

# CHAPTER 3

## INTRODUCTION TO LUKE 3

**Ver. 1.** *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar*, etc.] Emperor of Rome, and the third of the Caesars; Julius was the first, and Augustus the second, in whose time Christ was born, and this Tiberius the third; he was the son of Livia, the wife of Augustus, but not by him; but was adopted by him, into the empire: his name was Claudius Tiberius Nero, and for his intemperance was called, Caldius Biberius Mero; the whole of his reign was upwards of twenty two years, for he died in the twenty third year of his reign<sup>f151</sup>; and in the fifteenth of it, John began to preach, Christ was baptized, and began to preach also; so that this year may be truly called, “the acceptable year of the Lord”.

*Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea*; under the Emperor Tiberius, in whose reign the Jewish chronologer<sup>f152</sup> places him, and the historian<sup>f153</sup> also, and make mention of him as sent by him to Jerusalem: he was not the first governor of Judea for the Romans; there were before him Coponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annins Rufus, and Valerius Gratus:

*and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee*; this was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and brother of Archelaus; the above chronologer<sup>f154</sup> calls him also a tetrarch, and places him under Tiberius Caesar: he is sometimes called a king, and so he is by the Ethiopic version here called “king of Galilee”; and in the Arabic version, “prince over the fourth part of Galilee”; besides Galilee, he had also Peraea, or the country beyond Jordan, as Josephus<sup>f155</sup> says, and which seems here to be included in Galilee; (see Gill on “~~40~~ Matthew 14:1”).

*And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis*: Pliny<sup>f156</sup> makes mention of the nation of the Itureans, as belonging to Coele Syria; perhaps Iturea is the same with Batanea, or Auranitis, or both; since these with Trachon, the same with Trachonitis here, are allotted to Philip by Josephus<sup>f157</sup>: it seems to take its name from Jetur, one of the sons of Ishmael, (<sup>025</sup>Genesis 25:15) Trachonitis is mentioned by Pliny<sup>f158</sup>, as near to Decapolis, and as a region and tetrarchy, as here: Ptolemy<sup>f159</sup>

speaks of the Trachonite Arabians, on the east of Batanea, or Bashan: the region of Trachona, or Trachonitis, with the Targumists <sup>f160</sup>, answers to the country of Argob. This Philip, who as before by Josephus, so by Egesippus <sup>f161</sup>, is said, in agreement with Luke, to be tetrarch of Trachonitis, was brother to Herod Antipas, by the father's, but not by the mother's side. Philip was born of Cleopatra, of Jerusalem, and Herod of Malthace, a Samaritan <sup>f162</sup>: he died in the twentieth year of Tiberius <sup>f163</sup>, five years after this:

*and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene*: mention is made of Abila by Pliny <sup>f164</sup>, as in Coele Syria, from whence this tetrarchy might have its name; and by Ptolemy <sup>f165</sup>, it is called Abila of Lysanias, from this, or some other governor of it, of that name; and the phrase, “from Abilene to Jerusalem”, is to be met with in the Talmud <sup>f166</sup>, which doubtless designs this same place: who this Lysanias was, is not certain; he was not the son of Herod the great, as Eusebius suggests <sup>f167</sup>, nor that Lysanias, the son of Ptolemy Minnaeus, whom Josephus <sup>f168</sup> speaks of, though very probably he might be a descendant of his: however, when Tiberius Caesar reigned at Rome, and Pontius Pilate governed in Judea, and Herod Antipas in Galilee, and Philip his brother in Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias in Abilene, John the Baptist began to preach and baptize; to fix the area of whose ministry and baptism, all this is said.

**Ver. 2.** *Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests*, etc.] Some difficulty here arises, how these two could be both high priests; when according to the law of God, and the usages of the Jewish nation, there was to be, and was but one high priest at a time: many things are observed by writers, to solve this difficulty: some go this way; that though according to the divine institution, and the practice of former times, there was but one high priest at a time; yet now, through the corruption of the present age, there were two high priests; or at least, which officiated alternately in the same year: but of such a corruption, no instance can be given, even in those corrupt times; and as Maimonides says <sup>f169</sup>, there can be but “one high priest”  $\mu\lambda\ w[h\ l\ kb$ , “in all the world”; and besides, is contrary to their canons, which were then in being, and still remain; one <sup>f170</sup> of which runs thus,  $tj\ ak\ \mu\lambda\ wdg\ \mu\ynhk\ \yn\zeta\ \hat{y}nmm\ \hat{y}a$  “they do not appoint two high priests at once”. Others suppose, that these two annually performed the office of high priests by turns; that Caiaphas was high priest one year, and

Annas another: it is true indeed, that through the corruption of those times, this office became venal, hence it is said in the Talmud<sup>f171</sup>,

“because they gave money for the priesthood, they changed it every twelve months.” And which is more largely expressed by one of their commentators<sup>f172</sup>, “because the high priests, who were under the second temple, after Simeon the just, gave money to minister in the high priest's office, and because they were wicked, they did not fill up their years, therefore they changed every year.”

But though it is certain, that there were frequent, and sometimes annual changes in the priesthood, hence it is said of Caiaphas, (~~314~~John 11:49, 18:13) that he was “high priest the same year”, yet it does not appear that he and Annas took it yearly by turns: for Caiaphas continued in that office some years, even till after the death of Christ: and besides, had this been the case, as one of them could be but high priest for the year being, both in one year as here, could not with propriety be said to be high priests. Others take another method, and suppose Caiaphas to be properly the high priest, as he certainly was; and Annas so called, because he had been one formerly, the same with Ananus, the son of Seth; who was put into the priesthood by Quirinius, in the room of Joazar, and was deposed by Valerius Gratus, and Ishmael ben Phabi was put into his room: but though there may be instances of persons being called high priests, who had been in that office, after they were removed from it, yet no reason can be given, why Annas should be peculiarly called so, when there were in all probability several alive, who had been in that office as well as he; as Joazar his predecessor, and Ishmael ben Phabi, who succeeded Joazar, and after him Eleazar, the son of Annas, and then Simeon ben Camhith; nor why he should be put in the annals of the high priests, in a year in which he was not one. It seems most likely therefore, that he was the “Sagan” of the priests, of which office mention is frequently made, in the Jewish writings<sup>f173</sup>; yea, we often read of Chanina, or Chananiah, or Ananias, perhaps the same with this Annas, who is called, פּוּנְחָק גַּס, “the Sagan of the priests”<sup>f174</sup>. This officer was not a deputy high priest, or one that was substituted to officiate occasionally, in the room of the high priest, when any thing hindered him, or rendered him unfit for his office; as on the day of atonement, if the high priest contracted any pollution, they substituted another to minister<sup>f175</sup>; which was not the “Sagan”, but another priest; and even such an one was called an high priest, as appears from the following story<sup>f176</sup>.

“It happened to Simeon ben Camhith (a predecessor of Caiaphas), that he went out to speak with the king, on the evening of the day of atonement, and the spittle was scattered from his mouth, upon his garments, and he was unclean; and his brother Judah went in, and ministered in his stead in the high priesthood; and their mother saw her “two sons”, *dj a μwyb μyl wdg μynhk ynç* “high priests in one day”.”

But the “Sagan” was not an officer pro tempore, or so much under the high priest, and one in his stead, as a ruler and governor over other priests. Maimonides says of him thus <sup>f177</sup>;

“they appoint one priest, who is to the high priest as a second to the king, and he is called “Sagan”; and he is called a ruler: and he stands at the right hand of the high priest continually; and this is an honour to him, and all the priests are under the hand of the Sagan.”

The account given of him in the Talmud <sup>f178</sup> is this;

“in five things the “Sagan” ministers; the “Sagan” says to him, my lord, high priest, lift up thy right hand (i.e. when he took the lots out of the vessel for the goats, on the day of atonement <sup>f179</sup>; which should be slain); the “Sagan” is on his right hand, and the father of the sanhedrim on his left (i.e. when he went to the east of the court and the north of the altar <sup>f180</sup>, where were the two goats, and the vessel in which were the lots); the “Sagan” waved with the veils, or linen clothes; the “Sagan” held him by his right hand, and caused him to ascend (by the steps to the altar); and no man was appointed an high priest, before he was a “Sagan.””

Now these might be as Serojab and Zephaniah, the one chief priest, and the other second priest, (<sup>2524</sup>Jeremiah 52:24) where the Targum and Jarchi interpret the text, the “Sagan” of the priests. And this being an office of such dignity and authority, supposing Annas in it, though he was not “the” high priest, yet being the head of the other priests, he might be called one, and be joined with Caiaphas, and set before him; not only because he had been an high priest, but because he was his father-in-law:

*the word of God came to John the son of Zachariah:* a priest of the order of “Abia”; and of Elisabeth, a daughter of Aaron, and cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus; as it had come formerly to the prophets, and particularly

to Jeremiah, who was sanctified from the womb, as the Baptist was: he was blessed with a prophetic spirit, and with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with a wonderful revelation of the Messiah, and of the Gospel dispensation; and was abundantly qualified for the work he was called to, and sent to perform: and this befell him

*in the wilderness*; that is, of Judea; where he had been brought up and lived, and from whence and where he came, preaching: he had lived a solitary life, and had not learnt his doctrine from men, but had his mission, ministry, and baptism, from heaven.

**Ver. 3.** *And he came into all the country about Jordan*, etc.] He came out of the wilderness of Judea, where he first began his ministry, to some parts of the country that bordered on Jordan, and was near unto it, on either side the river; sometimes he was at Bethabara, and sometimes at Aenon, near Salim; for he did not take a tour round about all, the country that encompassed Jordan, but being at it, or in places adjacent to it, all the country round about came to him; (see <sup><3015></sup>Matthew 3:5).

*Preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*: this was the work and office of John, as signified by Elias, in (<sup><3015></sup>Malachi 4:5,6) the Jews say <sup>f181</sup>,

“the Israelites will not repent, till Elias comes; as it is said, (<sup><3015></sup>Malachi 4:5,6) in the land of Israel repentance delights.”

John came into this land, preaching this doctrine; (See Gill on “<sup><4004></sup>Mark 1:4”).

**Ver. 4.** *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet*, etc.] (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 40:3)

*saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord make his paths straight*; (See Gill on “<sup><4003></sup>Matthew 3:3”).

**Ver. 5.** *Every valley shall be filled*, etc.] Luke cites more out of the same prophecy, as relating to the times of John the Baptist, and the Messiah, than the other Evangelists Matthew and Mark do: in the prophet it is, “every valley shall be exalted”; which is done, by filling it up; the metaphor is persisted in, of preparing and clearing the way, for the coming of the Messiah, done by the ministry of John; under which, such souls as were lowly and humble, and depressed with the sense of sin, should be raised

and directed to believe in Christ, and be filled with divine consolation from him. These words are owned by the Jews<sup>f182</sup> to belong to the world to come; that is, the times of the Messiah; though they understand them, of making way for the return of the Israelites from captivity, by the Messiah: just as they suppose such things were done by the miraculous cloud, for the children of Israel, as they passed through the wilderness; of which they say<sup>f183</sup>,

“that it went before them, smote the serpents and scorpions, and fiery serpents, and the rock; and if there was any low place, it raised it up; or high place, it made it low, and caused them to be plain; as it is said, (<sup>240B</sup>Isaiah 40:3) “And every valley shall be exalted”, etc.”

But what they say of this cloud literally, as preparing the way for the Israelites, is in a spiritual sense true, of the ministry of John; whereby many of the children of Israel, had the way prepared for them, for the reception of the Messiah; when as every humble soul had its expectation raised, and its faith encouraged, and its heart filled with spiritual joy; so such as were proud and haughty, were humbled:

*and every mountain and hill shall be brought low*; all such as are elated with their own abilities, and boast of their righteousness, trust in themselves, and look with disdain and contempt on others, their loftiness shall be bowed down, and their haughtiness made low; and the Messiah alone, in his person, grace, and righteousness, be exalted:

*and the crooked shall be made straight*: such as are of a crooked spirit, and walk in crooked ways, with the workers of iniquity, shall have new spirits given them, and be directed to right ways, and be led in the paths of righteousness and truth:

*and the rough ways shall be made smooth*; and men of rough tempers, comparable to lions and bears, shall become quiet and peaceable, smooth and easy; and moreover, whatever difficulties were in the minds of men concerning the Messiah, the end of his coming, and the nature of his kingdom; and whatever impediments were in the way of embracing him when come, should now be removed at least from many persons: R. David Kimchi, a very noted Jewish commentator<sup>f184</sup>, acknowledges that the whole of this passage is to be understood, *l'çm Ård*, “by way of parable”, in a mystical and figurative sense.

**Ver. 6.** *And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*] “By the salvation of God” is meant, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of God's appointing and sending; and who is the author of that salvation which God resolved on, contrived, and approved of; and is his ordinance for salvation, unto the ends of the earth, for all his elect; (<sup><4020></sup>Luke 2:30) whom a great number among the Jews should, and did see, with their bodily eyes; and whom not only God's elect among them, but also all of them among the Gentiles, should behold with an eye of faith, for themselves, as their Saviour and Redeemer. It is matter of question, what passage is here referred to; whether (<sup><2415></sup>Isaiah 40:5) or (<sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 3:10) the latter comes nearest to the words, and the former stands closely connected with the expressions before cited; though it is usual with the New Testament writers, to join together passages, which stand in different places of the same prophet, and even which are in different books; (<sup><4033></sup>Romans 9:33) compared with (<sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 8:14, 28:16) and (<sup><4015></sup>Matthew 21:5) compared with (<sup><2421></sup>Isaiah 62:11, <sup><3809></sup>Zechariah 9:9) and that agreeably to the method used by Jewish writers <sup>f185</sup>.

**Ver. 7.** *Then said he to the multitude,* etc.] That is, John, as the Ethiopic version reads; and the multitude to whom he spake the following words, were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, as appears from (<sup><4037></sup>Matthew 3:7)

*That came forth to be baptized of him;* who came out of their houses, towns, and cities, round about, to the place where John was; and hearing and seeing what he was about, desired to be admitted to his baptism: not that they “were baptised of him”; as the Arabic version renders it; but they came with a view of being baptized, were it thought fit and proper they should: but John refused them, saying to them,

*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* (See Gill on “<sup><4037></sup>Matthew 3:7”).

**Ver. 8.** *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance,* etc.] Or “meet” for it, such as will show it to be true and genuine: “and begin not to say within yourselves”: in one of Beza's copies, and in another of Stephens's, it was read, “think not”, as in (<sup><4039></sup>Matthew 3:9). the sense is the same. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the phrase, “within yourselves”: what they are forbid to say follows,

*we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;* which need not be thought strange, when the creation of Adam out of the earth, and the production of such a numerous offspring, as the Israelites were, from Abraham and Sarah, when past all hope of children, and are signified by the rock and pit in (<sup>2500</sup>Isaiah 51:1,2) are considered; (See Gill on “<sup>4000</sup>Matthew 3:9”).

**Ver. 9.** *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees,* etc.] Not only to Jesse's family, which as a root in a dry ground, and to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation; but to the root of the vain boasting of every Jew; their descent from Abraham, the covenant made with him, their ecclesiastical state and civil polity, all which would quickly be at an end: the Romans were now among them, the axe in God's hand; by means of whom, utter ruin and destruction would be brought upon their nation, city, and temple:

*every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire;* (See Gill on “<sup>4000</sup>Matthew 3:10”).

**Ver. 10.** *And the people asked him,* etc.] Not the same as in (<sup>4000</sup>Luke 3:7) the Sadducees and Pharisees, for they seemed not to be at all affected with, and wrought upon, by the ministry of John; but rather were displeased with him, and turned their backs on him, and rejected him and his baptism; but the common people, that stood by; who hearing John speak of wrath to come, and of repentance, and fruits worthy of it, were filled with concern about these things, and inquire,

*saying, what shall we do?* either to escape the wrath and vengeance coming on the nation, and also eternal ruin and destruction; and Beza says, that in two of his copies, and one of them his most ancient one it is added, “to be saved”, and so in two of Stephens's; which confirms the above sense, and makes their inquiry to be the same with the jailor's, (<sup>4000</sup>Acts 16:30) or else their meaning is, what are the things we are to do, or the fruits we are to bring forth, the duties we are to perform, in order to testify the truth and genuineness of our repentance? which latter seems most agreeable.

**Ver. 11.** *He answereth and saith unto them,* etc.] By telling them what they should do; and he does not put them upon ceremonial observances, nor severe exercises of religion, nor even the duties of the first table of the law, and others of the second, though necessary to be done; but upon acts



of beneficence and kindness, to fellow creatures in distress; and are what may be called love of our neighbour, and which involves the love of God, and so the whole law; for the one cannot be rightly exercised without the other:

*he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none;* not both of them, but one of them: a man is not obliged to go naked himself, in order to clothe another; and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, “let him give one to him that has not”; that has not a garment to wear. This is not to be understood strictly and literally, that a man is obliged to give one of his coats, if he has more than one, to a person in want of clothing; it will be sufficient to answer the intent of this exhortation, if he supplies his want another way, by furnishing him with money to buy one: the meaning is, that persons according to their abilities, and of what they can spare, should communicate to those that are in distress: much less is it to be concluded from hence, that it is not lawful for a man to have more coats than one:

*and he that hath meat,* or meats, *let him do likewise;* that is, he that has a sufficiency of food, and more than enough for himself and family, let him give it freely and cheerfully to the poor and needy, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased: and when such acts of kindness are done in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, they are the fruits of grace, and such as are meet for repentance, and show it to be genuine. John instances in these two articles, food and raiment, as containing the necessaries of human life, and including every thing, by which one may be serviceable to another.

**Ver. 12.** *Then came also publicans to be baptized,* etc.] Being convinced under John's ministry of the evils of their past life, and desirous of being admitted to baptism, to which they understood repentance, and fruits meet for the same, were pre-requisite: these came nearer to John,

*and said unto him, master, what shall we do?* we have been very wicked persons, what shall we do to escape divine vengeance? or what are the particular duties we are to perform? or the fruits meet for repentance, we are to bring forth; that so we may be admitted to the ordinance of baptism, which requires, as previous to it, a true and hearty repentance? of these men,

(See Gill on “<sup>4156</sup>Matthew 5:46”) (See Gill on “<sup>4199</sup>Matthew 9:9-11”)

**Ver. 13.** *And he said unto them,* etc.] Not by advising them to quit their employments, as if it was a thing unlawful to impose pay, and collect taxes, but by directing them to perform their office aright:

*exact no more than that which is appointed you;* by the government: there were two sorts of publicans; there were some that exacted more than what they were ordered, and settled the tax at their own pleasure, and collected what they would themselves; and these were very odious to the people, and were reckoned with the worst of sinners, as thieves and robbers; but there were others, who behaved according to the orders of the government, and these were submitted to, as appears from the Jewish canons:

“says<sup>f186</sup> Samuel, the judgment a kingdom, is judgment (i.e. the orders of a government ought to be regarded); R. Chanina bar Cahana says, that Samuel says it of a publican, **hbxyq wl `yaç** “who has nothing appointed for him”: the house of R. Jannai say, of a publican that stands of himself.”

The gloss is,

““the judgment of a kingdom is judgment”; this is he that receives from a king, a tax (to gather) in a thing, **bwxcq**, “that is fixed”, so and so for the year, and he is no robber: “who has nothing appointed for him”, but takes according to his whole will and pleasure.”

Maimonides expresses this in plainer language<sup>f187</sup>

“in what things is it said that a publican is as thieves? when a Gentile publican, or a Gentile that stands of himself, or a publican that stands for the king, and hath nothing fixed for him, but he takes what he pleases, and leaves what he pleases: but a publican with whom the king agrees, and orders that he should take a third or a fourth, or, **bwxcq rbd** “any thing that is appointed”; and he constitutes an Israelitish publican to collect that part for the king, and it is known that the man is faithful, and does not add any thing to what the king has decreed; he is not in the class of robbers, for the judgment of a king is judgment. — And so a king that lays a tax upon citizens, or upon every man and man, “a thing fixed”; or decrees, that whoever transgresses this thing, they shall take all his goods into the king's house; or that whatever shall be found in the

field in the time of the barn (i.e. when it should be there) should pay tribute for it, whether he is the owner of the field or not: and so with respect to any thing else of this kind, it is not a robbery; and an Israelite that collects them for the king, is not in the number of robbers; for lo! he is right, and he does not add nor alter, nor take any thing to himself.”

Now such publicans as these, were received and submitted to, but others were rejected; so Moses Kotsensis says<sup>f188</sup>, that

“publicans that take, םהל בִּמְצֻקֵי רְבֻדֵי מִלְּוִי “more than what is appointed for them”, are rejected.”

From all which we may learn what publicans these were that came to John's baptism, and put the above question to him; that they were Jewish publicans, and not Gentiles; and therefore John says nothing to them, but what concerned their employment, which he doubtless would have done, if they had been ignorant Gentiles: and also we see the reason of his expressing himself in this manner, since publicans were very apt to go beyond their orders, and require more than was fixed for them to collect; and likewise that John, in this advice, spoke the sense of the Jews themselves; who did not refuse to pay tribute, excepting some few, provided no more was exacted, than the government appointed; and as temptations to such evils were very great, and it lay in the power of these men to impose on the people, and extort from them, to abstain from such practices was an argument of the fear of God, of the truth of grace, and of the sincerity of repentance.

**Ver. 14.** *And the soldiers likewise demanded of him*, etc.] Or “asked him”: why our translators have rendered it, “demanded of him”, I know not, unless they thought that such language best suited persons of a military character. Some think these were Gentile soldiers, since it does not look so likely that the Romans would employ Jews as soldiers in their own country; though it is more probable that they were Jews, in the pay of the Romans, who belonged to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, or to Philip of Ituraea, whose dominions lay near the place where John was: since it is certain, that there were many of the Jews that betook themselves to a military life; and seeing John instructed them in no part of natural or revealed religion, but what was suitable to their character and employment: for upon these men saying,

*what shall we do?* to avoid the threatened ruin, and to prove the truth of our repentance, that so we may be admitted to the holy ordinance of baptism; John replied,

*do violence to no man*; or “shake” him, or put him, into bodily fear, by threatening, hectoring, and bullying him, and drawing the sword upon him, which is usual, upon the least offence, for such persons to do;

*neither accuse any falsely*, or play the sycophant; who, in order to flatter some, bring malicious accusations against others; and which was a vice that too much prevailed among the Jewish soldiery; who either to curry favour with the Roman officers and governors, would wrongfully accuse their fellow soldiers, or country men, to them; or in order to extort sums of money from them, that they might live in a more luxurious manner than their common pay would admit of: wherefore, it follows,

*and be content with your wages*; allowed by the government, and do not seek to increase them by any unlawful methods, as by mutiny and sedition, by rebelling against your officers, or by ill usage of the people. The Jewish Rabbins have adopted this word, *aynsa*, into their language in the Misnic and Talmudic writings<sup>f189</sup>: and their gloss explains it by the money, for the soldiers, and the hire of soldiers, as here; and it includes every thing which by the Romans were given to their soldiers for pay, and which was food as well as money.

**Ver. 15.** *And as the people were in expectation, of the coming of the Messiah*; Daniel's seventy weeks being now accomplished, the sceptre being departed from Judah, and the Romans having the government in their hands, from whom they hoped for a deliverance by Christ;

*and all men mused in their hearts of John; whether he were the Christ, or no*; about which they had many reasonings and debates: some doubting of it, others ready to believe it, from his extraordinary birth, the singular holiness of his life, the power and efficacy of his doctrine, the new ordinance he administered, the restoration of religion by him, the freedom he took in reproving the vices of men, and the apt answers he gave to the questions now put to him. And that the Messiah was born, though he was not, as yet, made manifest, they might conclude, not only from the fulfilment of several prophecies, but from the song of Zacharias, the declaration of Simeon and Anna in the temple, and of the wise men that came from the east; and John appearing in such an unusual manner, they

were ready to hope that he was the person; though they did not consider that he was of the tribe of Levi, and not of Judah; from which latter the Messiah was to spring; but this might be unattended to by them, and Satan might have an hand in it to hide the true Messiah from them.

**Ver. 16.** *John answered, saying unto them all*, etc.] For some of them might not only so think in their hearts, but express with their mouths the apprehension they had of him; and might put the question to him, as the priests and Levites from Jerusalem afterwards did; or he might know the secret thoughts of their hearts by divine revelation; or be apprized by his disciples of the private sentiments of the people concerning him: and therefore, to put them out of doubt, and that he might not have an honour conferred on him, which did not belong to him, he addressed himself, in a very public manner, to the whole multitude, in the hearing of them all: though the word “all” is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, but rightly retained in others, being in all copies, and having a considerable emphasis on it: and said the following words.

*I indeed baptize you with water*; Matthew adds “unto repentance”; upon the profession of repentance:

*but one mightier than I cometh*; that is, *after me*; as Matthew records it:

*the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose*; neither to bear his shoes after him, as Matthew says, nor to untie his shoe string, or unbuckle his shoe, both which were menial actions with the Jews: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; as he did some of their nation, his own disciples, on the day of pentecost; (See Gill on “~~AB1~~ Matthew 3:11”)

**Ver. 17.** *Whose fan is in his hand*, etc.] (See Gill on “~~AB2~~ Matthew 3:12”)

**Ver. 18.** *And many other thing's*, etc.] Relating to the person and office of the Messiah, to the nature of his kingdom, the Gospel dispensation, and to faith in him; for he pointed him out to the people, and exhorted them to believe in him, and expressed much joy and pleasure on the hearing of his success and increase; and these, with others beside, in his “exhortation”, or whilst he was

*exhorting*, or “comforting”, *preached he unto the people*: publishing the Gospel, the good news, and glad tidings of the Messiah's being come, and of life, righteousness, and salvation by him.

**Ver. 19.** *But Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him*, etc.] By John, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions add:

*for Herodias his brother Philip's wife*; for taking her to wife, whilst his brother Philip was living. The account, which the Jewish chronologer<sup>f190</sup> gives, of this Herod, and of this fact of his, and John's reproving him for it, and the consequence of it, perfectly agrees with this of the evangelist.

“Herod Antipater, and there are some that call him, *yqꝛj yj* “the tetrarch”, was a son of Herod the first, and brother of Archelaus'; and he was the third king of the family of Herod; and he was very wicked, and a destroying man: many of the wise men of Israel he slew with the sword; and he took the wife of his brother Philip, whilst he was alive, to himself for wife; and John, the high priest, because *wj ykwh*, “he reproved him” for this, he slew him with the sword, with many of the wise men of Israel.”

And John reproved him not only for this sin, but others:

*and for all the evils which Herod had done*; his revellings, debaucheries, murders, etc. all which John, in great faithfulness, and with much freedom, told him and rebuked him for: for Herod had had a particular respect for him, and often had him with him, and heard him gladly, when John had an opportunity of speaking personally to him.

**Ver. 20.** *Added yet this above all*, etc.] This sin to all other sins, and which was of a more flagitious nature; and attended with more aggravating circumstances, especially in the issue of it:

*that he shut up John in prison*; in the castle of Machaerus, by the instigation of Herodias; (See Gill on “~~414B~~ Matthew 14:3”).

**Ver. 21.** *Now when all the people were baptized*, etc.] That came from several parts to John for this purpose, even as many as he judged to be proper subjects of that ordinance, as many of the common people, publicans, soldiers, etc.

*it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized*; of John in Jordan, he coming from Galilee thither on that account:

*and praying*; after he was baptized, for the coming down of the Spirit upon him, as man, to anoint, and qualify him for his office he was now about to

enter on publicly: and for success in it, and for a testimony from heaven, that he was the Son of God, and true Messiah:

*the heaven was opened*; (see Gill on “<sup><41B6></sup>Matthew 3:16”).

**Ver. 22.** *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape*, etc.] In a corporeal form, in a visible manner, and was seen with bodily eyes, at least by John the administrator; to whom this was a signal of his being the Messiah, and a fresh confirmation of it:

*like a dove upon him*; either in the form of a dove, or this corporeal form, whatever it was, descended and hovered on him as a dove does:

*and a voice came from heaven*; at the same time the Holy Ghost came down upon him; which said,

*thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased*: and was the voice of the Father; and the whole of this was an answer of Christ's prayer; (See Gill on “<sup><41B6></sup>Matthew 3:16-17”) (See Gill on “<sup><4011></sup>Mark 1:11”).

**Ver. 23.** *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age*, etc.] Or Jesus, when he was baptized and began his public ministry, was about thirty years of age: an age at which the priests, under the law, who were typical of Christ, entered on their work, (<sup><0023></sup>Numbers 4:23 <sup><R2B></sup>1 Chronicles 23:3) The word, “began”, is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions: and is often indeed redundant, as in (<sup><41B3></sup>Luke 3:8) and frequently in Mark's Gospel. The Arabic version renders it, “Jesus began to enter into the thirtieth year”, which carries the sense the same with our translation:

*being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph*; who had espoused Mary before she was with child of the Holy Ghost, and afterwards took her to wife, and brought up her son; so that it was not known but that he was the son of Joseph. Whether or no the Jewish notion of the Messiah, the son of Joseph <sup>f191</sup> may not take its rise from hence, may be considered: however, Joseph might very rightly be called, as he was supposed to be, the father of Jesus, by a rule which obtains with the Jews <sup>f192</sup> that he

“that brings up, and not he that begets, is called the father,”

or parent; of which they give various instances <sup>f193</sup> in Joseph, in Michal, and in Pharaoh's daughter.

*Which was the son of Eli*; meaning, not that Joseph was the son of Eli; for he was the son of Jacob, according to (<sup>f116</sup>Matthew 1:16), but Jesus was the son of Eli; and which must be understood, and carried through the whole genealogy, as thus; Jesus the son of Matthat, Jesus the son of Levi, Jesus the son of Melchi, etc. till you come to Jesus the son of Adam, and Jesus the Son of God; though it is true indeed that Joseph was the son of Eli, having married his daughter; Mary was the daughter of Eli: and so the Jews speak of one Mary, the daughter of Eli, by whom they seem to design the mother of our Lord: for they tell <sup>f194</sup> us of one,

“that saw, *yl [ tb pyrm*, “Mary the daughter of Eli” in the shades, hanging by the fibres of her breasts; and there are that say, the gate, or, as elsewhere <sup>f195</sup>, the bar of the gate of hell is fixed to her ear.”

By the horrible malice, in the words, you may know who is meant: however, this we gain by it, that by their own confession, Mary is the daughter of Eli; which accords with this genealogy of the evangelist, who traces it from Mary, under her husband Joseph; though she is not mentioned, because of a rule with the Jews <sup>f196</sup>, that

“the family of the mother is not called a family.”

**Ver. 24.** *Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi*, etc.]

These two, Grotius says, are omitted in the ancient exemplars; and he thinks they ought to be left out; and for which he mentions the authorities of Irenaeus, Africanus, Eusebius, Nazianzen, Jerom, and Augustin: but not only the Vulgate Latin, but all the Oriental versions, retain them:

*which was the son of Melchi*: and who, he thinks, was the immediate father of Eli:

*which was the son of Janna*: frequent mention is made, in the Jewish writings <sup>f197</sup> of *akl m yany*, “king Jannai”, who is said to be the same with king Jochanan, or John, the son of Simeon, the son of Mattithiah, that was called Hyrcanus; and his son Alexander, that reigned after him, was also called Jannai <sup>f198</sup>; but whether either of these is the same with this Janna, is not certain: but this may be observed, that they were both before the times of Herod, and the birth of Jesus, some years. And Jannai is called; in the chronicle of Jedidiah of Alexandria, or Philo the Jew <sup>f199</sup>, Hyrcanus the second, who reigned sixteen years:



*which was the son of Joseph.* This Joseph, according to the same chronicle, is called Joseph the second, and surnamed Arsis, and was greatly honoured by Ptolemy, and governed sixty years; and accordingly we shall meet with another Joseph anon.

**Ver. 25.** *Which was the son of Mattathias,* etc.] Surnamed Siloah, by the same Philo, who governed ten years:

*which was the son of Amos;* whose surname, according to the same author, was Sirag; or, as some, Syrach, or Shyrach, who governed fourteen years:

*which was the son of Naum;* who was called Mesalut, or Maslot, who governed seven years:

*which was the son of Esli;* or Eli, surnamed Haggai, who governed eight years;

*which was the son of Nagge:* with Philo he is called Nagid Artasat, or Artaxat, and said to govern ten years.

**Ver. 26.** *Which was the son of Maath,* etc.] Surnamed Aser, who governed nine years:

*which was the son of Mattathias;* called Eli Matathias, who governed twelve years:

*which was the son of Semei;* and named Abner Semei, who governed eleven years:

*which was the son of Joseph;* called Joseph the first, who governed seven years:

*which was the son of Juda;* who, according to the same writer, must be Judas, surnamed Hyrcanus the first, who governed fourteen years.

**Ver. 27.** *Which was the son of Joanna,* etc.] Johannes, or John, the son of Rhesa Mesullam, who governed fifty three years:

*which was the son of Rhesa,* called, by the above writer, Rhesa Mesullam; (<sup>1389</sup>1 Chronicles 3:19) and said, by him, to govern sixty six years:

*which was the son of Zorobabel* who governed fifty eight years:

*which was the son of Salathiel;* the same with Shealthiel; (See Gill on <sup>4012</sup>Matthew 1:12")

*which was the son of Neri*; the same with Jechonias, according to the Alexandrian, chronicle; (See Gill on “<sup><4012></sup>Matthew 1:12”)

**Ver. 28.** *Which was the son of Melchi*, etc.] This, with the following, “Addi, Cosam, Elmodam, Er, Jose, Eliezer, Jorim, Matthat, Levi, Simeon, Juda, Joseph, Jonan, Eliakim, Melea, Menan, and Mattatha”, all lived before the captivity, and were of the house of David, in the line of Nathan; for it follows,

*which was the son of Nathan*: of which persons no mention is made in the Old Testament, nor even of Mattatha, the son of Nathan: his sons that are mentioned are Azariah, Zabud, and Ahishar, (<sup><1045></sup>1 Kings 4:5,6) which last is thought to be the same with Mattatha: that Nathan was the son of David, as the order of things here directs,

*which was the son of David*, is clear from (<sup><1054></sup>2 Samuel 5:14 <sup><1305></sup>1 Chronicles 3:5, 14:4).

**Ver. 32.** *Which was the son of Jesse*, etc.] The order of the persons from Jesse to Abraham, as Obed, Boaz, Salmon, Naasson, Aminadab, Aram, or Ram, Esrom, (for Joram, which the Arabic version here inserts, is to be rejected,) Phares, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, perfectly agrees with the genealogy of Matthew, and the accounts of the Old Testament:

*which was the son of Thara*; the same with Terah, (<sup><0125></sup>Genesis 11:26,27) called by the Septuagint, Tharra:

*which was the son of Nachor*;, the same with Nahor, (<sup><0124></sup>Genesis 11:24,25) called there, by the Septuagint, as here.

**Ver. 35.** *Which was the son of Saruch*, etc.] The Septuagint call him Serouch, the same with Serug, (<sup><0122></sup>Genesis 11:22,23)

*which was the son of Ragau*; so the Septuagint, the same with Reu, (<sup><0410></sup>Genesis 40:20,21)

*which was the son of Phaleg*; the same with Peleg, (<sup><0118></sup>Genesis 11:18,19) the Septuagint reads as here: “which was the son of Heber”, or Eber, (<sup><0116></sup>Genesis 11:16,17)

*which was the son of Sala*, or Salah, (<sup><0114></sup>Genesis 11:14,15) the Septuagint there call him Sala.

**Ver. 36.** *Which was the son of Cainan*, etc.] This Cainan is not mentioned by Moses in (<sup><01112></sup>Genesis 11:12) nor has he ever appeared in any Hebrew copy of the Old Testament, nor in the Samaritan version, nor in the Targum; nor is he mentioned by Josephus, nor in (<sup><13124></sup>1 Chronicles 1:24) where the genealogy is repeated; nor is it in Beza's most ancient Greek copy of Luke: it indeed stands in the present copies of the Septuagint, but was not originally there; and therefore could not be taken by Luke from thence, but seems to be owing to some early negligent transcriber of Luke's Gospel, and since put into the Septuagint to give it authority: I say "early", because it is in many Greek copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, even in the Syriac, the oldest of them; but ought not to stand neither in the text, nor in any version: for certain it is, there never was such a Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, for Salah was his son; and with him the next words should be connected,

*which was the son of Arphaxad*; (<sup><01112></sup>Genesis 11:12,13)

*which was the son of Sem*, or Shem, (<sup><01110></sup>Genesis 11:10,11)

*which was the son of Noe*, or Noah, (<sup><01632></sup>Genesis 5:32)

*which was the son of Lamech*, (<sup><01638></sup>Genesis 5:28,29)

**Ver. 37.** *Which was the son of Mathusala*, etc.] The same with Methuselah; and so he is called by the Septuagint in (<sup><01635></sup>Genesis 5:25-27)

*which was the son of Enoch*, (<sup><01621></sup>Genesis 5:21,22)

*which was the son of Jared* (<sup><01638></sup>Genesis 5:18,19),

*which was the son of Maleleel*; the same with Mahalaleel; who is also so called by the seventy interpreters, in (<sup><01635></sup>Genesis 5:15,16) as here; which was the son of Cainan, (<sup><01632></sup>Genesis 5:12,13).

**Ver. 38.** *Which was the son of Enos*, etc.] (<sup><01639></sup>Genesis 5:9,10)

*which was the son of Seth*, (<sup><01636></sup>Genesis 5:6,7)

*which was the son of Adam* (<sup><01638></sup>Genesis 5:3,4)

*which was the son of God*: not begotten, as all the rest were, by their immediate parents, but created by God, in a supernatural manner, out of the dust of the earth, and quickened with the breath of God: so Adam is, by the Jews <sup>f200</sup> called, **pyhl a ^b**, "the son of God": though this may be

understood of Jesus; the son of Joseph, of Heli, etc. and so on to this clause, “the son of God”; being so as a divine person, to whom the human nature was united, and on that account so called; (see ~~4015~~ Luke 1:35) Thus, as Matthew gives us the regal line of Christ, showing him to be heir to the throne of his father David, Luke gives the natural line of Christ; and as Matthew traces his genealogy down from Abraham, in a descending line, to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus, Luke traces it upwards, in an ascending line, from Mary by Joseph, even up to Adam; to whom the Messiah was first promised, and who was a type of the second Adam, from whom he descended, though not by ordinary generation; nay, even to God himself: Christ, according to his divine nature, was the only begotten of the Father; and as to his human nature, had a body prepared by him, and in the fulness of time was God manifest in the flesh.