



Good News **for all people.**

The Gospel of Luke

Week 2 **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week of 9/4/22

Text: Luke 3:1-22

Icebreaker: What is the biggest event or experience you've prepared for? What was involved (time, money, etc.) in making sure everything was ready?

1. Luke's precision is on display in verses 1-2 of chapter 3. How do you think the details of this description align with what Luke said back in 1:1-4 from last week?

This should help us remember that Luke is telling us about actual historical events. These are real people from a specific location and just as much a part of history as events that have transpired in our own lifetimes. In all, this hopefully leads us to a place of greater confidence that we can trust the account that Luke presents as he wrote within the lifetime of those who knew Jesus firsthand.

Application: What does this kind of detail do for you in terms of your confidence in Luke's account? Why?

2. In verse 3, we see that John the Baptist's message was one of repentance. Simply put, *repentance* is a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior. What's an example of a change that should occur when someone encounters the gospel?

Repentance is turning away from whatever is not of Christ so that we can turn toward Christ. This "turning away" could include our words, actions, attitudes, motivations, etc.

Application: What would happen if a person sought to become a Christian without repentance?

A complete absence of change in a person's life suggests that the gospel has not yet taken root in a person's heart. The account of the rich young ruler (Luke 18-18-30) helps illustrate how a person might seek to attain salvation without any change in behavior or belief.

3. In verses 4-6, John quotes from Isaiah 40:3-5 to describe his ministry of preparing "the way of the Lord." How do you think the terrain-altering changes depicted here relate to what repentance is like?

At an individual level, repentance requires radical change in each of our lives. Sin is a barrier or opposition to God's ways, so a transforming work must take place in order to prepare us for the rule and reign of Jesus. It's as though the valleys need to be filled in and the mountains brought low. Commentator John Nolland explains, "The imagery is of a coming of the Lord...by way of the wilderness. Only a perfect road will be fit for him to travel upon."

Application: What's an example of a change ("repentance") that either took place in your life or in the life of someone you know as you/him/her came to faith in Jesus?

4. In verses 7-14, John confronts the crowds with a call to “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance” and then applies it for specific people. What are some common themes or ideas that you notice in John’s instructions?

We should notice an extreme generosity and open-handedness with whatever is excess. We can see as well a commitment to justice and contentment.

Application: Think about your own occupation or situation in life. What kind of “fruit” of repentance do you think could apply to you given what John said to others?

Certain industries may have unique temptations, but this requires a bit of abstract thinking and personal experience to discern. One example could be that a person in the financial services industry may know the temptation to “churn” an account to gain a higher commission. A nonprofit may be tempted to exaggerate its impact in order to secure greater donations.

5. In a passage of stern warnings and pointed exhortations, verse 18 surprises by calling John’s words “good news.” What’s “good” about John’s message?

It’s good in at least a couple ways. First, John warns about the axe being at the root of the tree and the threshing fork being ready, but we know that we still live in a time of God’s mercy. The axe has not yet struck, and the winnowing fork has not yet done its sifting. Part of the good news is that, until Christ returns, there is still time for people to repent and come to faith. Second, it’s good because it instructs us and motivates us to seek God’s righteous ways with a sense of urgency. The world is not right on its own and Jesus calls us to the only way that leads to life.

Application: As John’s words prepared the crowds for Jesus’ earthly ministry, how could they help us be prepared for the return of Christ?

In our day, the axe is still at the root and the winnowing fork has not yet done its ultimate work. We are closer to the day, though, when these implements will swing into action. That should cause us to assess how we’re living so that we are prepared for what’s ahead.

6. Some claim that, “The Trinity isn’t in the Bible.” What do you see in verses 21-22 to counter this claim?

This is one of the clearest depictions of the Father, Son, and Spirit in Scripture. The basic description of the Trinity is one God in three persons—Father, Spirit, and Son.

Week 2 Final Thought:

Verses 21-22 mark a shift in Luke’s account as Jesus is commissioned and John the Baptist’s life-long work of preparation for Jesus is all but complete. At the risk of skipping (far) ahead (e.g., Acts 1:8), we might reflect on how the purpose of our lives is also one of preparation...for Christ’s return.