

03/02/25 - Luke 3:21-38 - "Heaven and Nature Sing"

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me to Luke chapter 3. We'll be reading starting at verse 21. Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven, you are my beloved son, and with you I am well pleased. Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about 30 years of age, being the son, as was supposed, of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matad, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jani, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Negai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Simeon, the son of Joseph, the son of Jodah, the son of Joannan, the son of Resa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Sheltiel, The son of Neri.

The son of Melchie. The son of Adi. The son of Kosam. The son of Elmenem. The son of Eir. The son of Joshua. The son of Eliezer.

The son of Joram. The son of Matad. The son of Levi. The son of Simeon. The son of Judah. The son of Joseph. The son of Jonah.

The son of Eliakim. The son of Malaiah. The son of Minah. The son of Matata. the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Selah, the son of Nashon, the son of Amenadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arnie, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, The son of Isaac.

[2 : 19] The son of Abraham. The son of Terah. The son of Nahor. The son of Sarag. The son of Reu. The son of Peleg. The son of Eber.

The son of Shelah. The son of Canaan. The son of Arphtred. The son of Shem. The son of Noah. The son of Lamech. The son of Methuselah.

The son of Enoch. The son of Jared. The son of Mahalael. the son of Canaan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. Wowee. Now that was quite a reading.

I would say that quite a difficult task in and of itself, but I think I have probably a more difficult task of what do you do with all that?

[3 : 28] Duffy's like, I'm just the reader. Good luck there. Praise the Lord for his word.

Ancestry.com has an industry of over 3 million paying subscribers, and their DNA network has more than that.

It has 25 million individuals. This market brings in a revenue of 4.6 million dollars, and it's expected in about five years to probably hit about 10 billion, almost double that, nearly over double that.

And so to say the least, people are shelling out hundreds of dollars, monthly, annually, just to find out their great, great, great uncle, uncle, was a blacksmith in 18th century Scotland.

Right? And now let's be honest, half the time, it could be right or it could be wrong, and often disappointing knowing that you don't have Vikings blood. Right? I was disappointed in that.

[4 : 52] Even though you might look like Joe Scrimm, you're not a Viking. This fascination with genealogies is not anything new.

It's nothing new. Before DNA kits and online databases, genealogies mattered a lot. They mattered a lot. In biblical times, your lineage determined your identity.

Your lineage determined your inheritance. It actually determined if you got a job or not. We see that in Nehemiah 7, verse 64 and 65.

People who could improve their family line were excluded from the priesthood. No receipts. No service. No soup for you.

Right? Now, this is fascinating here. I imagine Luke on his investigative mission.

[5 : 55] Remember Luke's commissioning from Theophilus in chapter 1. He's getting eyewitness testimonies. He's going door-to-door knocking on people who might have a unique perspective into what happened, of how this all started.

And I could see him interviewing Zachariah, sitting down with Zachariah and Elizabeth, talking about Angel Gabriel and how that was to them, what it was like for Zachariah to be unable to speak. Right? He sat down with Mary, interviewed her, got the details from Mary. And that's more related to the passage today.

Because what happens with Luke is that he makes a spectacular, I'm going to use Les' words, spectacular discovery in Mary's lineage.

As Mary brought out all the baby pictures, all the Polaroids, the family get-togethers, she pulls out this piece of paper and record, of an ancestral record.

[7 : 07] And what a profound discovery. Unlike the Gospel of Matthew's lineage that included Joseph's genealogy, Mary presents to Luke her genealogy.

And this is huge as it further solidifies the identity of Christ through a differing perspective. And what Luke does in the sort of, you're wondering why he was just baptized, but John was already thrown in prison.

If that's confusing us, we have to see what he's doing here. What Luke does after closing out the ministry of John, Luke is very orderly. He's a good guy to put an orderly record together.

He lays out the ministry of John the Baptist. John's in prison. Close the book. Now onto Jesus. When did Jesus start? Well, there's an overlap in time. He goes back in time, chronologically, to focus solely upon Jesus Christ.

And so John is off stage. He's in prison. And now Jesus is central. And as he does this, Luke provides two announcements into the identity of Jesus Christ.

[8 : 30] Two pronouncements into the identity of Jesus Christ. One being heavenly and one earthly, lengthy passage that Duffy knocked out of the park today.

Both of those serving as theological statements that Jesus Christ is, in fact, the Son of God. Fully human, fully divine. And so let's break this naturally down into kind of out-of-proportion passages and sections.

The first section will be two verses, and then the other one will be however many is left. So let's break this down into those two sections based upon each announcement and allow these two accounts to reinforce our faith, to know for certain, give our faith a reason to believe.

The sermon title today, I'm going Christmas. Heaven and nature sing. And what these two sections will do is reinforce a single main point, that Jesus Christ's identity secures our eternity.

Let's see that, but before we do, let's pray. Father, we praise you for your word.

[9 : 59] Praise you for a willing soul to volunteer to read the passage today. Thank you for the effectiveness, the efficacy of your word to save.

And we thank you for the gospel as it unfolds within the text today. Help it to transform us and renew our minds by your spirit.

And we praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Heaven sings. Heaven starts singing.

In verse 21, it says, when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were open.

With Luke's focus solely upon Jesus Christ, he returns back in history to when Jesus Christ's ministry began, just as it were for John. When John the Baptist ministry began, well, technically, in the holy place, in the temple, when Gabriel said, this is what's going to happen, right?

[11 : 13] So, we might ask, now that seems a little odd. My atheist friend that I have says that, why would Jesus have to be baptized if he wasn't sinless?

Your whole gospel narrative is completely void of any meaning because it actually contradicts itself. Why was Jesus baptized? Why would he submit himself to this baptism of repentance, just as we saw last week with John the Baptist?

Well, I don't want you to miss Luke's language here, and I tried to emphasize it when I just read, but look at this. In the context of this baptism, what was going on around him?

As Jesus was immersed in water, he was literally immersed with all the people. There's like this proximal emphasis here.

Now, when all the people were being baptized, were baptized, and Jesus also had been baptized, right? It's uniting something with language here, with Jesus and all these people.

[12:36] This allows us to reflect upon Jesus Christ's ministry, beginning by identifying with sinners, with all the people.

There Jesus was, with all the people. He submitted himself to the baptism of repentance without needing it. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21 says, He who knew no sin became sin for us. And well, we see that playing out. This baptism has a similar theological sentiment. He who needed no repentance became repentance for us.

Jesus entered the water for those who do need it. What a better way to launch his ministry. Because as we've been seeing, even last week, repentance paves the way for salvation. No salvation for those who don't repent. And this messianic anointing, this fulfillment of prophecy became a Trinitarian revelation.

[13:57] It says, And the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven.

You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. You have the Holy Spirit present. You have the Father speaking present.

And you have the Son present. What a Trinitarian revelation. This would give me a heart attack. Experiencing that. It was at this time that the heavens opened, the Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father speaks.

Heaven sings. At this moment, Jesus identified with us. But God identified Him as His own. The language that reveals the divine identity of Jesus Christ identifies Him with three specific Old Testament prophecies and allusions. And we see His identity, His sonship.

[15:10] You are my. He belongs to the voice in heaven, the Father. He belongs. He is divine. Unites Him with sonship.

And with sonship, the Davidic lineage, being the Davidic king. Reference to Psalm 2, verse 7. But being that it's not just my Son, but it's my beloved Son, kind of like adding some spice to the statement.

Being that it's my beloved Son. This unites Jesus in His sacrificial role, His purpose.

Just as Isaac was Abraham's only son in Genesis 22. Not only that, but also purpose in with whom I am well pleased.

This unites Jesus as the suffering servant. You have this sonship, divine sonship with divine suffering, identity and purpose stacked within such a profound declaration and pronouncement from heaven.

[16:25] Heaven sings the divine sonship of Christ and the divine suffering that will be coming. how do you please God rather than sacrifice?

Pleasing aroma to Him of whom I am well pleased. Christ's life was already planned out. He knew what He was going to have to do.

And so this draws a line in our day-to-day in culture. This draws a line in pluralism as we, outside of these walls, God only knows what they're coming up with today.

But in pluralism, in fluid culture, this makes it sure that Jesus Christ is set apart, being the only bridge that can bridge that gap between a holy, perfect, righteous God and sinful, corrupt humanity. It's not an argument. This world needs understanding. For those who give their lives to Jesus Christ by their faith, the heavenly seal placed upon Jesus Christ is placed upon you as well, only through Jesus Christ.

[18:11] By faith in the fulfillment of Jesus Christ's mission, we are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the invitation to those who are apart from Jesus is to come.

How? Repent and believe and that's it. With the heavenly record straight of Jesus' supreme identity, supreme purpose being laid out, Luke takes it even a step further.

He's like, oh, I'm going to put this here. I'm just going to slam it in. Luke takes a step further in a one-of-a-kind revelation that unites Jesus Christ's identity with Adam.

And if with Adam, with God. Let's look at that. We saw heaven sing. Let's look at the earth sing, nature sing.

As genealogies established, credibility, Luke gave Theophilus a little more than Mark's gospel, not saying that Mark's gospel was insufficient.

[19:26] It is the word of God as well. And it's a different angle than Matthew's gospel. Not saying that Matthew's gospel was insufficient. It's a different view. It's all different portraits of the same object.

And so Matthew, he gave 42 names in his genealogy tracing the legal lineage through Joseph which emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the rightful heir of the throne of David. Right? Legal lineage. But Luke, he found a gold mine. He found 77 names that trace Jesus' human lineage.

Likely through Mary, we see Joseph's lineage as was supposed, hinting at Mary's lineage here, affirming Jesus Christ's humanity, linking him to Adam and ultimately God.

And now within this extensive list, it was beautifully read this morning, are names. I love the emphasis of the names that we know. Right? There's significant names and there's insignificant names.

[20 : 40] There's Zerubbabel, the post-exilic leader, helping rebuild the temple in Haggai 2. We have David, the royal ancestor of the Messiah.

You all know David. Abraham, you know Father Abraham, foundation of Israel's hope, Genesis 12. Noah, the survivor of the flood representing a new beginning and restoration.

and Adam, the first man whose disobedience led to sin entering the world. Significant names, but you also see Admon, Rasa, Nagai, Melchi 1, and Melchi 2.

Melchi of verse 24, Melchi of verse 28. Who are they? We don't know. And Janai. These people are completely unknown.

And how the more fitting for God to choose insignificant Mary. Poor, impoverished, a nobody in the middle of nowhere, and to choose her to fulfill the greatest promise of redemption.

[21 : 58] this is absolutely huge. What a discovery that Luke found, obviously led by the Holy Spirit, inspired Scripture, a lineage that goes beyond Father Abraham who had many sons.

Many sons of Father Abraham. I'm going to end it there. Carvin's like, this is what I live for. He goes not only back to Father Abraham, he goes back to Father God.

This theologically reinforces the essence of the good news, why this is good news indeed. Jesus' genealogy doesn't just trace his past, but it secures our future.

Right? It's like parallelism. Here, Adam is called the son of God. He was wrought by divine conception, the hands of God, but he failed in disobedience.

Jesus Christ has been affirmed as the son of God. Heaven and nature is now singing. at his baptism. How is he wrought?

[23 : 27] By divine conception, the hands of God, and therefore is rightly considered the second Adam. Now, there's something in Christianese terms called federalism, and that's an orthodox and a very sound understanding and explaining this divine initiative of God, which connects Jesus Christ to all humanity, just as Adam was created or connected to all humanity as well, as a federal head of mankind.

And Paul preached this constantly in 1 Corinthians 15, 22, and ending in 45. He says, for as in Adam, as a federal head of all mankind, all die.

So in Christ, all will be made alive. So the first Adam, you have the second Adam. And so it is written, the first Adam, the first man, Adam, became a living being, the last Adam, Jesus, a life-giving spirit.

Paul even preaches it in Romans 5, 17, for if by the trespass of the one man, Adam, as a federal head, death reigned through that one man.

How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?

[25 : 04] This is good news. In other words, the first Adam, sin and death. The second Adam, life, forgiveness, forgiveness.

Federalism isn't just about doctrine. It's about the divine plan of redemption. If by our earthly birth, we are all sons of Adam, we are imputed with sin, we need to be reborn.

We need rebirth. And if Adam's sin was imputed in us by our birth, it is only through rebirth then that righteousness is then imputed and given to believers by faith.

In other words, Adam started a plague in which all human and all mankind are shareholders of sin. You know? all mankind shareholders of sin. Starting a contagion is actually fairly easy to do. We saw that in 2020. That thing spread like wildfire.

[26 : 23] Jesus Christ came in the middle of our sinful pandemic to reverse its effects. Spiritual rebirth, being born again.

This reversal was far more difficult than we could ever imagine. It took pain. It took nails in hands. It took nails through the feet for you.

Just recently, my son experienced what it means to have something be driven through his foot. As you can call me Dr. Brent, surgeon at large.

had to pull a shard of glass out of his foot. And he was crying with pain.

And even the instances of pain that we receive in this life, it killed me to see him cry. But I'm just like, we've got to do this. Jesus Christ literally poured himself out.

[27 : 33] Y'all know pain? It is superior pain. Than the worst pain that we can even imagine. It took pain. This reversal was more difficult than we could ever imagine.

Jesus suffered greatly to reverse the course of sin. Adam started the plague, but Jesus started the cure. He brought the cure.

How can we love our sin? sin? How can we leave the words of John the Baptist after his pronouncement of people to repent, to turn away?

How can we continue in that way? Especially if we call ourselves Christians. Christians. how can we fail to reverse sin's course in our lives through our repentance and turning away from it?

How can we ignore this? Heaven is sung. Nature has sung.

[28 : 51] Heaven is sung that Jesus is God's beloved son, heir of promise. Nature is sung that Jesus Christ is the son of God, son of man.

But the question stands, will your life sing his praises? Is he your Lord and Savior?

Some of us want the Savior part. We want to withhold a couple things that actually make us feel good and help us get through the week. To cling to sin is to cling to Satan.

To release from Satan is to repent and to cling to Christ. There is no other way. And so if we struggle in that arena, we are in danger of understanding the reality of our sin, but also the holiness of God, just as George Matheson was our reflection during our confession this morning.

Is he your Lord and Savior? In the person and work of Jesus Christ, he is the fountainhead of all God's promises of redemption so that our person and our work may be renewed through spiritual rebirth and ongoing repentance in our lives.

[30 : 21] Not just one-time altar call, but an ongoing lifestyle of repentance and turning away from sin. And so we might feel this insignificance.

you might say, well, my name isn't on the billboard on Market Street.

Well, it doesn't matter. The repentance and the call to salvation is for you too. So whether your name is on the billboard on Market Street or maybe your name is written with permanent marker on your living room wall that your kids decided to write, it doesn't matter.

if you are in Christ, your identity is entirely hidden in Him. In Him. Sin doesn't define you any longer.

Your citizenship, whether citizenship in Mexico or America, it doesn't define you.

Your relational status doesn't define you. Your parental status or your parenting ability doesn't define you. Being fertile or infertile doesn't define you.

[31 : 32] If you are in Christ, your purpose is found in His identity, not your own. Whether you succeed in sanctification or you're failing miserably in sanctification, repentance is ongoing.

So whether your ancestors are Vikings, we all wish that, right? Kings or pilgrims, according to Ancestry.com or some DNA test you decide to give to someone, the real question isn't where we are from, but who we are in.

If we are in Christ or if we are in Adam, if we are in death or if we are in life. And so the real question that's posed to you today is where are you going?

Where are you going? You see in the main points of the passage, Jesus Christ's identity secures our eternity. Adam's identity secures our eternity as well.

One in heaven, one in hell. Adam's identity secures your destruction. The call of salvation is for today to come to Jesus Christ, to know him personally, for his mercy to shape and reshape and reshape our lives into the image of his son.

[32 : 54] Jesus Christ's family line is worth joining. The Bible says that we're grafted into that promise. By placing your faith in Jesus today, you will hear the same words spoken over you.

You are God's beloved child in whom God is well pleased. all on behalf of your faith in him. Let's pray.

Let's pray.