

## AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: LUKE 3

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 3: 1-22

### 1. The ministry of John the Baptist

a. Back drop of the time period:

- After the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC, the Promised Land was ruled by four of Herod's children: Antipas Herod [Galilee], Archelaus [Judea and Samaria], Philip [Ituraea] and Lysanias [Abilene].
- High priests: Annas and Caiaphas

c. John's key message: baptism of repentance - for the remission of sins

- Historical significance/ origin of John's baptism

*Baptism was practiced before the founding of the church. The Jews of ancient times would baptize proselytes to signify the converts' "cleansed" nature. John the Baptist used baptism to prepare the way of the Lord, requiring everyone, not just Gentiles, to be baptized because everyone needs repentance. However, John's baptism, signifying repentance, is not the same as Christian baptism, as seen in Acts 18:24–26 and 19:1–7. Christian baptism has a deeper significance.<sup>1</sup>*

d. Luke's OT reference about John's ministry

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord;  
Make His paths straight.  
Every valley shall be filled  
And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough ways smooth;  
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'* [Isaiah 40: 3-5]

- Luke's interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy

- 1) "Way of the Lord" -- Announces the 'NEW WAY' of the Messiah
- 2) "All flesh shall see the salvation of God"

- "All flesh" encompasses both the Jews and the Gentiles.
- The work of the disciples in the Acts is linked to the Lord's ministry.
- Another salvific work of God comes to all flesh through Jesus. -- Spiritual creation for

human salvation

- Thus, Luke assigns the significance of John the Baptist's ministry before commencement of the Lord's ministry based on Isaiah's prophecy. This was what had been foretold. A new way that brings the salvation of God to all peoples was about to come with the preparatory work of John through his message of repentance and giving of baptism for those whose hearts were prepared to receive the Lord.

*Discussion topic: What has been the meaning of your own baptism in your personal Christian journey?*

### 2. John's teachings in preparation for the Lord's ministry

a. Bear fruits suitable for repentance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-baptism.html>  
www.douglaschomistry.net

- Salvation does not come just because you are Jews [v. 8]
- All fruits that do not bear good fruits are thrown into fire for burning [v. 9].
- Give alms to the poor/ deprived [common message-v. 11].
- Do not extract unfair tax from the people [tax collectors-v.13].
- Do no violence to people, do not falsely accuse others and be content with your wages [soldiers v.14]

b. John's characterization of the Lord's work and judgment

- He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and 'fire' [v. 16]
 

*And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.*  
[Joel 2:28]
- Fire of judgment [v. 17]
 

*His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.*
- John saw both the first coming and the second coming of the Lord -- He baptized the people with the Holy Spirit during His first mission, but will punish all sinners with eternal fire when He comes the second time, as foretold by the OT prophets:
 

*For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven,  
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"Says the Lord of hosts,  
"That will leave them neither root nor branch.  
But to you who fear My name, The Sun of Righteousness shall arise, With healing in His wings;  
And you shall go out, And grow fat like stall-fed calves.  
You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet  
On the day that I do this,"Says the Lord of hosts. [Malachi 4:1-3]*

c. Proper understanding of "the way of the Lord" that brings "salvation of God" to all peoples.

*Discussion topic:*

1. Do we bear fruits of repentance in our lives according to John's guidelines?
2. Did you have a 'baptism of fire' experience from God?

**3. Jesus' baptism and heavenly sign**

v. 22: *And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

Isaiah 11: 1-2: *The Spirit's descent and resting on Jesus testified visibly that He is the Messiah.  
There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

*Discussion topics:*

1. Do you believe that you have the presence of the Holy Spirit with you?
2. If you have lost His presence along the way, what can you do to regain it?