Luke 3

1-15-06

“The Road That John Built!”

1. **Intro:**
   1.1. **Story:** An ancient poet told the painters of Greece in a period of great decadence in art to write under their paintings the names of the animals they had painted. He told them to write "horse," "ox," & "cow" underneath, implying that without the name it was impossible for viewers to tell one shape or color from another.
   
   1.1.1. And so, Christianity is vital when it is seen, not when it's just talked about!

   1.2. **Outline:** The Road that John Built; Farmer John; John the Counselor; Humble John; Martyr John; John the Baptizer; & Genealogy of Jesus.

2. **The Road That John Built!** (1-22)

   2.1. **The Road That John Built!** (1-6)
   
   2.2. Luke, the careful historian, ties the opening events of Jesus’ ministry to contemporary history.

   2.3. (1,2a) Jesus is born, grown, about to come on the scene as an adult, Why didn’t God use any of the leaders of the day to announce Him?

   2.3.1. God bypasses the Political leaders of the day(1); God bypasses the Spiritual leaders of the day(2a) & gave His Word to an unfamiliar Jewish Prophet in the wilderness.¹

   2.3.2. Annas was high priest from 6-15ad; deposed by Roman authority; his son-in-law Caiaphas was placed in the position18-36ad.

   2.3.2.1. The Jews still recognized Annas as the rightful High Priest.

   2.4. (2b) John the Baptist is back on the scene from ch.1:80.

   2.4.1. And we find him in the hottest & deepest chasm in the world!

   2.5. (3) Johns baptism looked forward to the coming of the Savior(also 16).

   2.5.1. Christian Baptism looks back in identification w/Christ’s death, burial, & res(Rom.6:1-6).

   2.5.2. Acts 19:3,4 “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

   2.5.3. Jews baptized Gentile proselytes, but they didn’t baptize Jews [www]

¹ Warren Wiersbe; Outlines on the NT.
2.5.4. **Repentance** - (Lit. "a change of mind") but "refers more broadly to the human involvement in the experience of conversion."²

2.5.4.1. It's a change of course, as a ship nearing a rock! Griffith Thomas

2.6. (4-6) John was a **prophet** who was the subject of **prophecy**!

2.7. When a king traveled the desert, workman preceded him to clear debris & smooth out the roads to make his trip easier.

2.7.1. Messiah's road was smooth because through John a large # of people were ready to receive Jesus' message (see 1:17).

2.8. **FARMER JOHN!** (7-9)

2.9. I used to love going to grandma’s house as a kid. We’d pass Farmer John’s in L.A. & see the murals of the pigs on the slaughter house.

2.9.1. This has nothing to do with farming **animals**, but it does with farming **crops**. [we’ll talk about **bearing fruit**, chopping down fruitless trees w/an **ax**, & **snakes** fleeing from burning fields]

2.10. (7) **Brood of Vipers** – Offspring of vipers; baby snakes.

2.10.1. i.e. "If Satan is the papa snake/serpent then they are his offspring".

2.11. What would John use for the **religious class** of today? (Vipers still?)

2.11.1. Maybe, “you **generation of Butterflies**!”

2.11.2. Maybe, “you **Rookery of Penguins**?” Why Penguins? Well, I was picturing them all dressed up; all look exactly alike; all waddling together; all hanging out together, detached from their world, content on their own ice-cube church!

2.12. **Who warned you to flee the wrath to come?** –

2.12.1. There is a **wrath** to come, & the only way to **prepare** for judgment is to turn from sin & trust the Savior, & be **transformed**!

2.13. (8) **As a Farmer, John was a Fruit Inspector!**

2.13.1. The **Cause** of repentance? (someone warning them)

2.13.2. The **Nature** of repentance? (real fruit, a changed life)

2.13.3. The **Outcome** of repentance? (remission of sins; escape wrath)

2.14. Fruits worthy of repentance? – W/o a change of heart, baptism would have been a farce.

2.14.1. It was meaningful only as a sign of **genuine** repentance.

2.14.2. **Repentance**, not **baptism**, is what brings **forgiveness**!

2.14.3. John taught one’s life proves whether or not he has **truly repented**! (cf. the book of James!)

2.14.3.1. Not only “**Turned around**”(3), but “**Transformed**”!

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² Shepherds Notes; pg.14
³ Knowledge Bible Commentary.
2.15. **We have Abraham as our father** – John’s message was that God was not concerned w/the root(or their “roots” in Abraham), but w/moral fruit in each person’s life.

2.15.1. See, as far as the root goes, the ax is about to be put to that, & then relationship w/God will be of faith entirely…a faith that produces fruit of righteousness.4

2.15.2. God takes the Ax to your denominational affiliation & asks, “is this what you’re trusting in?”

2.15.3. God takes the Ax to the church you grew up in & asks, “is this what you’re trusting in?”

2.16. **(9) John gets to the Root of things! (Sin)**

2.16.1. He seems to bury the hatchet…right in their conscience!

2.16.2. He calls them to repentance in trade for remission/forgiveness!

2.17. There is a big contrast between the people of vs.7-9 & those of vs.10-14.

2.17.1. The former group relied on their ancestry & didn’t repent.

2.17.2. The latter group earnestly heeded John’s call for repentance.

2.18. **JOHN THE COUNSELOR!** (10-14)

2.19. He takes the time to counsel them & prepare them for baptism & their new life of faith.

2.20. The people – Be Generous! And share what you have.

2.21. The Tax Collectors – Be Honest!

2.21.1. Notorious for their dishonesty in collecting more than required & pocketing it for themselves.

2.21.1.1. Zaccheus example! (19:8)

2.22. The Soldiers - Be Just! Be content. (225 Denari a year)

2.22.1. Known & hated for always trying to get more $ by extorting bribes & blaming others for it.

2.22.2. Intimidate = (LKGNT) “to shake violently, to shake down”.

2.22.3. Possible they were **Jewish soldiers** belonging to the temple guard or the court of Herod?{www}

2.22.4. But we do know **Roman soldiers** believed also [i.e. the Centurion].

2.23. Griffith Thomas likened each of these back to the prophecy.

2.23.1. Valley…filled – repentant souls receiving pardon.


2.23.3. Crooked…made straight – publicans convicted of dishonesty.

2.23.4. Rough ways…smooth – soldiers often rude & violent.

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4 Bible Readers Companion.
Note: John didn’t condemn the Tax collectors & soldiers professions.

2.24.1. He just said do your jobs honestly & don’t hurt people!
2.24.2. They could remain in their vocation & serve God!
2.24.3. Not…“you have to be just like me!”
   2.24.3.1. Not…Now get out there & live in the desert!
   2.24.3.2. Not…Go find you some locust & become insect-atarians!
   2.24.3.3. Not…Now go dress like me, itchy camel hair IS the fashion!
2.24.4. Nope! Not live like me; Not eat like me, Not dress like me!
   2.24.4.1. We are to serve Christ right where we live, just how we eat, & whatever clothes are our favorite (modesty obviously).

2.24.5. In spite of John’s asceticism, he was still mindful of the life & times around him!

2.25. So here were 3 examples of changes in these lives when there was true repentance.
2.25.1. Look at your own life before & after Christ.
2.25.2. Q: Do you remember what God changed in you 1st?
2.25.3. Q: Do you remember what you sought to change 1st?
2.25.4. Q: Are you still changing? Still bearing fruit unto Him?
2.25.5. Q: What difference has Jesus’ life made to your life?

JOHN MUST DECREASE! (15-18)

2.26. He didn’t come to talk about himself but to bear witness to the Son of God.
2.27. (15) Q: Has anyone ever confused you with Jesus???
   2.28.1. Me neither…What a compliment!
   2.28.2. Honor those who point you to Jesus, not to themselves!
2.29. (16) Baptize with Holy Spirit (at Pentecost) -

2.30. Baptist with Fire (Judgment) – (see 9,17)
   2.30.1. John pictures Jesus w/a winnowing fan in his hand, separating the wheat from the chaff.
   2.30.1.1. Ps.1:4 “The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.”

2.31. In that day 1 of the duties as a slave was to remove his master’s shoes.
   2.31.1. Thus, John saw himself as a slave (or even less) in comparison to the Messiah.

2.32. He says he’s coming!!! – And then he comes in vs.21.

5 Ibid.
2.33. **MARTYER JOHN!** (19,20)
Matthew & Mark give the full account of his arrest & martyrdom.

2.35. John wouldn’t compromise his message & spare his life; he was a **faithful witness** with **fearless honesty**!

2.35.1. When John directed his preaching at Herod, the result was imprisonment, & finally death.

2.36. Interesting when he asks his disciples go see if He’s the One?

2.36.1. The answer comes back, “it’s Him!”…the One who can do anything! But He’s not going to let you out! *(Lk.7:18-23)*

2.37. **JOHN THE BAPTIZER!** (21,22)

2.38. John baptized Jesus in order to **present Him** to the people, not because he was a repentant sinner.

2.38.1. And he does it “when all the people were being baptized”, again to **identify** with those who he had come to serve & save.

2.38.2. He stands in the water & identifies Himself with the people & with the stand of righteousness that his act signifies!

2.39. Alfred Plummer said about John, “*The whole man was a sermon!*”

3. **THE ROAD THAT GOD BUILT!** (23-38)

3.1. **JESUS’ FAMILY TREE!** (23-38)

3.2. About 30 – rounded off # here.

3.2.1. A person’s age frequently was given in multiples of 5 *(LKGNT)*.

3.2.2. Interesting that in Numb 4:47 OT priests must reach 30 before they could serve!

3.3. 77 ancestors.

3.4. **Matthew’s** genealogy – is that of Joseph’s, tracing His legal right to the throne.

3.5. **Luke’s** genealogy - is that of Mary’s, tracing Jesus’ natural/physical rights to the throne.

3.5.1. **Matthew** *(writing to the Jews)* traces only back to **Abraham**.

3.5.2. **Luke** *(writing to the Gentiles)* takes us all the way back to **Adam**.

3.5.2.1. Jesus tie, not only to Israel but to ALL humanity!
3.6. **End**: Not all the power of **Rome**, nor today’s **modern technologies**, have been able to satisfy the basic need all people share…to find life’s meaning.

3.6.1. **Not** even Rome’s beloved **Pax Romana** (the long period of peace and stability that existed under the Roman Empire, especially in the 2nd century AD) **Nor**, the **World Wide Web**, has been able to break the **bondage of sin** that constantly expresses itself in both **individual & social life**.

3.6.2. **But This Baby** grown to be a **Man** is about to say, “**I have come that you may have life, & have it to the full!**” (Jn.10:10)

3.6.3. **In Jesus**, God acted decisively to bring new life to **individuals & transformation to human cultures**.

3.6.4. **Q**: **What do you associate with a full life?**

3.6.4.1. To every person who lives by habit, w/o direction, w/o **meaning**, or w/o **real Hope** – Jesus’ life offers fresh newness, a life **turned around, & transformed** by the power of God!

3.6.5. **One of the greatest sins** is the sin of “**running your own life**”.

3.6.5.1. It is the opposite of Trusting/Allowing God to run your life.

3.6.5.2. **Submit** your life totally into His care this morning!

3.6.5.3. Give God rule of your life, **present & future**!

3.7. **Christianity is vital when it is seen, not when it's just talked about!**