

## Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 77 – March 18<sup>th</sup> – Luke 3:1-22

### Works frequently referenced in these notes on Luke

Geldenhuy, Norval	<i>Commentary on the Gospel of Luke</i> , Marshall Morgan and Scott, London, 1950
Marshall, I Howard	<i>The Gospel of Luke</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Paternoster, Exeter, 1978
Morris, Leon	<i>Luke</i> (Tyndale NT Commentaries), IVP, London 1974

#### Luke 3:1

Ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας  
Τιβερίου Καίσαρος, ἡγεμονεύοντος Ποντίου  
Πιλάτου τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ τετρααρχούντος τῆς  
Γαλιλαίας Ἡρώδου, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ  
αὐτοῦ τετρααρχούντος τῆς Ἰτουραίας καὶ  
Τραχωνίτιδος χώρας, καὶ Λυσανίου τῆς  
Ἀβιληνῆς τετρααρχούντος,

The dating of John's appearance follows the manner of ancient histories such as Thucydades and, in measure, also of OT books (Is 1:1; Jer 1:1-3 etc.).

ἔτος, ους n see 2:41  
πεντεκαδεκατος, η, ον fifteenth  
ἡγεμονια, ας f reign, rule

That is 27/28 AD.

ἡγεμονεω see 2:2  
τετρααρχεω be tetrarch, be ruler

Originally the ruler of a fourth part of a kingdom, then ruler of a region. The Herod mentioned here is the son of Herod the Great and of Malthrace. Philip was another son of Herod the Great but by Cleopatra.

Ἰτουραιος, α, ον Ituraean, one from Ituraea  
Τραχωνιτις, ιδος f Trachonitis; ἡ Τ. χωρα  
the Trachonitis region

#### Verse 2

ἐπὶ ἀρχιερέως Ἄννα καὶ Καϊάφα, ἐγένετο ῥῆμα  
θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν ἐν τῇ  
ἐρήμῳ.

ἐπὶ with the genitive means 'in the time of'.

ἀρχιερευς, εως m high priest, member of  
high priestly family

"Although Jews regarded the high priesthood as a life-office, the Roman administration changed the holders at will. Αννας (Jn 18:13,24; Acts 4:6) held office from AD 6 to his deposition by Gratus in AD 15... He was succeeded by his son Eleazer (AD 16-17) and then by his son-in-law Καιαφας (AD 18-37; Mt 26:3,57; Jn 11:49; 18:13f.,24,28; Acts 4:6...). Thereafter four more of his sons held the high priesthood... Clearly Annas continued to possess considerable power behind the scenes (Jn. 18:13-27), a fact which explains why Luke names him here and also calls him the high priest in Acts 4:6: the retired priest kept his title... Luke thus recognises that there was in fact one high priest in office, but shows his consciousness of the powerful position of the retired high priest." Marshall  
Note the way in which Luke (the historian) has researched his material as he said in 1:1-4.

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter  
ἐρημος, ου f deserted place, uninhabited  
region, desert

#### Verse 3

καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς πᾶσαν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου  
κηρῦσσαν βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν  
ἁμαρτιῶν,

περιχωρος, ου f surrounding region,  
neighbourhood

Ἰορδανης, ου m Jordan River  
κηρῦσσω preach, proclaim

Luke's concern is primarily with John as a preacher/prophet rather than a baptiser. But John's preaching concerns baptism: it consists in an explanation of the meaning and significance of the baptism he is performing.

μετανοια, ας f repentance, change of  
heart, change of way  
ἀφεσις, εως f forgiveness, cancellation (of  
sins)  
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

**verse 4**

ὡς γέγραπται ἐν βίβλῳ λόγων Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου· Φωνὴ βοᾶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

φωνη, ης f voice, sound  
βοᾶω call, cry out, shout  
ἐτοιμαζω see 1:17  
ὁδος, ου f way, path, journey  
εὐθους, εια, υ adj. straight  
τρίβους, ου f path, pathway

Along with Matthew and Mark, Luke has variations from the LXX. "αὐτοῦ is substituted for του θεου ἡμων, thus identifying the κυριος mentioned earlier as Jesus and not as God." Marshall

**Verse 5**

πᾶσα φάραγξ πληρωθήσεται καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ βουνὸς ταπεινωθήσεται, καὶ ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθείαν καὶ αἱ τραχεῖαι εἰς ὁδοὺς λείας·

φαραγξ, αγγος f valley, ravine

Here alone in the NT.

πληρωθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s  
πληρωω fill, fulfill, make come true, accomplish

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill  
βουνος, ου m hill  
ταπεινωω humble, make low, level

"The image is of the construction of a level road, easy for the traveller, across an undulating desert." Marshall

σκολιος, α, ον crooked, perverse  
τραχυς, εια, υ rough  
λειος, α, ον smooth, level

**Verse 6**

καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.

"The first part of Is 40:5 is omitted (καὶ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ἡ δοξα του κυριου)... Perhaps Luke did not regard it as being fulfilled in the earthly ministry of Jesus." Marshall

ὄψομαι fut. ὄραω see 2:20  
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature  
σωτηριον, ου n salvation, saving power

Luke alone includes this verse from Isaiah 40:3-5 which emphasises one of his characteristic themes, the universality of the Gospel.

**Verses 7-9**

These verses are almost verbally identical with Mt 3:7-10.

**Verse 7**

Ἔλεγεν οὖν τοῖς ἐκπορευομένοις ὄχλοις βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· Γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς;

The imperfect ἔλεγεν precedes a statement of some length or perhaps indicates that this was what John habitually said.

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

Luke more often uses the singular than the plural.

βαπτίζω baptise  
γεννημα, τος n offspring  
ἐχιδνα, ης f snake, viper

"The offspring share the character of the parents, and this probably lies in the poisonous nature of the adder which is evil and destructive (Is 11:8f.; 14:29; 30:6) rather than in its prudence in escaping from danger (cf. Mt 10:16)." Marshall

ὑπέδειξεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s  
ὑποδεικνυμι show, make known, warn  
φυγεῖν Verb, aor act infin φευγω flee, run away from, escape  
μελλω coming, future  
ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Marshall says that the question may mean:

- i) 'Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'
- ii) 'Who has shown you how to flee from the wrath to come?'
- iii) 'Who has shown you that you can escape the wrath to come merely by being baptised or by feigning conversion?'

Marshall prefers the last of these, saying, "The question is rhetorical and indicates the sheer impossibility of escaping the coming total judgement, certainly not by any external, *ex opere operato* rite. John wanted people to be baptised – but only if they were repentant."

**Verse 8**

ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας· καὶ μὴ ἄρξησθε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· Πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ, λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome  
ἀξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting

Here the meaning is 'befitting'.

ἀρχω rule, govern; midd begin

λεγω ὑμιν is used to introduce an emphatic statement.

λίθος, ου m stone  
ἐγειρω see 1:69

"The use of ἐκ with ἐγείρω may be Semitic. The point is not that the stones themselves are transformed into living people, but that they can bring forth living children as their progeny (Is 51:1f.)." Marshall

τεκνον, ου f child

### Verse 9

ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιῶν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

ἤδη adv now, already  
ἀξινῆ, ης f axe

Only here and in the parallel in Mt 3:10.

ρίζα, ης f root, source, descendant  
δένδρον, ου n tree [rhododendron = rose tree]

κεῖμαι see 2:34

The passive may suggest God as the subject.

καλός, η, ον adj. good  
ἐκκόπτω cut off, cut down, remove  
πῦρ, ος n fire

### Verse 10

Καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες· Τί οὖν ποιήσωμεν;

ἐπερωτῶ ask, interrogate, question

"It is not surprising that here and in vs. 12,14 some authorities (D al) add ἵνα σωθῶμεν (Acts 16:30). Here the question is about the nature of true repentance." Marshall

### Verse 11

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Ὁ ἔχων δύο χιτῶνας μεταδότω τῷ μὴ ἔχοντι, καὶ ὁ ἔχων βρώματα ὁμοίως ποιεῖτω.

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say  
δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two  
χιτῶν, ωνος m tunic, shirt (generally of garment worn next to the skin)  
μεταδότω Verb, aor act imperat, 3 s  
μεταδιδωμι share, give, impart  
βρωμα, τος n food, solid food

The plural indicates several items of food.

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

Compare 2 Cor. 8:13-15

"The 'good fruit' of 3:9 is expounded in terms of 'good works', i.e. 'works of love'. Such works are the expression of repentance or conversion, and not, as in rabbinic teaching, means of securing merit in the sight of God." Marshall.

### Verse 12

ἦλθον δὲ καὶ τελῶναι βαπτισθῆναι καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσωμεν;

τελωνης, ου m tax collector

"These were tax-farmers who had purchased for themselves the right to collect various indirect taxes, mainly customs or tolls; they employed subordinate officials to carry out the work. The system abounded with abuses... Consequently the collectors were cordially hated and despised by their fellow-countrymen, and in addition their job made them ritually unclean. Such men, regarded as being alienated from God by pious Jews, were welcomed by Jesus and also found their way to John, while the more respectable religious people failed to do so (7:29 par Mt. 21:31f.)." Marshall

διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

### Verse 13

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Μηδὲν πλέον παρὰ τὸ διατεταγμένον ὑμῖν πράσσετε.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing  
πλειων, πλειον ογ πλεον more  
διατασσω command, give instructions  
πρασσω practice, do, collect (of taxes)

"Love must be worked out in terms of justice." Marshall

### Verse 14

ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ στρατευόμενοι λέγοντες· Τί ποιήσωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Μηδένα διασεῖσητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε, καὶ ἀρκεῖσθε τοῖς ὄψωνίοις ὑμῶν.

στρατευομαι serve as a soldier

"They were not Roman soldiers, but the forces of Herod Antipas, stationed in Peraea (possibly including non-Jews, like his father's army, Jos. Ant 17:198f.), or perhaps Jewish auxiliaries used in Judaea for police duties; they may have been employed to assist the tax-collectors in their duties." Marshall

διασειω take money by violence or force

John warns against the characteristic sins of their profession.

μηδε negative particle nor, and not, not even; μηδε ... μηδε neither ... nor  
συκοφαντεω cheat, take money by false pretences

Marshall suggests that the meaning is 'to rob by false accusation'.

ἀρκεω be enough; pass. be content, be satisfied with

ὄψωνιον, ου n pay, wages

Means 'provisions' and hence 'ration-money'.  
"Soldiers' remuneration was in fact low, and the temptation to increase it by rapacious dealings was strong." Marshall

**Verse 15**

Προσδοκῶντος δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ  
διαλογιζομένων πάντων ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις  
αὐτῶν περὶ τοῦ Ἰωάννου, μήποτε αὐτὸς εἶη ὁ  
χριστός,

προσδοκῶ wait, wait for, expect

διαλογίζομαι see 1:29

μήποτε interrog. particle whether perhaps,  
perhaps

μήποτε here introduces an indirect question  
with the optative – as in 1:29 (see notes on that  
verse regarding use of optative).

εἶη Verb, pres optative, 3 s εἶμι

**Verse 16**

ἀπεκρίνατο λέγων πᾶσιν ὁ Ἰωάννης· Ἐγὼ μὲν  
ὔδατι βαπτίζω ὑμᾶς· ἔρχεται δὲ ὁ ἰσχυρότερός  
μου, οὗ οὐκ εἶμι ἰκανὸς λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν  
ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ· αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν  
πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ·

μεν ... δε introduces a contrast – 'on the one  
hand ... on the other...'

ὔδαρ, ὕδατος n water

I.e. 'only with water'

ἰσχυροτερος, α, ον stronger - comparative  
from ἰσχυρος

ἰκανος, η, ον worthy, sufficient, fit, able

λυω loose, untie

ἴμας, αντος n strap

ὑποδημα, τος n sandal

πυρ, ος n fire

Luke's words here point forward to Pentecost  
(Acts 1:5). Hence Spirit and fire should not be  
viewed as simple alternatives – salvation and  
judgement. However, Marshall suggests that in  
their original context, and in the light of the  
following verse, John "Should be understood  
in terms of judgement rather than salvation,  
and in terms of the final judgement rather than  
the 'gracious judgment' of Pentecost." The  
picture is of the chaff being separated by wind  
(πνευμα) and being consumed by fire.

**Verse 17**

οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ διακαθᾶραι τὴν  
ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συναγαγεῖν τὸν σίτον εἰς τὴν  
ἀποθήκην αὐτοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει  
πυρὶ ἀσβέστω.

πτυον, ου n winnowing shovel

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

The grain was tossed into the air with the  
shovel, so that the wind would separate wheat  
and chaff.

διακαθαίρω clean out, thresh out  
άλων, ος f threshing floor, what is  
threshed

συναγαγεῖν Verb, aor infin συναγω gather,  
gather together

σιτος, ου m grain, wheat

ἀποθηκη, ης f barn, granery

ἄχυρον, ου n chaff

Compare Psalm 1:4

κατακαίω burn, burn up, consume

ἀσβεστος, ον unquenchable

**Verses 18-22**

"The paragraph is Luke's own composition,  
strongly Lucan in language, and probably  
resting on Mk. 6:14-19 which Luke otherwise  
passes over. Its brevity suggests that he  
presupposed a fuller knowledge on the part of  
his readers." Marshall

**Verse 18**

Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἕτερα παρακαλῶν  
εὐηγγελίζετο τὸν λαόν·

"μεν ουν (here only in Lk; Acts 27x),  
summarises what has gone before and prepares  
the way for a new contrasting theme."  
Marshall

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

πολλα μεν ουν και ετερα literally 'many  
things too, different from these' i.e. 'with  
many other words'

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge  
εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the  
good news

"John's summons to repentance is understood  
as a way of preaching the gospel since it  
showed men the coming way of salvation."  
Marshall

**Verse 19**

ὁ δὲ Ἡρώδης ὁ τετραάρχης, ἐλεγχόμενος ὑπ'  
αὐτοῦ περὶ Ἡρωδιάδος τῆς γυναίκος τοῦ  
ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν  
πονηρῶν ὁ Ἡρώδης,

For τεταρααρχης cf. 9:7; Mt 14:1 – also the  
cognate verb used in 3:1.

ἐλεγχω show (someone his) fault, rebuke,  
show (something) up for what it is

"After dismissing his first wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, Herod had married Herodias, his niece and the former wife of one of his brothers; some MSS add Φιλίππου by assimilation to Mk 6:17. The marriage, which took place in AD 26, was unacceptable to Jewish sentiment, and John's boldness in putting into words what many people felt made him into a dangerous opponent of the tetrarch." Marshall

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

### Verse 20

προσέθηκεν και τουτο επι πασιν, και κατέκλεισεν τον Ιωάννην εν φυλακη.

προστιθημι add, add to, proceed

προσθεθηκεν και τουτο επι πασιν 'he added this also on top of all his evil deeds'. "The use of επι πασιν indicates that here we have not merely one more incident in a sequence, but the crowning instance." Marshall

κατακλειω shut up, put in prison

Only here and in Acts 26:10.

φυλακη, ης f prison, watch (of the night)

### Verses 21-22

Of Jesus' baptism and the descent of the Spirit, Marshall says, "This event is not the baptism with the Spirit prophesied by John, since the act is carried out on the stronger One and not by him, the symbolism of fire is replaced by that of the dove, and the gift is accompanied by a heavenly declaration; none of these features characterises Christian baptism. This event is different; it is the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit (4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38), the attestation of his Sonship, and in effect his call to begin his ministry. It takes place in an atmosphere of prayer, i.e. the ideal situation for receiving a divine revelation."

### Verse 21

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ βαπτισθῆναι ἅπαντα τὸν λαὸν καὶ Ἰησοῦ βαπτισθέντος καὶ προσευχομένου ἀνερχθῆναι τὸν οὐρανὸν

The aorist βαπτισθῆναι suggests that the event took place *after* all the people had been baptised. It is the climax of John's work (though cf. Jn 3:22ff.).

ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all  
προσευχομαι pray

Luke lays particular stress on Jesus at prayer (5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28f.; 11:1; 22:41; 23:46).

ἀνοιγω open

Here an unusual augmented infinitive.

On the opening of the heavens, cf. Is 64:1.

"The opening of the heavens is an indication that divine revelation is about to take place... the idea is rooted in OT prophecy. The significance is that after a period of apparent inactivity God himself comes down to act in power." Marshall

### Verse 22

καὶ καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον σωματικῶς εἶδει ὡς περιστερὰν ἐπ' αὐτόν, καὶ φωνὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενέσθαι· Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.

καταβῆναι aor act infin καταβαινω come or go down, descend

σωματικος, η, ον bodily, physical

εἶδος, ους n visible form, appearance

περιστερα, ας f dove, pigeon

There is much discussion regarding the significance here of the *dove*. The main suggestions are:

- i) An allusion to the Spirit present at creation, hovering over the waters (Gen 1:2). Here is the beginning of the new creation. But this picture would not require a *dove*.
- ii) An allusion to Noah's dove (Gen 8:8-12). Dunn suggests that this "gains in plausibility if John's baptism was intended to symbolise the coming flood of judgement..., so recalling the flood of Noah (cf. 1 Pet. 3:20-21); for then the dove would signify the end of judgement and the beginning of a new era of grace."

Marshall says that none of these suggestions is satisfactory. It is simply a graphic demonstration of an anointing and commissioning for service.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

God speaks directly from heaven as at Sinai. The opening words from heaven reflect Ps 2:7 (though see also Gn 22:2,12,16 for Isaac described as ὁ υἱὸς σου ὁ ἀγαπητός). The phrase alludes to Jesus both as Messiah and also to his close personal relationship with the Father. "It is significant that the Greek word used is one which avoids any suggestion of election or adoption to sonship but rather stresses the unique relationship between Jesus as the only Son and God as his Father." Marshall

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take delight in

Cf. Is 42:1. "God has appointed his Son to carry out the task of the Messiah, a task expressed in terms of the mission of the Servant." Marshall