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Luke 3 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Luke 3 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows the voice crying in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord

† It reveals the call to repentance before judgment came on that generation

† It establishes John as the forerunner and points directly to Christ as the One bringing fulfillment

Luke 3:1

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate

governed Judea, Herod ruled Galilee, his brother Philip ruled Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruled Abilene

† This sets the exact historical moment showing these events are real and tied to their generation (Luke 2:1)

† God anchors prophecy in real rulers, showing fulfillment is not future speculation but present reality

† Josephus confirms these rulers and the political setting of Judea at that time

Luke 3:2

During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John in the wilderness

† God bypasses corrupt leadership and speaks to a prophet outside the system (John 1:6)

† This exposes the failure of the temple leadership before its coming judgment

† Eusebius notes the corruption of the priesthood in this period

Luke 3:3

He went through the region around the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins

† Repentance was the condition to escape the coming wrath (Luke 13:3)

† This wasn't ritual cleansing but a call to change before judgment

† Josephus records John's baptism as a call to righteousness

Luke 3:4

As written in Isaiah, a voice cries in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight

† This directly identifies John as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 40:3)

† The Lord coming refers to covenant judgment and salvation

† Irenaeus affirms John as the prophetic forerunner

Luke 3:5

Every valley will be filled, every mountain and hill brought low, crooked paths made straight and rough roads smooth

† This is covenant language describing the removal of obstacles before God's coming (Isaiah 40:4)

† It points to the leveling of Israel's pride before judgment

† This imagery reflects preparation for divine visitation

Luke 3:6

All flesh will see the salvation of God

† Salvation is revealed publicly within that generation (Luke 2:30-31)

† This includes both Jews and Gentiles in fulfillment

† Clement of Alexandria connects this to the gospel reaching all nations

Luke 3:7

He said to the crowds coming for baptism, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath

† John identifies the religious crowd as corrupt and under judgment (Matthew 23:33)

† The wrath is imminent, not distant

† This matches the coming destruction of Jerusalem

Luke 3:8

Produce fruit consistent with repentance, don't say we have Abraham as our father, God can raise children from stones

† Physical descent means nothing without obedience (Romans 9:6-8)

† God can replace Israel if they refuse repentance

† This confronts covenant presumption directly

Luke 3:9

The axe is already at the root of the trees, every tree not bearing fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire

† Judgment is already ready, not delayed (Matthew 7:19)

† The tree represents Israel under the covenant

† Fire symbolizes destruction coming in AD 70

Luke 3:10

The crowds asked what should we do

† The people recognize urgency and seek direction

† True repentance leads to action

† This shows the seriousness of the moment

Luke 3:11

Whoever has two tunics must share with one who has none, whoever has food must do the same

† Repentance produces visible change in behavior (James 2:17)

† This reflects covenant righteousness

† Love for neighbor becomes evidence of true repentance

Luke 3:12

Tax collectors came and asked what they should do

† Even those despised are included in the call

† The gospel reaches all levels of society

† This shows God's mercy before judgment

Luke 3:13

He told them not to collect more than authorized

† Repentance includes honesty and justice

† Corruption must be abandoned

† This reflects righteous conduct under God's law

Luke 3:14

Soldiers asked what they should do, he told them don't extort or accuse falsely, be content with wages

† Power must not be abused

† Contentment replaces greed

† True repentance changes authority behavior

Luke 3:15

People were wondering if John might be the Christ

† Expectation of the Messiah was high in that generation

† They were looking for fulfillment

† This shows prophecy was understood as near

Luke 3:16

John said he baptizes with water, but one stronger is coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire

† Christ brings true transformation and judgment (Acts 2:3-4)

† Fire represents both purification and destruction

† This distinguishes John from Christ

Luke 3:17

His winnowing fork is in His hand, He will clear His threshing floor, gather wheat and burn chaff with unquenchable fire

† Separation is happening in that generation (Matthew 13:30)

† The wheat are the faithful, the chaff are judged

† This points directly to covenant separation

Luke 3:18

With many exhortations he preached the good news

† The gospel includes warning and hope

† Repentance and salvation go together

† This was urgent preaching before judgment

Luke 3:19

Herod was rebuked for his sins including taking his brother's wife

† Truth confronts rulers as well as common people

† Sin in leadership brings consequences

† Josephus confirms Herod's unlawful marriage

Luke 3:20

Herod added to his sins by imprisoning John

† Rejecting truth leads to greater sin

† This sets up John's eventual death

† This shows opposition to God's message

Luke 3:21

When all were baptized, Jesus was baptized and as He prayed heaven opened

† Jesus identifies with the people though sinless

† Heaven opening shows divine approval

† This marks the beginning of His public ministry

Luke 3:22

The Holy Spirit descended like a dove and a voice said You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased

† This confirms Jesus as the Son of God (Psalm 2:7)

† The Spirit's presence shows divine authority

† This reveals the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit

Luke 3:23

Jesus began His ministry at about thirty years old and was thought to be the son of Joseph

† This marks the start of His mission

† The genealogy connects Him to humanity

† This fulfills expectations of the Messiah

Luke 3:24

son of Matthat, son of Levi, son of Melchi, son of Jannai, son of Joseph

† This genealogy traces legal lineage through generations

† It confirms historical continuity of the Messiah

† Irenaeus connects this lineage to Christ fulfilling humanity

Luke 3:25

son of Mattathias, son of Amos, son of Nahum, son of Esli, son of Naggai

† Each name shows the preservation of the line

† God kept His promise through generations

† This affirms covenant continuity

Luke 3:26

son of Maath, son of Mattathias, son of Semein, son of Josech,
son of Joda

† The genealogy continues without interruption

† This reinforces historical accuracy

† God's plan unfolds through real people

Luke 3:27

son of Joanan, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of
Shealtiel, son of Neri

† Zerubbabel ties this line to post-exile restoration

† This connects Christ to Israel's rebuilding

† Eusebius records these historical connections

Luke 3:28

son of Melchi, son of Addi, son of Cosam, son of Elmadam, son
of Er

† These names preserve the generational chain

† God maintained the lineage faithfully

† This confirms divine oversight

Luke 3:29

son of Joshua, son of Eliezer, son of Jorim, son of Matthat, son
of Levi

† The repetition of names shows continuity

† This emphasizes the legitimacy of Christ's line

† It confirms prophetic fulfillment

Luke 3:30

son of Simeon, son of Judah, son of Joseph, son of Jonam, son
of Eliakim

† The line continues through Judah as promised

† This connects to the tribe of kingship

† God fulfills His covenant promises

Luke 3:31

son of Melea, son of Menna, son of Mattatha, son of Nathan,
son of David

† This confirms descent from David

† Christ fulfills the promise of David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12-13)

† Irenaeus affirms this royal connection

Luke 3:32

son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz, son of Salmon, son of
Nahshon

† This ties to the line preserved in Ruth

† It shows God's providence through generations

† The Messiah's line was never broken

Luke 3:33

son of Amminadab, son of Admin, son of Arni, son of Hezron,
son of Perez, son of Judah

† This traces back to the patriarchs

† It confirms fulfillment of promises to Judah

† The line is historically grounded

Luke 3:34

son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, son of Terah, son
of Nahor

† This connects Christ to Abraham

† It fulfills the promise to bless all nations

† Covenant history is fulfilled in Christ

Luke 3:35

son of Serug, son of Reu, son of Peleg, son of Eber, son of
Shelah

† The genealogy continues into early history

† This shows the unity of mankind

† God's plan spans all generations

Luke 3:36

son of Cainan, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem, son of Noah, son of Lamech

† This ties Christ to the flood narrative

† It shows continuity from Noah

† God's covenant with humanity continues

Luke 3:37

son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mahalalel, son of Cainan

† This connects to early righteous men

† It shows the long preservation of the line

† God's plan predates Israel

Luke 3:38

son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God

† This brings the line back to Adam

† Christ is connected to all humanity

† Irenaeus taught Christ restores what was lost from Adam

Historical References

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

How It Applies To Us Today

† Repentance still defines true faith

† God has already fulfilled what He promised

† We live in the established kingdom now

† Our lives must bear fruit consistent with repentance

† Christ is the fulfillment of all covenant history

Q & A Appendix

Q: What was the coming wrath

A: It was the judgment on that generation (Matthew 23:36)

Q: Why is repentance emphasized

A: Because it was required before judgment (Luke 13:3)

Q: What does the fire represent

A: It represents judgment and purification (Malachi 4:1)

Q: Why include the genealogy

A: To prove Christ fulfills all history (Romans 5:18)

Q: What does this chapter prove

A: That fulfillment happened in their time (Luke 21:32)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† Luke 3

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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