



Week 3: Jesus Prepares for His Ministry

Introduction:

Following the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, Luke focuses on three events that prepare for Jesus' public ministry. First, John's ministry prepares the people to receive Jesus' work as Messiah. Second, Jesus' baptism shows him to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve the purposes of the Father who loves him. Third, Jesus' wilderness temptation demonstrates his readiness to defeat sin and Satan as our victorious, sinless Savior. Luke includes a genealogy that draws attention to Jesus as a "second Adam" who reverses the consequences of Adam's failure. The section assures us that Jesus' work as Messiah—including his death, which is foreshadowed in important ways—is acceptable to God, and therefore able to redeem sinners.

Remember: As you discuss questions in your groups or reflect on them by yourself, keep in mind that the goal is not to get all the answers right. Many of us will not know the answers, and that is okay! The goal is to interact with God's Word and give genuine thought to it. If you struggle to even guess a possible answer, that is okay too! The pastors will provide the answers after your discussion so you can know and record them on your study guide.

Questions:

Read Luke 3:1-20

1. (Breakout) John was sent as the last pre-Christian prophet. His work was to proclaim the end of the “age of the law and promise” and the beginning of the “age of fulfillment”. Rather than trusting in the law, John proclaimed repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He famously addresses the crowd as a “brood of vipers” and tells them not to bother trying to justify themselves as children of Abraham. Why would the crowd try that in the first place? Why wouldn’t it work in the Kingdom that Jesus is bringing?

Answer:

2. What “fruits” does John the Baptist cite as evidence of genuine repentance before God? What does this suggest about the kind of kingdom Jesus has come to establish?

Answer:

Read Luke 3:21-38

3. (Breakout) What features of Luke 3:16–22 suggest that Jesus' baptism is unique, and not an expression of personal repentance? If not to confess his own sin, why does Jesus submit to John's baptism?

Answer:

Read Luke 4:1-15

4. (Breakout) Take a moment to summarize the similarities and differences between Jesus' temptation and Adam's fall into sin (see below). Note especially the circumstances in which each is tested and the settings in which their tests occur. How does this deepen your appreciation for Jesus and his faithfulness?

Genesis 3:1–6

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Answer:

5. What is the only thing that Jesus uses to refute the devil and resist temptation? How does that teach and equip us to resist temptation?

Answer:

6. (Breakout) Three times Jesus responds to Satan with Scripture citations from the book of Deuteronomy. How do Deuteronomy 8:1–18 and 6:10–19 suggest that Satan is tempting Jesus not simply to a one-time sin but to a mindset of self-reliance? How do these texts highlight the contrast between Israel's failures and Jesus' faithfulness?

Answer:

Closing Thought:

The events in Luke 3-4:15 deepen our trust in Jesus by assuring us that he is fully and uniquely prepared to serve as our Savior. He is the second, perfect Adam who will Keep God's law perfectly. He is filled with the Holy Spirit, He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. All this, and He is just beginning His ministry. Jesus is great and we are about to witness His great works, the greatest of which will be to suffer, die, and be raised again for the redemption of all mankind. As you finish this time in God's word, turn to Him in awe and adoration and praise Him for who he is and what He has done for us.