

Luke: Behind the Man: The Early Years

Pt. 2 – The New Three R's

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod, ruler of Galilee; his brother Philip, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, ruler of Abilene; during the Chief-Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—John, Zachariah's son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet:

*Thunder in the desert!
Prepare God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!
Every ditch will be filled in,
Every bump smoothed out,
The detours straightened out,
All the ruts paved over.
Everyone will be there to see
The parade of God's salvation.*

Luke 3:1-6

_____ **of our** _____

When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the popular thing to do, John exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to deflect God's judgment? It's your life that must change, not your skin. And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as 'father.' Being a child of Abraham is neither here nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make children from stones if He wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire."

Luke 3:7-9

Pt. 2 The New Three Rs...continued

...continued

_____ **our** _____

The crowd asked him, "Then what are we supposed to do?" "If you have two coats, give one away," he said. "Do the same with your food." Tax men also came to be baptized and said, "Teacher, what should we do?" He told them, "No more extortion—collect only what is required by law." Soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He told them, "No shakedowns, no blackmail—and be content with your rations." The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, "Could this John be the Messiah?"

Luke 3:10-15

But John intervened: "I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

Luke 3:16-17

_____ **in the** _____

There was a lot more of this—words that gave strength to the people, words that put heart in them. The Message!

Luke 3:18-19