

The Discippler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discippler

Luke 3

3:1-2 – The background for the ministry of John the Baptist

- *As written in the commentary, the discipler may want to review some of the names in verses 1 & 2. It may be helpful to point out the political corruption, greed and wickedness of those listed. Particularly point out that the Herod named here is not the same Herod mentioned in chapter 1. This Herod is Herod Antipas, one of Herod the Great's sons.*
- *And speaking of names, ensure that the disciple does not confuse this John—John the Baptist—with other men named John, such as John, the son of Zebedee, who was Jesus' disciple and who wrote the Gospel of John and the letters. (For some, it may be necessary to explain that the name "Baptist" has nothing to do with the modern-day denomination.)*
- *Make sure that the disciple sees the contrast between the unrighteousness of those named and the righteousness of John the Baptist.*

3:3-6 – The message of John the Baptist: repentance

- *It is vitally important that the disciple understands the significance of John's message regarding "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." The word "repent" actually means "to turn around," implying a change of direction in one's behaviors and habits, especially in terms of relationships. Without repentance for sins, there can be no real appreciation for the cross of Christ, no real appreciation for the concept of grace, and therefore, no real salvation through Jesus Christ.*
- *Have the disciple look up and read Isaiah 40:4-6. Explain the meaning of straight "paths" and filled "ravines." Relate that concept to getting one's life right with God. Relate how this passage is a "messianic" passage and refers to the royal kingship of the Messiah.*

3:7-9 – The warnings of John the Baptist: Your repentance must bear fruit

- *Explain the meaning of the phrases "You brood of vipers," "wrath to come," and "We have Abraham for our father." Apply them to today's Christian culture where so many call themselves "born again" but "do not bear fruit in keeping with repentance," particularly in terms of relationships.*
- *Go into some detail here concerning the phrase "bear fruit in keeping with repentance." The typical young disciple will name things like attending church, tithing, reading Scripture, et cetera. While all these things are good, the main focus should be on relationships. The next few verses should help with that.*

3:10-14 – The instructions of John the Baptist: treat others with love

- *Have the disciple identify the three groups and three questions asked of John concerning "Then what shall we do?" Have the disciple identify the main theme in John's responses.*
- *But don't stop there! Have the disciple identify people in his or her own life where the principle of treating others with love needs to be done to bear fruit. Have them identify friends, co-workers, fellow students, and especially family where treating others with love is the hallmark of the Christian disciple, thus bearing fruit in keeping with repentance. Ensure that the student understands that short of treating others with love, there is no true repentance, and confession and repentance become merely a religious exercise to make one feel better.*

3:15-17 – The prophecy of John the Baptist: You will be baptized with fire (the Holy Spirit)

- *Now the disciple is confronted with another ministry of the Holy Spirit. If the disciple hasn't figured it out already, make sure that he or she knows that to be "baptized with fire" refers to the Holy Spirit. This was first seen at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-3). Being baptized with the Holy Spirit means to receive the Holy Spirit by placing one's faith in Jesus Christ; that is, to believe. To be "led by the Spirit" means to be guided by the Holy Spirit to make the right moral and godly choices. To be "filled with the Spirit" means to boldly declare the wondrous acts of God through Jesus Christ. (The last ministry—to "walk by the Spirit"—is not discussed in this commentary, and is found only in Galatians 5:16 and 25. To "walk by the Spirit" means to live one's life in a manner that is marked by the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—all of which are reflected in relationships. See Galatians 5:13-26.)*
- *Disciplers need to ask their disciples if they have been "baptized" by the Holy Spirit. If they have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, they have been baptized by the Spirit. Many disciples may say, "Well, I think I have, but I don't feel any different." Ensure that being baptized by the Spirit is not a matter of feeling, and there may be no emotional experience involved. It is simply a matter of believing, and therefore, the fact of being baptized by the Spirit is a matter of faith based on the word of God. The best way to tell if a person has been baptized by the Spirit is a change in behavior involving relationships, and a desire to know more about Jesus Christ and His kingdom.*

3:18-20 – The imprisonment of John the Baptist: for confronting unrighteous leaders with their unrighteousness

- *The sordid details of John's imprisonment and subsequent death are not found in Luke. Therefore, the discipler, if asked, may refer to Matthew 14:1-12.*
- *Ask the question, "Why didn't Jesus, with His power, rescue John?" There is an important lesson here. First, John's ministry was ending and Jesus' ministry was beginning. Second, John had completed the mission for which he was sent by God. Third, God does not rescue us when He has something better waiting. Death is not the enemy—sin is the enemy.*

3:21-22 – The baptism of Jesus: an introduction to the Trinity

- *Point out here the presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism.*
- *Explain to the disciple why Jesus went to John for baptism.*
- *It is important here to point out what the Father says about His Son, Jesus: "You are My beloved Son...." Ask the disciple, "What else could the Father have said about His Son?" And, "Why is the term 'beloved' so important?" Point out how the Father's description characterizes the relationship between the Father and the Son.*

3:23-38 – The genealogy of Jesus Christ through the ancestors of Jesus' mother Mary (the "seed line")

- *It may be helpful to point out that there are two genealogies for Jesus, the other being found in the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-17). Share with the disciple why there are two, and what each one represents. Point out that Luke's genealogy goes all the way back to Adam, while Matthew's goes back only to Abraham.*
- *In terms of application, how does a Christian have a "spiritual genealogy"? Ask the disciple to trace his or her spiritual genealogy.*
- *Make sure the disciple understand the concept of the "seed line." This concept is very, very important when studying the genealogies of Jesus, as well as the genealogies found in the Old Testament. It also helps to understand God's interaction—and intervention—with the nation of Israel.*