

The Birth of Christ

Lesson 5

Luke 3:1-37

January 3, 2021

A Voice Crying in the Wilderness

Introduction

Several centuries before the coming of Christ, Isaiah prophesied about a voice “calling in the wilderness.” John the Baptist was Jesus’ cousin and gave a warning and a “heads up” to the proud and complacent people of the Jewish society of his time. He came to announce the coming of the Messiah that Israel anticipated for thousands of years. Not only was John prophesied about by Isaiah and Malachi but Jesus called him the greatest “among those born to women.”

John had no patience for those who were smug and prideful of their heritage and place in society but called all to repentance, baptism, and fruitfulness. Repentance brings humility, and baptism represents our entrance into a relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. When we leave behind our old lives and begin to trust Jesus, we begin to lead a fruit-filled life that glorifies God.

John the Baptist was the greatest of prophets because he pointed to an immediate Messiah and an urgent need to acknowledge and trust that Messiah. He reminds us not only of the importance of baptism but also of the need for ongoing humility, repentance, and fruitfulness.

Memory verse: “As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”—Luke 3:4

Pray and read Luke 3:1-37. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

What does the passage say?

1. Who was emperor of Rome when Jesus lived?
(Luke 3:1)
2. Who was governor of Judea? (Luke 3:1)
3. What are the things that John the Baptist did to announce the coming of the Messiah? (Luke 3:3)
4. Write down three things John said to the crowds who came to him. (Luke 3:7-18)
5. What did John tell the people that they should do?
(Luke 3:3-8)
6. Why did Herodias put John in prison? (Luke 3:19-20)
7. How did John clarify the difference between himself and the Messiah? (Luke 3:16)

8. What two remarkable things happened when Jesus was getting baptized? (Luke 3:21-22)

What does the passage mean?

1. The book of Isaiah was written about 700 years before the birth of John the Baptist. How do the words from those prophetic verses point to John the Baptist? (Isaiah 40:3-5; Luke 3:4-6)

2. John called the people to repentance and to action that produces fruit. What is repentance? (Proverbs 28:13; Acts 3:19) What is the connection between a fruitful life and repentance? (Luke 3:8-17; John 15:1-8)

3. What do you think John meant when he said that Jesus would baptize “with the Holy Spirit and fire?” (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4-8, 4:31)

