*), ⁶and all flesh will see the salvation of God.'" cf. **Mat 3:3; Mark 1:3**.

It is interesting that instead of going to the people, John compelled the people to come out to him in the wilderness. This sets up his preaching perfectly, as the people need to come to the knowledge of Jesus for salvation.

"Smooth" is the adjective LEIOS λείος that is uniquely used here in a parabolic way to speak of repentance. Taken from **Isa 40:3-5**, the imagery of Luke's preamble to John's ministry is that of making a highway for the coming King. New roads would be made which would be level, straight, and smooth. This imagery was a common one in ancient days of preparing for the coming of a king or emperor. Much work was needed to be done before his arrival. This is similar to our current day etiquette of "rolling out the red carpet," for a dignitary or honored guest. It was also used in ancient days regarding warfare, as the conquerors would pave a straight and smooth path for their armies to navigate through otherwise rough terrain, thereby, saving their energy for the great battle, so that they could be victorious. This too is analogous to the coming of our Lord, where He would win the strategic battle of the Angelic Conflict upon the Cross.

In this imagery of paving a new road way, it is a beautiful figure of the real preparation that was the more beautiful; the transformation of repentance in the hearts of the people. By encouraging repentance, John was preparing the people to receive Jesus and the message of His apostles, so that they would positively receive Jesus' message of salvation. Therefore, in a spiritual sense, John was to prepare a highway for the Lord, which would result in a repentant people that would receive its Messiah.

Isaiah prophesied as follows:

Isa 40:3-5, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; ⁵Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

This is a human voice calling out in the wilderness commanding the people to prepare the way of the Lord, to make a straight highway in the desert for God. Although, commentators have made several allusions to the application of this passage, this has nothing to do with people returning to the land of Israel. This highway is similar to those mentioned in many ancient Near East records. The context is of emissaries of a great conquering king going before him and preparing a road sufficiently magnificent for a powerful monarch. But here it is not a literal road but a figurative one, or better a spiritual one, which leads to the spiritual awareness of who the Messiah is and His victory over sin, resulting in the restoration or reconciliation of the people to God. John paved the way of the Lord with the repentant, "changed" hearts of men and women.

This prophecy is also similar to the millennial roads referred to in **Isa 11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 45:2**; cf. **Isa 62:10; 43:19**.

Isa 35:8, “A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it.”

The millennial road is for God to come back to His people, to come to their aid. Yet, in the Gospels we recognize the true fulfillment in the ministry of John the Baptist as he spiritually prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus by calling for repentance.

In **Isa 40:5, “the glory of the Lord will be revealed,”** tells of the full weight of God’s glory in His presence and power, the revelation of who He is. Certainly, when the Lord comes back to establish His millennial reign the whole world will see it, and believers will experience it. Yet, the actual application of this prophecy is found in the ministry of John the Baptist and our Lord’s First Advent. John’s ministry was not building a road in the wilderness, filling up depressions, grading hills, and straightening hairpin curves; rather, he paved the way of the Lord with the changed lives of men and women.

Notice that John’s proclamation of the good news included his warnings of the bad news. He indicates that all have sinned. All need to come to repentance, a change in their thinking that results in a changed lifestyle as well. Then, having told the bad news, John went on to tell the good news that God would soon visit men with His salvation.

Yet, in **Luke 3:6**, we have, **“all flesh will see the salvation of God.”** “Salvation of God” is SOTERIOS HO THEOS that uses the Genitive for THEOS that means salvation belongs to God and is from God. He both possesses salvation and is the source of salvation for all of mankind. In addition, Salvation is given to mankind by the grace of God, as part of His grace plan for our salvation, **Eph 2:8-9**. The way we obtain God’s salvation is by faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

As Luke notes, **“all flesh”** meaning all of mankind, **“will see salvation.”** In other words, all members of the human race will come to know God’s plan of salvation, whether they believe in it or not. Interestingly, Isaiah states in **vs. 5, “Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together.”** In these two passages, **“the glory of the Lord”** is synonymous with the **“salvation of God.”** That is because in salvation, we see the total glory of God. As a matter of grace, salvation is entirely the work of God.

Salvation is the work of the Father in judging our sins, of the Son in being judged for our sins, and of the Holy Spirit in common and efficacious grace. This is why the way of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ, and faith alone with no works added to it. This is the message the people need to repent towards. They needed to change their thinking from a system of works for salvation, to a system of grace for salvation. When they would receive the salvation of God by faith in the light of His grace provision, they would “see” the revealed glory of God.

1 Chron 16:35, “Then say, ‘Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to Your holy name, and glory in Your praise.’”

Rom 3:20-22, “Because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight, for through the law is the knowledge of sin. But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.”

Rom 3:28, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.”

Rom 4:4-5, “Now to the one who works for salvation, his wages are calculated, not on the basis of grace, but on the basis of debt. But to him who does not work for salvation, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith receives credit for righteousness.”

Gal 2:16, “Nevertheless, knowing that a (*spiritually dead*) person is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; because by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

Rom 5:1, “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our lord Jesus Christ.”

There is a point at which we see God for the first time. **Deut 5:24**, “Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness.” You cannot see the greatness of God until you can see the glory of God. In these passages, seeing the glory of God is seeing the greatness of His grace plan for our salvation.

Heb 2:10, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

This is what John was preaching, as Paul also noted in **Eph 1:17**.

Eph 1:17, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

And because **Rom 3:23** says that we all fall short of the glory of God, God has provided us the means to see, know and be His glory through Jesus Christ.

Psa 62:7, “On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.”

Psa 79:9, “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake.”

Psa 85:9, “Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.”

Isa 46:13, “I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off; and My salvation will not delay. And I will grant salvation in Zion, and My glory for Israel.”

2 Tim 2:10, “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

Rev 19:1, “After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.’”

The Church, the Royal Family God, is called to eternal glory since Christ is seated in the place of glory. The formation of the Royal Family comes under the phrase, “being called to eternal glory,” **1 Peter 5:10**; **2 Peter 1:3**. This is the status of the Royal Family being called into eternal relationship with God through His plan of salvation.

Salvation Glory that results in Resurrection Glory!

In our study of Luke’s Gospel, we are currently noting what I call the “Preamble” to John the Baptist’s ministry in **Luke 3:4-6**, which is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in **Isa 40:3-5**. In comparing the two, we have noticed a slight variation in the last phrase.

In Luke’s gospel it reads: “And all flesh will see the salvation of God.”

While Isaiah’s prophecy reads: “Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see *it* together.”

In comparing the two, we note that the “salvation of God” is equivalent to the “glory of the Lord,” that “all flesh will see.” And in fact, the Septuagint translation of **Isa 40:5** already combines them and reads: “And they will see the glory of the Lord, and all flesh will see the salvation of God.” The translators of the Septuagint assumed that the subject of “all flesh will see together” was referring to “salvation,” as noted in **Isa 52:10**.

Isa 52:10, “The LORD has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.”

The nameless subject in **Isa 40:5b**, which is noted by an “it” in italics is defined by the Septuagint translators as “salvation.” In addition, through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, Luke only used the last half of the Septuagint

translation and utilized its translation to define the nameless subject as “salvation.” Therefore, we understand from Isaiah, that glory and salvation go hand in hand. As such, the revelation of God’s plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ, as preached by John, is a revelation of God’s great glory.

This “**Salvation Glory**” is seen throughout the Scriptures, as we have noted above. But nowhere is it seen more prevalent than in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, which resurrection He has promised to those that believe. **Read Luke 23:26-24:26.**

Here, we see that in order for Jesus to enter into glory, the glory of His resurrection, He first had to suffer, (i.e., die) for our sins. Once Jesus paid for our sins upon the Cross, He then could enter into His glory of resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God the Father. Once Jesus completed the work of salvation and entered into His resurrection glory, all who would believe upon Him would also be saved and entered into resurrection glory.

John 11:25, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.’”

Rom 6:4, “Therefore, we have been buried with Him (*Jesus Christ*) through baptism into death (*baptism of the Spirit*) in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

1 Peter 1:3-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Phil 3:10-11, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Phil 3:20-21, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

As such, the resurrection body is described in terms of glory, **1 Cor 15:43.**

1 Cor 15:42-44, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”

Our resurrection body is “**raised in glory**,” because we are in the status quo of His victory upon the Cross that results in an everlasting union and life with Jesus Christ. Our resurrection will be part of the “First Resurrection” of all believers throughout human history. The first resurrection is pictured in Scripture as a battalion pass-in-review, and is divided into four echelons, **1 Cor 15:20-24.**

1 Cor 15:20-24, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, ²⁴then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

The four companies in order of resurrection include:

1. Alpha Company: The resurrection of Christ, for He is “the first fruits of those that slept,” **Mat 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 2:31-34.**
2. Bravo Company: The resurrection of the Royal Family of God at the end of the Church Age, **John 14:1-3; Phil 3:20-21; 1 Cor 15:51-57; 1 Thes 4:13-18; 1 John 3:1-2.**

3. Charlie Company: The resurrection of the OT believers and Tribulational martyrs at the end of the Tribulation and at the Second Advent of Christ, **Dan 12:13; Isa 26:19-20; Mat 24:31; Rev 20:4.**

4. Delta Company: The resurrection of the Millennial saints at the end of the Millennium, **Rev 20:5.**

Therefore, we will live forever in a state of glory. In **2 Thes 2:14**, “**The attainment of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,**” refers to having a resurrection body exactly like His.

2 Tim 4:18, “**The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**”

3. John’s fiery preaching, vs. 7-14.

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?"**”

Here we see a difference between Luke’s gospel and Matthew’s, Mark does not include this narrative. Luke states generally that John spoke to the “crowds” OCHLOS, while Matthew says he addressed only the Pharisees and Sadducees, **Mat 3:7**, “**But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"**”

“**Brood of Vipers**” uses the Greek Noun GENNEMA γέννημα that means, “that which is produced or born, offspring, progeny, or generation.” It comes from the noun from GENNAO, “to give birth to, beget, or involving generation” that is from GINOMAI that means, “to become.” Interestingly, GENNEMA is only used for “**offspring**,” in railings against the Pharisees, **Mat 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7**, as the “offspring of vipers,” translated “brood of vipers.”

The variant GENEMA is used for “**fruit**” or the “generation of the vine” meaning, “grape juice or wine,” in **Mat 26:29; Mark 14:25; and Luke 22:18**, that our Lord would not drink again of until His Second Advent, and in **2 Cor 9:10**, translated “harvest” but meaning Divine Good Production.

Therefore, we have a stark contrast in the application of this word from those who lead others astray from faith in the Lord, to the completed work of the Lord upon the Cross or His Divine Good Production, as well as ours.

GENNEMA used regarding the Pharisees and Sadducees is linked with “**vipers**” ECHIDNA ἔχιδνα that means, “a poisonous snake,” named as the viper or adder in **Mat 3:7; 12:34; 23:23; Luke 3:7**. ECHIDNA focuses on the evil, dangerous character of the creature in contrast to the more common word for snake, OPHIS. John might have borrowed this phrase from Isaiah.

Isa 59:5, “**They hatch adders’ eggs and weave the spider’s web; He who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a snake breaks forth.**”

The only other time this word is used, is for the literal snake that bit Paul in **Acts 28:3**. Therefore, “**brood of vipers,**” figuratively means the offspring of perversive snakes, and therefore, the offspring of the false teachers of false doctrines that led the Israelites astray from knowing their Messiah.

The serpent is an emblem of the devil, **Gen 3:1; Rev 12:9, 14-15**, and Jesus not only repeated John’s words, **Mat 12:35; 23:23, 33**, but He interpreted the words, and told them plainly that they were “**the children of the devil,**” **John 8:44**. The Jewish rulers well deserved this name, for they poisoned the religious principles of the nation, and accomplished the crucifixion of the Son of God

“**Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come,**” gives us the imagery of snakes desperately fleeing from a wild fire. Here, it means who told you the truth about salvation to avoid God’s judgment to come including the judgment of condemnation to the eternal Lake of Fire. It gives us the principle that impending judgment is the alternative to repentance. John’s baptism, like that of Moses at the Red Sea, **1 Cor 10:2**, was a way of escape from destruction, if

rightly used.

The “**wrath to come**” ORGE MELLO is Hades and the eternal Lake of Fire for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. Prophecy foretold that Messiah's times would be accompanied with wrath, **Isa 63:3-6; Dan 7:10-26**. ORGE is also used figuratively in **Rev 14:10; 16:19**, regarding God's future wrath or judgment upon the unbeliever in the image of drinking wine in a simile to “brood of vipers.”

Rev 14:9-11, “Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name’.”

Revelation 16:19, “The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”

As Luke is writing for Gentile ears, and Matthew Jewish, Luke wants to warn all people, both Jew and Gentile, as all who do not believe will endure the “wrath to come.” But Matthew is addressing the head of the snake, the religious leaders who are rejecting God's Messiah and keeping the people from seeing / knowing Him too.

Luke 3:8-9 and **Matthew 3:7-10** are virtually identical, although Matthew is broken down into three verses while Luke just two.

Luke 3:8-9, “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.”

Mat 3:8-10, “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; ⁹and do not suppose that you can 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. ¹⁰The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

These verses now change from the view point of the unbeliever to the believer, as it discusses “fruit in keeping with repentance” that means Divine good production post salvation.

We begin with “**therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance**.” Here, Luke and Matthew use the analogy of “**fruit bearing**” that is Divine Good Production, (DGP), or the Fruit of the Spirit, **Gal 5:22-23**, to play off of the “offspring / fruit generation” of vipers in **vs. 7**. Here, the DGP is that “**in keeping with repentance**.” The Greek reads AXIOS HO METANOIA that means, “worthy of, deserving, fit, good enough, or suitable” for “repentance,” METANOIA. We noted METANOIA in **vs. 3**, and it carries the same meaning here of a change of heart, that is the change of thinking in the context of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. So, Luke is saying, if you have changed your way of thinking regarding the Messiah for salvation, now you should live in the new life that He brings, and live worthy of this new life you have. In other words, since your sins have been forgiven by Christ, you should no longer live a sinful life style, but instead live in the righteousness you have been made in Christ. We should live our lives worthy of the holiness and righteous of God, cf. **Eph 4:1; 2 Thes 1:11**.

2 Thes 1:11, “To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power.”

As such, true repentance is evidenced by a change of character, (not mere good works in an effort to earn salvation). “Fruits of repentance” are evidences that one has turned from the ways of death to receive the life-giving salvation of God. God forgives; therefore, we repent in gratitude. Yet, this change in character can only come about by God's transforming Spirit and your post-salvation renewing of the mind through Bible Doctrine being resident within your

soul.

Then Luke states, **“and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father.’”** This begins with Semiticism for “do not even begin to think.” “Say to themselves,” reminds us that many times people deceive themselves to quiet their consciousness from the condemning thoughts of judgment they deserve. It tells us that the Israelites should not “rest on their laurels.” In other words, just because they are Israelites, in the lineage of Abraham, does not guarantee them salvation and eternal life. It does not guarantee that they are “children of God,” and have a free pass to heaven and God’s Kingdom. Israelites, as do Gentiles, must accept God’s plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ, in order to receive eternal glory, by being “born again,” **John 3:3.**

John 3:3, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God’.”

That is why he goes on to say, **“for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.”** In Aramaic, the words stones and children produce a pun. Yet, the fact is God does not need the Israelite people to populate His kingdom. He can find children anywhere, because He is God. Yet, He has given the Israelites a unique opportunity as a chosen race. But that opportunity only comes to fruition when they accept God’s plan for their salvation glory. That is the change of thinking that is necessary for the Jew. They have to change their thinking regarding their unique opportunity as physical children of Abraham, to accept Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah to become spiritual children of Abraham, just as the Gentile believer also becomes. That is what Paul was saying in **Rom 9:5ff, “not all Israel is Israel.”**

Rom 9:6-8, “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.” That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.”

Unfortunately, the Jews believed, and still believe today, that they had a favored position with God and took pride in being Abraham’s children. John denounced the concept of nationalistic or racial privilege and proclaimed that God would base His judgment on a person’s volition, not his lineage. Therefore, everyone who repents and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior becomes a child of God and is spiritually Abraham’s child, **Gen 17:5; John 1:12; 8:39; Rom 4:12-16; 8:14; Gal 3:6-9, 26; 6:15.**

Gen 17:5, “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.”

John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

Heb 2:10, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

Rom 4:16, “For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”

Rom 8:14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

John repeated this message, and Jesus reiterated it, **Mat 8:11-12, “I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; ¹²but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**

Next, in **vs. 9**, we have a warning of Divine Discipline coming against the people because of their lack of repentance demonstrated by Divine good production. In John’s day, trees that did not produce were useless. They were cut down and used for firewood. Here we have a dual warning, one of personal Divine discipline for reversionistic believers

who do not produce Divine Good, and one of national discipline for the nation that does not produce Divine good. Here, John is compared to a farmer who chops down useless trees and who winnows the grain to separate the wheat from the chaff, **vs. 17**.

“Indeed the axe (AXINE only used here and Mat 3:10) 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.”

“**Root**” is the Noun RHIZA ρίζα that means, “root, source, shoot, or offspring,” so the analogy of “brood or offspring” of vipers continues. That is, those without Divine Good Production (DGP).

“**Trees**” is the noun DENDRON where we get our word rhododendron from, and is used figuratively, first in the plural, then in the singular for reversionistic and unrepentant believers, as well as reversionistic and unrepentant nations.

The imagery here is clearly one of judgment, cf. **Isa 10:33–34; Ezek 31:12; Dan 4:14**, both present and continual judgment, and does not refer to the final judgment but rather to the discipline of God occurring due to the arrival of God’s kingdom and the lack of repentance thereof.

“**Every tree that does not bear good fruit**” speaks of no DGP in their life. These will be “**cut down and thrown into the fire,**” i.e., used as fuel or a motivating factor for others to repent with good works, which is similar to what our Lord said in **John 15:2a, 6**.

John 15:2a, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away...”

John 15:6, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

This “burning” is not Hades or the Lake of Fire, but God’s discipline towards those who do not produce the Fruit of the Spirit, **Gal 5:22-23**, which is spoken about in **John 15**, where the positive believer can produce fruit, more fruit, and much fruit.

Therefore, these analogies are first speaking of God’s Divine discipline on the reversionistic believer. They do not lose their salvation, but they are disciplined and can be taken out under the 3rd stage of Divine discipline, **1 Cor 11:30, “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”**

Interestingly, as the positive believer can produce three tiers of Divine good production, (fruit, more fruit, and much fruit), the reversionistic believer can suffer three tiers of Divine discipline, (weak, sick, and a number sleep). In addition, below John is questioned three times and gives three answers on how the people can produce Divine good.

John the Baptist gives this same warning as our Lord did in **John 15**, to the believer(s) who does not produce DGP after believing in Jesus Christ as the promised Savior-Messiah. That is why he goes on to answer the questions of various people as to “**what they should do,**” in **vs. 10-14**, now that they are saved.

This also has the backdrop of God’s judgment on the nation of Israel that rejected His Son as their Savior. As you know, the unbeliever can never produce Divine good. And, as a nation of predominate unbelievers or reversionistic believers, God will take out the nation of Israel under the 5th Cycle of National Divine Judgment, as noted in **Lev 26:14-38**, which He did to Israel in 70 A.D., and replaced with a fruit bearing tree, i.e., the Gentile nations, cf. **Luke 6:43-45; 13:6-9**.

The nation of Israel had not been productive and judgment was going to be their portion. John was telling the people of Israel that if they did not bring forth fruit, the axe would come down on the root of their tree.

Jesus said in **Mat 21:43, “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.”**

The Lord Jesus Christ is saying the same thing to the church today in the United States of America.

“Already now the messianic banquet has begun (Luke 14:15–24), and the judgment is taking place. The invited guests are being excluded, and the outcasts are now invited in their place. Indeed, the last are becoming first, and the first are becoming last (13:30). The barren fig tree is now experiencing its final hour (13:6–9). Unless there is repentance, it will be cut down (13:9). Compare Rom 11:17f., for a Pauline parallel.” (New American Commentary)

Therefore, failure to repent invites catastrophe: **“Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.”** The privilege of Jewish heritage was plainly not enough. John, or better God, demanded a strong sense of Divine good production to avert the possibility of a terrible judgment that would “sever” their roots. John’s message was drastic and clearly offensive to many Jewish traditionalists who thought they were good enough; just as many churchgoers do today!

Nevertheless, when John saw the people were repentant, he baptized them and expected them to give some evidence of their sincerity. The application of **vs. 7-9**, is seen in **vs. 10-14**, which is unique to all the gospels.

Vs. 10

Luke 3:10, “And the crowds were questioning him, saying, ‘Then what shall we do?’”

“Then what shall we do” is in the Aorist, Active, Subjunctive Mood of the common verb POIEO, “to do, produce, accomplish, etc.” It was a deliberate real question the people were asking John. In this construction, they were not asking questions of fact, but of possibility or means. They were not asking “what or who,” but “how and where.” They were grappling within their thoughts, “how do we produce this fruit?”

Understandably, John’s words were upsetting to the crowds. That is why they were continually “asking” him (Imperfect of EPEROTAO, “ask for, inquire, etc.), to correct their mistaken view on salvation, (i.e., salvation is being born a Jew), and to define their post salvation repentance further.

John answers some of their questions in **vs. 11-14** in a practical sense. Luke uses three examples of John’s recommendations for Divine good production.

Principle: Truly repentant / believing people want to know what they should do in their new spiritual life.

Vs. 11

Luke 3:11, “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’.”

The **“tunic”** CHITON χιτών was not the outer garment, cape / coat like apparel. It was the inner garment or shirt, maybe even a “long Johns” type of apparel. It is used in **Mat 5:40; 10:10; Mark 6:9; 14:63; Luke 3:11; 6:29; 9:3; John 19:23** twice; **Acts 9:39; Jude 1:23**.

In **John 19:23** we see the difference, as the soldiers divide, Jesus’ outer garment into four pieces, but cast lots for His tunic because it was seamless.

So, we see that people might have had multiple shirts in their possession, and if they come across someone who does not even have one, to share their surplus with them.

“To share with him” is the Aorist, Active, Imperative, for a command, of the verb METADIDOMI μεταδίδωμι that means, “give over, impart, **share**, or bestow.” It comes from the root verb DIDOMI that means, “give, give out, hand over, etc.,” with the prefix of the preposition META that means, **“with.”**

John taught the importance of sharing one’s substance with those less fortunate. He specifically mentioned clothing and food (BROMA), but he no doubt had other needs in mind as well. The message is those who have are to share with those who have not. The Bible is full of commands to care for the less fortunate. Therefore, we see that

unselfishness and generosity are “fruits worthy of repentance.” cf. **2 Cor 8:13-15; James 2:15-17; 1 John 3:17.**

Vs. 12-13

Luke 3:12, “And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, ‘Teacher, (DIDASKALOS) what shall we do?’ (same construction as in vs. 11), ¹³And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.’”

Now going from the general population and sharing with others, Luke notes that John got specific in his responses, in this case regarding tax collectors, (TELONES), who were Jews that were most hated by the Jews because of their allegiance to the Romans, and thought to be sinful because some were unscrupulous in collecting tax money and charging high taxes; more than the government mandated. For other references to tax collectors see **Luke 5:27, 29–30; 7:29, 34; 15:1; 18:10–13; 19:2.** Notice that Jesus chose Levi, a.k.a. Matthew, as one of His disciples / Apostles.

Therefore, the repentant tax collectors, no doubt, came with their question because of the guilt they felt. They knew they were defrauding the people, and their consciences, along with their feeling of ostracism condemned them. So, they asked, how can we produce fruit that is worthy of our salvation.

The simple answer was, “be honest in all your transactions and accountings.” John considered fair and honest business practices and generosity with their wealth as the major fruits of repentance.

It is interesting that he does not tell them, or the soldiers below, to do something, but rather to stop doing something that was sinful. Many times, when we say no to sin, especially when it would affect someone else negatively, we are actually producing Divine good towards them. It really is the concept of “loving your neighbor.”

Remember, repentance is a way of life, not a one-time event. It is not the fruits of repentance as efforts to earn salvation, but rather as concrete, practical evidences that a life had been touched and moved by the mercy and grace of God. The fruits of repentance were not the fruits of legalism, but of a relationship between God and you, the forgiven one.

An example of the right application of this is seen in the encounter Jesus had with the Tax Collector Zaccheus in **Luke 19:1-16.**

Vs. 14

Luke 3:14, “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.’”

“**Soldiers**” is actually a verb here. The Present, Middle, Participle in the Nominative case that acts like a noun of STRATEUOMAI στρατεύομαι that means, “serve as a soldier or serve in the army.” It is used seven times in the NT, and this is the only one that potentially meant an actual soldier. All the other uses are figurative, typically of believers fighting inside the angel conflict. From the context of this verse, it seems that these are actual soldier employed by the government.

Some think this refers to Roman soldiers who would be Gentiles and absolutely not Jews, others think they were Jewish soldiers in the employment of the Sanhedrin or King Herod Antipas, perhaps to assist with the tax collections. Assuming Roman soldiers, we see John’s baptism drawing from Jews and Gentiles alike, cf. **Luke 7:1-9**, with a message for both Jews and Gentiles.

Regardless, as to what type of soldiers they were, John’s response to them was similar to those for the tax collectors since they also had opportunity to defraud and torment the people. His response was threefold:

1. “**Do not to take money from anyone by force,**” which is the Aorist, Active, Subjunctive of the Verb DIASEIO διασεῖω that means, “extort by force, blackmail, take money by terrifying someone,” or literally, “to shake thoroughly.” It is only used here in Scripture. Our English slang expression “shake down” possesses the same

connotation. It means to not extort or blackmail by applying your authority over someone.

2. **“Nor accuse anyone falsely,”** which is also in the Aorist, Active, Subjunctive but this time of the Verb SUKOPHANTEO συκοφαντέω that means, “accuse falsely, defraud, slander, blackmail, or extort.” It is only used here and in **Luke 19:8**. It comes from SUKO “fig,” and PHAINO “show or declare.” It came from ancient Greek when there was a famine of the figs, and certain people were put in charge of making sure the figs were not exported illegally. They became known as the “fig informers” SUKOPHANTEO. Later, it was used in the Greek in the form of “blackmail” by public officials, but it could refer to any effort by a person who seeks to oppress or extort someone with false charges or threats. False accusation was also a favorite approach by many soldiers who acted as troublesome informers on frivolous or false grounds. So, John condemns the custom of blackmailing those with money by acting as informers and false accusers against them. In addition, this is where we get our English word “sycophant” from, which is a “servile, fawning, or obsequious person who flatters somebody powerful for personal gain.”

This and the others mentioned above are part of the seven abominable sins the Lord hates, **Prov 6:16-19**, **“There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: ¹⁷Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, ¹⁹A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.”**

3. **“And be content with your wages,”** that uses the Present, Passive, Imperative of the Verb ARKEO ἀρκέω that means, “be enough, sufficient, and be satisfied or content with.” It is linked with “wages” OPSONION meaning their “pay, compensation, or salary.” The soldiers in that day were paid very little. Similar to our soldiers today compared to other professions. They were not to add to their wages by pillage or extortion. Instead, they were to be content with what the Lord had provided them, and not to lust for more leading to further sin, cf. **Mat 28:12**.

ARKEO “content” is used eight times in the NT with the underlying theme of being “satisfied,” due to having trust in God your Heavenly Father who provides for and protects you, cf. **Mat 6:25f; 2 Cor 12:9; 1 Tim 6:8; Heb 13:5**.

Mat 6:25, **“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”**

2 Cor 12:9, **“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”**

1 Tim 6:8, **“If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”**

Heb 13:5, **“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’”**

OPSONION ὀψώνιον for “wages” is used only four times in the NT, here and in **Rom 6:23**, to show what the “wages of sin” are (i.e., death), and in **1 Cor 9:7; 2 Cor 11:8** in regard to how the “soldier” that is the Pastor/Teacher or missionary should earn their wages from the church.

1 Cor 9:7a, **“Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? ...”**

But the message John is giving these soldiers is to be content with the salary that they earn and not be greedy and use their power to take money unjustly from others. Do not extort. Do not bully. Do not cheat others using the authority of the state. Do not use weapons to take from people; rather, be content with your wages.

Notice that in the case of the tax collectors and soldiers, John does NOT tell them to vacate their profession, only to act and operate honestly with integrity. They could remain in their vocations and serve God. In addition, positions of authority and wealth are neither to be exploited nor to be used as instruments of oppression. Power is to be used to help, not oppress. Money is to be used as a means of imitating God’s generosity and of demonstrating true thankfulness to God.

And remember **1 Tim 6:10**, “**For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**”

And **1 Tim 3:3**, “**Do not be addicted to wine or pugnacious (aggressive, confrontational, and quarrelsome), but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.**”

As our Lord said in **Mat 7:20**, “**So then, you will know them by their fruits.**”

The Westminster Confession of Faith says, “*Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man’s duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly.*” Therefore, repentance causes us to examine our own lives with specificity. We must think about how we use our callings, our positions, and our privileges to either help or hurt, to sin or pursue righteousness.

In summary, “*The genuinely repentant one who has turned from his sin to God acts like the God who has changed him. Because God has been generous in His mercy to those who repent, they are merciful in return by being generous in meeting the needs of others. God expects this reciprocal action from those who have received His mercy. (See the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, Matthew 18:23-35.)*” (Complete Biblical Library)

Chuck Swindoll notes, “*Luke 3:7-14 insists that we understand repentance, for if we do not understand repentance then we do not accurately understand the Christian life. As Martin Luther put it in his ninety-five theses, “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent’ (Matt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” In the Christian life we enter into a life of repentance, a life of ever turning toward that celestial city. Repentance is a wonderful Christian discipline.*” (Christ-Centered Exposition)

Therefore, John was identifying the crooked things that had to be made straight, if a highway was to be prepared for the Lord’s coming, cf. **vs. 4-5**. As James noted in **James 1:27**, “**Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.**”

4. John preaches the Gospel and coming of Jesus’ ministry, vs. 15-18.

Vs. 15

Luke 3:15, “**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.**”

Here, we see that John through his preaching created a sense of expectations in the heart of the people for the coming of the Christ. Our ministry should do the same!

“**In a state of expectation**” is the Present Active, Participle in the Genitive Masculine of PROSDOKAO προσδοκάω that means, “wait for, look for, anticipate, expect.” In the Greek it meant, “waiting for something in suspense.” In our verse, it means they had hope in the sense of confident expectation that “**the Christ**” HO CHRISTOS was coming and they were eagerly waiting for Him. Just as John’s listeners had a heightened sense of expectation waiting for the 1st Advent of the Christ: Savior, Messiah, King, so too should we be expectantly looking for His return, **Mat 24:50; Luke 12:46; 2 Peter 3:10-14; cf. 1 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20.**

“**All were wondering in their hearts**” is similar to Mary’s pondering in **Luke 1:29**, the people were, “considering, pondering, and deliberating” DIALOGIZOMAI, “**in their hearts**” KARDIA - right lobe of the soul, if John was “**the Christ**” CHRISTOS – the anointed One.

John’s reply in **vs. 16-17**, is noted in all the gospels; **Mat 3:11-12** that is almost verbatim to **Luke; Mark 1:7-8**, that is more abbreviated; and **John 1:19-27, 33** that expands on the overall scene.

Vs. 16

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.’”

Here we see that John’s humble response teaches of Christ’s ministry towards the Church and all peoples.

John’s “**answer**” APOKRINO was No!, I am not, using certain terms regarding his ministry compared to Jesus’ ministry, (i.e., I baptize you with water; He with the Holy Spirit and judgment). John also states Jesus’ authority over John by saying, “**One is coming who is ‘mightier’ than I,**” using the Adjective ISCHUROS ισχυρός that means, “strong, powerful, mighty, able, forcible, or vehement.” It come from the Noun ISCHUS “strength, power, forcefulness” that tells us that Jesus as God is endowed with or possesses power which He applies towards mankind in all that He does. He has all the power necessary and all the ability to do what His Sovereignty is able to do, especially judge mankind.

“**I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals**” is an idiom similar to our saying, “I don’t hold a candle compared to Him.”

“Fit” is the Adjective HIKANOS ικανός that means, “sufficient, adequate, considerable, fit, competent, able, worthy, etc.” It was a statement of humility and unworthiness in the presence of absolute holiness, power, and authority.

Then John identifies Jesus’ greater ministry, power, and judgment, “**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (HAGIOS PNEUMA) and fire (PUR).**”

Both of these baptisms are one of seven mentioned in the NT, as noted above under **vs. 3**, and are two of the four “Real Baptisms,” along the Baptism of Moses and the Baptism of the Cross. “Real Baptism” means there is an actual identification with something that has significance. The other three baptisms, (by John, Jesus’ own baptism, and with Water), are called Ritual Baptisms, and none of these are extant at the present time. They are representative identifications in which water is used as a training aid to represent some principle of doctrine. Water represents something else in a ritual baptism, and the person going into the water must have knowledge of the meaning of the water and ritual. Therefore, John’s Baptism with water had the water representing the Kingdom of God / the Kingdom of Heaven. But the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” and “with Fire” are actual identifications with something, as we will see. No representative is used.

It is worthy to note that the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” although given credit to the Holy Spirit elsewhere in the NT, is said by Luke via John the Baptist, to be a baptism that Jesus would perform as the agent of the baptism, the Greek language also identifies this, as we will note next. So, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a work that Jesus performs, as is the Baptism with Fire, which we will note below.

In our passage, the Greek word for “**with**” is the Dative Preposition of EN. In this verse and **1 Cor 12:13** that also speaks of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, EN is a Dative of Means. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the instrument or means by which the agent, (Jesus Christ), uses to baptize. See Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, pg. 374. As such, “with” is a good translation. In addition, the prophecy that John makes in this verse, is fulfilled in the Church Age, as noted **1 Cor 12:13**.

1 Cor 12:13, “For by (means of) one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” Jesus Christ is the unnamed agent in this verse. Therefore, in this baptism we see the unity of the Trinity to perform the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is noted in **1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28**. This occurs at salvation for Church Age believers only. This baptism is God the Holy Spirit identifying us with the Lord Jesus Christ forever. It is the means of forming the Royal Family and breaking the back of the Old Sin Nature as the ruler of human life. We are positionally changed. No water is involved in this Real Baptism. We are identified with Christ in His death, burial,

and resurrection, **Eph 4:5; Acts 1:5**. It is the process in which God the Holy Spirit enters us into union with Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father, making us positionally higher than angels.

This is one of seven ministries of God the Holy Spirit:

1. Efficacious grace is the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to make faith in Jesus Christ effective for eternal salvation. When positive volition is exercised toward gospel information resulting in faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit picks up that weak faith from the spiritually dead unbeliever and makes that faith effectual, carrying the believer to the point of salvation.
2. Regeneration is where the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit creates a human spirit for the imputation of eternal life to that human spirit. This is being spiritually born again. The new believer then becomes trichotomous, having a body, soul, and spirit.
3. In the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit creates a temple in the believer's body for the indwelling of Christ as the shekinah glory, **1 Cor 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor 6:16**.
4. In the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit makes us joint-heirs with Christ and guarantees through His own signature the preservation of our redemption and eternal life, **Eph 1:13-14; 4:30**. It guarantees our eternity, and therefore provides us eternal security.
5. In the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit enters the believer into union with Christ, making the Church Age believer a part of the Royal Family of God forever.
6. The sovereign distribution of spiritual gifts to every believer at salvation is a ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is for the function of royalty, **1 Cor 12:11**.
7. The Filling of the Spirit is the initial entrance into the God's Power System at the point of salvation where the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit can be utilized in the execution of the protocol plan of God, **Eph 5:18**.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the means of forming the Royal Family of God during the Church Age. It is a function of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit at salvation. By being entered into union with Christ, we are adopted as Royal Family of God. This union with Christ is called Positional Sanctification or the sanctification of the body, **Eph 5:25-27**.

Eph 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

This is the one and only baptism that unifies the Royal Family of God, **Rom 6:3-5; Eph 4:5**.

Eph 4:5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Rom 6:3, "Do you not know that all of us have been baptized into Jesus Christ? ⁴Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism into his death, in order that as Christ was raised again from the dead to the glory of the father, we also might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death (and we have), and not only this (retroactive positional truth), we shall also be united in the likeness of his resurrection."

The "newness of life" refers to our being a made new spiritual species, **2 Cor 5:7; Gal 6:15**, and Royal Family of God. So, **Rom 6:3-5**, teaches identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

The many references to Positional Sanctification or the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are often found in the prepositional phrase EN + the locative of CHRISTOS, translated "**in Christ**." Almost everywhere this phrase is found, it is a technical reference to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and resultant positional truth, cf. **Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 15:22**.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is related to the Church Age only. This ministry of the Holy Spirit is not found in the OT, and there are no eschatological references to it beyond the Church Age. In fact, John the Baptist made the first prophecy regarding it and our Lord followed it up upon His ascension in **Acts 1:5**.

Acts 1:5, “For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The mechanics of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are found in **Gal 3:26-28**, “**For all of you are the sons of God (Royal Family) through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you were baptized into Christ, and have clothed yourselves (put on) with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**”

Being in union with Christ, all human distinctions are removed by the formation of the Royal Family of God. Neither race nor status in life is an issue. No racial, social, or economic distinctions are made.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience, **1 Cor 12:13**. It is not the function of any spiritual gift, as alleged by the “holy roller” heresy, which equates the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. No one has legitimately spoken in tongues since 70-90 A.D. Therefore, because of the universality of the baptism of the Holy Spirit provided for all Church Age believers, it is not in any sense experiential. The only experience that those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit are ever conscious of is the experience of sensing their absolute unworthiness. It is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit that changes people, but the power of the ascended Christ coming into their lives through the Holy Spirit. We all too often separate things that the New Testament never separates. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience apart from Jesus Christ—it is the evidence of the ascended Christ.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an act of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. Any time God uses His Divine power, whether it is the omnipotence of God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, it excludes any form of experiential cooperation. That is grace! In addition, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred first in Jerusalem and included the gift of tongues to warn the Jews of the coming of the 5th Cycle of Discipline, as John also warns about in our passage, **Luke 3:16-17**. As such, it was not a function or cause of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, but a separate unique ministry of the Holy Spirit; His gift giving and convicting ministries.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit could not occur until there was the strategic victory of Jesus Christ in the Angelic Conflict. The Levitical priesthood was inadequate for the Church Age. In addition, Christ as battlefield royalty had no Royal Family. Therefore, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the mechanics for providing Christ with a Royal Family to go along with our Lord’s third royal title, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” And, since every believer in the Church Age is now a target of Satan, there was a necessity for a universal Royal Priesthood, **1 Peter 2:5; 9**. Therefore, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is unique to this dispensation.

Our union with Jesus Christ is a permanent identification which distinguishes Christianity from religion. In religion, man by man’s efforts seeks to gain the approbation of God, a satanic function. In Christianity, the believer through union with Jesus Christ has a permanent relationship with God. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit forms the body of Christ; Christ being the head. As such, all Church Age believers are formed into one body and one Royal Family, **Eph 2:16; 4:4-5; 5:30-32; Col 1:24; 2:19**. The Holy Spirit is the agent in the formation of the body of Christ, the church universal, the Royal Family of God. This is the Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

God the Father appointed Jesus Christ as the head of the body as a part of His third royal title. Synonyms for the Royal Family of God are:

- The Royal Family in union with Christ is called, “the body.”
- The Royal Family on earth is called, “the Church.”
- The Royal Family in eternity is called, “the bride of Christ.”

The entire world is not the family of God. Only those who believe in Christ become the children of God, at which point the Baptism of the Holy Spirit makes us in the Church Age Royal Family of God.

Equal privilege for all Church Age believers is based on the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, a doctrine which involves the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. Through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, equal privilege in the Royal Family of God is related to two doctrinal facts:

1. The omnipotence of the Holy Spirit creates a Royal Family of God, the body of Christ, as an organism, not as an institution.
2. Simultaneously, from the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit creates a new spiritual species for spiritual living (not for psychological living) in the devil's world. Every Church Age believer is a part of this unique spiritual species. Furthermore, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit also provides equal opportunity for the fulfillment of the protocol plan of God through residence inside God's Power System, (GPS).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the most important thing that happens to us at salvation. It forms the church universal, the body, the Royal Family of God, the new spiritual species, etc. This distinguishes us from every other dispensation, and makes it possible for us to have equal privilege and equal opportunity under the Plan of God.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit demands that the believer think of himself as a person, totally apart from any form of superiority or inferiority. You are not to think of yourself as superior or inferior, or with any form of human prejudice or hypocrisy. Spiritual living must replace psychological living, see **Gal 3:26-29**, once again.

Gal 3:26-29, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

Summary, the characteristics of the Baptism of the Spirit:

1. It is not an experience. It is not an emotional activity or ecstasies. Therefore, it is not speaking in tongues.
2. It is not related to human feeling(s).
3. It is not progressive. Therefore, it cannot be improved in either time or eternity. Our union with Christ is perfect from salvation.
4. It is not related to any human merit or ability. There is nothing you can do to have the Baptism of the Spirit.
5. It is obtained in total at the moment of salvation. It is not a post-salvation experience. It is not the "second blessing," so called by holy rollers. Union with Christ is a completed ministry by the Holy Spirit. Hence, it cannot be reversed by any human failure.
6. It is eternal and unchangeable in nature. It cannot be canceled or changed by God or man. It is a part of your eternal security. No renunciation; no sin, human good, or evil; no moral or immoral degeneracy can cancel this ministry of the Holy Spirit.
7. It is known and understood only through perception of the mystery doctrine of the Church Age. Therefore, it cannot be applied in a state of ignorance. It is invisible, not subject to empiricism; it is subject to cognition of Bible doctrine only.
8. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is one of the POLITEUMA privileges, i.e., one of the ten unique features of the Church Age, making the Church Age believer unique because it is the basis for making us Royal Family of God.

Doctrine of the Baptism with Fire

"**Fire**" is the Greek Noun PUR. In the OT, fire was used for both a cleansing, purifying agent and an agent of destruction. God demonstrated His pleasure with fire upon the altar, **Gen 15:17; Lev 9:23f; Judges 6:21; 1 Kings**

18:38; 1 Chron 21:26; 2 Chron 7:1. Yet, fire also demonstrated God's displeasure and was a sign of His wrath and judgment, **Gen 19:24; Exo 9:24; Lev 10:2; Num 11:1; 16:35; 2 Kings 1:10; Amos 1:4, 7.** In addition, the Lord God is described as a "consuming fire," **Deut 4:24; 9:3; Isa 33:14.**

The first mention of "fire" in the Bible is **Gen 19:24-25**; the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. The last mention in the OT is **Mal 3:1-2**; the 2nd Advent of our Lord. The first mention in the NT is **Mat 3:10**, the parallel passage to **Luke 3:16**; the Baptism with Fire. The last mention in the Bible is **Rev 21:8**; the final judgment of the unbeliever, the second death, the eternal Lake of Fire.

Fire was also used by our Lord as a physical manifestation of Jesus Christ in the OT called a "theophany." This is illustrated several times in the Bible including:

1. The making of the covenant with Abraham, **Gen 15:17.**
2. The appearance in the burning bush, **Exo 3:2.**
3. Leading the Israelites by a pillar of fire by night, **Exo 13:21-22; 14:24; Num 9:15-16; 14:14;** etc.
4. His appearance on Mount Sinai, **Exo 19:18; 24:17; Deut 4:11-36; 5:4-26;** etc.
5. And others, **1 Kings 18:24, 38; 1 Chron 21:26; 2 Chron 7:1, 3.**

Fire was also used symbolically in Israel's worship to represent God's constant presence with Israel, **Lev 6:12-13.** God's presence as fire represented both judgment and purification. Our English words purify and purge both come from the Greek word for fire, PUR.

Used about 75 times in the NT, it carries the same meanings as in the OT. It is particularly used to represent Jesus' judgments: On the believer's works in **1 Cor 3:13-15**; on the unbeliever's works in **Rev 20:11-14; 2 Thes 1:7-9.**

2 Thess 1:7-9, "And to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Likewise, Jesus referred to the judgment of eternal condemnation as a place of fire, of unquenchable flame, **Mat 5:22; 13:42, 50; 18:8-9; 25:41; Mark 9:43, 48; Luke 3:17.** No less horrible is the idea of being eternally lost in the Lake of Fire, **Rev 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8.**

Now, as for the baptism that Jesus Christ will perform called "the Baptism with Fire," in our verse, there are several interpretations.

1. Many believe the "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" and the "Baptism with Fire" in **Luke 3:16** are one and the same because of the conjunction KAI "and" usage in this verse, linking them together, and especially because on the day of Pentecost; the visible manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was described as "**tongues as like fire**" in **Acts 2:1-4.** But the reading of **Acts 2** says, "like as fire" not "is fire." This coupled with "fire" being an analogy for the Holy Spirit, leads them to this interpretation. Thus, when John the Baptist says, "**I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me...will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire,**" **Mat 3:11, Luke 3:16,** they understand this to be one positive promise to believers that they will be baptized both "with the Holy Spirit" and "with fire."

Even further, some separate these two as two baptisms of the Holy Spirit during the believer's life, where the "2nd Baptism" is manifested in some charismatic way. In addition, they even tell their congregants to "pray for the 2nd Baptism." They construe it as an experience to be sought, a kind of "second Pentecost." Yet, these interpretations are manifestly erroneous, and it is not scriptural to pray for a Baptism with Fire.

Yet, in context, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and with Fire are two separate things, because when we carefully read **Acts 2:3**, the text says the tongues were “**as or like fire**,” (using the Greek Adverb HOSEI), and not “of fire,” (which the Greek would exclude HOSEI if that were the correct reading). Therefore, this was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost for the Disciples in the upper room, but not the Baptism with Fire.

2. Some interpret the “Baptism with Fire” as an ongoing cleansing that the Holy Spirit brings to the believer post salvation. This interpretation applies the purifying aspect of fire to the believer’s life, as being trials and tribulations, or the Holy Spirit’s purifying work in the life of the believer to bring them to perfected holiness. They apply the OT analogies of the refining fire on gold or silver where the dross is removed to make the precious metal more pure. They believe this is the analogy applied to believers post salvation. This is where we get our current day idiom “baptism with fire,” meaning someone goes through a difficult task that results in some kind of advancement.
3. The Theological Dictionary also notes that the Gnostics would seal the initiates with a hot iron on the lobe of the right ear, calling it the “Baptism with Fire.”
4. The correct interpretation of “Baptism with Fire,” is that it is a separate baptism from the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, as we have noted above in the outline of the Seven Baptisms Found in Scripture. Not only is it separate, but it is performed by Jesus Christ upon His Second Advent, and does not affect the Church Age believer, and only affects unbelievers.

As we have noted above, The Baptism with the Holy Spirit, is a positive promise to believers who will be immersed in the Spirit and entered into union with Jesus Christ at the moment of their salvation, making them members of the Royal Family of God. On the other hand, the “Baptism with Fire,” is a negative promise of judgment to the unbeliever, as fire is also associated with Divine judgment in Scripture. Therefore, Jesus will baptize everyone with one or the other. You either receive the Spirit from Christ or else He will cast you into the fire. This was John’s point, as we will define further below.

It is also worth noting that the gospels of Mark and John present far less detail on the content of John’s preaching. Specifically, neither of them mention John’s warnings of impending judgment or his vivid image of “the axe laid at the tree’s root where every fruitless tree is cut down and thrown into the fire” and “chaff being cast into the fire,” as Matthew and Luke do, cf. **Mat 3:10-12; Luke 3:9, 16-17**. As such, when Mark and John present John the Baptist’s words about Christ, they leave out the reference to the “Baptism with Fire” that Luke includes in **vs. 16**.

Mark 1:7-8, “And he was preaching, and saying, ‘After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. ⁸I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

John 1:33, “And 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.”

Mark and John do not include it in their gospels because judgment is not in view in their accounts of this scene. Therefore, we are not told about a “Baptism with Fire.” In every case where the judgment of the wicked is not discussed and only the positive promise to believers is in view, the language about baptizing with fire is absent, cf. **Acts 1:4-5; 11:15-17**.

In the same way, the OT spoke of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, **Acts 2:16-18**, cf. **Joel 2:28-29**, the OT prophets used a similar image related to the idea of a “fire baptism,” cf. **Zeph 3:8**.

Joel 2:28-29, “And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

Zeph 3:8, “‘Therefore, wait for Me,’ declares the LORD, ‘For the day when I rise up to the prey. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.’”

The burning fire of God's indignation will be poured out on all the nations and peoples of the earth. This is the Baptism with Fire. Similar language is used for God's judgment elsewhere, such as:

Lam 2:4, "He has bent His bow like an enemy; He has set His right hand like an adversary and slain all that were pleasant to the eye; in the tent of the daughter of Zion He has poured out His wrath like fire."

Lam 4:11, "The Lord has accomplished His wrath, He has poured out His fierce anger; and He has kindled a fire in Zion which has consumed its foundations."

Nahum 1:6, "Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him."

Ezekiel 22:31, "'Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads,' declares the Lord God."

Thus, just as the "Baptism of the Spirit" pointed back to the promises of God "pouring out His Spirit," so too does the image of a "Baptism with Fire" point back to the imagery of God pouring out the fire of His wrath.

Now, as we have noted above, the Baptism with Fire is one of seven different Baptisms in the Bible. There are 4 Real and 3 Ritual Baptisms. A "Real Baptism" is without water and identifies someone or something with someone else directly. "Ritual Baptism" is with water and uses water as a representation of someone or something that another is identified with.

The Ritual Baptisms included:

- 1) The Baptism of John, **Mat 3:6-11; John 1:25-33.**
- 2) The Baptism of Jesus Christ, **Mat 3:13-17.**
- 3) Christian Water Baptism, **Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36, 38; 16:15, 33.**

The Real Baptisms include:

- 1) The Baptism of Moses, **1 Cor 10:2.**
- 2) The Baptism of the Cross, **Mat 20:22; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.**
- 3) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, **Acts 1:5; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 4:5; Col 2:12.**
- 4) The Baptism of Fire, **Luke 3:16-17; Mat 3:11-12; 25:31, 33; 2 Thes 1:7-9.**

2 Thes 1:7b-9, "...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

The announcement of the Baptism with Fire was given to John the Baptist as noted in **Mat 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17.** Later, the Apostle John would write about it in **Rev 19:11.**

Rev 19:11, "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war."

In **Rev 19:11**, the Baptism with Fire is defined as the judgment of the Tribulational unbelievers at the Second Advent. The time of the Baptism with Fire is at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. Upon His Second Advent, all living unbelievers are removed from the earth and placed in fire, (Hades), for 1000 years until the last judgment. The punishment area for the Baptism with Fire is the "Place of Torments" in Hades, where all unbelievers await the last judgment. Both Jews and Gentiles who are Tribulational unbelievers are involved in this Second Advent judgment. This judgment results in the Millennium beginning with believers only, **Mat 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17.** Therefore, this is the real identification of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation with fire in Hades and eventually the eternal Lake of Fire, at the Great White Throne Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ, when all unbelievers throughout

human history are identified with fire forever. This signifies that the Tribulational unbelievers, as are all unbelievers, are identified with the defeat of Satan.

In **Luke 12:49**, Jesus exclaimed, **“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!”** Notice, Jesus was saying He came to judge the earth. People do not read this passage, but we must realize that he came to judge. He came to send fire on the earth.

Then Jesus said in **vs. 50**, **“But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!”** Before he could send fire on the earth, He had another baptism to undergo, the Baptism of the Cross, the payment of the penalty for our sins. He had to experience this before He could send fire on earth. By receiving John’s baptism, Jesus was announcing that the Messiah will soon be baptized with the baptism of the Cross, which, in turn, will take away the sin of the world.

So, John mentioned two baptisms: The Baptism with the Spirit and The Baptism with Fire. The Baptism with the Spirit began at Pentecost, **Acts 1:5**; (note that Jesus said nothing about fire at that time). The fact that Jesus did not append “with fire” to His announcement of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit in **Acts 1:5**, further confirms that the Baptism with Fire refers to a future separate baptism.

Today, whenever a sinner trusts Christ, he is born again and immediately baptized with the Spirit which places the believer in union with Jesus Christ and into the body of Christ, the Church, **1 Cor 12:12-13**. In contrast, the Baptism with Fire refers to the future judgment of unbelievers which both Luke and Matthew explain in the verses following the announcement of the two baptisms.

The analogy to the Baptism with Fire is found in **Mat 24:36-41**. The one left in the field is the mature believer; the one taken is the unbeliever. This is not a “rapture” passage for the Church. It is passage about the Second Advent of Jesus Christ that is compared to the days of Noah when people had no time for Bible doctrine because they were too distracted by the pleasures of normal living. In the days of Noah, all unbelievers were removed from the earth by water; at the Second Advent, it will be by fire. In addition, we see a similar judgment when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone to remove the unbelieving sinful population, **Gen 19:24-25**, which is the first mention of fire in the Bible.

Gen 19:24-25, **“Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, ²⁵and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”**

Therefore, we see that the Baptism with Fire is necessary for the beginning of a new civilization in the Millennium. In each civilization man has a different life span, each civilization has its own climate and its own variation in species, and all civilizations begin with believers only. Remember that a civilization is the Divine protection of the human race during the Angelic Conflict. As such, God has ordained four civilizations in human history: Antediluvian, Postdiluvian, Millennium, and Eternity.

The NT also gives us various parables of the Baptism with Fire, including:

1. The wheat and the tares, **Mat 13:24-30, 36-43**.
2. The good and bad fish, **Mat 13:47-50**.
3. The ten virgins, **Mat 25:1-13**.
4. The sheep and the goats, **Mat 25:31-46**.
5. The talent test, **Mat 25:14-30**. The one talent man represents the unbeliever.

The Baptism with Fire is used to motivate and evangelize Jews of the Church Age, **Heb 12:27-29**. The Jewish Baptism with Fire is noted in **Ezek 20:34-38; Isa 1:25-27**. All Jewish unbelievers of the Tribulation go into fire, **Mal 3:1-6, 4:1-2**. It is the picture of Christ judging them in the desert. **Mal 3:2**, is the last mention of fire in the OT, before our Lord’s first Advent.

Mal 4:1, **“For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be**

chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."

It is also used to motivate and evangelize Gentiles as the Gentile Baptism with Fire is noted in **Mat 5:22, 29-30; 25:31-46**; cf. **Mark 9:43**.

Mark 9:43, "And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire."

So, both the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Baptism with Fire demonstrate the power of Jesus Christ to judge. To be in God's presence is to be in the presence of absolute holiness where no sin or unrighteousness can stand. Because God cannot be in the presence of sin, He is able to judge and destroy sin and the sinner, and purify the repentant sinner. Therefore, John shows that "He who is coming," is more than an earthly Davidic king; He is a supernatural Person who establishes the kingdom and reigns as Savior and Judge. John's message of salvation and judgment announces that the Messianic age is upon them.

Like the OT prophets, John may not have necessarily seen the time difference between the First and Second Advents of Christ. He may have seen them both in one picture. As such, John was saying, especially in **vs. 17**, that the Messiah, when He came, would prepare a remnant (wheat) for the kingdom by empowering and cleansing the people. Those who reject Him (chaff) would be judged and cast into eternal unquenchable fire, cf. **Mal 4:1**.

Finally, the Baptism with Fire also vindicates the character of Jesus Christ, **Acts 2:19; Rev 19:11**.

Acts 2:19, "And I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke," cf. **Joel 2:30**.

Rev 19:11, "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war."

In conclusion, the Baptism with Fire, is not to be confused with the cleansing efficacy of the Holy Spirit, nor with the tongues "as / like of fire" that appeared at Pentecost. "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," is placed in direct contrast to gathering the "wheat into the garner," in **vs. 17**. It is clear from the immediate context of this reference in both **Mat 3:9-12** and **Luke 3:16-17**, and from the general testimony of Scripture, that this Baptism with Fire is connected with judgment at the Second Advent of Christ, as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, **Acts 1:5; 11:16**, is connected with grace flowing from the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ at His First Advent. As John F. Walvoord correctly observes, "*While the Church Age is introduced with a baptism of the Spirit, the Kingdom Age is to be introduced with a baptism of fire*" (Doctrine of the Holy Spirit). Therefore, the Baptism with Fire is thus to be interpreted as eschatological judgment.

After saying that Jesus Christ would baptize "**with the Holy Spirit and fire**" in **vs. 16**, John used an agricultural analogy in **vs. 17**, to describe it and its results. Jesus will not only "**gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the separated chaff with unquenchable fire.**" This means that after His Second Advent, Christ will take repentant converts into His Millennial Kingdom, but will send the unrepentant people to fire or Hades and then in **Rev 19:20; 20:15**, to "**the Lake of Fire.**" So, the context shows that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a good result for believers only, but the Baptism with Fire is a punishment for unbelievers only. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit began after Jesus' First Advent and the Baptism with Fire will begin after His Second Advent. This was the view of the early church father Origen and others, and is among many modern commentators today.

Vs. 17

Luke 3:17, "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."

This verse begins with the relative Pronoun HOS "**of whom**" to indicate this winnowing fork is the Lord Jesus Christ's; the same person from **vs. 16**, who will baptize both "with the Holy Spirit" for believers only, and "with

Fire” for unbelievers only.

Interestingly, this verse has 4 Greek words that are only used in this narrative about John the Baptist’s proclamation about Jesus, both here and in **Mat 3:12**. They include the Greek words for; “winnowing fork,” “thoroughly clear,” “threshing floor,” and “chaff,” that we will note below. In addition, “unquenchable” is only used in these two texts and **Mark 9:43, 45**, where all four usages define hell / the eternal Lake of Fire.

The reason for the unique usage of these words and phrases is that John was witnessing to OT saints. These words are rich in OT theology that would have been known by his hearers in that day. In addition, because they are steeped in OT analogies of God’s judgment, especially towards His people Israel, it was powerful language for them to understand and apply. Therefore, John uses terms rich in OT theology for the Jews of his day to recognize the Messiah / King, who also judges.

“**Winnowing fork**” is the Noun PTUON πτόον that means, “fan or winnowing fork or shovel.” It is only used in this narrative of John the Baptist here and in **Mat 3:12**. It denotes a tool used in winnowing grain. It was a fork with which farmers would toss threshed grain up against the wind in the process of separating the chaff and stalks from the grain, by letting the wind blow away the chaff or stalks, while the grain fell back to the ground to be collected.

Since it is only used here in the NT, we look at its use in the OT. This is where John was getting his imagery from. In the OT, it is equivalent to the Hebrew Noun ZARAH that means, “to scatter or winnow.” It was used literally for winnowing wheat or barely, **Ruth 3:2**, and for God’s judgment, **Isa 30:24-25**, that describes the lead up to the battle of Armageddon, cf. **Lev 26:33; 1 Kings 14:15; Psa 44:11; Jer 4:11; 31:10; 49:32, 36; Ezek 12:14f; 30:23, 26; Zech 1:19**.

Its first use in the Bible refers to judgment against a rebellious people. It is used in **Exo 32:20** for when Moses took the golden calf that Aaron had made, pulverized it and scattered the powder on the water, and made the children of Israel drink it as a punishment.

Of direct correlation to our passage, there is another Hebrew noun MIZREH that means, “winnowing fork or fan,” that is only used in **Isa 30:24; Jer 15:7**, where both passages speak to the judgment of God against Israel. The first, **Isa 30:24**, speaks of God’s judgment of blessing the people in the last days, after he has separated out the unbelievers. This verse also uses a hapaxlegomena Hebrew word, RACHATH that means, “winnowing shovel,” used to gather the grain after the fork had separated the chaff by tossing. So, the gathering of God’s elect is also noted in that passage.

The second, **Jer 15:7**, speaks of His judgment towards the unbelieving. Therefore, this process is used as a metaphor of the effects upon the wheat and the chaff with the varying results to each.

In addition, in both Hebrew and Greek, the word “spirit” can mean “wind,” RUACH and PNEUMA respectively. In this sense, the Holy Spirit or “Wind” is the instrument of judgment, cf. **John 16:8**, used by our Lord to separate the believer from the unbeliever, as is “Fire.”

“**In His hand**,” CHEIR, means Jesus is ready for immediate work and for the work to begin.

“**Thoroughly clear**” is also only used in this narrative in our verse and **Mat 3:12**. It is the verb DIAKATHARIZO διακαθαρίζω or DIAKATHAIRO διακαθαίρω in the Aorist, Active, Infinitive that means, “cleanse thoroughly or perfectly, clean out, thresh out, or to winnow.” It comes from the root verb KATHAIRO that means, “to cleanse or purge,” or KATHARIZO that means, “cleanse, make clean, or purify.” It uses the prefix DIA to intensify the word. This term is not found in either classical Greek or the Septuagint. This “cleansing / winnowing process” is analogous to the “baptism” analogy.

“**Threshing floor**” is the Noun HALON ἄλων that is also only used in these two passages. It is related to the Verb ALOAO that means, “thresh.” In the ancient world a threshing floor was often a hard place in an open field where grain was piled to be threshed and winnowed. Interestingly, the first time “threshing floor” is used in the Bible is **Gen 50:10**, with the Hebrew Noun GOREN for the “threshing floor of Atad,” which was the place that Joseph and

his brothers, and many others lamented over the death and burial of Jacob/Israel. There was “great and sorrowful lamentations there. This reminds us of the “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” which describes Hades and the Lake of Fire, **Mat 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.**

Luke 13:28, “In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.”

Its last use in the OT is **Micah 4:12**, that speaks about the Baptism of Fire for Israel and the separation of the Sheep nations from the Goat nations.

Micah 4:12, “But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, and they do not understand His purpose; For He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.”

Next, we see the first purpose of this winnowing process, “**to gather**” (SUNAGO), “**the wheat**” (SITOS, used symbolically for the life of a righteous person versus the unrighteous who at death will be rewarded by God with a new, resurrected life, cf. **1 Cor 15:37; John 12:24**, in heaven with God, cf. **Mat 3:12; 13:25, 29**), “**into His barn**” (EIS APOTHEKE).

APOTHEKE meaning, “barn, storehouse, or granary,” is used six times in the NT, and only by Matthew and Luke. Besides this narrative, it is also used in several parables by our Lord, cf. **Mat 6:26; 13:30; Luke 12:18; 12:24**. This phrase is a metaphor or idiom for gathering believers unto Himself and bringing them to heaven.

Mat 13:30, “Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn’.”

Then we have “**but**,” the Contrasting Conjunction DE that introduces the second purpose of God’s winnowing process that is directed towards unbelievers.

“**He will burn up**” the Future, Active, Indicative of KATAKAIΟ κατακαίω, “burn down, burn up, consume by fire.” To prevent chaff from being blown back and mixed again with the wheat, it was burned up. There will be no mixing of good and bad after death, **Rev 22:15**; cf. **Mat 8:12; 1 Cor 6:9f; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 21:8.**

“**The chaff**” ACHURON, only used in this narrative, nevertheless when the Bible wants to show the worthlessness and doom of the ungodly, “chaff” is one of its favorite figures, cf. **Job 21:18; Psa 1:4; Isa 17:13; Jer 15:7; Hosea 13:3; Mal 4:1.**

“**With unquenchable fire**” ASBESTOS PUR. The Adjective ASBESTOS ἄσβεστος means, “inextinguishable, or not to be quenched.” This is where we get our English word for a material that is heat resistant called “asbestos.” It is used in this narrative and **Mark 9:43, 45** for the Eternal Lake of Fire. This portrays the eternal finality and irreversible nature of the final judgment. It fits well the description of Gehenna as a metaphor for the place of eternal judgment, for there Jerusalem’s garbage was burned, and its fires never went out. So, here and in other places, **2 Thes 1:8-9; Mark 9:48; Mat 25:41**, the future suffering of the wicked is taught in the Bible.

As such, Jesus made extensive use of fire, burning, or a flame to portray the agony of those who will experience everlasting punishment. The gospels record at least thirteen instances of such descriptions from Jesus, **Mat 5:22; 7:19; 13:40, 42, 50; 18:8–9; 25:41; Mark 9:43, 48–49; Luke 16:24; John 15:6**, and six more mentions of the same by John the Baptist, **Mat 3:10-12; Luke 3:9, 16-17.**

Jesus used the figure of Gehenna eleven times to portray the misery of eternal punishment, **Mat 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5**. In two instances He combined the two words into the expression “Gehenna of fire.” Gehenna was the designation of a valley to the south and southwest of Jerusalem where garbage was dumped to furnish fuel for a fire that burned continually. Earlier the place had acquired a bad reputation because of sacrifices offered to the god Moloch there. The name became the equivalent to the hell of the last judgment.

So, Hell will be a place of great heat in a literal sense, probably hotter than any heat ever generated in this creation, and a place of great suffering, both physical and spiritual, suffering the likes of which no human has yet endured, suffering that Jesus likened to other types of human misery.

Therefore, the separation of the chaff (i.e., the wicked) is a picture of the Lord's judgment prior to and after the eschatological kingdom of the Messiah. John is telling the people that Jesus is coming ready to judge, and His Cross will be the determining factor. If people believe, they are the wheat gathered into heaven, if they do not believe in Jesus, they are the chaff that is burned up in the unquenchable fire called Hell or the Eternal Lake of Fire.

The image here of the threshing floor is as sobering as the ax laid to the root of the unfruitful tree, **vs. 9**. *“Christ plunges the winnowing shovel of the gospel into the world, and the wheat of faith is collected while the chaff of unbelief gets burned away in condemnation. Christians must bear faithful witness to Christ the Judge in a world that would rather Jesus were only a babe in a manger; they would only have Jesus be some wise teacher and consistently deny that he is Judge. Jesus is both the saving Lord who gives his life for sinners and the judging King who weighs us all.”* (Christ-Centered Exposition).

Preaching the gospel is not just about eternal salvation, it includes the potential for eternal condemnation. It is always about the forgiveness of sins, since Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, yet that forgiveness is either realized by those that believe or unrealized by those who reject Jesus as the Savior / Messiah. For those that reject Him, there is the reality of eternal condemnation. Therefore, God's judgment of eternal condemnation towards the unbeliever is part of the gospel message, as we see in John's preaching.

The Doctrine of the Eternal Lake of Fire / Hell

Throughout His ministry Jesus taught that the lost would depart into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; an eternal punishment. In other words, they will suffer endless, conscious agony away from the presence of God and His Son.

2 Thes 1:9-10, “These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.”

Jesus' last extended teaching about how the lost would spend eternity came in His description of the sheep-and-goat judgment in **Mat 25:31-46**, where He made pronouncements of judgment regarding two groups. The pronouncements will come when He returns to earth to initiate His Millennial reign and will deal specifically with the living Jews and Gentiles on earth at that time. He will reach His verdict on the basis of how the two groups have treated believing Israelites during the persecutions of Daniel's seventieth week, treatments that will reflect whether they have trusted in Him to receive eternal life. The consequences of Jesus' pronouncements will be happy for believers, but for unbelievers they will be unspeakably horrible. The latter group, the goats, will depart from His presence into unending punishment worse than the suffering one experiences when he has his flesh consumed with fire.

The Lake of Fire is the final destination for both fallen angels and unbelieving mankind. It is both literal and eternal. It was prepared originally for Satan and his angels, **Mat 25:41; Rev 20:10**.

Mat 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Yet, unbelievers also go there, and there is no way out, **John 3:18, 36; Heb 9:27**. Hell is eternal and irreversible, **Rev 20:11-15; 21:8**.

Heb 9:27, “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”

John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Rev 14:11, “The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest day and night.”

Rev 20:14, “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”

Rev 20:15, “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

The first occupants of the Lake of Fire will be the beast and false prophet of the Tribulation, **Rev 19:20**. The devil will also join them in the Lake of Fire, **Rev 20:10**.

After the Great White Throne Judgment of Jesus Christ, all unbelievers of the human race will be there, **Rev 20:14**. In that process, unbelievers are pulled out of the fire of Hades, judged, and cast into the Lake of Fire, **Rev 20:15; 21:8**.

In fact, Hell had to be enlarged to accommodate the unbelievers of human history, **Isa 5:14a, “Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure.”**

In a parable, our Lord warns to correct our lives by having faith in Him for salvation, otherwise we will suffer the results of His judgment into the Eternal Lake of Fire, as it is also described as a place, **“where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”** cf. **Isa 66:24; Mark 9:43, 48-49**.

Isa 66:24, “Then they will go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched; and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.”

One difference between fire as known in the present life and eternal fire is that this fire will never run out of fuel and burn out. Jesus described the fire as “unquenchable,” **Mark 9:43**, as did John the Baptist in our verse and the parallel of **Mat 3:12**. Jesus said it will be a fire that acts like salt, preserving rather than destroying, when He said, **“Everyone will be salted with fire,” Mark 9:49**. Its burning will never end. Therefore, this suffering and punishment will be for all of eternity, **Mat 25:46; Jude 1:7**.

Jude 1:7, “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”

Mat 25:46, “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Key facts about eternity:

1. Everyone will exist eternally either in heaven or hell, **Dan 12:2, 3; Mat 25:46; John 5:28; Rev 20:4-5**.
2. Everyone has only one life in which to determine their destiny, **Heb 9:27**.
3. Heaven or hell is determined by whether a person believes, puts their trust in Christ alone to save them, **John 3:16, 36**, etc.
4. Hell is conscious torment forever, **Mat 13:49; Mark 9:48; Rev 14:10**.

Mat 13:49, “Furnace of fire...weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Mark 9:48, “Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

Rev 14:10, “He will be tormented with fire and brimstone.”

Erroneous views of Hell:

1. The second chance view – After death there is still a way to escape hell.
 - Answer: **Heb 9:27, “It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”**
2. Universalism – All are eternally saved.

➤ Answer: It denies the truth of salvation through Christ which means that a person decides to either trust in Christ or else he/she rejects Christ and goes to hell, **John 3:16; 3:36**.

3. Annihilationism – Hell means a person dies like an animal – ceases to exist.

➤ Answer: It denies the resurrection of the unsaved, **John 5:28**, etc. It denies conscious torment.

John 5:28-29, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice,²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

4. Atheist / Humanist view; There is no such thing as Hell.

5. Buddhist view; Hell is temporary for its inhabitant, life is cyclic. Buddhists do not accept that these places are eternal. It is unreasonable to condemn a man to eternal hell for his human weakness but quite reasonable to give him every chance to develop himself. From the Buddhist point of view, those who go to hell can work themselves upward by making use of the merit that they had acquired previously. There are no locks on the gates of hell. Hell is a temporary place and there is no reason for those beings to suffer there forever. The Buddha’s Teaching says there are heavens and hells not only beyond this world, but in this very world itself.

6. Jehovah’s Witnesses view; They believe people who die pass out of existence, from **Psa146:4; Ecc 9:5, 10**. They do not suffer in a fiery hell of torment and that God will bring billions back from death by means of a resurrection, **Acts 24:15**. However, those who refuse to learn God’s ways after being raised to life will be destroyed forever with no hope of a resurrection, **Rev 20:14-15**. It is a form of annihilationism.

7. Seventh Day Adventist’s view; they believe Hell is not an eternity of suffering and torture. They believe God is just but also merciful and it’s not in the nature of God to torture the unrighteous for eternity. Instead, sinners and unbelievers will ultimately die for eternity. They believe in a variant of annihilationism.

8. Catholicism view; Purgatory, people have a second chance. The Catholic Church holds that “all who die in God’s grace and friendship but still imperfectly purified” undergo this process, which the Church calls purgatory, “so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.” They get this doctrine from the misinterpretation of **1 Cor 3:15** and **1 Peter 1:7**, and to the mention by Jesus of forgiveness in the age to come in **Mat 12:32**.

1 Peter 1:7, “That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Many of the erroneous views of today regarding Hell come from the 14th century writings of the Italian Dante Alighieri. In the first part of his writing called Divine Comedy, he writes a story about being in “Inferno,” which is the Italian word for Hell. It is followed by Purgatorio and Paradiso. In Inferno, he tells a story of the journey of Dante through Hell, guided by the ancient Roman poet Virgil. In the poem, Hell is depicted as nine concentric circles of torment located within the Earth; it is the “realm ... of those who have rejected spiritual values by yielding to bestial appetites or violence, or by perverting their human intellect to fraud or malice against their fellowmen,” As an allegory, the Divine Comedy represents the journey of the soul toward God, with the Inferno describing the recognition and rejection of sin.

The nine circles of torment include:

1. Limbo, for the unbaptized and virtuous pagans, who are punished with eternity in an inferior form of Heaven. They live in a castle with seven gates which symbolize the seven virtues.

2. Lust, where souls are blown about in a violent storm preventing them from finding hope of rest and peace. Strong winds symbolize the restlessness of a person who is led by the desire for fleshly pleasures.

3. Gluttony, for the gluttons who are forced to lie in vile freezing slush produced by never-ending icy rain. The vile slush symbolizes personal degradation of one who overindulges in food, drink, and other worldly pleasures, while

the inability to see others lying nearby represents the gluttons' selfishness and coldness.

4. Greed or Avarice and Prodigality, here are the souls of people who are punished for greed. They are divided into two groups: those who hoarded possessions and those who lavishly spent it, jousting. They use great weights as a weapon, pushing it with their chests which symbolizes their selfish drive for fortune during their lifetime. The miserly and spendthrift push great heavy weights together, crashing them time and time again.
5. Anger or Wrath and Sullenness, where the wrathful fight each other on the surface of the Styx river, while the sullen gurgle beneath it. Again, the punishment reflects the type of the sin committed during their lifetime.
6. Heresy, where the heretics are trapped in flaming tombs.
7. Violence, where the violent against people and property, the suicides, the blasphemers, the sodomites and the usurers reside. It is divided into three rings. The Outer Ring houses murderers and others who were violent to other people and property. In the Middle Ring, the poet sees suicides who have been turned into trees and bushes which are fed upon by harpies. But he also sees here profligates, chased and torn to pieces by dogs. In the Inner Ring are blasphemers and sodomites, residing in a desert of burning sand and burning rain falling from the sky.
8. Fraud, where panderers and seducers, flatterers, sorcerers, false prophets, liars, and thieves are. This circle of Hell is divided into 10 Bolgias or stony ditches with bridges between them. In Bolgia 1, Dante sees panderers and seducer. In Bolgia 2 he finds flatterers. After crossing the bridge to Bolgia 3, he and Virgil see those who are guilty of simony. After crossing another bridge between the ditches to Bolgia 4, they find sorcerers and false prophets. In Bolgia 5 are housed corrupt politicians, in Bolgia 6 are hypocrites and in the remaining 4 ditches, Dante finds hypocrites (Bolgia 7), thieves (Bolgia 7), evil counselors and advisers (Bolgia 8), divisive individuals (Bolgia 9) and various falsifiers such as alchemists, perjurers, and counterfeits (Bolgia 10).
9. Treachery, where betrayers of special relationships are frozen in a lake of ice. It is divided into 4 Rounds according to the seriousness of the sin, although all residents are frozen in an icy lake. Those who committed more severe sin are deeper within the ice.

In addition, Dante assigned various historical figures to each of the circles as examples. Some even Biblical figures like Judas Iscariot.

Degrees of Punishment in Hell:

Though now definition of degrees or levels of punishment in Hell are given to us in Scripture, it does seem to allude to the fact that there will be different degrees of punishment in the Eternal Lake of Fire for the unbeliever. **Luke 12:47-48**, clarifies that all the unbelievers will not endure the same degree of suffering: **“And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, ⁴⁸but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”**

The measure of a person's punishment will depend on how much of the Lord's will a person knew and rejected / disobeyed, but even those knowing the least will face unimaginable anguish that never ends. Incidentally, an annihilationist has no response to the Biblical teaching of degrees of punishment. If the lost are to become obliterated, degrees of nonexistence are impossible.

This doctrine / belief comes from two directions. The first is logical in that since there are different rewards for believers in heaven there must be different levels of punishment for those in Hell. **James 1:12**, is one of the verses that tells us of different rewards in heaven. And the fact that in **Rev 20:11-15**, unbelievers works are judged, may allude to not only the proof of their unbelief in Jesus, but also to the degree of punishment they will receive in the Lake of Fire. The second direction is from various Scriptures that emphasize punishment in Hell, **Luke 20:45-47**. Notice the last phrase of **vs. 47**.

Luke 20:45-47, **“And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples, ⁴⁶“Beware of the scribes, who**

like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, ⁴⁷who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation.”

This is also stated in **Mat 23:14**; **Mark 12:40**. Greater condemnation is viewed as greater levels of punishment in Hell. This doctrine has few Scriptures for comparison, so many commentators skip over it and act like it is not even there. So, there has not been a lot of discussion in theology about this topic.

The Greek word for Condemnation is the word KRIMA that is the basic/root word for “judgment” that also means, “sentence and condemnation.” So, a greater/more extensive judgment is brought against these individuals.

Luke 10:10-16, is another passage that leads to the doctrine of greater judgment. In **vs. 14**, the word for judgment is KRISIS, which also means, “judgment or a decision made or sentence.” cf. **Heb 10:29-31**.

In addition, Judas is said to be in “**his own place**,” **Acts 1:25**, which has been interpreted by some as referring to a reserved spot in Hell, and the Pharisees' converts were said to be “**twice the son of Hell**” as their mentors, **Mat 23:15**. cf. **Psa 62:12**; **Prov 24:12**; **Jer 17:10**; **Ezek 18:20, 30**.

That there are degrees of punishment in the afterlife is strongly implied in the teachings of Scripture. It is accurate to think of Hell as a place with physical dimensions that can be experienced as a reality.

On the other side of the coin, those who do not believe in different levels of judgment in Hell for the unbeliever view these Scriptures as Divine punitive judgment on the individuals while here on earth.

Vs. 18

Luke 3:18, “**So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.**”

This verse tells us that Luke is not reproducing one of John's sermons word for word, but rather is giving a sampling of his teachings. No one had recorded John the Baptist's teachings. Yet, Luke had access to early eyewitnesses who had heard the sermons. He probably had access to many of the actual speakers in the Book of Acts too. So, Luke is saying this was what John was in the habit of doing, preaching, and teaching.

From this we can also see that John the Baptist used the doctrines of the Baptism with Holy Spirit and the Baptism with Fire, plus “**many other exhortations**,” (PARAKELEO) to “**continually preach the gospel**” (EUANGELIZO, Imperfect, Middle, Indicative) of Jesus Christ, “**to the people**” (LAOS).

To preach the gospel always means to preach the “good news” of God about His plan of and offer for salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, preaching about the union with Jesus Christ that believers receive at the moment of salvation through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the judgment of the Eternal Lake of Fire for the unbeliever who rejects Jesus Christ as their Savior, are part of the “good news” / gospel of Jesus Christ.

Next, we come to our fifth section.

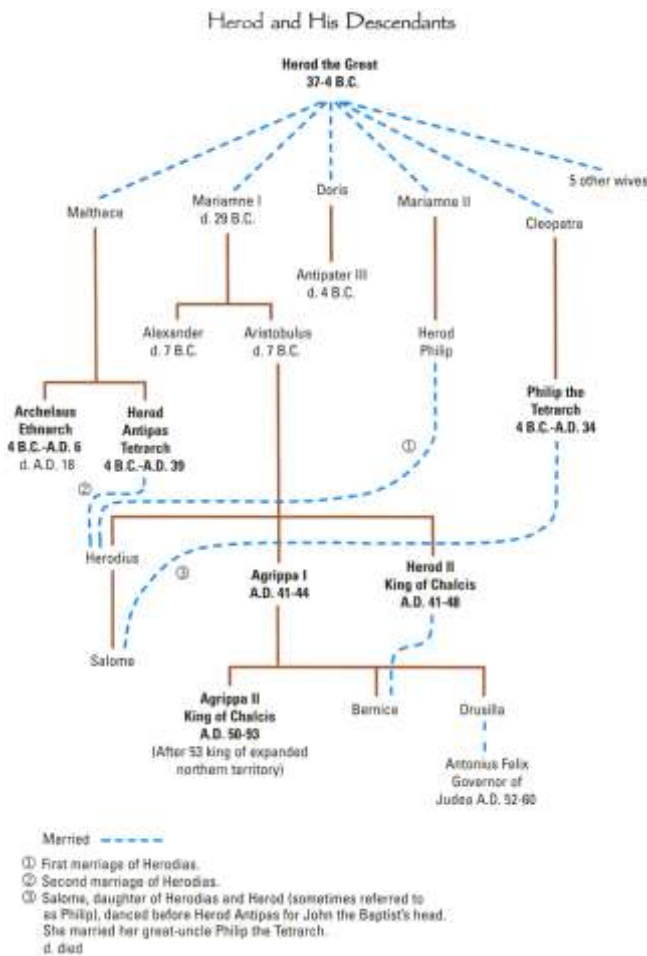
5. John preaches against Herod and Herod's retribution toward John, vs. 19-20.

Here, we see the persecution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas, who was the “Tetrarch” of the region of Galilee at that time, as we noted in **vs. 1**. In **vs. 1**, Luke used the Verb TETRARCHEO τετραρχέω, “to be a tetrarch.” Here he uses the noun TETRARCHES τετράρχης.

This word is only used for Herod in the NT, here and in **Mat 14:1**; **Luke 9:7**; **Acts 13:1**. Herod Antipas was the Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, ca. 4 B.C. - 39 A.D. 39.

Vs. 19

Luke 3:19, “But when Herod the tetrarch was reproved by him on account of Herodias, his brother's wife, and on account of all the wicked things which Herod had done.”



In this verse, we once again see the adulterous and incestuous relationship Herod had with his current wife Herodias, who was previously married to his half-brother Philip, who is also another half-brother's, Aristobulus, daughter, making Herodias Herod's niece.

Here, we see an important fact that only Luke mentions, that is John also preached against Herod, “**was reproved by him,**” which uses the Present, Passive, Participle of the Verb ELENCHO ἐλέγχω that means, “refute, convict, or reprove.” In classical Greek, it meant, “to disgrace or to put (someone) to shame.” Secondly, it referred to “cross-examine, question for the purpose of disproving or reproof, to censure, or to accuse.” Also, the sense of “to expose” should not be overlooked, because reproof “exposes” sin for examination, **John 3:20; Eph 5:11-13.**

John 3:20, “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

Nevertheless, although it involves reproof of sin, it has as its goal a restoring or an establishing of a relationship, whether that relationship is between persons or a person and God. John was trying to get Herod, and others, to repent so that they could be entered into union with Jesus Christ through the Baptism with the Spirit and avoid the judgment of the Baptism with Fire.

As we preach and witness, we have the authority as Royal Priests and Royal Ambassadors to reprove and rebuke, in our exhortation. But remember, it does not always necessarily generate success in turning someone away from sin. That is still an issue of their own volition. All we can do is tell them the truth about Christ and about sin, e.g., the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Baptism with Fire. This is especially a part of the Pastor/Teachers' and Deacons' authority, **1 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:9, 13.**

1 Tim 5:20, “Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.”

Titus 1:13, “This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith.”

Vs. 19, also says that John exhorted Herod and others, “**on account of all the wicked things Herod had done,**” where the word “**wicked**” is the Adjective PONEROS πονηρός that means, “painful, serious, grievous, bad, wicked, evil, or depraved.” It was also used to describe the desire to do evil and hurt others; for example, a woman who intended to seduce a man was called a PONERA. When the Article HO is used with it, it becomes a title for Satan, “the Evil One,” **1 John 2:13-14; 5:18-19; cf. Luke 8:12.**

Ultimately, John's call for repentance caused trouble for the corrupt government. The Herods who were naturalized Jews were well-known for their affinity with heathen ethics. Therefore, John called out Herod's many sins and transgressions, first to get Herod to wake up and repent, and secondly, as an example for the people as to what not

to do, by pointing out the differences between Satan’s cosmic kingdom and God’s Heavenly Kingdom that is gained through faith in Jesus Christ.

Vs. 20

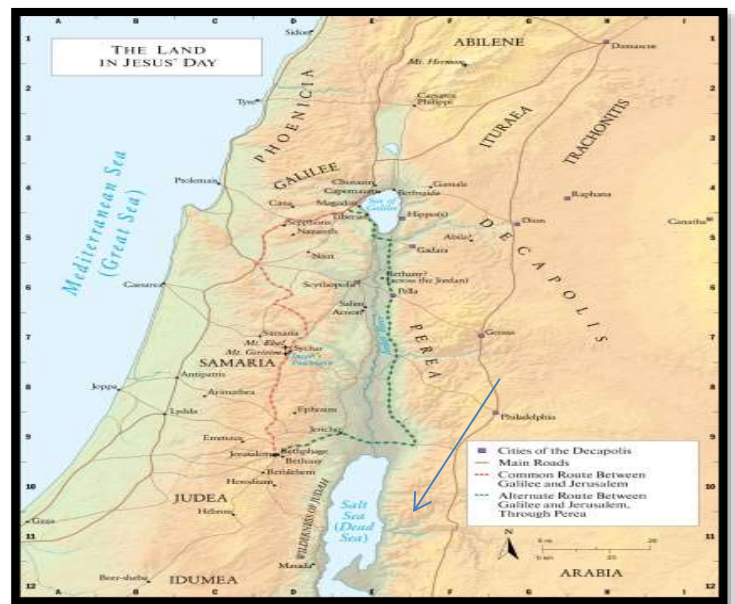
Luke 3:20, “He added this also to them all, that he locked John up in prison.”

Here we see that Herod compounds his sin. John had spoken the truth to Herod as fearlessly as he did to the Pharisees, tax-gatherers, and soldiers. As a result of John’s reproof and rebuking preaching against Herod, and especially his wife Herodias, Herod “**locked him up**” KATAKLEIO, “shut up, lock up, or confine.” It is used only here and in **Acts 26:10**, regarding Saul’s actions against the early church before his conversion.

“**In prison**” is the Preposition EN with the Noun PHULAKE in the Dative Case for, “guarding, a guard, prison, or a watch.” Here, it means putting John in prison, where he was held for about two years, which latter resulted in John’s martyrdom. So, “**added this to them all**,” includes illegally putting John the Baptist in prison and killing him unjustly.

Luke does not go into detail here about John’s persecution or martyrdom, as Matthew and Mark point out that Herodias was responsible for John’s death in prison, **Mat 14:3-12; Mark 6:17-29**. Luke does not record John’s death, but alludes to it in **Luke 9:7-9**.

Josephus states that John was arrested because he was popular with the people and Herod feared what John might tell them to do, (Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.2). Herod has heard about John and his preaching. He wanted to see the strange desert-preacher. We are told he sent for him and he liked to hear John talk. There was something about that earnest man that appealed to the poor, wretched, godless Herod, and he was stirred within. Josephus also noted that John’s imprisonment was in the fortress at Machærus, east of the Dead Sea, which was a combination palace, fortress, and prison near the southern tip of Herod’s territory.



The accounts in Josephus present various motives for Herod, as well as an interesting reconstruction of the events. Herod feared John’s power but hesitated to move against him until John verbally attacked him, which Luke records here. Once imprisoned, Herodias forced Herod to execute John. John the Baptist’s imprisonment and illegal execution was also a foreshadow of Jesus’ fate, for this was the fate of all the prophets, **Luke 13:33; cf. Luke 4:24; 11:49–51; Acts 7:52**.

This is the last we see of John for a while as Luke records that John was imprisoned, then promptly drops him from the story line until **Chapter 7**, and therefore does not record John’s execution as do Matthew and Mark. Luke also does not explicitly tell us that John was the one who baptized Jesus; although, it is easy to ascertain from this narrative that it would be John who baptized Him. Once John has defined true repentance, prophesied about Jesus, and predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel of Luke views John’s task as essentially complete. The duration of the ministry of John the Baptist is variously estimated at fourteen to eighteen months. Nevertheless, John had faithfully finished his God-given assignment and prepared the people to meet the Messiah, the Son of God.

Principles:

John gives us a model of faithful persevering witnessing in several ways.

- John remains faithful with the gospel itself, **vs. 18**. He keeps preaching the good news in many ways and fashions.

- We see his faithfulness no matter the audience, **vs. 19**. He preached the same gospel to Herod the Tetrarch. He does not bend the message to suit the itching ears of his hearers.
- We see John's faithfulness no matter the cost, **vs. 20**. For preaching the gospel without compromise to Herod, John finds himself locked up in prison, and before long, Herod will have John beheaded, **Mat 14:1-2; Mark 6:14-29**. Sometimes, our preaching will cost us our freedom or our lives, which may be the only way we make it clear that Jesus is Lord in both our preaching and our pain, that we fear God and not man. This is God's calling on the Christian life and how the world will know who Jesus is.
- Herod liked to hear him preach as long as he did not touch the sin of Herod's own life. There are many people like that. They can enjoy fervent, earnest preaching as long as it is directed to somebody else, but when it comes home to them it is too personal. They do not like it.
- John could have compromised his message and spared his life, but he was a faithful witness who declared God's truth without fear or favor.
- His ministry was a brief one and may have appeared to be a failure, but he fulfilled his work, **Acts 13:25** and was pleasing to the Lord, **Luke 7:18-35**.

6. Jesus' Baptism by John, vs. 21-22.

These two verses are one single sentence in Greek. Here, Luke sees Jesus' baptism as the climax and culmination of John's ministry of baptism, yet he does not say directly that John baptized Jesus, although it is more than highly likely given the context of this chapter.

Luke 3:21, "Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened."

A better translation of this verse reads: **"Now at the time all the people came to be baptized, Jesus also was baptized, and while praying, heaven was opened."**

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'."

Why was Jesus baptized?

Neither John nor Jesus saw in Jesus' baptism an acknowledgment of a need for Jesus to personally repent. John, for his part, recognized his own unworthiness to carry out such a sacred duty, but Jesus said in **Mat 3:15**, **"Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.** In this statement, the Lord Jesus Christ says that He came into the world to fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law. We have broken all those righteous requirements, so Jesus stands in our place not just as our sin bearer but also as our righteousness. All the active and positive obedience we owe God as his creatures, the Lord Jesus provides perfectly, even down to His willingness to be baptized by John for the remission of sins he had not committed.

In addition, as our High Priest, **Heb 2:17; 4:14**, Jesus consecrated Himself in the likeness of the OT high Priest in fulfillment of the Law, who would ceremonially be purified by washing with water to be consecrated before entering into the special service before God, which in **Lev 6:14** was the "scape goat" ceremony. Jesus, prior to entering into His ministry and special service before God, (to bring righteousness to all of mankind through the Cross giving us escape or pardon of our sins and condemnation), underwent the washing of water Baptism by John to be consecrated and prepared. And, just after Jesus' baptism we see a unique consecration and enabling to perform His special work for God. Likewise, as the Scapegoat was sent out into the wilderness, so too was our Lord immediately following His baptism. As you read **Lev 6**, you will see many types of our Lord and His ministry before the Father.

Jesus' baptism is noted in more detail in **Mat 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:29-34**. Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit and Jesus' sonship manifests itself quite clearly in how his Gospel recounts the story of John's baptism in

contrast to the other Synoptic Gospels.

- a. Mark shows how the baptism confirmed Jesus' Messiahship, already asserted in **Mark 1:1, 7**, by recording the voice from heaven, **Mark 1:11**.
- b. Matthew's Gospel emphasizes the supremacy of Jesus over John in its exclusive recounting of John's reluctance to baptize Jesus, **Mat 3:14-15**.
- c. Like John's Gospel, Luke concentrates on the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, **John 1:33**. The Holy Spirit inspired each of the four to bring out distinctive aspects of Jesus' ministry.

Nevertheless, Luke adds a couple of interesting points:

1. Jesus was baptized while others were being baptized. His baptism was like everyone else's. It shows us that Jesus was numbered amongst the people. He did not have a special or private baptism. He did not have a unique baptism, until it was completed, which too demonstrated the coming baptism of the Church Age believer that is without water. His baptism had many witnesses of the occasion. It was a public baptism to demonstrate His faith in God's Plan and provision of salvation, even though He would be the provider of that salvation through His Cross. As noted above, Jesus explains to John the reason for His baptism, that He must be baptized because **"this is the way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."** **Mat 3:15**. Therefore, His water baptism was a foreshadowing of His future Baptism of the Cross, His future suffering on the Cross, **Luke 12:50**.

As such, Jesus put Himself on the same level as the worst of sinners. He stood in place of the sinner when He allowed Himself to undergo baptism. He represented not only Israel, but all of mankind. He was the substitute for all their sins. The baptism in the Jordan anticipated His death and burial and foreshadowed the agony in the garden and the judgment He bore on the Cross. John apparently realized this as he later described Jesus as the **"Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,"** **John 1:29**. Cf. **Luke 22:37; Isa 53:12**.

Luke 22:37, "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

Isa 53:12, "Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors."

2. Heaven opening up and the descending of the dove, which was a visible manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to the humanity of Jesus Christ, occurred, **"while He was praying."** The point here is the importance and power of prayer.

As you know, prayer represents our most intimate time of personal relationship with God. We are not told what Jesus was praying for or about, but we do see He was in a time of intimacy with God the Father. During this time of intimacy, God the Father sent His Holy Spirit to indwell the humanity of Jesus Christ to empower and enable Him for His upcoming ministry. This being just prior to our Lord beginning His ministry, which began with His journey into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for 40 days and 40 nights, indicates that intimacy with God in our prayers and petitions is vitally necessary. Likewise, when we do enter into intimate prayer, God will answer our prayers, giving us what we need to accomplish His plan for our lives.

Only Luke relates that Jesus was in prayer when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Luke is showing us Jesus' common practice before entering into the work and service of God, as this scenario was duplicated by our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to our Lord being entered into the temptations of His trials culminating in the Cross, when He took on the sins of the entire world. Elsewhere, only Luke notes Jesus at prayer before momentous events, e.g., **Luke 6:12; 9:18, 29; 11:1**. Luke also notes that Jesus prayed when His work upon the Cross was completed, **Luke 23:46**. Therefore, we see a faithful habit demonstrated by our Lord that we too should follow, especially before entering into a seemingly tasking or tempting situation. If the perfect Son of Man had to pray in order to serve the Father, how much more do we His people need to pray!

In vs. 22, Luke's emphasis is clearly on the events which immediately followed Jesus' baptism rather than on the baptism itself. This is seen in the way in which Luke records the fact that Jesus was baptized, using a simple participial clause. The three main clauses, and obviously Luke's emphases, are:

1. That heaven was opened.
2. The Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove.
3. The voice came from heaven identifying Jesus as God's Son.

In that moment, we see the Trinity, three distinct persons, (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), each eternally and fully God, interacting with one another. As the Son prayed, the Holy Spirit descended, and the Father affirmed the Christ.

1. "**Heaven**" OURANOS οὐρανός can represent any of the three heavens noted in the Bible: 1st our atmosphere, 2nd the stellar universe, 3rd God's Throne room. Here, it is God's throne room piercing through the 2nd and 1st heavens to bring about and show the descent of the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry.

The opening of heaven indicated that Divine revelation was about to take place. Nevertheless, it was an answer to Isaiah's ancient prayer, **Isa 64:1**, "**Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down.**" The phrase also commonly refers to an extraordinarily special moment in time when earth and heaven are not separated, **Ezek 1:1; John 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11.**

2. The "**descent of the Dove**," was the manifestation of the empowerment of Jesus by the Holy Spirit, which enabled Him to launch His ministry, **Luke 4:1, 14, 18**, and sustain Him throughout His mission of suffering, as the Suffering Servant, to which He was destined, **Isa 53.**
3. The Father's proclamation, "**You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased**," is identical in Mark's account, but Matthew reads, "**This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.**" Matthew uses the close proximity 3rd Person while Luke and Mark the intimate 2nd person. Most scholars see a direct allusion to **Psa 2:7; Isa 42:1.** This is the first line in the first of the "Servant Songs" in the book of **Isaiah 42.**

Isa 42:1, "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."

As in the birth narratives, there is at Jesus' baptism a supernatural attestation. As such, the voice from heaven was once again, the declaration of Jesus' sonship and the Father's propitiation, which was also affirmed by the bodily descent of the Dove, cf. **Psa 2:7.**

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

*"The voice from heaven clearly reveals a unique relationship between Jesus and God and refers to Jesus' past as well as present status with God. The voice did not confer upon Jesus a new status, so we should not see here some kind of adoptionist Christology. Rather, the voice confirmed what the readers read already in **Luke 1:32-35** and **2:49**, i.e., that Jesus was the Son of God before his baptism."* (New American Commentary)

*"'You are my Son, whom I love' designates Jesus as the unique Son of God. Present scholarly opinion holds that the concept of divine sonship in Jewish thought was not only applicable to angels (**Job 1:6; 2:1**) and to the nation of Israel and her kings (**Exo 4:22; 2Sam 7:14; Hos 11:1**) but was coming into use, at least at Qumran, as a designation for the Messiah (4QFlor 10-14). At the Annunciation Jesus was designated the "Son of the Most High" (**1:32**). On his sonship and OT passages, see the comments on the Transfiguration (**9:35**) for a full discussion of the wording common to both passages. Here we may simply observe that the words "love" and "well pleased" convey the idea of choice and special relationship."* (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

In the thunderous proclamation of God the Father just after Jesus' Baptism, Jesus' Messianic mission was announced

from heaven, as though it were already completed. The Father, by saying He was “**well pleased**,” notes the already completed mission of Jesus Christ in His eyes. This demonstrates the eternal nature of God, and His predesigned plan from eternity past.

“**Well pleased**” is the Aorist, Active, Indicative of the Verb EUDOKEO, εὐδοκέω that means, “be well pleased, delight in, approve, or consent (from a legal standpoint).” All of these are in view regarding our Father’s attitude towards Jesus and His work. It means that God the Father was perfectly satisfied in the work His Son has performed and will perform, right through to His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and session. It shows us the propitiation of God the Father regarding His plan of Salvation for mankind through His Son upon the Cross

God the Father also made this statement about His Son at the Transfiguration in **Mat 17:5**, which was a type and precursor of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Indecently, **Luke 9:29**, records Jesus praying to the Father just prior to the Transfiguration.

Mat 17:5, “While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!’”

Peter also noted the delight of the Father in His Son after Jesus’ actual resurrection in **2 Peter 1:17**, which resurrection stamps the completion of God’s Plan for Salvation through Christ’s victory upon the Cross.

2 Peter 1:17, “For when He (Jesus Christ) received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased’.”

Therefore, we see the Father being propitiated, “**well pleased with His Son**,” at the beginning and at the conclusion of His earthly ministry that established Jesus’ Messiahship by winning the strategic victory of the Angelic Conflict through His death, resurrection, and ascension. God the Father is well pleased with Jesus because He perfectly performed and completed God’s Plan of Salvation for the entire world. The Baptism announcement sent a thunderous and bone shacking acknowledgement and approval throughout the universe.

In Conclusion:

In **vs. 21a**, we see Jesus being numbered amongst the people, representing the taking on of the sins of the entire world through His death and burial. In **vs. 21b-22a**, we see God’s provision of the enabling power the Holy Spirit, so that Jesus could complete God’s plan for our salvation. In **vs. 22b**, we see the completed plan of God for our salvation demonstrated in the victory of resurrection, which pleased God the Father to no end.

1. When our Lord went down into the Jordan, we see His promise to go to the Cross and die for our sins.
2. When He comes forth from the waters, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Him, we see our Lord’s victory demonstrated by His resurrection that is given to all who believe. It was through His death, burial, and resurrection that He “**fulfilled all righteousness**,” **Mat 3:15**.
3. When we hear God our Father say about Him, “**You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased**,” we see the propitiation of God the Father’s Plan of Salvation from eternity past being completed once and for all time in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Next, we will see the reasons and importance of the symbol of the “dove” representing God the Holy Spirit indwelling Jesus after His baptism, as it notes in **vs. 22a**, “**And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove**.”

Luke alone added, “**in bodily form**,” which intensifies the reality of the Spirit’s coming upon Jesus. This tells us that the “dove like,” image was an actual appearance, visible to people who were there at the time of Jesus’ baptism, especially John the Baptist, as proof of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in Jesus. This image was an actual thing, which we call a manifestation; an appearance in visible form of the Holy Spirit.

“**Like a dove,**” is a simile and does not mean that the Spirit actually took the form of a dove to descend upon Jesus. All four Gospels are careful to inform us that it was not an actual dove, but some form that showed the visible manifestation of the indwelling ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the humanity of Jesus Christ.

This is important because some in the early church developed a false doctrine about this account, in that it was the being of the Incarnation of Christ, rather than at His birth, as the Cerinthian Gnostics held. Therefore, God was cautious with His word choice here, so that this would not represent the indwelling of the Deity of the Son of God, the 2nd person of the Trinity, into the humanity of Jesus Christ, but rather it was the manifestation of the empowering and enabling ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the 3rd Person of the Trinity, into the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Likewise, the Spirit’s descent upon Jesus should not be confused with the “Baptism with the Spirit” spoken of by John the Baptist, **vs. 16**, as we have noted above, for the “Baptism with the Spirit” is something Jesus Himself does for the believer, whereas the descent of the Spirit was something that happened to Jesus.

Like Matthew and John, Luke also had the Spirit coming “**upon,**” EPI, Jesus rather than “**into,**” EIS, Him, as in **Mark 1:10**. This is used to draw our attention back to the prophecy of the Spirit coming to Jesus in **Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1**; cf. **Luke 4:18**.

Isa 11:2, “The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”

Isa 42:1, “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.”

Isa 61:1, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; ²to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.”

This was the act of the Holy Spirit taking up His residence in the Messiah.

The descent of the Spirit “**upon**” Jesus is also reminiscent of **Gen 1:2**, when the Spirit hovered over the earth ready to bring forth new life. Jesus’ ministry was given to man through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to bring new spiritual life to all.

2 Cor 3:6, “Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

Notice in **Gen 1:3**, the first thing created was light, “**Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.**” Jesus Christ was the “light of the world,” **John 8:12; 9:5**.

The giving of the Holy Spirit to Jesus was a symbol of Jesus’ anointing with the Spirit for His three-fold ministry of Prophet, Priest, and King. It was the dynamic equipment which would enable the Messiah to discharge the duties connected with these offices, **Luke 4:16-19**.

Jesus was the Messiah, that means, “the anointed One,” and this demonstrated that to the people; He was the Anointed Messiah. This visible manifestation of anointing was given to show God’s appointing, acceptance, and approval of Jesus and His entrance into His ministry. As does the last phrase of **vs. 22**, “**You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.**” The apostle John also indicated that the Spirit’s coming upon Jesus proved to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah, **John 1:33**. So, this indicates that for Luke and the other gospel writers, Jesus’ sonship and anointing go hand in hand, cf. **Luke 4:41; 22:67, 70; Acts 9:20, 22**.

Now, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus also expresses the reality of the Spirit’s equipping, empowering, and enabling of Jesus for His ministry. Before Jesus began His ministry, He was anointed by the Spirit. The importance of this for Luke is evident from **Luke 4:1, 14** and especially **vs. 18–21**; cf. also **Acts 4:26–27; 10:37–38**. Therefore,

Jesus was “anointed” for His ministry as the “Anointed-Messiah-Christ.” There is a clear allusion here to **Isa 61:1**, as noted above, which Luke would develop in **Luke 4:18–19**, cf. **Acts 10:38**.

As Jesus received this Divine enablement for His ministry, the disciples would also be equipped in the future, **Luke 24:49**; **Acts 1:4–8**, just as all Church Age believers are.

In the NT, “Dove” is the Noun PERISTERA περιστερά, “dove or pigeon” that is used for this narrative in all four gospels, **Mat 3:16**; **Mark 1:10**; **Luke 3:22**; **John 1:32**, and for doves to be used as sacrifices in the Temple when our Lord over turned the money changing tables, **Mat 10:16**; **21:12**; **Mark 11:15**; **John 2:14, 16**, and for the sacrifice of Joseph and Mary’s purification and Jesus’ dedication at the Temple, **Luke 2:24**.

Because of the fact that outside of the Baptism of Jesus narrative, the “dove” is only used in the NT regarding the sacrificial animal; we see that symbolism in this narrative as well. In other words, the dove represents the preparation of the true sacrifice for our sins, our Lord Jesus Christ. We also see this usage in the OT as the “dove” was a sacrificial animal, especially of the poor people, as we will note below.

Therefore, in the NT, “dove” is only used for sacrificial animals for the poor, and in the narrative of Jesus’ baptism that concludes with the descending of the Holy Spirit who appears like a dove.

In the OT, we have several additional symbols that are relevant to Jesus’ Baptism narrative. In the OT, “Dove” is the Hebrew Noun YONAH, יֹנָת and is translated, “dove, pigeon, or turtledove.”

Both “dove” and YONAH are first mentioned or used in the OT, in the Bible, in **Genesis 8**, the flood narrative. Here we see Noah sending out a dove to see if the land had yet dried up. In this narrative, the Dove comes back with an olive leaf or branch. The emphasis here is on the “resting place,” of **vs. 9**, which the dove finally brought evidence to Noah in the form of the olive leaf. So, here the dove is an analogy of refuge and rest, which our Lord would provide through His sacrifice, while sustained by the Holy Spirit.

Peter, later linked the flood with baptism; therefore, we connect the use of the dove and the ark, and the Dove and Jesus Christ, **1 Peter 3:19-22**. In that, we also see the branch the flood dove returned with, as Jesus Christ, the Branch, is also symbolized, **Zech 3:8**; **6:12**.

Therefore, though some cultures view doves as a symbol of death and evil, the Bible uses the dove to symbolize sacrifice, rest, peace, gentleness, and virtue. L.S. Chafer noted C.H. Mackintosh’s note on this.

“As for the character of a dove, C. H. Mackintosh in his Notes on Genesis writes of the dove which Noah released from the ark: “And it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth, to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.” The unclean bird made its escape, and found, no doubt, a resting-place on some floating carcass. It sought not the ark again. Not so the dove,—“She found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark ... and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark: and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, plucked off.” Sweet emblem of the renewed mind, which, amid the surrounding desolation, seeks and finds its rest and portion in Christ; and not only so, but also lays hold of the earnest of the inheritance, and furnishes the blessed proof that judgment has passed away, and that a renewed earth is coming fully into view. The carnal mind, on the contrary, can rest in anything and everything but Christ. It can feed upon all uncleanness. “The olive leaf” has no attraction for it. It can find all it needs in a scene of death, and hence is not occupied with the thought of a new world and its glories; but the heart that is taught and exercised by the Spirit of God, can only rest and rejoice in that in which He rests and rejoices. It rests in the Ark of His salvation “until the times of the restitution of all things.” May it be thus with you and me, beloved reader,—may Jesus be the abiding rest and portion of our hearts, that so we may not seek them in a world which is under the judgment of God. The dove went back to Noah, and waited for his time of rest: and we should ever find our place with Christ, until the time of His exaltation and glory in the ages to come. “He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” All we want, as to this, is a little patience. May God direct our hearts into His love, and into “the patience of Christ.”—4th ed., pp. 104-5.” (Chafer's Systematic Theology - Systematic Theology – Volume 6)

We can compare this analogy with others OT passages that link the “dove” with “rest,” **Psa 55:6; 68:13; Jer 48:28; Hosea 11:11.**

Psa 55:6, “I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.’”

Psa 68:13, “When you lie down among the sheepfolds, you are like the wings of a dove covered with silver, and its pinions with glistening gold.”

Jer 48:28, “Leave the cities and dwell among the crags, O inhabitants of Moab, and be like a dove that nests beyond the mouth of the chasm (*Hell*).”

Hosea 11:11, “They will come trembling like birds from Egypt and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will settle them in their houses, declares the LORD.”

This rest comes from the sacrificial analogy of the Dove in the OT, **Lev 1:14; 5:7, 11; 12:6, 8; 14:22, 30; 15:14, 29; Num 6:10.** As we have noted in the NT application, the “dove” was used as the sacrifice for the poor for purification after giving birth, the dedication of the newborn, (which we noted above regarding Joseph, Mary, and Jesus), and for those under the Nazirite vow, if they touched a dead body.

Lev 5:7, “But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.”

Being the sacrifice of the poor, it was most likely abused by those who were trying to keep their finances for their own pleasures, rather than offerings for God. It speaks of the abuse of the cosmic Christian who is grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit. As noted in the temple cleansing incidents of Jesus, the dove was certainly being abused by the sellers, **Mark 11:15; Mat 21:12; John 2:14, 16**, which Jesus would bring about cleansing thereto.

Other OT allusions to the “Dove” include the beauty and wonder of the Holy Spirit’s words that strengthen and empower us, cf. **Song of Sol 2:12, 14; 5:2; 6:9.**

And for those who reject God, be it Israel or Gentiles, the Dove is used to indicate the suffering or insufficiency man has without the true dove in their life, plus the exhortation to return to the true Dove or sacrifice, **Isa 38:14; 59:11; 60:8; Jer 48:28; Ezek 7:16; Hosea 7:11; 11:11; Nahum 2:7**, as the Dove is used in analogy because of its mournful and sorrowful cooing.

Therefore, when we understand “**the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove,**” we see the anointing of the Messiah by God the Father; the enabling and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit to sustain Jesus throughout His ministry, including the Cross and Resurrection; and the rest and refuge we find in Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for the poor sinner who accepts Him as their Savior.

H. The Genealogy of the Son of Man, Luke 3:23-38.

1. Jesus’ genealogy through His mother Mary’s family tree.

We have heard the testimony of John and the testimony of God the Father. Now, in **vs. 23-38**, we come to the testimony of the genealogy. The genealogy is the evidence proving that only Jesus is the Christ.

What is the purpose of the genealogy in Israel? Scattered throughout the OT, e.g., **Genesis 4; 5; 10; 1 Chron 1-9**, are various tracings of family trees and relationships. Genealogies have a three-fold purpose:

1. They proved who was Jewish and who was not. Such proof of Jewish ancestry was important because God’s covenants were made with Israel. The promise of a Deliverer was a promise made to Israel, and He would come from Israel, **Deut 18:15, 18.**
2. The genealogies proved who could or could not serve as priests. Only Levites could serve before the Lord in the Tabernacle and the Temple. When Israel left captivity and exile during the days of Nehemiah, they turned almost

immediately to the genealogies to register the people returning from exile. **Neh 7:64**, tells us there were some who sought to be registered but were not found in the genealogies, “so they were disqualified from the priesthood.” The entire priesthood prefigured the coming Savior who would be the Great High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, **Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:20; 7:1; 8:1**, etc.

3. The genealogies proved who was or was not a “son of David.” They are needed to fulfill the Davidic covenant of **2 Sam 7**, when God promised to establish David’s throne forever. In other words, David’s son would be ruler over Israel and the Messiah. But not just any son or descendant of David could fill that role. The genealogy had to prove that anyone claiming to be Messiah was not descended from David through Jeconiah, **Jer 22:24-30; 36:30-31**. God declared that no one from Jeconiah’s house would sit on David’s throne. This is called the “Coniah curse.” So, the lineage of the Messiah could not come through Jeconiah.

Only two of the gospels, Matthew and Luke, record the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew began his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus. In **vs. 1, Chapter 1**, he states that Jesus was the son of David and Abraham to prove His royal lineage and Jewish heritage. Matthew associated Jesus with Abraham who was the father of the Jews and of their faith, and with David whose descendants had the right to the Jewish throne. Matthew’s original audience was Jewish; as such he wanted to show Jesus’ origins in the fulfillment of prophecy. In His Gospel, he frequently presents Jesus as the King of the Jews. Therefore, Matthew’s genealogy emphasizes this view.

Matthew also used the lineage of Jesus’ adoptive father Joseph and begins his lineage account with Abraham and ends with Joseph’s father Jacob. Matthew then names Joseph and Jesus, **vs. 16**, “**Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.**”

Luke, on the other hand, gives the lineage through the line of Jesus’ mother Mary. He begins with Joseph, and then gives Mary’s father next, Eli or Heli. In the Jewish Talmud, written just a few years after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are told that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary of Bethlehem, the daughter of Heli. That clears the mystery for us here. Luke then runs the lineage up through Eli’s line all the way to Adam, “**the son of God,**” **vs. 38**. As we stated in our outline of the book, Luke is showing that Jesus is the Son of Man. As such, he runs the lineage all the way through to Adam, the first man.

As a son of Adam, Jesus was qualified to redeem the sons of Adam, which means the entire human race. This is necessary because according to the Law, a redeemer had to be related to the ones in need of redemption, **Lev 25:25, 47-49; cf. Ruth 4:4-6; Jer 32:6-12**, (i.e., the kinsman redeemer). Furthermore, a redeemer could not be in need of redemption himself. Jesus, our sinless Kinsman, paid the price of our redemption, **2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 1:18-19**. Yet, He was more than a mere human. Jesus is wholly God and wholly man in hypostatic union. Therefore, Luke’s universalistic perspective is seen here. Jesus is the fulfillment not just of Jewish hopes but of the hopes of all people, both Jew and Gentile. For out of Adam the whole human family has come, cf. **Acts 17:26**, and Jesus is the son of Adam.

In addition, Adam was a type of Jesus in that he did not have a human father, for the one who gave him life was God himself. Similarly, God through His Spirit was the creative power who gave life to His Son, Jesus.

Nevertheless, Luke also shows that Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham, and the son of God, showing His royal lineage, His Jewish heritage, and His Divine sonship, as His lineage ends with God the Father. As such, the occupant of the throne of David filled the office of son of God by serving as the king. In **Psalms 2, especially vs. 7, 12**, the king was considered begotten by God on his coronation day. This was a common concept among ancient Near Eastern civilizations, as the king filled the office of sonship which meant that the king acted with the full powers and blessing of the god, provided the king properly honored him.

Luke affirms this royal concept of Jesus’ sonship in **Luke 3:22; 9:35; 19:38**. However, the very beginning of his Gospel goes beyond this traditional meaning of “Son of God” and makes it clear that Jesus’ very nature is from God, cf. **Luke 1:35**. Keep in mind that John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus’ relationship with God the Father existed before His coming to earth at Bethlehem, **John 1:1-3; 8:58; 17:5**. As such, Jesus’ Sonship was and is eternal.

By ending with “**son of God**,” Luke may also be trying to dispose of the heathen myths about the origin of man and to show that God is the Creator of the whole human race, Father of all men in that sense. No mere animal origin of man is in harmony with this conception.

Further, by presenting the genealogy between the baptism of Jesus and the temptation of Jesus, rather than at the beginning of the Gospel as Matthew does, Luke’s Gospel affirms that Jesus is the Son of God several times in succession, **Luke 3:22, 38; 4:3ff, 9ff**. There is OT precedent for this positioning in Moses’ genealogy, **Exo 6:14-25**, which is not recorded at the beginning of his life, but just before he started his ministry. Therefore, Luke looks at the human and Divine nature of Jesus.

*“It was natural for Matthew, writing for Jews, to give the legal genealogy through Joseph, though he took pains to show in **Matthew 1:16, 18-25** that Joseph was not the actual father of Jesus. It was equally natural for Luke, a Greek himself and writing for the whole world, to give the actual genealogy of Jesus through Mary.”* (A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament.)

Also, of interest is that Matthew employs the word “begat” or “**was born**” GENNAO, cf. **Luke 1:13; 57**, each time when referring to fathers bearing sons, while Luke only uses the article TOU, (HO) and does not repeat HUIOS “**son**,” except before Joseph. Yet, for understanding purposes, the translators added “son” to Luke’s lineage. In addition, neither Matthew nor Luke gives us a complete genealogy. Sometimes they would skip generations.

Other major differences are:

1. Matthew works forward in time while Luke works backward.
2. The number of names differs, Luke’s list being longer, e.g., Matthew has 41 names from Jesus to Abraham while Luke has 57. Also 38 names are different from David to Jesus, and Luke lists 60 names not found in Matthew.
3. As notes above, Matthew follows the dynastic descent, while Luke traces a more genetic descent. Either concept of “sonship” is acceptable to the ancient Near Eastern mind.
4. Many of the names in the lists are not identical. For example, in Matthew, the Davidic lineage emerges from Solomon and Rehoboam, while in Luke, the line goes through David’s other son Nathan and his son Mattatha.
5. Matthew includes Jeconiah, while Luke does not. Also noted above, this is because of the “Coniah curse,” in **Jer 22:24-30; 36:30-31**, where God states Jehoiakim would not have a son to sit on the throne. Luke’s lineage rightly places Jesus on the throne of David excluding the line of Jeconiah.
6. Jewish genealogies were constructed primarily to demonstrate the family’s Jewish origins and not necessarily to give an exhaustive accounting of every ancient relative. Yet, it is interesting that Matthew’s genealogy is arithmetically symmetrical between the three major divisions of fourteen in his list, **Mat 1:17**. Luke has no particular rhythm other than that noted below.
7. Matthew mentions four women in his genealogy, Luke does not mention any women, but the entire line is through Mary.

Now, before Luke gives us the lineage, he makes two statements about our Lord.

Vs. 23

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.”

1. The first statement is that Jesus begins His ministry. Luke makes this statement post Jesus’ baptism and receiving the descending of the Holy Spirit. Matthew states Jesus “**began**” ARCHO ἄρχω, “rule, begin, or reign,” post the wilderness and three temptations by Satan, **Mat 4:17**. Luke says Jesus “began” His ministry before the wilderness encounter. Notice the potential play on the word ARCHO that also means rule or reign. This begins His rulership

as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. The second statement is an approximation of Jesus' age, "**about thirty years of age**" HOSEI TRIAKONTA ETOS. Interestingly, the word "**ministry**" is not in the Greek; therefore, some translate this passage, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." This speaks to the entrance into His age, and then the narrative goes on to speak of His ministry. But this is an improbable translation given the word use and context. It better refers to the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

The age of Jesus is important because the Lord had reached the traditional age of maturity; cf. **Numbers 4**, when a man attained "fullness of strength." In addition, we see the Levite priests entered upon full service at that age, **Num 4:3, 23, 30**, and in order for Jesus to be our High Priest, He needed to wait until that age to fulfill the Law. Also, we see some allusions to kingship in comparison to David and Joseph, **2 Sam 5:4; Gen 41:46**, starting their rulership at the age of 30.

Luke then begins the lineage by stating in essence that people thought, believed, or "**supposed**" NOMIZO νομίζω, cf. **Luke 2:44**, Jesus was Joseph's son. We know that Jesus was not his blood related son, but was his adoptive son.

Next, Luke states the father of Joseph as ELI, who is actually Mary's father and Joseph's father-in-law. Luke does not use HUIOS or "son" here, but only the article TOU that Luke uses going forward to represent sonship in the generations.

Eli in the Greek is HELI, Ἠλί, that means, "ascending or climbing." An interesting play on words, as the lineage of Jesus goes up from here. Heli is only used here in the NT.

Vs. 24-38

Luke 3:24, "the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³²the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Here, we have Luke's genealogy. The genealogy contains 77 ancestors. Of those, 36 are unknown in the OT. Many of the others are noted in **Gen 5:1-32; 11:10-26; 1 Chron 1-3**. The exact arrangement of generations, in contrast to Matthew, is uncertain. The intended pattern may be:

1. Jesus to exile, (3 x 7 generations).
2. Exile to David, (3 x 7 generations).
3. David to Abraham, (2 x 7 generations).
4. Abraham to Adam, son of God, (3 x 7 generations).

Like Matthew's, we see multiples of 7, i.e., Spiritual perfection.

Luke writes to show that Jesus is the Messiah promised by God and that His claim is fulfilled through His mother, Mary. This helps make sense of **Gen 3:15** and **Isa 7:14**, where we read that the offspring of the woman will "strike the serpent's head," and "the virgin will conceive and have a son." Luke's genealogy shows that Jesus fulfills all the criteria necessary for being Messiah. His claim is legitimate. The genealogy makes His claim a matter of public

record.

Since 70 A.D., no one else can establish their descent from David. That is because in 70 A.D., the Roman army destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. They conquered and scattered Israel into captivity. The records of the genealogies and lines of descent were destroyed. Only here in the Gospel of Luke, in the genealogy of **Chapter 3**, do we receive the definitive evidence that the Messiah, the anointed one of God, is none other than Jesus Christ.

So, we see that the overall intention of Luke's list is clear. He wants to show Jesus' connection to David, to Abraham, to Adam, and to God. Each connection allows a point to be made about who Jesus is and whom He is qualified to serve.

1. The connection to David establishes His rights as regal heir; Jesus can be King of Israel. "Son of God" in this sense involves the right to rule as the Promised One, the Son of David, **Luke 1:31-35**; cf. **2 Sam 7:6-16**. And remember, the promised King of Israel is also the head of the human race. God's promise to Israel becomes the Church Age believers' promise in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile.
2. The connection to Abraham links Jesus to the national promise and hope.
3. The connection to Adam allows Luke to argue that Jesus represents all humanity.
4. The connection to God the Father shows that Jesus is the Son of God while also being the Son of Man.

In Jesus, God has carefully designed affairs so that as Son, He can realize both the hope of the OT and the hope of creation.

We also see in this list, that there are some who walked closely with God and some whose walk was uneven. In a sense, Jesus represents them all, much as He does us. In other words, Jesus represents both the sinners and the saints. In the list, is also a variety of humanity. Some of the people are well-known OT people who made a great mark; others are known to us only in this listing. Jesus represents both the well-known and the unknown of the world; i.e., the small and the great.

It is important to appreciate the uniqueness of this list. We all have genealogies, but none of them qualifies us to be God's chosen Son. We receive our role in God's family through Him. In a sense, the only genealogy that counts for us is the one that connects us to Jesus, for His work makes our biological roots less relevant. He makes His children out of Jews and Gentiles, males and females, **Gal 3:29**.

Finally, *"Luke reveals Jesus Christ as the Son of Man and the Savior of the world. His line does not stop with Abraham, but goes all the way back to Adam who was the first "son" of God -- the created son of God. But he fell from that lofty position when he sinned. Jesus Christ, the last Adam and the Son of God, is come to bring mankind back into that relationship with God which Adam formerly had and lost. This relationship is accomplished through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."* (Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee).

Therefore, in proof of Jesus as our Savior, Luke / God provides us with this lineage.