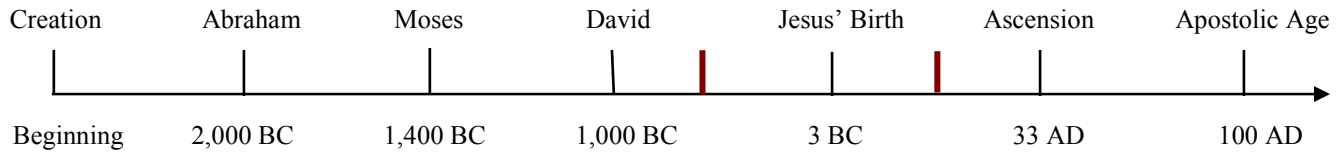


Across the Generations

Learning from God's Word and from Each Other

Sunday, December 10, 2006
 "Predictions, Promises and Prophecy"

Context and Time Frame



Isaiah's Ministry

730-710 BC

Birth of John

John Begins his Ministry

Baptism of Jesus

John Imprisoned

Death of John

3 BC

28 AD

29 AD

30 AD

31 AD

Overview: Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar - when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene - during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

"A voice of one calling the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.

Review

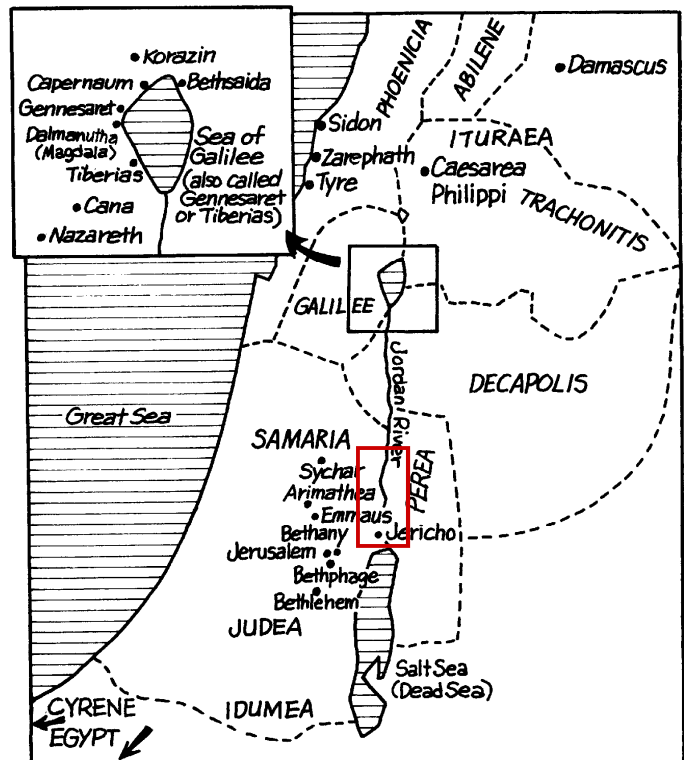
There is a great deal of specific information offered by Luke. This is to be expected because Luke wrote: "I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning."

Luke's purpose, which is the same as God's, is to provide an "orderly account" of the things that have been fulfilled among us, so that "you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Because we have an orderly account, we can draw a few observations between:

- Predictions
- Promises
- Prophecies

With humans there are limitations, what must we conclude about God?



What was John supposed to do during his time of service?

What was significant about John's ministry?

Compare what John did with what Jesus commanded his disciples, his church to do after his ascension - Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

What did Isaiah say John would do --

Make straight paths
Fill in the valleys
Mountains and hills made low
Crooked roads straightened
Rough ways will become smooth

What would John accomplish with his "public works" program?

My View

Because God gives a proclamation through his prophets, and keeps it perfectly, how does that help me when I need . . .

Courage
Comfort
Certainty

What has the Lord given me every reason to do with him in my life?

Closing View

Compare God's prophecy with a horoscope. What conclusions do you come away with?

Against what should we evaluate every prediction, promise, or prophecy?

Devotional Thoughts - Luke 3:1-6
Monday, December 11th through Saturday, December 16th

Monday

Read Luther on "Prophets"

"Prophet designates one sent directly by God. That person is called a prophet who has an immediate knowledge of God and into whose mouth the Holy Spirit puts the Word; for He is the source of their knowledge, and prophets have no other teacher than God. No one can make a prophet by human teaching or preaching."

What makes a "prophet" a prophet from God?
What can a true prophet always be counted on to preach?
Because prophets are servants of God, how should I treat them
and the words they speak?

Prayer Thoughts:

O gracious Savior, I thank you for sending prophet after prophet to strengthen my faith and to convince me of the truth I need to know. Comfort me with your Word. Strengthen me to hold on to all of your prophecies. Finally, give me the faith to put my trust in everything you have spoken for my benefit and blessing. Amen!

Tuesday

Read Christian Worship 20 st. 1

When all the world was cursed by Moses' condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came with words of consolation.
With true fore-runners zeal the greater one he named.
And him as yet unknown, as Savior he proclaimed.

What was the curse that was brought upon the world?
What was the message of consolation that John brought?
As a forerunner he pointed people to Christ, what did he use to do this work?

Prayer Thoughts:

O almighty and merciful God, I thank you for every word you have brought to me through your prophets. I thank you especially for the testimony of John the Baptist who points me to Jesus and to the precious work he accomplished as my Savior. Help me hold on to him always - as my Lord, my Savior, and my God. Amen!

Wednesday

Read John 1:19-28

Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ."

What shows John understood his call?
What revealed John's message was truly extraordinary?

Prayer Thoughts:

O gracious Lord, thank you for sending John the Baptist to point me to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Keep me in his grace and growing stronger in my faith, so that I will be able to handle any challenge to my faith. Amen!

Thursday

Read Christian Worship 14

Arise, O Christian people! Prepare yourselves today.
Prepare to greet the Savior, who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone, the truth and light were given;
The promised Lord from heaven to all the world is shown.

Prepare the way before him; prepare for him the best.
Cast out what would offend him, this great, this heavenly guest.
Make straight, make plain the way; the lowly valleys raising,
The heights of pride abasing, his path all even lay.

Who am I preparing to meet?
What is he coming to bring me?
What do I need to do in order to meet him?

Prayer Thoughts

O gracious Savior, Jesus Christ, I thank you for giving me your precious Word, and for preparing me to be on my guard. I also thank you for the gift of your Word which allows me to stand strong and confident as I see the last days unfold before my eyes. Keep me faithful to you in all things so that I can look forward to life with you in your heavenly kingdom. Amen!

Friday

Take a look at the Horoscope in the newspaper and compare it to Luke 3:1-6.

What does a “horoscope” offer?
How does this “truth” compare with the truth in the Scriptures?
What do I have to acknowledge about every source of information outside Scripture?
What about other ways of receiving information?

Prayer Thoughts

O Lord, keep me alert and on my guard. Give me the strength of faith to look beyond the wisdom this world has to offer. Then, bless me with a strong and growing faith so that I can resist the devil and all his wicked ways. Amen!

Saturday

Read Luke 3:7-18

How did John show he was different from Jesus?
How did John show he carried on the same message / ministry that Jesus had?
What eventually brought John more trouble than what he could handle?
Should John have backed off?
What does John’s ministry help us understand about the ministry the Lord has given me as an individual and as a member of his kingdom?

Prayer Thoughts

O Lord, help me be ready to welcome you at your birth. Even more important, help me be ready to welcome you at your return in glory. At this time, keep my eyes firmly fixed on all the signs and wonders, and on all the pictures you have provided for me in Scripture. Amen!