



CHAPTER 3: 1-38

The Gospel of
Luke

www.spreadjesus.org www.spreadjesus.org

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Luke 3: 1-38

Douay Rheims Version

John's mission and preaching. Christ is baptized by him.

1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina:
2. Under the high priests Anna and Caiphas: the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert.
3. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins.
4. As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.

5. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain.
6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
7. He said therefore to the multitudes that went forth to be baptized by him: Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come?
8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance: and do not begin to say, We have Abraham for our father. For I say unto you that God is able of these stones, to raise up children to Abraham.
9. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire.
10. And the people asked him, saying: What then shall we do?
11. And he answering, said to them: He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner.
12. And the publicans also came to be baptized and said to him: Master, what shall we do?
13. But he said to them: Do nothing more than that which is appointed you.
14. And the soldiers also asked him, saying: And what shall we do? And he said to them: Do violence to no man, neither calumniate any man; and be content with your pay.
15. And as the people were of opinion, and all were thinking in their hearts of John, that perhaps he might be the Christ:
16. John answered, saying unto all: I indeed baptize you with water: but there shall come one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;
17. Whose fan is in his hand: and he will purge his floor and will gather the wheat into his barn: but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.
18. And many other things exhorting did he preach to the people.
19. But Herod the tetrarch, when he was reprov'd by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done:
20. He added this also above all and shut up John in prison.
21. Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened.
22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, as a dove, upon him. And a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son. In thee I am well pleased.
23. And Jesus himself was beginning about the age of thirty years: being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was of Heli, who was of Mathat,
24. Who was of Levi, who was of Melchi. who was of Janne, who was of Joseph,
25. Who was of Mathathias, who was of Amos, who was of Nahum, who was of Hesli, who was of Nagge,
26. Who was of Mahath, who was of Mathathias, who was of Semei, who was of Joseph, who was of Juda,

27. Who was of Joanna, who was of Reza, who was of Zorobabel, who was of Salathiel, who was of Neri,
28. Who was of Melchi, who was of Addi, who was of Cosan, who was of Helmadan, who was of Her,
29. Who was of Jesus, who was of Eliezer, who was of Jorim, who was of Mathat, who was of Levi,
30. Who was of Simeon, who was of Judas, who was of Joseph, who was of Jona, who was of Eliakim,
31. Who was of Melea, who was of Menna, who was of Mathatha, who was of Nathan, who was of David,
32. Who was of Jesse, who was of Obed, who was of Booz, who was of Salmon, who was of Naasson,
33. Who was of Aminadab, who was of Aram, who was of Esron, who was of Phares, who was of Judas,
34. Who was of Jacob, who was of Isaac, who was of Abraham, who was of Thare, who was of Nachor,
35. Who was of Sarug, who was of Ragau, who was of Phaleg, who was of Heber, who was of Sale,
36. Who was of Cainan, who was of Arphaxad, who was of Sem, who was Of Noe, who was of Lamech,
37. Who was of Mathusale, who was of Henoch, who was of Jared, who was of Malaleel, who was of Cainan,
38. Who was of Henos, who was of Seth, who was of Adam, who was of God.

Ver. 1.—Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Ver. 2.—Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

S. Luke passes from the twelfth year of Christ to His thirtieth, when, after the manner of the Hebrews, He began to discharge His Office of Teacher and Redeemer and to preach publicly.

In the fifteenth year. Augustus reigned for fifty-seven years from the death of Julius Caesar, and died on the 19th of August; so that the last year of Augustus was not a complete year, and, consequently, the first of Tiberius only consisted of five months, from August to January, from which the Romans began the year. This Tiberius, having heard wonderful things through Pilate of the miracles and the sanctity of Christ, wished to place Him among the gods, but the senate opposed him, because he had attempted to do it without consulting them (see Commentary on S. Matt. xxvii. 24).

Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa. Archeläus, son of the Infanticide Herod, was exiled by Augustus for his tyrannical conduct in the tenth year of his tetrarchy, supposed to be the fifty-second of Augustus and the twelfth of the life of Christ.

Augustus then joined Judæa (that is, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin) to the province of Syria, the governor of which was at the time Quirinus, or, as S. Luke calls him, Cyrenius, who committed the administration of Judæa to Coponius. Hence the governors of Judæa were called procurators or administrators, though they were really governors. Pilate is here called *ἡγεμονεύων*, ruler or chief; and the Arabic has “in the dominion over Judæa of Pontius Pilate.” Pilate was the fifth procurator of Judæa in succession from Coponius; he ruled nine years, in the second of which Christ was baptized, and in the fifth was crucified by him. By the vengeance of God Pilate was exiled by Augustus in the twenty-third year of the reign of the latter.

Herod being tetrarch of Galilee. In the Arabic, “In the dominion of Herod the ruler over the fourth of Galilee, and of Philip, his brother, over the fourth of Ituræa.” A tetrarch is one who governs the fourth part of a province or kingdom; called by Theodoret a “Quadruplaris.”

Herod the Infanticide, dying five days after the massacre of the innocents, in the second year of Christ left three sons, Archeläus, Herod Antipas, and Philip (for he had put the rest to death—one of them, Antipater, at the very time of the massacre of the innocents). These striving together about the succession of their father, Augustus divided the kingdom into four parts, or tetrarchies; he gave Judæa to Archeläus (and after his expulsion to Coponius), Galilee to Herod Antipas, Ituræa and Trachonitis to Philip, and Abilene to Lysanias, a foreigner. These tetrarchies were of great size, and like kingdoms, as Pliny tells us (bk. v. 18); and so Herod Antipas, although he is called a tetrarch by S. Matthew (xiv. 1), is called a king by S. Mark (vi. 14). Indeed Herod Agrippa, father and son, the nephew and grand-nephew of Herod Antipas, being son and grand-son of his brother Aristobulus, obtained from Caligula and from Claudius the title of king, as appears from Acts xii. 1 and xxv. 24.

And his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and the region of Trachonitis. Ituræa, so called from Iethur or Ithur, the son of Ishmael, is a mountainous and woody district stretching along the base of the Lebanon. Trachon, or Trachonitis, says Pliny (bk. v, ch. 18), is a region beyond Jordan, between Palestine and Cœlesyria, bounded on the east by the Arabian desert, and on the north by Damascus; it was inhabited by half the tribe of Manasseh. *And Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene.* Bede and Adrichomius think that this Lysanias was a fourth son of Herod the Infanticide. But Josephus says that he was the son of another Lysanias, who was the elder son of Ptolemy Minnæus, who ruled in Chalcis close by Mount Lebanon, and that he succeeded him in his kingdom before Herod the Infanticide had been made king of Judæa by the Romans. The elder Lysanias was slain by Antony, the colleague of Augustus and Lepidus in the Triumvirate, at the instigation of Cleopatra, who was scheming to add his kingdom to her own ancestral kingdom of Egypt. This happened thirty years before the birth of Christ.

Lysanias the younger tried to reinstate Antigonus in the kingdom of Judæa, to the exclusion of Hyrcanus, whom Herod the Infanticide supported; for this reason Herod was created King of Judæa by the Roman Senate at the instance of Antony and Augustus, both Hyrcanus and Antigonus being excluded, as Josephus relates in bk. i. ch. 11 of his "War;" and the same author, in bk. xix. ch. 4 of his "Antiquities," asserts that all that region was called Lysania, after Lysanias.

Abilene, Abila, Abyla, or Abela, is a celebrated town of Cœlesyria situated by Mount Lebanon, and from it the region of Abilene, or Abilina, takes its name. Abilene borders on Damascus towards the east, Chalcis on the west, and the Lebanon on the south.

S. Luke is at great pains to enumerate here the chief personages, both secular and ecclesiastic:—

- (1.) To mark distinctly and palpably the time and year when John, and then Christ, began to preach.
- (2.) To shew that the sceptre had now passed from Judah, because Herod and his sons the tetrarchs, and Tiberias and the Romans had become the rulers of Judæa, and that therefore the Messiah, the beginning of whose preaching he relates in this chapter, had come, according to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10.
- (3.) To give us to understand that Israel, torn in sunder among so many rulers; some infidels, others impious men, had need of the advent of the Messiah, Who should make the people whole and save them.
- (4.) Because these personages had much to do with those works of John and of Christ which S. Luke will afterwards relate. Tiberius, as I have said, wished to number Christ among the gods; Pilate crucified Him; Herod Antipas seized upon Herodias the wife of his brother Philip, and being reproved by John, slew him; and he clothed Christ in a white dress and mocked Him; while Annas and Caiaphas persecuted Christ to death, and also persecuted the Apostles after His death.

Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests. There was but one high priest of the Jews, as appears from Josephus and others; why then are there two mentioned here? My answer is that Caiaphas was the high priest, but there were many chief, or leading priests, as is clear from Matt. xxvi. 3, and the *chief priests*, are repeatedly mentioned in the Passion of Christ, as accusing Him before Pilate, condemning Him, mocking Him, but the most prominent of them were Caiaphas and Annas, the former as being high priest, the latter as father-in-law of Caiaphas, and as having been high priest, and having great influence among the Jews; indeed, Annas had five sons who were high priests after him (Josephus, "Antiquities," bk. xx. ch. 8).

The word (that is, the command) of God came unto John the son of Zacharias. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, God ordered John the Baptist to preach and baptize; ordered him by an interior inspiration, perhaps too by the voice of an angel.

Ver. 3.—*And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance (i.e., stirring them up to do penance) for the remission of sins—to be*

concerned. For if Jesus be descended from Jesca and Mathat, He could not be also descended from Jesca and Mathan; how, then, is He set down as the descendant of both Mathan and Mathat?

My opinion is that in the time of Christ it was very well known that Mathan was the common grandfather of Joseph and the Blessed Virgin; and that Jacob, the father of Joseph, and Heli, or Joachim, the father of the Blessed Virgin, were full brothers - as Francis Lucas holds - or rather, that Jacob was the brother of S. Anne, the wife of Heli, or Joachim, and mother of the Blessed Virgin; hence the genealogy of one is the genealogy of the other. For the Blessed Virgin was descended, through her mother, from Jacob, Mathan, and Solomon, and, through her father, Joachim or Heli, from Mathat and Nathan.

So S. Matthew gives the genealogy of the Blessed Virgin through her mother S. Anne, while S. Luke gives it through her father Heli, or Joachim, so that Christ may be shown to be descended of the seed of David in both ways.

There is no other better way than this of reconciling the genealogies given by SS. Matthew and Luke. Moreover, it is the common opinion of S. Augustine, Denis the Carthusian, Cajetan, Jansenius, and other doctors whom Suarez quotes (pt. iii., quæst. xxvii. a. 1, disp. 3, sect. 2) that S. Luke traces the genealogy of Christ through Heli, or Joachim, the father of the Blessed Virgin. Hence it must follow that S. Matthew's genealogy is traced through S. Anne, and that she was the daughter of Mathan; for otherwise all her ancestors, whom S. Matthew recounts, belong only to Joseph, and not to the Blessed Virgin and Christ.

S. Matthew then traces Christ's descent through His father Joseph, S. Luke through His mother, the Blessed Virgin; both lines are united in David, but after him separate through his two sons Solomon and Nathan. And again these two lines of Nathan and of Solomon unite in S. Anne, the daughter of Mathan, and sister of Jacob, Joseph's father.

praises and honours, and refer them to Christ, lest by reason of their pride they be deprived of them by Christ.”

Ver. 23.—*And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years old.* “Beginning” refers not to “thirty years,” for then “about” would be redundant, but to the public preaching of Jesus, for which He was sent by the Father. Having been declared in His baptism the Messiah, the Teacher, Lawgiver, and Saviour of the world by the Dove and by the voice of the Father, and when He was therefore beginning to exercise this His function, and to teach the Gospel law and preach publicly, Jesus “was about thirty years old.” This is plain from the Greek, which has, “And Jesus was about thirty years beginning,” *i.e.*, when He began to preach. So Jansenius, Baronius, and others.

Observe the “about;” he does not state definitely whether Jesus was exactly thirty. If we suppose Him to have been born in the forty-second year of Augustus, Jesus was, in this year of His baptism—the fifteenth of Tiberius—completing His twenty-ninth year and beginning His thirtieth. But if He were born in the forty-first of Augustus He was now completing His thirtieth year.

Thirty years. John, and a little after him, Christ, began to preach not too soon, but at a proper age. The Hebrews have the tradition that no one was allowed to teach publicly before his thirtieth year, for at that age a man is in his full vigour, and his judgment fully matured and perfected. This we also gather from 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.

As was supposed, the son of Joseph, which was (here, and before each of the following names the Arabic puts in “the son”) *of Heli, which was of Mathat.* From this passage Porphyry and Julian the Apostate accused Luke of being incorrect, because Joseph was not the son of Heli, but of Jacob, as S. Matthew says (ch. i.); and because S. Luke gives the other progenitors of Joseph and Heli names entirely different from those given them by S. Matthew.

Besides, Jesus was not the son of Joseph, but born of the Virgin Mary. The solution given by some to this difficulty is that Joseph was by nature the son of Jacob, but by law the son of Heli. By the old law (Deut. xxv. 5) a surviving brother had to raise up seed to his dead brother, and the brother who had died childless was held to be the legal father of these sons. Now Jesca, says Euthymius, married Mathat, and by him had Heli, then she married Mathan, and by him had Jacob. Heli died without issue, and his brother Jacob married his wife in accordance with the law, and Joseph was his son by her, being, therefore, *naturally* the son of Jacob, but *legally* of Heli. So Justinus, S. Jerome, Eusebius, Nazianzen, and S. Ambrose explain it. But, on the other hand, Heli and Jacob were only uterine brothers, and the law on the subject of raising up seed to a brother only applies to full brothers, sons of the same father; for they alone kept the name and heritage of the father. Besides, the introduction of Jesca is beside the point. For though her sons, Heli and Jacob, be connected through her, yet they would have no connection through Mathat and Mathan and the rest of their ancestors up to David.

This, therefore, has nothing to do with the pedigree of the Blessed Virgin and Christ, in so far as showing Jesus to be of the seed of David according to the flesh is concerned. For if Jesus be descended from Jesca and Mathat, He could not be also

obtained in the baptism of Christ. John was preaching penance, that by it they might dispose themselves for the reception of pardon and grace from Christ. See Matt. iii.

Ver. 4.—*As it is written in the book of the words of Isaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.*

Ver. 5.—*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.* S. Gregory (*Hom. xx. In Evangelia*), S. Augustine, S. Chrysostom, Bede, and others interpret these words as meaning, Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, as Christ said. This, however, is a discourse in which John exhorts his hearers to a change of life and conversation, as though he said, O ye Jews, prepare the way for Christ, your Messiah, now about to come to you. Wherefore, “Every valley shall be filled,” *i.e.*, let it be filled up, “and every mountain and hill shall be brought low,” *i.e.*, let it be brought low, “and the crooked,” *i.e.*, difficult ways, “shall be,” *i.e.*, let them be made, “into straight,” &c. In other words, smooth all the ways for Christ, your King, Who cometh, as is wont to be done for kings that are about to enter upon their kingdoms, so that the rough ways be made smooth and level. Remove from your minds all that is evil, distorted, or unequal; too much lifted up, or too much cast down; he that beareth in his heart the mountain of pride, let him bring down this swelling, and he that hath in him the valley of pusillanimity or sloth, let him lift and fill it up with generosity and confidence in God; and he that is of “rough” behaviour, let him train himself to suavity and modesty.

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God—i.e., so shall it come to pass that every man shall be able to see both with the eyes of the body, and also more especially with those of the soul, “the salvation of God”—the Saviour Christ—feel and experience within himself the salvation and the power of the grace brought by Christ.

S. Gregory (*Hom. 20 In Evang.*) says, “Every valley shall be filled up, because the humble receive a gift which the hearts of them that are puffed up repel from them. The bad places are made straight when the hearts of the wicked, turned awry by iniquity, are directed by the rule of justice; and the rough places are turned into smooth ways when haughty and angry minds return to the gentleness of meekness by the infusion of heavenly grace.”

The verses from 7 to 10 have been explained in the Commentary on S. Matthew iii. 7.

Ver. 10.—*And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?* that we may bear fruits worthy of penance, and so avoid the ruin threatened by you, and obtain everlasting salvation. John had accused the Pharisees and the populace, but the Pharisees “despised the counsel of God,” c. vii. 30, and therefore also the discourse of John; but the crowd of common people, deeply moved and touched by the force of his preaching, try to find out the way to repent, so as to seize upon John’s instructions, and offer themselves to him ready and prepared. So also, in these days, the common people were more ready than the great to take hold of the warnings of preachers, and are therefore saved rather than they.

Ver. 11.—*He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* A synecdoche; he signifies every kind of alms-deed by one which is the more common and necessary; clothing and feeding the poor. “Two” supposing one coat to be sufficient to clothe and warm the body, and the other, therefore, superfluous, let him give that other “to him that hath not,” to him that is naked and in need of a coat. For if both be necessary he is not bound to, give either to the poor man. So S. Jerome (*Quæst. I. ad Hedibiam*); and S. Ambrose, on this passage, says, “The limits of mercy are observed according to the capability of human nature, so that each one deprive not himself of everything, but share what he has with the poor man,” and he adds, “He that is able, let him bear the fruit of grace, he that is bound, of penance. The use of mercy is common, therefore the precept is common; mercy is the fulness of the virtues.”

This, then, is one of the fruits worthy of penance, according to the words of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, “Break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor” iv. 27. Besides, almsgiving fitly disposes our lives for every virtue. Every virtue is either of obligation or of supererogation; justice is of obligation, mercy of supererogation, and therefore mercy satisfies both for itself and for justice, both because he that gives what is his own, will not seize what belongs to others, and also because he that gives what he is not bound to give will much more pay what he owes—to which he is bound by justice or some other virtue—and again because mercy comes of love and charity, and charity is the fulness of the law. For “He that loveth hath fulfilled the law,” Rom. xiii.

Euthymius aptly remarks here, “He enjoins on the multitudes to take one another into mutual benevolence, and assist one another with mutual good works.” For the many easily understand works of mercy, and devote themselves to them, while they are not easily induced to prayer, fasting, and works of penance, and sometimes are incapable of them.

Ver. 12.—*Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?*—to save our souls. Here is fulfilled the saying of Christ “Publicans and harlots shall be before you (O Scribes) in the kingdom of God,” Matt. xxi. 31. For the sinners, being called to account by John, felt deep compunction, acknowledged their fault, and sought for penance; but the proud Scribes, thinking themselves just and wise, despised it.

Ver. 13.—*And he said unto them, exact no more than that which is appointed you*—in the exaction of taxes. In the Greek it is *πιζάσσετε*, which can be translated both make and exact, but in this place is more clearly rendered exact as the Syriac and the Greek render it. So Jansenius, Maldonatus, Francis Lucas, and others. For tax-gatherers are wont to increase the tribute out of avarice, and to exact more than is appointed by the Ruler, which is theft or rapine, wherefore John here charges them with it. “He lays a moderate command on them,” says S. Augustine (*Serm. 3 de Diversis*), “that both iniquity may have no place, and the appointed tribute may have effect” “So the Baptist,” says S. Ambrose, “gives to each generation of men the answer suitable to them.” Let the preacher do the same, and prescribe to wives, to husbands, to sons, to maidservants, to menservants, to merchants, farmers and lawyers, what each in particular ought to do, and give each one the directions proper to his state of life.”

Ver. 14.—*And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* Soldiers who were serving some of them under Herod Antipas against Aretas, the king of the Arabs, some under the prefect of the Temple, and some under Pilate, the Roman Governor; these men, hearing John thundering against their vices, and threatening them with hell, conscious of rapine and other crimes, which soldiers are wont to commit, becoming, together with the publicans, contrite, at the word of John, seek from him the remedy of penance, of a good life, and of salvation. John, therefore, tacitly gives it to be understood that it is lawful to be a soldier, and that war is lawful, as S. Ambrose teaches (*Serm. 7*), and S. Augustine (*Contra Faustum*, bk. xxii. ch. lxxiv.)

Ver. 15.—*And as the people were in expectation* (in the Greek *πιζοσδοκοῦντες*, suspecting, expecting, as Vatablus renders it—when the people were hoping, or were in suspense with hope, desire, and expectation), *and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not*—the Messiah promised to the fathers, and so eagerly expected by all the Jews at this particular time when the sceptre had passed from Judah, and Daniel’s seventy weeks, the sign of Christ’s coming, were fulfilled. As the people, then, were spreading this report about John, the chief men of the Jews at length sent messengers to him to ask him whether he were Christ (John i 19). Such was the holiness of John. So S. Ambrose, Bede, and others explain.

Ver. 16.—*John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, namely the Messias.*

The rest which Luke here adds has been explained on Matt. iii. 11.

Morally, Origen says, “Preachers are here warned not to allow themselves to be too much praised or honoured by the people, but to suppress these