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(Luke 3-21)

Intro. Today we begin a 4-part series entitled “Jesus the Messiah” from the Gospel of Luke. It will take us just past Easter as our main focus will be the crucifixion & resurrection of Jesus the Messiah (hence, the cross & tomb up here on stage). To help set that context, I want to do an overview of Luke 3-21 on “The Ministry of Jesus the Messiah.” When you think about ministry, it is quite common to think of ministers. I heard about how a group of ministers and a salesman’s organization were holding conventions in the same hotel, and the catering department had to work at top speed serving dinners to both. The salesmen were having spiked watermelon for dessert. But the chef discovered that it was being served to the ministers by mistake. “Quick!” he commanded a waiter. “Bring it back!” The waiter returned, reporting that it was too late. The ministers were already eating the liquor-spiced treat. “Do they like it?” asked the chef. “Don’t know,” replied the waiter, “but they’re putting the seeds in their pockets” (*Quoted Magazine*). Ministry can be wearisome enough that one might turn to such things to dull the pain, but the high mark of ministry is in following in our Lord’s footsteps. Let’s read a few select passages to set the stage for “The Ministry of Jesus the Messiah.”

Theme: Christ’s ministry

Background: You know the first couple of chapters of Luke better than these chapters we’re looking at today—news about the births of John the Baptist & Jesus, Jesus’ presentation in the temple & teaching to astound the religious leaders at the age of twelve.

➤ I want to highlight 5 keys in understanding “The Ministry of Jesus the Messiah”:

1. The baptism of Jesus initiated Him for ministry as the Messiah (3:21-22)

- At 30 years of age (3:23), Jesus gets baptized by John the Baptist, showing His agreement with John’s ministry, later claiming John was the Elijah to come before the Messiah
- At Jesus’ baptism, God clearly proclaims Him as the Messiah—“You are My Beloved Son; with You I am well pleased” (3:22)

2. The temptation of Jesus foreshadowed His victory over Satan as the Messiah (4:1-13)

- 3 times Satan tempted Jesus after He fasted for 40 days in the wilderness—each time Jesus responded by quoting Scripture, in context, to avoid falling prey to Satan’s temptations

Illus: One of the reasons I encourage you to memorize Scripture is because it helps you avoid temptations to sin—cf. Psalm 119:11

- Jesus’ victory over Satan’s temptations points ahead to His victory over Satan through His passion & death (cf. 22:3-6)—more on this next time

3. The teaching of Jesus proves His wisdom as the Messiah (4:14-15, 22, 32)

- There was a prophecy that One would come as a greater teacher & prophet than Moses (cf. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18) & it was viewed as a Messianic prophecy—Jesus’ teaching proves He fulfilled this prophecy as the Messiah
- Time & again, Luke shows Jesus as a Teacher without equal—many crowds came to Him throughout Galilee, the Decapolis & even Jerusalem (cf. 2:41-52)
- When people heard Jesus, they heard the good news of the kingdom of God
- They marveled at Jesus’ teaching & were amazed at what He might become
- Sometimes Jesus taught on raising the standard in the kingdom of God—love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, be merciful, judge not and you will not be judged (Luke 6)—He got to the intent of the Law, showing how high God’s standard is
- Luke often shows Jesus teaching in parables (Luke 10, 12-16, 18-21)—a type of wisdom literature—stumping people & especially religious leaders on the kingdom of God—He did this

& revealed the meaning to His followers, proof that unless the Lord reveals to you the way of the kingdom, no one comes to know it by their own wisdom (Luke 8)

4. The healing of Jesus demonstrates His authority over all things as the Messiah (4:33-41)

- Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law of sickness & all who were brought to Him—the lame, the sick, the blind, the deaf, even the dead (Luke 7-9)—even saving His disciples from a storm (Luke 8)
- Jesus' healing ministry showed His compassion on the helpless & the weak (the lame, those with withered hands, the blind—each dependent on others to make a living)—He came to call the sick to repentance, not the righteous—those who were in need of Him & completely dependent on Him

Illus: Christ still calls the same to Him today. Those who are self-righteous or trust in their own goodness or power or money & view reliance on Christ as a weakness will not be saved. But those who are needy & helpless & cry to Him for salvation, those will be saved

- The fact that Jesus could heal people of so many diseases shows He can do all things—He has authority over all things & as such, He is the Messiah promised of God to deliver His people

5. The disciples of Jesus follow Him as the Messiah (5:1-11)

- When you first read the Gospels, you can mistakenly think Peter, James, John, Matthew & others responded to Jesus the first time they hear Him. But Jesus had been ministering for a few weeks or months when He called them & they respond by leaving their old life behind
- Sometimes people in those days would pursue a teacher to gain as much instruction as possible, much like someone today going through years of schooling to become a doctor or lawyer—we see this with the disciples of John the Baptist, for instance—the disciples of Jesus not only follow Him & kept following Him & spread His message (Luke 9-10)

So who is Jesus to you? Do you follow Him as the Messiah?

Illus: As followers of Jesus the Messiah, we are called to follow in His footsteps—you can do that literally by visiting the Holy Land & if you ever get the chance, you should take it up because you start reading the Bible in color after visiting there—but whether you make it there or not, going there won't make you one of His disciples—millions live there today & aren't any closer to Jesus than unbelievers half a world away.

- But when you see Jesus as the Messiah, you follow Him—you follow Him in believer's baptism (following His example but also identifying with His death, burial & resurrection publicly), you follow Him in avoiding temptations (you will fail, but following Him means He gives you the grace to resist them), you follow Him in teaching others about His message & the kingdom of God, you follow Him in a ministry of compassion to the hurting & needy & you follow Him as a disciple, learning more about Him & growing in your relationship to Him

Conc. I enjoy traveling to other countries & seeing creations by God & various works by man, but there's no place like home. When you go through Customs in the U.S. & after they ask you a few questions, they say "Welcome home." That's special because traveling to other countries isn't home. For each one of us, there's a greater home. Christ created you, but you are fallen in your sin. He invites you to turn from your sin & come to Him & when you do, He says, "Welcome home." If Christ is already your Lord, but you need a church home & you know this is where the Lord would have you, then come home & join. If you need to follow the Lord in believer's baptism or some other calling, then follow "Jesus the Messiah."