

III. PREPARATION

§14: JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matt. 3:1–6; Mark 1:2–6; Luke 3:1–6; John 1:19–23

Historical Information

Lk. 3:1–2

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the governmental-rule of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governmental-ruler of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,
2 in the time of the high priest Annas and Caiaphas, the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

Geographical Information

Mt. 3:1

Mk. 1:4a*

Lk. 3:3a

Jn. 1:28*

1 Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,	4a John the Baptizer came in the wilderness	3a And he came into all the neighboring region of the Jordan,	28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
--	--	--	---

General Message of John's Preaching

Mt. 3:2

Mk. 1:4b*

Lk. 3:3b

2 and saying: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.	4b and was preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.	3b preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.
---	--	--

Questions About John's Identity

Jn. 1:19–22

19 And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem, in order that they might ask him: Who are you?
20 And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed: I am not the Christ.
21 And they asked him: What then? Are you Elijah? And he said: I am not. Are you the Prophet? And he answered: No.
22 They said then to him: Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?

O.T. Prophecies Concerning John

Mt. 3:3

Mk. 1:2–3*

Lk. 3:4–6

Jn. 1:23

3 For this is the one spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying:	2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:	4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:	23 He said:
--	--	---	--------------------

<p>(The) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.</p>	<p>Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way;</p> <p>3 (The) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.</p>	<p>(The) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.</p> <p>5 Every ravine shall be filled up And every mountain and hill shall be lowered, And the crooked shall become straight, And the rough shall become smooth ways.</p> <p>6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.</p>	<p>I am (The) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord,</p> <p>as Isaiah the prophet said.</p>
--	---	---	--

John's Lifestyle

Mt. 3:4

Mk. 1:6*

<p>4 Now John himself had his garment from camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.</p>	<p>6 And John was clothed with camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and he was eating locusts and wild honey.</p>
--	---

John's Followers

Mt. 3:5-6

Mk. 1:5*

<p>5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the neighboring region of the Jordan were going out to him;</p> <p>6 and they were being baptized in the Jordan River by him, confessing their sins.</p>	<p>5 And all the country of Judea and all the Jerusalemites were going out to him;</p> <p>and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.</p>
--	--

Notes

1. The asterisk [*] by a scripture reference above means that the passage is out of order for its own book. This is done so that the parallels can be seen more clearly.
2. **Tiberius Caesar (Lk. 3:1).** Roman emperor from A.D. 14 to 37. His fifteenth year would be A.D. 28/29. He was emperor throughout Jesus' ministry and is therefore the Caesar of the gospels. (See chart: "Rulers of Rome and Palestine" on for references). Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, founded the city of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee in about A.D. 18 in honor of Tiberius Caesar.
3. **Pontius Pilate (Lk. 3:1).** See chart for other scriptural references to him.

4. **Herod, tetrarch of Galilee (Lk. 3:1).** See the chart: “The Family of Herod the Great” for further references. This is Herod Antipas who was tetrarch from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. This is the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded because of John’s speaking out against his marriage with Herodias (Mt. 14; Mk. 6), the one who wanted to see Jesus (Lk. 7:9) and finally got his chance (Lk. 23:7–15). He is also the one whom Jesus called “that fox” (Lk. 13:31–32).
5. **Philip (Lk. 3:1).** Not to be confused with the Herod Philip of Mt. 14:3 and Mk. 6:17 who was married to Herodias before she married Herod Antipas. This Philip was tetrarch over regions northeast of the Sea of Galilee. He built the city of Caesarea Philippi (Mt. 16:13; Mk. 8:27) in honor of both the Caesar and himself, and he also rebuilt the city of Bethsaida on the sea of Galilee.
6. **Lysanias (Lk. 3:1).** For some time the only known Lysanias ruling in the region of Abilene died in 36 B.C. Some thought Luke was in error. However, according to “an inscription at Abila, dating from the reign of Tiberius, it was governed by Lysanias at the time of Jesus’ public life. In A.D. 34 it was given to Agrippa I.” (*Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, “Abilene” pg. 5; see also “Lysanias” pg. 586).
7. **Tetrarch (Lk. 3:1).** Literally, “ruler of a fourth (part),” the word came to be used loosely of a ruler over a small, dependent state. Generally, there was a declining rank in authority as one went from: King—Ethnarch—Tetrarch. Other governmental officials were “prefects,” “procurators,” “governors,” etc. The word “governmental-rule/ruler” in Lk. 3:1 is a general term meaning “command, rule” (we get our word “hegemony” from it).
8. **High Priest (Lk. 3:2).** This word is singular, but two names follow. See chart: “Rulers of Rome and Palestine” under “High Priests” for dates and references. Both Annas and Caiaphas (Annas’ son-in-law) were appointed by Roman procurators, the common practice of the time. It appears that even after Annas was no longer the official High Priest, he retained a great amount of influence and is still called High Priest in Acts 4:6, though Caiaphas in all likelihood was the duly appointed one.