

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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INAUGURATION
OF THE
MAN-SAVIOR

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THE INAUGURATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

In this booklet we shall consider the inauguration of the Man-Savior ([Luke 3:1-22](#)). First He was introduced by John the Baptist ([vv. 1-20](#)), and then He was baptized ([v. 21](#)) and anointed ([v. 22](#)).

As we shall see, the inauguration of the Man-Savior mainly involves His being baptized by John the Baptist and His being anointed by the Father. Actually, this inauguration is an introduction, but it is more than merely an introduction. To introduce a person does not mean to officially put him into office. But to inaugurate a person means not only to introduce him, but also to usher him officially into his office.

In the foregoing chapters of Luke, the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. Through His conception, birth, and youth He was prepared as a complete Person to be our Savior in His humanity with His divinity. Now in [chapter three](#) it is necessary for Him to be introduced and ushered into His ministry. Therefore, in [3:1-22](#) we have a record

of the inauguration of the Man-Savior. Regarding this inauguration, both John the Baptist and God the Father played a part. John did something on man's side, and the Father did something on God's side.

INTRODUCED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

In [3:3-14](#) we see that John the Baptist came preaching the baptism of repentance. [Verse 3](#) says that “he came into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.” Repentance is a matter of changing the mind, of turning the mind to the Man-Savior. Baptism is a matter of burying the repenting people, terminating them so that the Man-Savior may germinate them by regeneration ([John 3:3, 5-6](#)).

According to [3:3](#), the baptism of repentance was for the forgiveness of sins. The Greek word translated “for” also means unto. Repentance with baptism is for, and results in, forgiveness of sins, so that the obstacle of man’s fall may be removed and man may be reconciled to God.

[Luke 3:4 through 6](#) say, “As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. Every

ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked places shall become straight, and the rough places smooth roads; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” In [3:4](#) to prepare the way of the Lord and to make His paths straight means to change people’s minds, turning their minds toward the Man-Savior. It also means to make their hearts right, to straighten every part of their hearts through repentance, so that the Man-Savior may enter into them to be their life and take possession of them.

In [3:5](#) ravine, mountain, crooked places, and rough places are figures of speech describing the condition of men’s hearts toward God and toward each other and the relationships among men ([Luke 1:16-17](#)). Both the condition of men’s hearts and their relationships need to be dealt with for the way to be prepared for the Savior’s coming.

[Verse 6](#) says that all flesh will see the salvation of God. Here “flesh” refers to fallen men, and “salvation” denotes the Savior as the salvation of God.

JOHN’S WORD TO THE CROWDS

In [3:7-9](#) John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! Who

prompted you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce then fruits worthy of your repentance, and do not begin to say among yourselves, We have Abraham for our father, for I tell you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And already also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.” “Brood of vipers” in [verse 7](#) equals “children of the Devil” in [1 John 3:10](#).

In [verse 8](#) John the Baptist told the people that God was able to raise up children to Abraham out of the stones. Due to the impenitence of the Jews, both this word and the word in [verse 9](#) have been fulfilled. God has cut them off and raised up the believing Gentiles to be children unto Abraham in faith ([Rom. 11:15, 19-20, 22](#); [Gal. 3:7, 28-29](#)). This also indicates that the kingdom of God is constituted not of children of Abraham by birth, but of children of Abraham by faith.

In [verse 9](#) John says that every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire. This fire is the fire in the lake of fire ([Rev. 20:15](#)), where the unbelievers will suffer eternal perdition.

In [3:10-14](#) we have a record of John’s word to the crowds, to the tax collectors, and to some

who were serving in the military. To those of the crowd who asked him what to do, John said, “He who has two tunics, let him share with the one who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise” (v. 11). To the tax collectors who came to be baptized, John said, “Exact no more than what you have been instructed” (v. 13). To those serving in the military he said, “Extort nothing from anyone by force, nor take anything from anyone by false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages” (v. 14). What John says here is related to morality. By this we see that in his Gospel, Luke emphasizes morality because his intention is to present the Man-Savior in the highest standard of morality.

RECOMMENDING THE MAN-SAVIOR

In 3:15-17 we have John the Baptist’s recommendation of the Man-Savior. Verse 15 says, “Now while the people were in expectation and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ.” Here we see that the people were expecting to know whether John might be the Christ, the Messiah (John 1:19-27).

In verses 16 and 17 John said, “I indeed baptize you with water, but He who is stronger than

I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire; whose winnowing shovel is in His hand to thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Here we see that although John preached a baptism of repentance, the goal of his ministry was a wonderful Person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He did not make himself the center of his ministry, as a magnet attracting others to himself. He realized that he was only a messenger sent by Jehovah of hosts to bring people to Jesus Christ and exalt Him as the goal of his ministry.

In [verse 16](#) John said that he baptized with water, but the One coming, the Man-Savior, will baptize people in the Holy Spirit and fire. Water signifies death and burial for the termination of repenting people; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life and resurrection for the germination of terminated people. The first was a sign of John’s ministry of repentance; the latter, a sign of the Man-Savior’s ministry of life. John buried the repenting people into the death-water; the Man-Savior raised them up for their regeneration in the Spirit by His resurrection life.

The death-water, pointing to and signifying

the all-inclusive death of Christ, into which His believers are baptized ([Rom. 6:3](#)), buried not only the baptized people but also their sins, the world, and their past life and history (just as the Red Sea buried Pharaoh and the Egyptian army for the children of Israel—[Exo. 14:26-28](#); [1 Cor. 10:2](#)), and separated them from the God-forsaking world and its corruption (just as the flood separated Noah and his family from the world—[1 Pet. 3:20-21](#)).

The Holy Spirit, into whom the Man-Savior baptizes those who believe in Him, is the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God ([Rom. 8:9](#)). Hence, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be baptized into Christ ([Gal. 3:27](#); [Rom. 6:3](#)), into the Triune God ([Matt. 28:19](#)), and even into the Body of Christ ([1 Cor. 12:13](#)), which is joined to Christ in the one Spirit ([1 Cor. 6:17](#)). It is through baptism in such a water and in such a Spirit that the believers in Christ are regenerated into the kingdom of God, into the realm of the divine life and the divine rule ([John 3:3, 5](#)), that they may live by the eternal life of God in His eternal kingdom.

According to the context, “fire” in 3:16 and 17 is not the fire in [Acts 2:3](#), which is related to the Holy Spirit. Rather, the fire in these verses is the fire of the lake of fire ([Rev. 20:15](#)). The word

spoken by John the Baptist here means that if the people will truly repent and believe in the Lord Jesus, the Lord will baptize them in the Holy Spirit so that they may have eternal life. Otherwise, the Lord will baptize them in fire, putting them into the lake of fire for eternal punishment. John's baptism was only for repentance, to usher people to faith in the Lord. The Lord's baptism is either for eternal life in the Holy Spirit or for eternal perdition in fire.

In these verses there are three kinds of baptism: the baptism in water, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the baptism in fire. The baptism in water is for repentance, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for life, and the baptism in fire is for perdition.

Luke 3:17 indicates that the Lord will gather the wheat into His barn, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Those typified by the wheat have life within. The Lord will baptize them in the Holy Spirit and gather them into His “barn” in heaven by rapture. Those typified by the chaff, like the tares in Matthew 13:24-30, are without life. The Lord will baptize them in fire, putting them into the lake of fire. “Chaff” in 3:17 refers to the impenitent Jews, whereas the tares in Matthew 13 refer to nominal Christians. The

eternal destiny of both will be the same—perdition in the lake of fire ([Matt. 13:40-42](#)).

EXHORTING AND BRINGING GOOD NEWS

[Luke 3:18](#) says, “So, with many and various things he exhorted and brought good news to the people.” The Greek word rendered “brought good news” is *euaggelizo*. This word means to evangelize, to announce good news, to declare or bring glad tidings, to preach the gospel. To bring good news of the kingdom of God ([Luke 4:43](#)) is to preach the kingdom of God as the gospel, the good news.

THE BAPTISM AND ANOINTING OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

In [3:21](#) and [22](#) we have the baptism and anointing of the Man-Savior: “Now it came about that, when all the people were baptized, and as Jesus was baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him; and a voice came out of heaven, You are My beloved Son, in You I delight.” The Lord Jesus was baptized not only to fulfill righteousness according to God’s ordination ([Matt. 3:15-16](#)), but also to allow Himself to

be put into death and resurrection that He might minister not in a natural way, but in the way of resurrection. By being baptized He lived and ministered in resurrection even before His actual death and resurrection three and a half years later.

The Lord's being baptized to fulfill God's righteousness and to be put into death and resurrection brought Him three things: the open heaven, the descending of the Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Father. This should be the same with us today in our experience.

Luke 3:22 says that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Man-Savior in bodily form as a dove. Before the Spirit of God descended and came upon Him, the Lord Jesus was conceived and born of the Spirit (Luke 1:35). This proves that He already had the Spirit of God within Him for His birth. Now, for His ministry, the Spirit of God descended upon Him. This was the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1; 42:1; and Psalm 45:7 to anoint the Man-Savior and introduce Him to His people.

Luke 3:22 says that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove. A dove is gentle, and its eyes can see only one thing at a time. Hence, a dove signifies gentleness and singleness in sight

and purpose. By the Spirit of God descending upon Him as a dove, the Lord Jesus ministered in gentleness and singleness, focusing solely on the will of God.

In 3:22 we are also told that a voice came out of heaven, saying, “You are My beloved Son, in You I delight.” Whereas the descending of the Spirit is the anointing of Christ, the speaking of the Father is a testimony to Him as the beloved Son. Here we have a picture of the divine Trinity: the Son standing on earth, the Spirit descending upon the Son, and the Father speaking concerning the Son. This proves that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit exist simultaneously. This is for the accomplishment of God’s economy.

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