

Luke 3 (Part 2): 21-38 • The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus

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All right, Luke chapter 3. We're going to read a few verses here, and then we're going to open in prayer. Verse 21 is where we're picking up. Luke chapter 3. And if you follow along, it goes like this,

“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” ²³ Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,” (ESV)

Let's pause there for a moment and let's pray. I need prayer before I go in and do the rest of the names that are there.

Thank You Father for Your Word. Thank You for filling us with understanding and insight, and as always Lord, we want to confess our complete and utter dependence upon You to speak to us today and to really make our hearts and minds to understand Your Word. So do this work in our hearts we pray, and teach us today from the Scriptures. We ask it in Your name, amen. Amen.

Luke begins here in this section by speaking about the ministry of John the Baptist and he says very simply in verse 21, *“now when all the people were baptized.”* And that means when all the people who had come to be baptized were baptized, *“Jesus also, (he says, was)...baptized.”* And it's interesting, but that's Luke's treatment of the baptism of Jesus. It's very brief. Interesting, isn't it, that Luke is the one who gives us such incredible detail about the birth of Jesus and some of the events related to His birth, tells us things that other Gospel writers don't tell us.

We hear about Simeon. We hear about Anna. We don't get those things from the other Gospel accounts. Luke develops them beautifully, and yet when we come to His baptism, He goes, and then when the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized and that was it. He just leaves it at that. Mark covers a little bit more. He actually gives us three whole verses when it comes to the baptism of

Jesus. John really only mentions it from the perspective of John the Baptist himself. He quotes John as saying, I saw the Spirit descending on Him like a dove, da, da, da, that whole spiel. (Matthew 3:16)

Matthew is the one who actually gives us the most, concerning Jesus' baptism so I wanted to put that up on the screen for you so we can look at it together. It's from the third chapter of Matthew as well. And it says,

Matthew 3:13-17 (ESV)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

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We're told in Matthew's version of this, that when Jesus first began to go into the waters of the Jordan, that John first resisted the whole idea of baptizing Jesus, and it's no wonder why, because you'll remember, and we've mentioned this several times, that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. It was built around the whole idea of people recognizing their sinful condition, knowing that they needed forgiveness from that sin, and then going into the waters of baptism to confess and to receive forgiveness from the Lord.

And so, we're..., John, that's why John said what he did. Jesus comes in and he's like, what are you doing here? I need to be baptized by you. There's no reason for you to come and confess sin because you are the sinless Lamb of God. What's kind of interesting about that is that Jesus's baptism actually presented a problem to the early Church for that very reason, because they were talking about the fact that Jesus was qualified to die on the cross for our sins

because He was sinless, because He had no penalty of His own to pay He was free to pay our penalty, right?

Nobody else could pay that penalty because you have to, yourself, be sinless in order to take on someone else's penalty, otherwise, I mean, I couldn't die for you. If I said, Lord, I want to die for this person over here, He'd say well, sorry, you can't because you've got your own issues to deal with. Well, Jesus, that wasn't the thing with Him. So in the early Church, this presented an issue you see, because people knew, it was public knowledge Jesus had consented to the right of John's baptism, again a baptism of repentance and they're like, what was that all about?

Why did Jesus do that, and didn't that muddy the waters a little bit? I mean you're telling me on the one hand Jesus is the sinless Lamb of God, on the other hand He got dunked by John, and again that was all about sin. Well, here's the interesting thing. As difficult as that was for the early Church every single Gospel writer mentions this event. None of them left it out, none of them thought, you know, I don't think I want to talk about that because that might present some issues for people reading my Gospel.

They might read this and go, what's that all about? No, they didn't see a problem at all. In fact, far from muddying the message of what Jesus came to do in the waters of baptism, I think the Gospel writers believed that it actually sent the right message. Because you see, the message of Jesus being baptized is all about him coming to identify with sinful man. That's why He came. Jesus did not get into the water because He had any sin to be forgiven from. He got into the water so that He might identify with you and me and all the people that were there.

I mean, think about it. Jesus, when He emerged into His public ministry, could have gone right to Jerusalem and started hanging with the rabbis, teachers of the law, and identified with them, but He didn't. He went to the one place in Israel where people were congregating to do one thing and one thing only. Confess their sin, and He wanted to be there. In fact, He not only wanted to be there, He wanted to be among them, and not just be among them, He wanted to do what they were doing, which was to go through that whole issue of water baptism. Again, He's identifying with them. He's identifying with them, okay.

Not to say that He's one of them, but He's identifying, and we understand this concept of identifying. I mean, every time we go through a season of political elections, there's all this jockeying and positioning and posturing. Politicians love to be identified with people who are popular in the public eye because they

believe that it's going to reflect well on them, and if I can be identified with the latest, hottest musical group or singer, musician, or whatever, then hopefully when it comes time for, people to vote, they're going to think that identification has cast a positive light on me and I'll get more votes or something like that.

And we see it happen with young and upcoming actors and actresses. They love to be photographed with more seasoned and recognized celebrities because obviously, to be identified with those people is a very positive thing for their career. Hoping maybe some studio or director is going to see the picture and call them in, or something like that. Have you ever noticed that some people create identifications with other groups simply by the way they dress? Can you think about that?

Think about the way people dress, and when you see them, instantly you know what the identification is. They identify, they're identifying with a group by what they literally put on. Let me just throw this out. I'm not going to, I'm not making fun of anybody. Please understand. But if I said to you Harley biker image, what would you think of? When you think of, when I say that, there's an identification that goes with it, isn't there? Like this right?



I mean, isn't that it? It's pretty much what came into your mind, and not that there's anything wrong with that, but you look at a guy like that and he identifies, you know that he identifies with that genre of motorcyclist, bikers, sort of a thing, and we all know it. We look at him and we all know it, and it's

an instant identification. We know where he belongs, with the rest of those guys, they're into that sort of thing.

When Jesus came, began His public ministry, He identified with us and with our sin, and the best way to do that was to go where John was preaching sin and forgiveness of sins. And when you were standing, if you would have been standing there on the Jordan while John was doing his thing, if you would have seen someone walk down off the riverbank into the Jordan, you would know exactly why they were doing that. There was no question in your mind why they waded into the water. It was because they believed themselves to be sinful and in need of forgiveness.

I find it so interesting that Jesus did that. That He was willing to do that. To wade into the water in front of all kinds of other people who were there watching, not that they were necessarily even noticing Him, but to identify Himself in such a way. But I think it speaks of our Lord's willingness to declare in a public sort of a way, His resolution, His determination to not just identify, but ultimately bear the penalty of our sin, because when we get further into the New Testament, one of the things that we read is that Jesus, His connection with our sin and that sort of thing, went beyond just mere identification.

It was deeper than that. And you say, well, how much deeper? Well, let me show you a couple of verses. Paul wrote them in a couple of his Epistles. I'll put them both up on the screen from 2 Corinthians and Galatians. He says, and from 2 Corinthians,

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

God made him who had no sin. To be sin for us...

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

God made him who had no sin. To be sin for us...

Interesting statement, right? And then from Galatians 3:13,

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

Now this takes it deeper, you guys. This is a step beyond identification, right? This is a step beyond just putting on the clothes and looking like all the other people that identify with this particular thing, or in Jesus's case, this is a step

beyond simply jumping into the water along with the rest of the people who were being baptized, and identifying himself as one of them.

Notice what it says, “*God made him who knew no sin to be sin.*” Right? And then in Galatians, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse,*” not by just taking our curse. He did that, but “*by becoming our curse.*”

He became those things. That's admittedly a step beyond identification, is it not? Maybe several steps. Jesus became, oh man, let that one just simmer in your brain for a little while. That'll make a difference. He didn't just take my sin. He became my sin for me. He didn't just bear my curse. He became my curse. Goodness gracious. What in the world is going on here?

Don't ask me to explain the hows and the, I know the why we know that God so loved the world. But the how? That's, as they like to say, beyond my pay grade, which is a very nice way of saying, I'm an idiot and I can't figure that part out.

I just, I don't know. I'm just, it's beyond me to understand or to explain to you, in any sort of a comprehensible way, how Jesus could become my curse and my sin, but that He did, and I can only imagine. I can only imagine the struggle that He endured during His earthly ministry, not just being identified and being around sinners but just becoming that for us. There's a song that we sing and the lyrics go like this, He became sin who knew no sin that we might become His righteousness, and I wonder how much we even understand of what we sing.

It's a lovely lyric and it's true from the standpoint that it reflects the reality of Scripture, but it is amazing, nonetheless. Luke goes on to tell us in verse 21, He says, if you look with me there, that “*...when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying...*” And this is just a side point because we don't know exactly what His prayer was, but did you know that Luke is the only Gospel writer to tell us that Jesus was praying during the time of His baptism?

Not that we would be surprised by that necessarily, but he's the only one that mentions it. And then he says, he goes on to say, “*the heavens were opened,*” and wow, were they ever. opened. I mean, here God is breaking into human history, and I think that's part of what that whole heavens being opened is signifying for you and I, we know that the entrance of the Spirit now is going to come and we'll see that in a moment, but this whole remark about the heavens being opened is a significant statement as it relates to what's happening in human history.

Do you understand what's happening here? I mean, the monumental importance of this thing. God has invaded human history. God has shown up on the scene and He's one of us. He's a human being, albeit completely God at the same time. Don't ask me to explain that one either.

The point is this is incredible. Heaven opened and it's interesting that Luke would record that along with the other Gospel writers at this time of His baptism, because here's what's interesting. When John sees the revelation of Jesus coming a second time, do you understand that he uses the same language? Let me show you this from Revelation chapter 19 It says,

Revelation 19:11 (ESV)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

Now, obviously, this is talking about when Jesus comes to a second time and He's coming right? That hasn't happened yet. But did you notice the language is just the same as He begins His earthly ministry and when He comes again, the heavens are opened and what emerges? God in human flesh.

Next, Luke goes on to tell us that the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form. That's interesting. This is most certainly a nod toward a particular prophecy that we have in the Book of Isaiah written 700 years before the birth of Christ. Speak about I think about this now what Luke is telling you the Spirit descended on Him. Now let me show you Isaiah chapter 42.

Isaiah 42:1 (ESV)

Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

And so, once again we see this connecting point between the Old Testament prophecies and what Luke is telling us here about Jesus's baptism. And then he gives us the imagery of the dove, which is significant in and of itself. If I were to say to you today, what is a dove symbolic of? Well, it means the same thing today that it did back then. It's meant it for a long, long time.

A dove is a symbol of peace, and truly has been for a long, long time. So the Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove probably gives us several pictures, not the least of which is that Jesus is coming in peace to respond in peace, to give salvation and so forth.

And finally, we have the voice of the Father declaring, ²²“....*you are my beloved son with you I am well pleased.*” That's a beautiful statement made by the Father expressing His blessing and affirmation of the work of the Son, the obedience of the Son and His good pleasure.

By the way, this is one of several places in the Word of God where we can see all three members of the Trinity in one single picture. We have the Son of God emerging from the waters of baptism. We have the Spirit of God descending on Him in the form of a dove, and we have the voice of God, the Father, speaking from heaven and saying, this is my Son, and so forth. Beautiful picture.

And then Luke presents us with the genealogy of Jesus, and you'll notice that I didn't read through all the names the first time through. It's really an exercise in pronunciation. But I, Sue told me I shouldn't shrink from it. So ready? Here we go. Verse 23,

“Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, (I guess we repeated ourselves there) the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷ the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri,

²⁸ the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, (I like that name. He was the admin.) the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,

³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, (that's actually not, that's not really

the correct pronunciation) *the son of Arphaxad*, (don't name your kid that) *the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,* ³⁷ *the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,* ³⁸ *the son of Enos, (actually) the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*”

No one should have to do that twice. Alright, so we've gone through the genealogy of Luke and it's an interesting one, and when you compare it to the one that's recorded in Matthew you notice that there are actually several, very clear differences. For one thing, Luke starts off with Jesus and he goes back in time all the way back to Adam, you'll notice.

Matthew on the other hand in his genealogy starts with Abraham and then he goes forward in time to end with Jesus, but there are other differences too, and essentially, this is where it gets interesting, all right?

It happens when these two men get to David, and David is a huge character in the Bible, of course, but they each get to David. Matthew follows the lineage from one of David's sons, which is Solomon, and goes that way and Luke gets to David, and he follows the lineage through a different son of David, Nathan, and he goes that way. Now that's interesting. And it has led some people to wonder what's going on here? Well, interestingly enough, Luke's lineage, the one we've just read, alleviates a problem that Matthew's lineage runs smack into.

And that is, one of the people that Matthew mentions in the lineage of Jesus was one of the kings of Israel named Jeconiah who was cursed by the Lord. He was a particularly stubborn and evil king. He was one of the last kings before the Babylonian empire came in and destroyed the city, capturing the people, destroying the temple, and taking the people into captivity in the Babylonian empire. And Jeconiah was incredibly stubborn, incredibly pig headed, and the Lord ended up cursing him and saying, concerning Jeconiah, that none of his children shall sit on the throne of David.

Pretty interesting isn't it, since Jesus is considered in the lineage of David and eligible to sit on the throne of David. And yet, Jeconiah is cursed, and by the way, if you don't recognize the name Jeconiah, the other name that you will have seen in your Bible is Jehoiakim. Let me show you the prophecy where the curse took place. It's actually in Jeremiah chapter 22. It says,

Jeremiah 22:30 (ESV)

Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, (He's speaking, again of Jeconiah) a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

And that's what is said about this king of Judah, despite the fact that he appears in the lineage of Jesus, according to Matthew. And so, you look at that and you ooh, I think we've got a problem here. But it's really not a problem, and the reason it's not a problem is because what Matthew is giving for you and I is the genealogy of Joseph. And Joseph was a man who was born in the lineage of David, but he was also born in the lineage of Jeconiah. But you see, Joseph wasn't Jesus's biological father. In fact, the biology didn't connect at all.

And so, all Matthew is attempting to do in his genealogy is simply make a statement. Jesus is born, or legally in the lineage of David. Here's why I say legally. When anyone adopts a child, they have the legal right to their fathers or to give their children their name. Their lineage is now this adopted child's lineage and all of the rights that go along with being family are bestowed upon this adopted child. It was this, it's the way it is in our country today. It's the way it was in Israel back then.

The fact that Jesus was literally adopted, if you will, by Joseph and known as Jesus, the son of Joseph shows that Jesus had the legal right because Joseph was a descendant of David, but He couldn't rule through Joseph. And so Luke takes the time to show us His lineage through the son of David named Nathan, who bypasses the curse and Mary is the blood relation. So what Luke is giving us here is the lineage of Mary. And so Matthew gives His legal lineage and Luke gives us his blood lineage, and we see here in these two situations that Jesus qualifies, more than qualifies to sit on the throne of David.

Now, some of you might be saying, well, why didn't Luke just say Mary, why didn't he just put her name in there when he began to do this lineage? Well, it just wasn't done. A woman's name would appear in a lineage, and they often did. Ruth appears in the lineage of Jesus Christ and so forth, and on and on. Tamar appears in the lineage of Jesus, but to start or to stop a genealogy with a woman. To begin it or to end it with a woman's name, it just wasn't done, and so Luke did the next best thing.

In Luke 4:23. Look what he says again. He says, “*Jesus being the son as was supposed.*” And that Greek word literally means considered. In other words, Jesus being considered the son of Joseph, the son of Haley, and on, and on and on. That's Luke's way of saying it's not His lineage, it's not His genealogy, but it was supposed, and so forth. Now the other reason to believe that Luke is presenting Mary's genealogy here is that so much of Luke's Gospel account is given from the perspective of Mary.

Luke gives more details than only Mary could have given. He even says things like, “*and she treasured all these things in her heart.*” And that's information you only could have gotten from the mother of Jesus, and I'll tell you that there are other reasons to believe that Luke's genealogy is that of Mary. I'm not going to bore you with them because some of them get somewhat detailed involving Greek wording, but suffice it to say, Jesus was qualified from a human standpoint to be the promised Messiah, and we see that in the Word.

I want to let you know that next week when we get into Luke chapter 4, we're going to be moving on with this idea. We're going to be getting into the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and we're going to continue talking about how Jesus identified with sinful man, this time in the wilderness. We're going to talk about how the first Adam came and endured the temptations of the enemy and failed, and how the second Adam, or the last Adam came and endured the temptations of the enemy and prevailed, and in so doing, He identifies with the representative of the human race.