

2nd Sunday in Advent December 9, 2018

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran

Living the ^ Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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<https://www.askideas.com/second-sunday-of-advent-lighting-candles-clipart/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 344 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 63
“On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry”

“Charles Coffin wrote this text in Latin for the Paris Breviary, published in 1736. In 1837 it was translated into English by John Chandler for his *Hymns of the Primitive Church* (Chandler mistakenly thought it was a medieval text). The text has since undergone many revisions, and today it is hard to find two hymnals in which the text is the same. Almost all hymnals include the same five verses (most modern hymnals leave out the original second stanza), but the wording changes quite significantly between texts...

Since this hymn explicitly calls us to make way for Christ, it is most fitting for the season of Advent. It references John the Baptist, a key figure in the narrative of Christ’s birth, and also address us today, to prepare the way or Christ’s second coming. One option suggested by the editors of the *Psalter Hymnal Handbook* is to sing the last verse as the doxology each of the four Sundays in Advent.”

- https://hymnary.org/text/on_jordans_bank_the_baptists_cry
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uz0kFAwuWTY> “Organist is Mark Peters. The prelude for hymn 344 in Lutheran Service Book is from Hymn Prelude Library, Vol. 9 (tunes P, Q, R).”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XSHpLCa7W0> “...sung by the congregation of St. John LCMS during the December 6, 2015 service.”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Klk-BJODjFI> Alternate melody, “Winchester New” Sean Jackson - Christian Music

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

“Divine judgment is swift & decisive! In time, the Lord is sure to defeat all opposition to what is good & right. (Malachi 3:1-7b) In spite of this ongoing conflict, divine grace in Jesus fortifies the Church in prayer, partnership, good works, affection, love, discernment & excellence. (Philippians 1:2-11) God's Word & Sacraments equip the forgiven & forgiving Church to be vigilant about the coming wrath, but also to be generous in bearing fruits of repentance, as we await the salvation of God. (Luke 3:1-14)”

- <http://www.messiahgr.org/events/> MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, 2727 FIVE MILE RD. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Malachi 3:1-7b; RCL, Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9 (next week: Zephaniah 3:14-20; RCL, the same reading)

"The main subjects of Malachi’s message were the love of God, the sin of the priests and people, judgment for sin, and blessing for righteousness. One cannot help but observe that the Gospel of

God has been the same message for sinners of all generations... The most notable feature of this book is its repeated pattern of discourse. Three steps are involved: Affirmation (charge or accusation): "You are robbing Me" ([Mal 3:8](#)). Interrogation (introduced by "you say"): "But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' " ([Mal 3:8](#)). Refutation (answer to the question): "In tithes and contributions" ([Mal 3:8](#)). The common repeated phrase in these discourses is "you say." It appears eight times: [Mal 1:2, 6, 7; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13](#). Another feature of Malachi's message is his strong emphasis on the Law of God (read [Mal 4:4](#)). Also, the book surpasses all other prophetic books in the proportion of verses spoken by the Lord to Israel (forty-seven out of the total of fifty-five)." (Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament)"

➤ https://www.preceptaustin.org/malachi_commentaries

3 "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.^[a] ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

Robbing God (*a reference to verse 8*)

⁶ "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷ From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

- a. [Malachi 3:3](#) *Or and they will belong to the Lord, bringers of an offering in righteousness*

"The messenger is sent to prepare the way before the King, and you'd better listen. He's not there to say whatever's on his mind that day, but he's there to tell you what the King has to say. If you obey the messenger, you obey the king. If you reject the messenger, you face the King's wrath, not the messenger's. If the messenger proclaims in the name of the King, "I pardon you," then the King pardons you. If the messenger proclaims that you are guilty and rebellious, then the King declares that you are condemned.

As the Old Testament draws to a close with the book of Malachi, the prophet declares that the King is coming; and before He comes, He will send His messenger to prepare the way. You hear of the messenger in our Gospel lesson as John the Baptist preaches a baptism of

repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Our Old Testament lesson sums up John's messages with different imagery as it proclaims the coming of the King

The King comes to purify—He comes to purify His people from sin and sinners. He comes like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap, declares the prophet, and that ought to make his audience squirm a bit. They know their sins, and the prophet lists a bunch of them. There are those guilty of sorcery, which would include everything from using incantations to obstruct God's will, to mixing potions to end God's gift of unborn life. There are adulterers, which would include all those guilty of immoral acts or just lustful thoughts and vulgar words. There are liars, who not only deny the truth but also abuse God's gift of words. There are those who use their strength to oppress and manipulate those who are weak and vulnerable. And there are those who do such things wantonly, with no fear of God and His promised judgment.

The Lord promises judgment, swift judgment, upon sorcerers, adulterers, liars, predators and willful sinners—against those who sin against faith, body and truth; against God and neighbor. Do not be deceived: you bear the stains of these sins in your own self. There's no use denying it, for "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," declares St. John (1 John 1:8). To deny that you are stained with sin is only to confirm that you are numbered among deceivers, though you are only perhaps deceiving yourself.

Judgment is coming—that's part of the messenger's proclamation, and so you hear John the Baptist warn of the wrath to come in our Gospel lesson. But before the King comes to judge, He first comes to purify—which as I said before, might make the prophets' hearers uncomfortable...

Now, the Lord will still discipline you at times, because parents discipline their children; but that is not out of wrath for your sin, but out of love that you might remain His beloved child.

God isn't out to get you, because He already "got" His Son on the cross for your sin. You're already refined and purified in His sight, because you wear the righteousness of Christ first given in Your baptism. So when the prophet asks, "Who can endure the day of His coming, and who can stand when He appears?" The answer is, You can! You won't just endure the day of His coming in glory, but you will delight in it. You know this to be true because already, for the sake of Jesus, in God's eyes you are already refined. You are already purified. Because you are forgiven for all of your sins. "

- http://goodshepherdboise.org/content/e107_files/public/39_malachi_31-7b1212.12.pdf Pastor Tim Pauls, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Boise, Idaho
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TewE8cH4vHc> This is track 5 from the 1992 album entitled "Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration". (1992) Patti Austin

"RedBean 2 years ago (edited) Patti's "But Who May Abide" is one of the most amazing cross-continental, cross-century collaborations imaginable.. just think. 3000 years ago, the ancient Hebrews wrote the fiery Malachi verses; 2000 years ago the New Testament writers reshaped these words to the story of Jesus; 400 years ago the King James guys translated these into inspired English; 300 years ago, Handel crafted the powerful melodies that ring clear and true today; 100 years ago, the founders of Gospel brought searching blues and vocal fireworks to religious song; 20 years ago Patti, Mervyn & co. melded these all together in one masterpiece of pure soul shaking beauty!! God bless! "

Psalm 66:1-12; RCL, Luke 1:68-79 (Psalm 85; RCL, Isaiah 12:2-6)

“Come and see what God has done: he is terrible in his deeds among (people).” (66:5). “Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me.” (66:16). Like Psalm 118, Psalm 66 plays with the crucial relationship between individual and community under God...The psalm begins with a hymn praising God’s redemptive work for Israel (66:1-12), but then turns into an individual song of thanksgiving (66:13-20...

In the hymnic opening, Israel is called to praise Yahweh for his work on behalf of all. Verse 6 seems to refer to both the crossing of the sea and of the Jordan, representing the whole history of salvation by these two basic events. The mood is strong and objective. God does what God does; in response one can only cringe (66:3) or worship (66:4). Part 2 of the psalm is, on the other hand, personal and soul-searching...”

- http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/7-2_Search_for_God/7-2_Gaiser.pdf
Frederick J. Gaiser, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

How Awesome Are Your Deeds

To the choirmaster. A Song. A Psalm.

66 Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

² sing the glory of his name;
give to him glorious praise!

³ Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!

So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.

⁴ All the earth worships you
and sings praises to you;

they sing praises to your name.” **Selah**

⁵ Come and see what God has done:

he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.

⁶ He turned the sea into dry land;

they passed through the river on foot.

There did we rejoice in him,

⁷ who rules by his might forever,

whose eyes keep watch on the nations—

let not the rebellious exalt themselves. **Selah**

⁸ Bless our God, O peoples;

let the sound of his praise be heard,

⁹ who has kept our soul among the living
and has not let our feet slip.

¹⁰ For you, O God, have tested us;

you have tried us as silver is tried.

¹¹ You brought us into the net;

you laid a crushing burden on our backs;

¹² you let men ride over our heads;

we went through fire and through water;
yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.

“Most commentators believe that Psalm 66 was penned by [Hezekiah](#), king of Judah, after the Lord delivered the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the attack of the Assyrian army. Although the city was surrounded by 185,000 Assyrians, Isaiah had prophesied that not a single arrow from an Assyrian bow would make its way into Jerusalem (37:33). Indeed, that night, an [angel of the Lord](#) came and slaughtered the entire army (2 Kings). It seems Hezekiah wrote this psalm in celebration of this event.

In this psalm, we have a reminder that we need to praise God. Some commentators divide this psalm into two parts, others divide it into three. One can make a case for three psalms within a psalm: a hymn (66:1–4), a community psalm of thanksgiving (66:5–12), and an individual psalm of thanksgiving (66:13–20). This psalm is divided into two parts. The first half, verses 1 through 12, would be sung by a choir. The second half, verses 13 through 20, would be sung by a soloist, perhaps by Hezekiah himself...”

- <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/jimerwin/2016/10/11/psalm-661-20-praising-gods-work-life/> October 11, 2016 by [Jim Erwin](#)

There is much discussion about the structure of this Psalm and the importance of viewing the entire Psalm. Consider this article by Fred Gaiser about “testimony” and a very complete study of the entire Psalm.

“I will tell you what God has done for me” (Psalm 66:16): A Place for “Testimony” in Lutheran Worship?

Should Lutherans offer “testimonials” in church? Is there a place for such a thing among Lutherans and others who retain some form of historical Christian liturgy? Is this not too raw, too messy, too dangerous? What in the world would our forebears say?

Well, Martin Luther, for one, said this: “Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth.” For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. [Those who believe] this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But [they] must gladly and willingly sing and speak about it so that others also may come and hear it... ‘

- https://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/26-2_Renewing_Worship/26-2_Gaiser.pdf Frederick J. Gaiser, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

Philippians 1:2-11; RCL, Philippians 1:3-11 (Philippians 4:4-7; RCL, the same reading)

“The opening comments and introduction in Paul’s letters often give us an insight into something of the key aspects of what will follow in the letter as a whole, but also an insight into the life of the church to whom the letter is written and their relationship with Paul.

In this case the opening verses of this letter highlight three key themes. First, that of sharing in the gospel, second the meaning of the gospel, and third, the “good work” that God does in the life of the disciple...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2695 Edward Pillar Minister, Evesham Baptist Church, Evesham, United Kingdom

Greeting

1 Paul and Timothy, servants^[a] of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers^[b] and deacons:^[c]

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace,^[d] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

- a. [Philippians 1:1](#) For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface
- b. [Philippians 1:1](#) Or *bishops*; Greek *episkopoi*
- c. [Philippians 1:1](#) Or *servants*, or *ministers*; Greek *diakonoi*
- d. [Philippians 1:7](#) Or *you all have fellowship with me in grace*

“Of the four lectionary readings for this Second Sunday of Advent, this passage from Philippians gives the lightest and least obvious perspective on Advent. I say, least obvious, because apart from the two references to “the day of Christ,” there’s no clear Advent character to Paul’s words. These two references occur in an otherwise standard greeting in a Pauline epistle. On the other hand, these references to Christ’s coming in the midst of an otherwise unremarkable greeting may say something about how we ought to observe Advent in the midst of our everyday lives.

When I say that this is the lightest of the four readings, I mean that it has the most upbeat mood. Malachi 4 is filled with warnings about the coming of The Messenger who will prepare the way. “Who can endure the day of his coming? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.” Luke 3 shows us that Messenger, John the Baptist, preparing the way by calling folks to repentance. And while the reading from “the Psalms” is Zechariah’s “Benedictus” in Luke 1 (*Revised Common Lectionary*), the old man’s ode to joy is thick with Old Testament prophecy and theological concepts. Preaching on any of those texts will get us into heavy stuff. The coming of the day of the Lord is almost threatening or at least filled with so much meaning that it is nearly

overwhelming. The Day of the Lord feels like a giant thunderstorm looming off on the horizon. While that cloud may eventually “burst with blessings on our heads” (as in the hymn, “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”), it still looks ominous from a distance.

Instead of blazing fire and harsh soap, an old man spouting prophecy and a wild man shouting in the wilderness, our reading from Philippians 1 gives us a much lighter image of Advent, the image of harvest. I pick that up from verses 10 and 11, where “the day of Christ” is followed by “filled with the fruit of righteousness...” Paul looks toward that day of Christ’s coming as the day when the fruit is ripe and ready for the harvest. While it’s true that we could take the phrase about “completion until the day of Christ Jesus” in verse 6 as an image drawn from the building trades, it could also refer to the completion of the farmer’s work, when the fruit of his labor is ready to be harvested.

The preparation and anticipation of Advent is often done with a mood of introspection and even penitence. If my reading of Philippians 1 is right, Advent can also be a time of celebration, of downright jubilation. That is the mood here in our reading. There’s thanksgiving and joy, love and peace. It makes me think of Thanksgiving Day with a table sagging under the fruits of the harvest, or the annual Christmas feast with family gathered around the table in boisterous good cheer, or the Cornucopia filled with fruit and vegetables and grain on the Communion Table at my last church during the holidays. This text and its image of harvest will elevate our celebration of Advent far above the world’s “have yourself a merry little Christmas.” Overflowing with thanksgiving and joy and confidence and love, we look forward to the coming of the Lord of the harvest who will gather in the full fruit he planted at his first coming (John 12:24)...”

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/advent-2c/?type=lectionary_epistle
Stan Mast

Luke 3:1-14 (15-20); RCL, Luke 3:1-6 (Luke 7:18-28 (29-35); RCL, Luke 3:7-18)

“...since the lectionary splits Luke’s account of John the Baptist’s ministry between the Second and Third Sundays of Advent, you may want to read the whole of Luke 3:1-18 now.

From History to Confession

Of the four Evangelists, Luke operates with the most self-conscious sense of himself as a historian. For this reason, he at several points situates his characters in the larger historical framework and narrative of the Roman world. Hence, John is born “in the days of King Herod of Judea” (1:5), and Mary and Joseph set out for Bethlehem because of the census ordered by Emperor Augustus, “when Quirinius was governor of Syria” (2:1-2)... Luke is making a confession of faith: the events he narrates, though apparently small on the world stage -- the birth of a son to a priest and his barren wife, the fortunes of a pregnant young woman and her fiancé -- are of global significance...” (continued after the reading)

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 3rd Chapter”

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² during the

high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
 ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,^[a]
 make his paths straight.
⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
 and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
 and the crooked shall become straight,
 and the rough places shall become level ways,
⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

⁷ He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” ¹¹ And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics^[b] is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” ¹³ And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, ¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. ¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰ added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

- a. [Luke 3:4](#) Or *crying, Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord*
- b. [Luke 3:11](#) Greek *chiton*, a long garment worn under the cloak next to the skin

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“...The same is true of today's reading where Luke pulls out all the stops and names not just one or two historical figures to anchor his story, as in previous scenes, but rather lists seven leaders both secular and religious. Along side this august company, John is nothing, the son of a small town priest. Further, he is nowhere, out in the wilderness. But readers of the biblical saga will recognize that this is the setting for prophecy, as it is to this John, rather than to the mighty, to whom, as Luke narrates simply, "the word of God came."

While Luke gives less attention to John's garb or diet than Matthew or Mark, he nevertheless also sees him as a -- and perhaps as the last and culminating -- representative of the Old Testament prophets. He was of priestly lineage on both sides of his family (1:5), is named by the angel Gabriel as having the spirit and power of Elijah (1:17), and fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah (3:4-6). Similarly, John, moved by the word of God, plays two characteristically prophetic roles: (1) He calls for repentance and, indeed, proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and (2) he also precedes, prepares the way for, and foretells the coming of the Messiah, the one who is the salvation of Israel.

In this way, John serves as the hinge of history, drawing to a close the age of the law and the prophets and inaugurating the age of redemption when, in the words of John's spirit-filled father, "by the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us..."(1:78).

In these opening verses -- which in many ways serve as the beginning of his gospel proper (with the first two chapters serving as introduction) -- Luke lays out the primary dramatic tension that will occupy his remaining chapters. John comes preaching repentance and forgiveness, and the one who follows him, but is greater than him, will do likewise (even praying for the forgiveness of those who crucify him [23:34]). Both will end up dead, but their deaths -- and even more, Christ's resurrection -- will shake the foundations of power these seven represent and stand upon. Indeed, by the time Luke writes, all seven are dead, a fact not lost on the community for whom Luke writes, while those who follow Jesus persist, and even flourish.

In this way, Luke moves beyond locating the story of John and Jesus in world history to actually locating -- and reinterpreting -- the history of the world in light of the story of John and Jesus. Further, Luke locates and reinterprets the history of the readers of his gospel in light of this story as well. Those drawn into this story, Luke proclaims, though perhaps beset by the powerful of the world, have nevertheless been joined to Jesus' death and resurrection and so will also and eventually triumph. After all, John's preaching will "give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death and guide our feet into the way of peace" (1:79)..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=491 **David Lose**
Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn

As I caution each week, "...Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary." What do you think of the author's approach in the italicized section below?

“At the end of this list of leaders comes “John, son of Zechariah.” By this point, Luke’s readers have already been introduced to John. We know of his unlikely conception (Zechariah and Elizabeth are “old” and Elizabeth is “barren,” 1:7), and we know that he is related to Jesus. Indeed, most commentaries note that the infancy stories portray John and Jesus symmetrically.

Still, they are not meant to be seen as equals; the Baptizer is “great” before the Lord (1:15), but he is clearly inferior to Jesus. This so-called “step-parallelism” portrays John as Jesus’ God-sent precursor.

There is an odd chronological gap between 2:52, which simply states that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, to 3:1, where John comes on the scene fully grown. ***So startling is this jump that some redaction critics have suggested that the original beginning of Luke’s Gospel was 3:1 and Luke 1 and 2 were added later. One need not engage in source-critical debates to wonder why the narrator skips over Jesus’ and John’s childhoods (with the exception of 2:41-52), especially given that ancient Greco-Roman biographies often did include a hero’s early years.*** Why does Luke move so suddenly from a story of Jesus at twelve (2:41-52) to the account of John as an adult (3:1-6)?

One effect of the leap from the young Jesus to the adult John is to draw attention to the fulfillment of previous prophecies about John’s role. The angel Gabriel had told Zechariah:

“And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him. (1:16-17)”

Zechariah had then reiterated:

And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High. For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. (1:76-77)

By collapsing the timeline of some thirty years into the space between two verses, Luke makes the prophecies about John the Baptist seem to be fulfilled instantaneously. This storytelling technique subtly reinforces the Lukan theme of divine fulfillment...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3894 **Michal Beth Dinkler** Assistant Professor of New Testament, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.



- *Agnus Day* appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>

So have you taken the Luke Challenge to produce a handwritten copy of the book of Luke by Christ the King Sunday, November 24, 2019?

It is 24 chapters long (1151 verses or 19,482 words, subject to the translation). Break that down to a schedule that works for you; a specific time or day each week, 2 weeks per chapter, or about three verses a day. Use a spiral notebook or a journal. Decide if you want a “Red Letter” edition for the words of Christ. Invent your own illustrated manuscript style. (Or you could just commit to reading it)

How you do it is your choice, actually doing it is also your choice.

“I love Luke. The man has style. And he displays that style in narrative after narrative in his Gospel and in his sequel, The Book of Acts. Tradition has it Luke was a doctor. He clearly came mighty close to missing his calling. Thankfully, the Spirit used Luke’s considerable literary powers after all to give a great gift to the world: Luke’s two contributions to what we now call the New Testament...”

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/advent-2c/?type=the_lectionary_gospel
Stan Mast

“For Luke “as it was in the beginning” might be a good slogan to encapsulate his Gospel’s conclusion. Because when Luke began, we heard a lot of very dramatic rhetoric as to what the coming of the Messiah would entail. Even the Virgin Mary’s song in Luke 1—the Magnificat—is filled with violent imagery. We read about the rich being sent away empty, about the proud being overthrown, and just generally about the great reversal of fortune that would come as a result of the child Mary was carrying.

Then when John the Baptist appears in Luke 3, he also makes claims that are on the grand side. He predicts great upheavals and then claims that ALL of humanity would see these things... Both Mary and John the Baptist speak (and sing) in ways that let you know something BIG is on its way!

But then Jesus of Nazareth appears and for the longest time things get kind of quiet. Jesus is doing many good things, saying memorable phrases, healing people. But no valleys were getting exulted. No mountains were falling into the heart of the sea. The haughty rich were snug and secure in their mansions, and the poor were not being filled with good things. It got to the point (as you can read in Luke 7) where even John the Baptist thought he had made a mistake in identifying his cousin Jesus as the great Coming One... Loosely paraphrased, John wonders if they should wait for someone **better!**...

But Jesus kept making clear that his kingdom, though real and powerful, was of a different nature than the kingdoms of this world. Finally, however, by the time we get to Luke 21, some of this gospel’s rhetoric appears to have swung around full circle as even Jesus starts to talk about public events that all humanity will see. What’s more, those public events will be dramatic and will send people skittering and scattering. You can almost hear John the Baptist crowing, “Now that’s more like it!” Mother Mary may be smiling approvingly in the background, too...”

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/advent-1c-2/?type=the_lectionary_gospel Scott Hozee