

Change that makes a Difference

“Change without difference”

- We hope a change will make a difference, yet often it doesn't
 - Buying exercise equipment
 - Other examples?

Sometimes change actually makes a meaningful difference

- Health warning
- Yet it happens far less than we expect or hope
 - Seeing a car accident changes our driving...for a short time

When God the Son entered humanity...

1



The Savior has Come!
Luke 3:1-20

bib.ly/Lu3.NIV

2

Gospel of Luke

- Purpose: know the certainty of the ministry of Jesus
- Chapters 1-3: Preparing for Jesus' ministry
 - Prophecy about John the Baptist and Jesus
 - Birth of John the Baptist and Jesus
 - Jesus' growth
 - John the Baptist prepares people for Jesus

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Luke 3:1-20

bib.ly/Lu3.NIV

1-3: John is God's preparer for Jesus & His salvation

- 4-6: • Luke: know the certainty of this historical event
- 7-9: • God chose an unusual individual in the desert
- 10-14: rather than the powerful people (secular or religious)
- 15-17: • Jesus said: "No one is greater than John" *Luke 7:28*
- 18: • Baptism of repentance
- 19-20: • Baptism: a public expression of an inner reality
 - A change to align one's **whole being** with God.
 - Religious Jews were called to repentance
 - The purpose: forgiveness of sins

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Luke 3:1-20bib.ly/Lu3.NIV

1-3: John is God's preparer for Jesus & His salvation

4-6: John's message: God is coming! So get ready!

7-9: • Preparation is the change of human lives

10-14: • "What needs removal is people's sin"

15-17: • Reversal

18: • those who are low (weak, sinful) are raised up

19-20: • those who are high (pride, power) are brought down

• what is crooked and rough
is made straight and smooth

• Salvation is meant for all peoples

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4-6: John's message: God is coming! So get ready!

7-9: Sermon 1: Beware of God's coming judgment

10-14: • John questions the sincerity of their repentance

15-17: • Not merely religious action or a "change of mind"

18: • Not safe because of being Jewish

19-20: • Thinking: "We are God's chosen ones"

• Judgment is very near and very real

• John's message: Show in your actions

the reality of your claim to follow Jesus

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1-3: John is God's preparer for Jesus & His salvation

4-6: John's message: God is coming! So get ready!

7-9: Sermon 1: Beware of God's coming judgment

10-14: **Sermon 2: Show repentance by treatment of people**

15-17: • People heard the urgency and danger!

18: • Paul: "You must teach what is appropriate to sound

19-20: doctrine." *Titus 2:1*

- Be generous to the poor (even if you aren't rich)
- Be honest & just when you have power
- Be content with what you have
- Seriously!

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4-6: John's message: God is coming! So get ready!

7-9: Sermon 1: Beware of God's coming judgment

10-14: Sermon 2: Show repentance by treatment of people

15-17: **Sermon 3: God's Messiah is great beyond all others!**

18: • Far surpassing John's greatness as a prophet

19-20: • "I am nothing compared to Christ!"

- Messiah's baptism: Holy Spirit and fire
 - Far greater than John's baptism with water
- Final judgment is very real and sobering

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10-14: Sermon 2: Show repentance by treatment of people

15-17: Sermon 3: God's Messiah is amazingly great!

18: Summary of John's ministry

- 19-20: • He preached the good news
- Forgiveness of sins is found in Jesus alone
 - Requires a genuine turning to God with one's whole being, not just beliefs or thinking or attitudes or religious actions
 - Urgent and bold

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18: Summary of John's ministry

19-20: Herod rejected God's purposes for him

- John also confronted those in power who did not come to him
- Rejection of God's prophets is a rejection of God
- First of many powerful people to reject Jesus' ways

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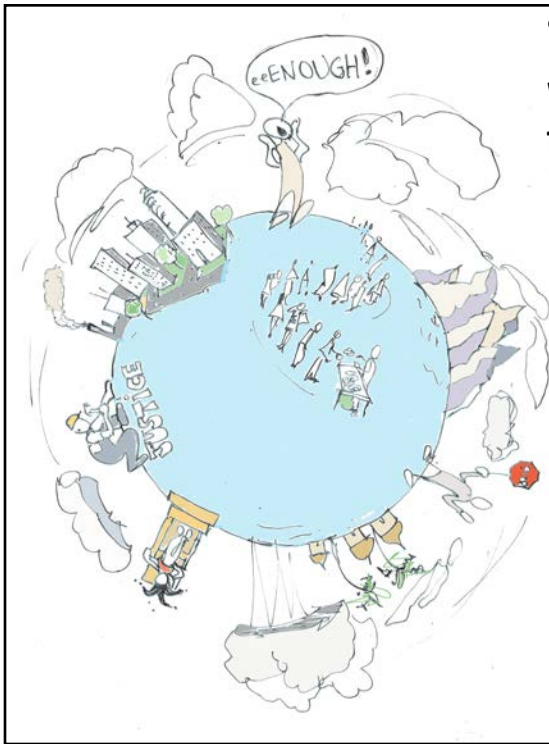
The Big Idea

**The coming of the Savior from God to people
brings the life-altering Kingdom of God
and it demands people's urgent repentance
for receiving His forgiveness & blessing**

**"the discipline of rebuilding life
in alignment with the will of God."**



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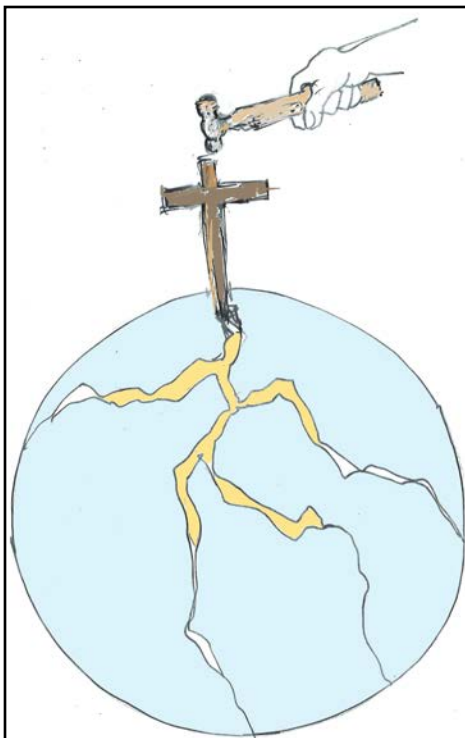


"What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun."

Ecclesiastes 1:9

- "History demonstrates that **racism never goes away**; it just adapts." *Color of Compromise*
- Jesus said, "**The poor you will always have with you**, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me." *Mark 14:7*
- Jesus said to his disciples: "**Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come**, but woe to anyone through whom they come." *Luke 17:1*

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"But when this priest [Jesus] had **offered for all time one sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. **For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.**"

Hebrews 10:12–14

"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! **He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

1 Corinthians 15:56–57

Death, sin, brokenness, and division are **no longer in charge**! Christ in us is greater than these!!

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The Big Idea

**The coming of the Savior from God to people
brings the **life-altering Kingdom of God**
and it demands people's urgent **repentance**
for receiving His forgiveness & blessing**

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Application

See all of life in the light of Jesus' power & presence

- Human powers are nothing compared to the Son of God
- Jesus has come with salvation to all who bow to Him
 - This transforms every life experience
- The Son of God's presence & work changes everything!
 - Death is not the end
 - Suffering in Christ brings profound good
 - Blessings are gifts from God to be used as He directs
 - My failings are not the final word!

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“But we have this treasure [the knowledge of God in Christ] in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

We are **hard pressed on every side**, **but not crushed**;
perplexed, **but not in despair**;
persecuted, **but not abandoned**;
struck down, **but not destroyed**.

We **always carry around in our body the death of Jesus**, so that **the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body**.

For we who are alive are **always being given over to death for Jesus' sake**, so **that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body**.”

2 Corinthians 4:7-11

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Application

See all of life in the light of Jesus' power & presence

Receive forgiveness and restoration in Christ alone!

- Nothing else can fix the harm we have brought to ourselves and to others
- Nothing else can change our future
- The weight of our shame and guilt and vulnerability is lifted from us in Christ alone
- The honor and righteousness and security that belongs to Jesus Christ is given as a gift to us!
 - Entirely by His death in our place

18

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. **But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.**”

1 Timothy 1:15-16

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Application

See all of life in the light of Jesus' power & presence
Receive forgiveness and restoration in Christ alone!

Rebuild life in alignment with the will of God

- This is repentance
 - not merely feeling bad about our sin & its harm
 - not merely feeling bad about potential punishment
 - not powerless or imprisoned by evil or trouble
- Be generous to the poor
- Be honest & just when you have power
- Be content with what you have
 - **What are the specific actions for each of us?**

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Application

See all of life in the light of Jesus' power & presence
Receive forgiveness and restoration in Christ alone!

Rebuild life in alignment with the will of God

- This is not optional!
 - Rejecting this is rejecting God
- We don't repent **SO THAT** God loves us
- We repent **BECAUSE** God loves us

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The Big Idea

**The coming of the Savior from God to people
brings the life-altering Kingdom of God
and it demands people's urgent repentance
for receiving His forgiveness & blessing**

22

So, as the Holy Spirit says:

**"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts..."**

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, **let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.**

For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.

Hebrews 3:7–8; 4:1–3