

Gospel of Luke  
Week 2 Summary  
Luke 3:1–4:13

Luke shifts his focus from Jesus back to John the Baptist. Now a man and ready for his ministry. But, before Luke describes that ministry he locates it in a political hotbed. We know from history some of these men's reputations and that they were in fact hostile to John and Jesus. So, Luke tells us from the start that while the gospel has a universal focus, by no means will it have a universal acceptance.

John's preaching and baptism is around repentance and indicates that the status quo will no longer do. This is consistent with John being the prophet found in Isaiah. After all God prefers justice not sacrifice. While John's use of water as an agent to reflect inner purity, what is different is that John baptizes rather than an individual cleaning themselves. It is through this baptism that the people are made ready. Where the original quote specifically referred to YHWH, Israel's God, we the reader have been prepared to know that Lord now refers to Jesus.

John turns on the crowds, not because he is crazy or mean, but to show the urgency of repentance. Using the term brood of vipers he refers back to Genesis 3 the seed of the serpent or the seed of the woman. His message is that Jewish heritage is not what counts but behaviour consistent with God's character. In this way, God can make children of Abraham out of even inanimate objects such as stones and this signals God's intention of making a new people.

As a result of the crisis that John creates in their minds the crowds ask the obvious question: what must we do? Again, like Isaiah, John's answer is to act justly. Share what you have, don't take what isn't yours, and don't exploit the weak. As John calls out, baptizes, and teaches it is natural for people to wonder if he is the one that God is going to act through to redeem Israel. He is clear and answers no. Rather, the one to come is greater than him—he is not even worthy to be his slave. And, the one to come has a greater baptism—John's prepares with water, but the other involves the Spirit and judgment.

Here we see from the people's questions that while the Messiah was a hope it wasn't clearly defined. So, John begins to define Jesus' ministry—one of eschatological judgment. John's ministry is to use the winnowing fork to separate the wheat from the chaff. This means those who chose to align themselves with God through responding in obedience to his message and baptism. Or, those who chose not to align themselves with God by remaining in the status quo. The Messiah's ministry is to judge based on the division which results from John's ministry.

At the end of this section Luke removes John having summarized his ministry in order to focus on Jesus instead.

Jesus continues to align himself with his father's purpose, so he goes out to John to be baptized. Luke doesn't dwell on that baptism as the other gospel writers do. For him it is the affirmation which is the focus—Jesus receives the anointing of the Holy Spirit which affirms he is the anointed one (Christ/Messiah/King) and God himself affirms Jesus is his unique Son. Luke emphasizes the sonship by reciting a genealogy of Jesus which leads to Adam who is God's son. But, he also says it was supposed that Jesus was Joseph's son. This indicates that it is not his lineage that makes him God's Son, but his unique conception.

Following the affirmation by God himself that Jesus is God's Son, that identity is tested before he goes into public ministry. Here Luke wants to show us that Jesus is recapitulating Israel's own adventure and history in the wilderness. This demonstrates that Jesus is the true Israelite as he succeeds in obedience and identity where Israel had failed. He is Israel's true

representative (Messiah) and also humanities true representative (since Israel functioned that way for all of humanity).

The devil comes and tries to have Jesus exchange his obedience to God for instant results, however Jesus remains faithful. The use of three temptations tells us that these incapsulates all the temptations that Jesus faces in his ministry. In fact, all opposition has the devil behind the screen.

*The King Jesus Gospel*

“Chapter 2”

1. Is McKnight saying that people do not need to make a personal decision in order to be saved?
2. Does gospel and salvation mean the same thing?
3. Why does he emphasize a Gospel culture over a salvation culture?
4. What is the basic difference between McKnight's understanding of gospel and pastor Eric's?