

Luke 3:1-6

Introduction: This paragraph jumps ahead from 2:42 about 22 years, making this 29 AD. John is now nearly 35 years old. Luke clearly shows Theophilus that Christianity began in public (cf. Acts 26:26).

The historical setting of the ministries of John and Jesus—3:1-2a

- 1) Politically
 - a) Nationally—¹ *Now in the fifteenth year of the rule [AD 14-37] of Tiberius Caesar,*
 - i) He began reigning as co-Caesar with Augustus in AD 12. His began his solo reign in AD 14.
 - ii) How ironic that millions no longer recognize his name, but they recognize the names of Jesus, John the Baptizer, and Pontius Pilate!
 - b) Regionally
 - i) Southern area around Jerusalem—*Pontius Pilate being ruler [AD 26-36] of Judea,*
 - (1) Pilate was a Roman prefect, in charge of collecting taxes and keeping peace.
 - ii) Near north—*Herod (Antipas) being tetrarch [4 BC – AD 39] of Galilee*, (cf. 3:19; 23:6-12) (he was a loyal puppet of Rome)
 - iii) Further north—*and his (half-) brother (Herod) Philip being tetrarch [4 BC – AD 34] of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis,*
 - iv) Furthest north—*and Lysanias being tetrarch [?? – AD 37] of Abilene,*
 - c) Gentile domination does not overthrow God's eternal purpose. When Luke wrote this book, all these leaders had passed into the fog of history.
- 2) Religiously
 - a) ² *during the time of the high priesthood of Annas [AD 6-15] and Caiaphas* (son-in-law of Annas) [AD 18-36], (cf. John 18:13-27)
 - b) This was the 30th year of Jubilee according to the Jewish calendar.

God intervenes in the course of human affairs—3:2b

- 1) John the prophet—the word [βόημα] of God came to [έπι] John the son of Zachariah, in the wilderness (desert; cf. 1:80). (cf. 1:76-77)
 - a) Cf. Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Zechariah 1:1
- 2) John's ministry of the Word is a fulfillment of God's promises through Isaiah and God's promises to Zechariah through Gabriel (Luke 1).

What was John's response to receiving this revelation from God?—3:3-6

- 1) John's ministry—3:3
 - a) The location—3:3a ³ *And he went into all the surrounding region of the Jordan,*
 - b) The message—3:3b *proclaiming [κηρύσσω] an immersion [βάπτισμα] of repentance [μετάνοια] in view of [εἰς] the forgiveness [ἄφεσις] of sins [ἁμαρτία],*
 - i) To participate in this baptism was a recognition of the need for God's

- forgiveness with a sense that one needed to live differently as a response to it. (NET Bible)
- ii) Genuine repentance produces a life lived with a sense of responsibility before a sovereign God. (Bock, 1:287) The results of repentance are illustrated in the immersion.
 - iii) John's immersion represented for its precross Israelite audience a commitment to a new approach to God resulting in a life of fruitfulness for God and expectation of the coming Messiah. To submit to this immersion is to confess one's commitment to this perspective. (Bock, 1:289)
- 2) What is the authoritative source for such behavior? [from Isaiah 40:3-5]
- a) The Biblical basis for such a message—3:4 ⁴ as it is written [pf. pass. ptc. γράφω] in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The voice of one shouting in the wilderness, Make ready the route [ὁδός] of the Lord, make His paths [τρίβος] level [εὐθός].
 - i) Cf. the early name for Christians—Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22
 - ii) Cf. Acts 18:25-26
 - b) Metaphors of repentance—3:5 (All the obstacles to His approach are to be removed.)
 - i) The need for humility—⁵ Every ravine will be filled in, and every mountain and hill will be lowered [ταπεινώω],
 - ii) The need for righteousness—and the crooked [σκολιός] will be made straight [εὐθός] and the uneven [τραχύς] roads level [λεῖος];
 - iii) The heart that turns in repentance is to express itself in concrete acts and await God's deliverance. (Bock, 1:293)
 - c) The result of repentance—3:6 ⁶ and all flesh (humanity, all nations) will see the salvation [σωτήριον] of God (the Father).”
 - i) Luke omits the phrase: “the glory of Yahweh will be revealed”. God's glory is manifest in the salvation of all flesh. (cf. Acts 28:25-28)
 - ii) God's salvation is seen in the baptism in the Spirit (cf. 3:15-16) that Christ brings. (Bock, 1:293)

Take-home truth: Genuine repentance involves a change of mind that in turn changes the way one lives before God and people.