

“Brood of Vipers”

Luke 3:4-9

Oct. 3, 2021

Luke 3:1-3

- 1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,
- 2 in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.
- 3 And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

Luke 3:4-9

- 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. 5 'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH; 6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.'" 7 So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father;' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 9 "Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

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- Luke pauses here and gives us a quote from Isaiah 40:3-5.
- Why? Because this quote is a prophecy that is being fulfilled in John.
- Context, Context, Context –

Isa 40:1-2

- 1 "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God.
 - 2 "Speak kindly to Jerusalem;
- And call out to her, that her warfare has ended,
That her iniquity has been removed,
That she has received of the Lord's hand
Double for all her sins."

- Isaiah is saying, "You have been under judgment (1-39). But now it is time to repent and then salvation will come to you."
- John is called to say exactly the same thing to Israel. Israel has been under judgment.

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"it is written" – perfect tense – "it was written at a point in past time and stands today. It is true today."

Isa 40:8

- 8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.

Matt 24:35

35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. "wilderness" – this identifies that John is the one being talked about – 700 years earlier!

"crying" – βόων - raise a cry, call or shout of joy, pain, etc, by using one's voice with unusually high volume.

"make ready" - Isaiah tells us that there needs to be preparation for the coming of the Messiah. That was the custom of the day. Same as today.

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Mal 4:5-6

- 5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.
6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

Luke 1:16-17

- 16 "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.
17 "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD."

- Salvation = the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- It is through Christ that salvation would be made available to all men.

Luke 2:27-30

- 27 And he (Simeon) came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,
28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,
29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,
• Repentance comes first and then faith in Christ. That for many is the stickler.

5 'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED,

**AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW;
THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT,
AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;**

- Isaiah continues with more preparations.
- These preparations are metaphors for repentance. You cannot bypass sin and skip to the Savior as many Jews did and we often do today.
- We have 20-20 hindsight and foresight on all of what happens to Israel so let's think about it.
1st Coming – judgment, call to repentance, rejection, crucifixion, judgment (70 A.D.).
*if Israel would have had true repentance and received the Messiah, then John's ministry would have been fulfilled and the Kingdom would have come to earth at that time.
2nd Coming – judgment (7 year Tribulation), call for repentance (1.44,000, 2 witnesses), acceptance - all Israel is saved.
Note: We have to read Luke 3 as if there could have been only one coming.

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- These are the first words coming out of the mouth of a prophet since Malachi, 400 years earlier.

"crowds" – οχλος – a class of people, rabble-rousers, a riot

Matt 3:7-8

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

"John moved Israel as Israel had not been moved for centuries....Crowds from the cities and villages, from Judea and Galilee, Peraea and the land east of the Jordan, Pharisees and Sadducees, priest and Levites, scribes and elders of the people, publicans and proselytes, warriors from the Roman and Herodian armies, came to hear the prophet..."

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7 components to John's message:

1. Their condition – "brood of vipers"

- "brood" are offspring, a generation.
- "vipers" – poisonous snakes. Reference to Satan in the garden. These are his children.

John 8:44

44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.

- Why use this language? Because they are caught in a system of dead formalism, self-righteousness brought about by works-righteousness, hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, tradition, condemnation, and deception.
- Sometimes you have to use strong language to jolt people into thinking about the false system they are in.
- When it comes to evangelism 1 size does not fit all.

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2. The wrath of God.

- Somebody warned them.

"Well looky here, my oh my, the sons of the devil are fleeing the wrath that is coming. Who could have possibly told you that you needed to repent? I'm sure in your system you didn't come up with it."

- Wrath is real. Judgment is real. Hell is real.

- The subject of HELL is always offensive to human nature.

Luke 3:17

17 "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

3. The escape.

- "to flee" is an escape.

- There is an escape route but there is only one.

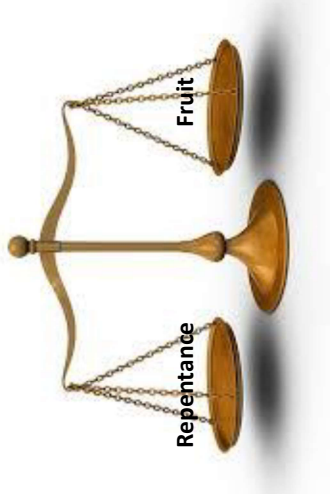
- The ark had one door, and only one door.

- Scoffers can see there is a door. They just don't like the means to enter it – repentance. So they try and invent other doors.

8 "Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

4. Their life will change.

- "If you are truly repenting, then let's see some results."



"It doesn't matter how high you jump in church, or how emotional you get, but how straight you walk afterwards."

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- "If you are truly repenting, then let's see some results."

5. **Their ancestry will not save them. Their religion will not save them. They cannot save themselves. Only Christ can save them.**

- John says, "Don't even go there."
- There is no protection in Abraham from the wrath to come, only in Christ.
- There are no spiritual grandchildren. Everyone personally must repent and come to Christ.
- The only thing you inherited from Abraham was an old sin nature.
- Religion will damn you faster than anything else.

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- 6. **You are not critical to the plan of God.**
 - You don't have God boxed in. You are not indispensable!
 - If God does not save you, He will save someone else, even out of a stone.
 - Notice John does not say that God could do away with the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - Jewishness is no guarantee of salvation, and non-Jewishness is no hindrance from salvation.

Organized religion is never more organized than when it attempts to silence the truth.