



# **LOST SHEEP AND COIN**

Luke 15: 1- 7 and 8 - 10

# THEMES

- The context of Eating with sinners and tax collectors
- Parables of restoration of Israel - the lost ones.  
(shepherding the sheep)
- We will see this theme also in the *Parable of the Lost Son* (Prodigal son)



# IMMEDIATE - CONTEXT

- Several things are immediately noteworthy:
  - A **rabbi** eating with **sinners** is thought to be **acting scandalously** in the company he keeps; and,
  - The **rabbi** eating with **tax collectors**, in the tradition of the elders **becomes unclean**  
(**cf.: Mt 18:17\*** *synonymous association*)
  - Further, a **tax collector** was especially despised - because **he took from his own**, as an agent of the occupiers - who so disregarded his faith as to become **intentionally unclean!**

# IMMEDIATE - CONTEXT

- The Scribes and Pharisees - were the liturgical police of the time. They were honestly and sincerely scandalized.

- “He welcomes sinners and eats with them”

- Shows intent to become defiled and scandalized. **Unthinkable.**



- How could a **mikvah bath** be available to someone who is **not repentant** nor defiled only because of necessity.

# BROADER - CONTEXT

- Finally, the LARGER context **of Chapter 14**
  - **Healing of the man with dropsy** - curing even on the Sabbath
  - **Conduct at a banquet** (eating) for guests, and the invitation to the excluded ( poor, crippled and blind) to be **guests in the Kingdom of God.**
  - **The call to discipleship** to Whoever seeks to follow Him, **leave family** (in this case leave the traditions of the elders, if they prevent).

# RESTORATION



- Dispersion and Exile of the 12 tribes. Restoration? How?
  - **Jeremiah** prophecy 650BC
  - **Ezekiel** - prophet in the captivity of Babylon 550BC
  - **Zechariah** prophecy 520BC
  - **New Testament** confirmation

# RESTORATION

- **In 722 BC** - the **10 Northern tribes of Israel** were defeated by the **Assyrians** and dispersed throughout the Assyrian empire.
- A very small remnant of these 10 tribes managed to remain faithful to God of the Patriarchs. Most intermarried with pagan wives and lost their previous Israelite identity.
- Yet, God promised not only to restore the faithful but also the unfaithful at a future time - even though these 10 tribes seemed to be “lost” to history.

# RESTORATION

- **In 586 BC** - the **2 remaining Southern tribes** of Israel, known as the Jews due to the predominance of the tribe of Judah (along with the tribe of Benjamin) were defeated by the **Babylonians** and taken away to modern day Iraq.
- At that time, **the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians**, and the riches within it taken as tribute to Nebuchadnezzar.
  - **Now all 12 tribes were lost**, but 70 years later, **some of the Southern tribes returned to Judea.**

# RESTORATION

- After the return of the 2 Southern tribes, the Temple was rebuilt, and the next 500 or so years, were known as the “Second Temple period.”
  - Prophecies of a restoration of Israel (all 12 tribes) seemed unfulfilled.
  - Additionally, the prophecies were hard to interpret. David was dead, and he seemed a key figure in them.
  - How could God pull this off. At the time of Jesus, some of the Israelite tribes had not been heard of for over 700 years!

# RESTORATION

- Ezekiel prophesies that David would be their shepherd and king.
- Now, David was long dead when they returned from the Babylonian exile. (500 years)
- So, this prophecy could not have been fulfilled then if Ezekiel was referring to the King David of Israel's history.

# RESTORATION

- **Who then was this new David?**
  - We read in Ezekiel 34:23-24 – “I will place over them one shepherd, **my servant David**, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.
  - I the Lord will be their God, and **my servant David** will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.”

# RESTORATION

- Lets read **Jer 23:1-8\***
  - The Lord is speaking against the shepherds of Israel. They have not cared for the flock
  - God will gather the remnant of His flock
  - God will appoint shepherds who will shepherd them, so that none shall be missing.
  - Note - how Jesus connects this prophecy to the parable of the one missing sheep, and how the Shepherd goes after it.

# RESTORATION

- Continuing:
  - God will raise a righteous shoot to David  
(cf.: Isaiah 11:1\* - Jesus a son of David - a king as verse 5 describes)
  - verse 6: “In his days Judah will be saved, Israel shall dwell in security.”
    - Israel = 10 Northern Tribes  
+  
Judah = 2 Southern Tribes.

# RESTORATION

- Lets read **Zechariah 11:4-13** - Allegory of the Shepherds
  - **Disappointed** with the shepherds of the people
  - **God will become the shepherd** (v. 7)
  - v. 12 the wages of God, the good shepherd:  
30 pieces of silver.
    - **(Judas Iscariot** fulfilled this betrayal prophesy quite *literally* as recorded in Mt 27:3-5\*)

# RESTORATION

- Jesus the Shepherd.

Mark 6:34\*

- He sees that **the people are like sheep without a shepherd**, so **He has pity on them**.
- Feeds 5000 men and their families while they recline in the “green grass.” **Mk 6:39**  
(Ps 23 - The Lord is my shepherd ... in verdant pastures you let me graze ...
  - Jesus fulfills Psalm 23

# RESTORATION

- Jesus the Shepherd.
  - *John 6:22-71 - description of the event*
  - He continues, *after feeding them with Bread that perishes* - to tell them He will feed them with the Bread of Life, nothing less than His body.
    - “The bread that I will give is my flesh” v.51
    - His body, is the food that gives life. v.53, 57-58
    - *as such He would lay his life down for his sheep*

# RESTORATION

- Jesus the Good Shepherd.  
John 10:1-18\*
  - His sheep hear His voice
  - As the gate - He protects the sheep, because  
“I AM the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” v.11
  - Jesus has **other sheep** not of this fold ... v. 16  
These are the Gentiles, but someday there will be only *ONE* flock (found in His church)

# RESTORATION

- Jesus the Good Shepherd.  
according to Jer 23:4 will appoint **other** shepherds
- Do we have any Scripture testimony that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy?
- Lets look at John 21: 15-19\*
  - Simon, son of John —Feed my lambs, ...  
Tend my sheep, ... Feed my sheep.
    - Follow me.
    - cf.: Mk 16:20 - the commission of the others.

# RESTORATION



- The great commission in Acts 1:8:
- ... “you will receive power when the **Holy Spirit** comes upon you, and
- you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem**, throughout **Judea** and **Samaria** and to the **ends of the earth.**”

# RESTORATION

- On the **Day of Pentecost**, **St Peter** declared that **Jesus** was indeed the descendant of David who would come and that it was **Jesus who was the Messiah**.
- In **Acts 2:29-36**, Peter says, “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.”

# RESTORATION

- At **Pentecost** we see evidence that not only had the Messiah come but **He sent the Holy Spirit upon His disciples**, to be with them, reminding us of Ezekiel's prophecy in **Ezekiel 37:27** where he says,
  - “My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.”
  - While Jesus had indeed ascended, He also remained with his people, the New Israel - the Church. cf.: Gal 5:16 — Read also **Jn 1:14\***

# LOOKING FOR THE LOST

- **Both parables:** Lost Sheep and Coin **have common themes:**
  - The owner has **many**
    - **Loses only one**
  - Uses **disproportionate effort** to look for what was lost
  - Has **disproportionate joy** when what is lost is found.

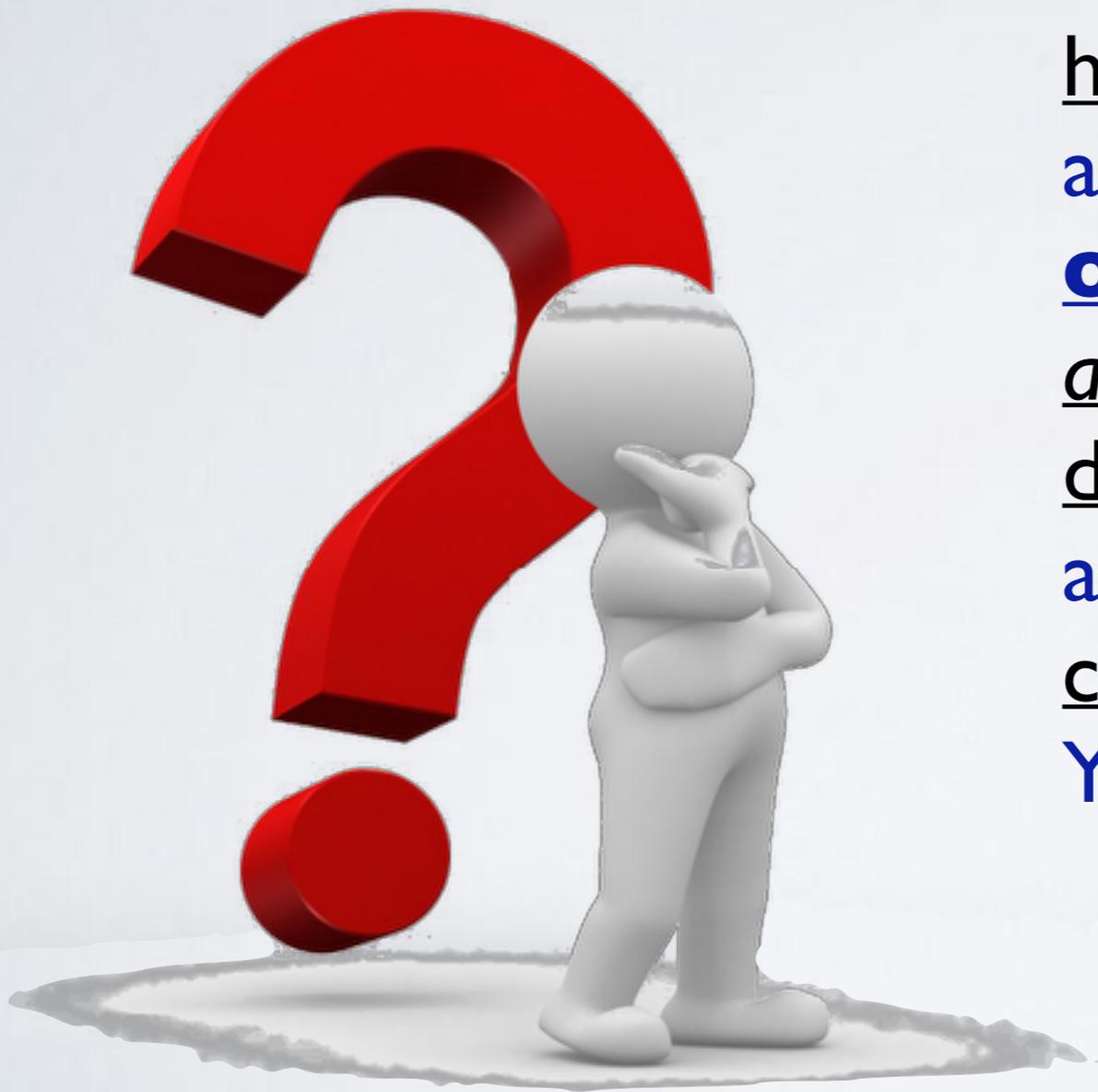


# LOOKING FOR THE LOST



- Which one among you, losing ONE sheep would not leave the 99, to look for it?
- Answer: NONE of us would do that.
- This is precisely the point. **We do not think as God does**, and He cares too much to lose even one.

# LOOKING FOR THE LOST

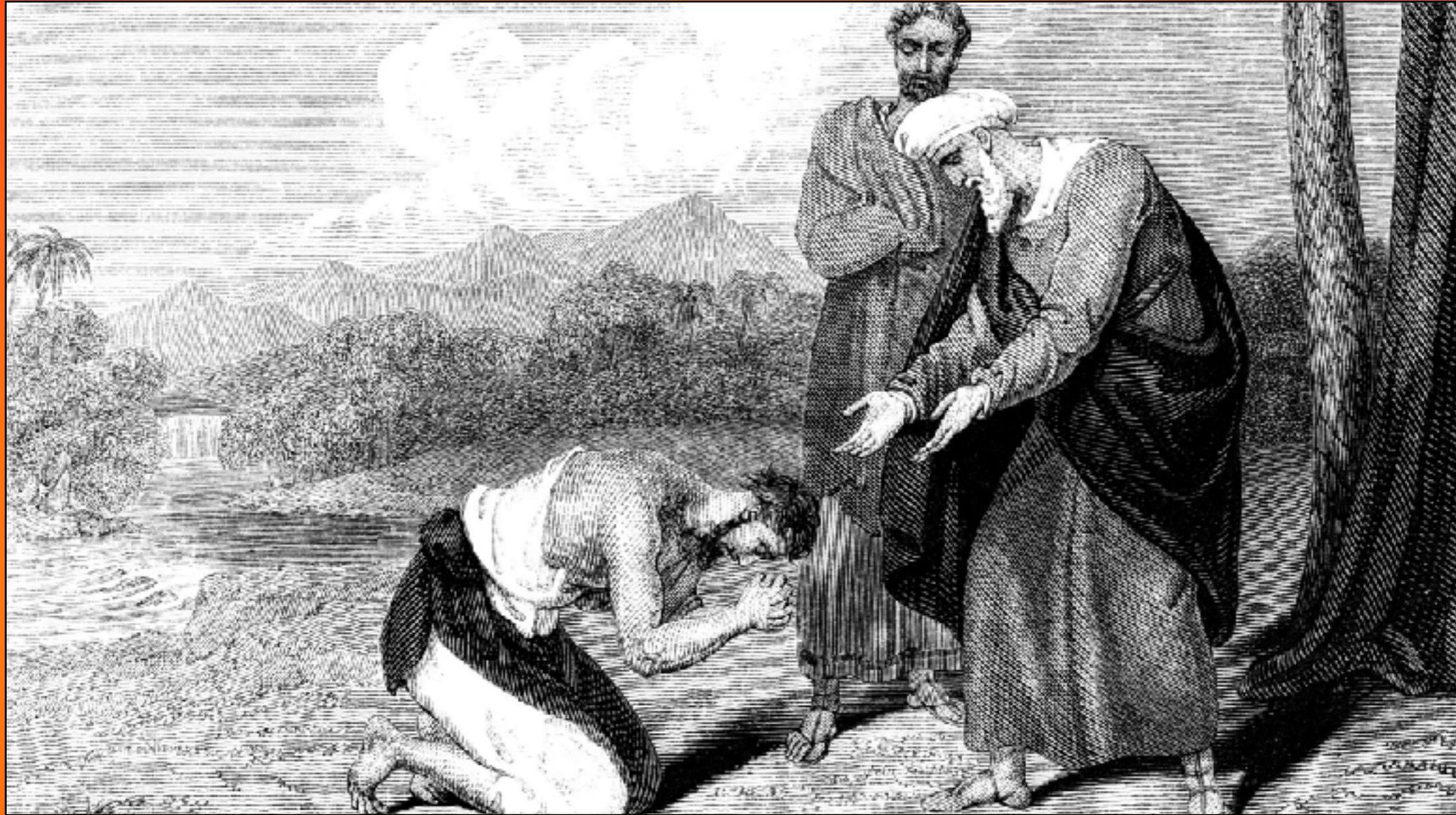


- What do you have that if YOU had more than one, but turned around for a second and noticed **one missing**, you would walk away from everything else, and use disproportionate effort to find, and that once found you would call everyone to celebrate with You?
- My answer: **A son**. Nothing else would probably qualify.

# LOOKING FOR THE LOST



- Picture for a second, the joy of Our Father and all of Heaven and all the Angels when you repent of your desire to live your life apart from God,
  - and commit to a life guided by his will.



# THE PARABLE OF THE ELDEST BROTHER

Luke 15: 11-32

# A PERFECT TRANSITION

**Read Lk 15: 11-32\***

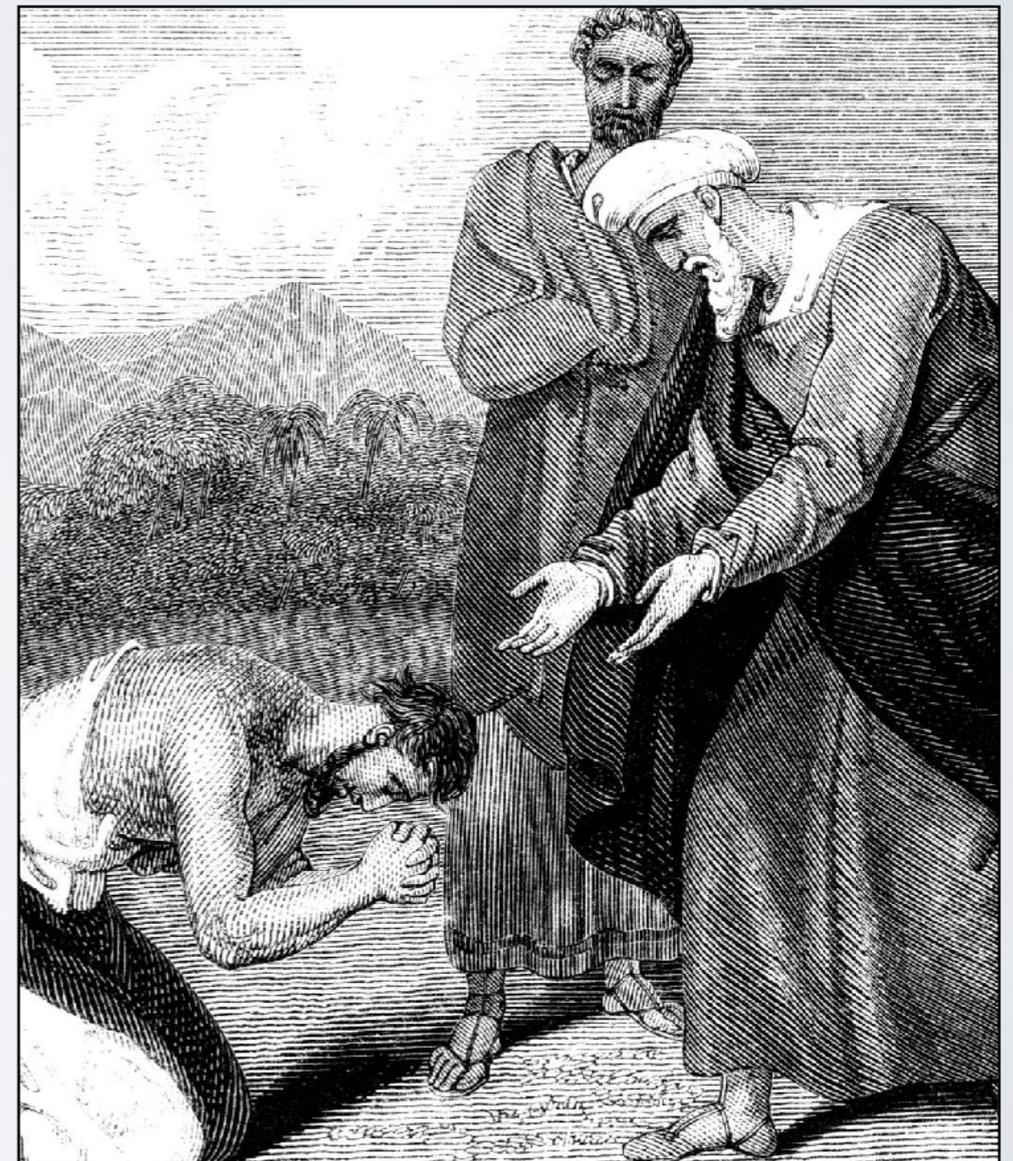
A transition of focus from what is lost, to both what is lost and what is retained. A fresh look at a familiar story.



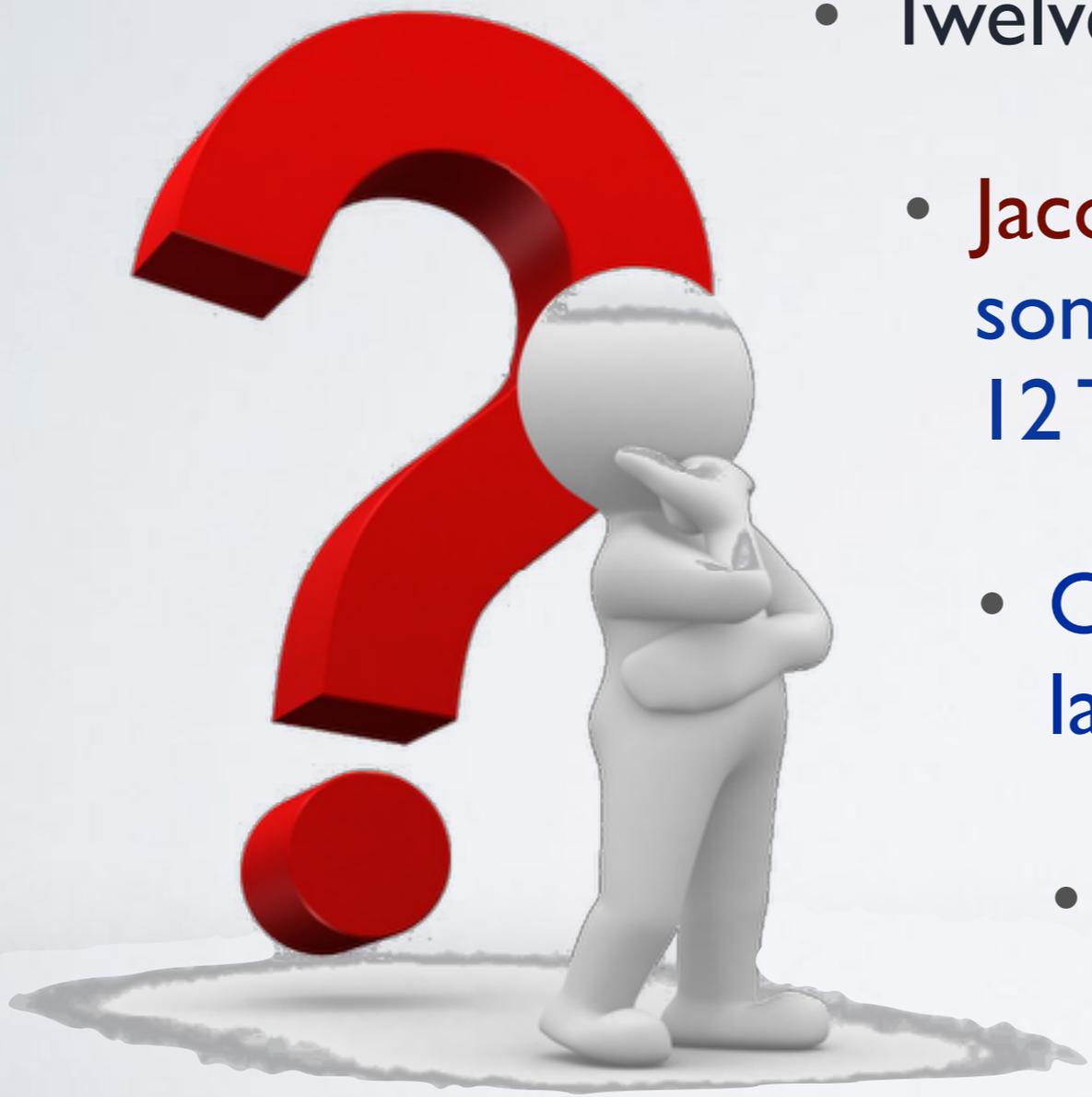
- Parable unique to St Luke
- Jesus describes the circumstances regarding the younger son, the one who is lost, but then **shifts** our attention to the circumstances regarding the eldest son.

# PRODIGAL SONS

- Too many **themes** and **allegorical descriptions**, for a working list. **Big Picture:**
  1. Relevant History of Israel
  2. Fall and restoration of Youngest Son
  3. Resentment of Elder brother



# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



- Twelve Tribes - Twelve Sons
- **Jacob had 12 Sons.** Two of these sons, did not become part of the 12 Tribes of Israel.
- Only the 12 Tribes possessed land.
- Which two sons of Jacob, were not represented as a Tribe and therefore did not possess land?

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## Sons

## Tribes

Genesis 29-30	Numbers 1
Reuben	Reuben
Simeon	Simeon
Levi	Judah
Judah	Dan
Dan	Naphtali
Naphtali	Gad
Gad	Asher
Asher	Issachar
Issachar	Zebulun
Zebulun	Ephraim
Joseph	Manasseh
Benjamin	Benjamin

- Levi's Tribe became the Priestly tribe and therefore did not own a territory (Ex. 32)
- Joseph, died in Egypt, and his two sons represented him. Both of these grandsons of Jacob were 1/2 Egyptian (Gen. 48:6\*)

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **All Twelve Tribes were unified** under King Saul and David **until 930 BC** when King Solomon died.
- Thereafter, the Davidic Kingdom Divided into two:
  - **The Northern Kingdom** - kept the name **Israel** and consisted of 10 of the 12 Tribes.
  - **The Southern Kingdom** - consisting of the tribes of **Judah and Benjamin** took the name of Judah and became the Kingdom of **Judah**.

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Browse - The story is captured in 1 Kings 12 and 13\*
- A story regarding the Division and reason for it. Taxes
  - The idolatry of King Jeroboam in **Ephraim**, came from Egypt - **Two Golden calves.** (1 Ki 12:26-31)
  - Built a Temple and Altar and non-Levite priests, and offered sacrifice - for which his **Hand withered.** (1 Ki 13 & Mk 3:1-6\* cured on non-arbitrary feast)

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **In 722 BC** - Assyria occupied the land of the Northern Kingdom known as Israel and dispersed the 10 Tribes throughout its empire, separating them
  - to avoid reunification
  - to avoid revolt
- Several Prophecies speak of God's condemnation of Israel (10 Northern Tribes)

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **In 586 BC** - Babylonian Empire defeated the 2 Southern Tribes known as the Kingdom of Judah and these two Tribes were exiled in modern day Baghdad area
  - The Solomon Temple was destroyed
  - These two Tribes did return 70 years later and returned to the land of Judah - and rebuilt the Temple.

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Jeremiah  
30\* & 31\***
- **selected  
passages**



# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Jeremiah  
30\* & 31\***

- **selected  
passages**

- So more than any other prophecy the writings of **Jeremiah Ch 30-31** capture God's actions regarding these 10 Tribes and the Messianic hope.
- God would send a Messiah who would **restore** Israel (the 10 Northern Tribes) with Judah (the 2 Southern Tribes) into one new covenant people

# PRODIGAL SONS

- Turning to the Parable - Lk 15 - beginning verse 11.
- A man had **two** sons (an allusion to Israel and Judah)
  - Younger Son - Ephraim - recall Kings of Israel sons of Ephraim who was grandson of Jacob (2nd generation)
  - Older Son - Southern Tribes - (Judah/Benjamin) - represents the Pharisees and Scribes - see v.2

# PRODIGAL SONS

- Verse 12 - “Give me the share of your estate that should come to me.” This is inheritance language
- **Note the Father is still alive.**
  - A reminder that the Kingdom of Israel renounced the Fatherhood of Yahweh in favor of Paganism.
- Israel, while still in the promised land, separated from the Temple of God - *which represented the ‘home’ of God the Father on Earth* - and engaged in Pagan practices even as they established their own Temple in Mt Gerazim.

# PRODIGAL SONS

- **Verse 13 - The younger son** - sets off to a distant country **where he** squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. (Harlotry)
- **Distant country** - Assyrian Dispersion
  - cf **Jer 30:10\*** - **same language** describing the status of the 10 Northern tribes of Israel
- **Harlotry** is a better translation here from the Greek. It better describes what flows from **worshipping another God** - like cheating on your spouse/family (*Israel's worship false gods*)

# PRODIGAL SONS

- Verse 14-15 - Severe famine. Hungry. Hired himself to tending swine.
- Realization that Israel's soul was starving apart from God.
- Still seeking to regain the loss of the benefits of the Mosaic covenant, Israel **sank deeper into paganism** - represented by the feeding and tending of **swine**.
- Israel was **unclean** in the sight of God

# PRODIGAL SONS

Such was the status of **Israel** at this point represented by the parable:

- Outside of the Covenant - deprived of Food for the Soul
- Without proper familial status - A disinherited child
- Being prepared by God, nonetheless, to finally admit that she was ready to seek a return to the true God.



# PRODIGAL SONS

- **Where is Jesus at this time? He is in Samaria**
- **Samaria** is the region in some elements of the 10 Northern Israelites returned.
- **Samaria, in Jesus' eyes** is considered a land of half-breeds by the Jews because they still worship away from the Jerusalem Temple and have different practices traceable to paganism.  
**Samaria is like an illegitimate child, with no status.**





## COMING TO HIS SENSES

- **Literally:**  
“When he came to himself.”
- The futility of his actions, the separation from his family, the great sin against his father - all the effects came at once.
  - YET, none these ultimately moved him.
- **The Trigger:**  
He was starving and saw no way out!

# COMING TO HIS SENSES



- **Imperfect Contrition:**  
“Fear of the consequence”
  - **Perfect Contrition**  
How much better it might have been that he was motivated by love.
- **The Result:**  
The **imperfect contrition** was sufficient to cause the younger brother to seek the home of his Father and be reconciled.



## COMING TO HIS SENSES

- **The Plan:**  
“I will eat at my father’s house and not die of hunger”
- **Confession Plan**
  - “I have sinned against heaven and you...
  - “I don’t deserve son status. Treat me as a slave ...
  - “Will work for food”

# PRODIGAL SONS

- God was working in the life of the younger son.
  - Likewise, God was working in the life of the **Samaritans:**
- **John 4: 4-42** - Recall the Samaritan Woman at the well. Recall her five husbands (Baals).
  - Recall **the Samaritan Woman's joy** when she realized Jesus was the promised Messiah.
  - Recall the **Testimony of the others** at her village.

# PRODIGAL SONS

- **Luke 10: 1-22** - Recall the Samaritan people were receiving the Gospel message at the hand of the 72 disciples of Jesus.
  - Recall **the joy of the 72 disciples** when they saw power of Jesus overcome the demons and scorpions, among the Samaritans (*Satan being evicted, so that the people could see Truth*)
  - Recall the **joy of Our Lord** upon hearing of their success. **“I give you praise Father”** for it was the Father who was blessing the return of the Samaritans, (Israel - younger brother).

# PRODIGAL SONS

- God the Father, through Jesus, was **reconciling all of Israel** as prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.
  - “When he was still a long way off ...”
- **Jer 31:3-5\*** (slightly paraphrased as God speaks)  
“The Lord appears to him from **afar** (*a long way off*), with age-old love, **I have loved you: so I have kept my mercy toward you.** Again I will **restore** you ... you shall go forth **dancing** (**Lk 15:25**) with the merrymakers ... you shall plant **vineyards** on the mountains of **Samaria.**” (**cf. Is 5:1-7\***)

# PRODIGAL SONS



- Here, in the Parable, the Father while the son was far off:
  - **Ran** to him,  
*(some say uncommon in those times for a distinguished man to run)*
  - then **embraced** and **kissed** him.
- In short received him as a son.

# PRODIGAL SONS



***Familiar theme - of Luke Ch 15***

- **Let us celebrate with a feast.**
  - “This son of mine was **dead**, and has come to **life** again; he was **lost** and has been **found**.”
- Recall the **lost sheep** and **lost coin** parables that preceded this parable. **God’s continuing effort to gather us to Him.**

# PRODIGAL SONS



- “**Quickly...** The Father ordered his servants ...
  - Get the **finest robe**
  - a **ring** on his finger
  - **sandals** on his feet
  - and kill a **fattened calf**
- Notice the contrast between how the **servants** are ordered around and the **son** is being served.

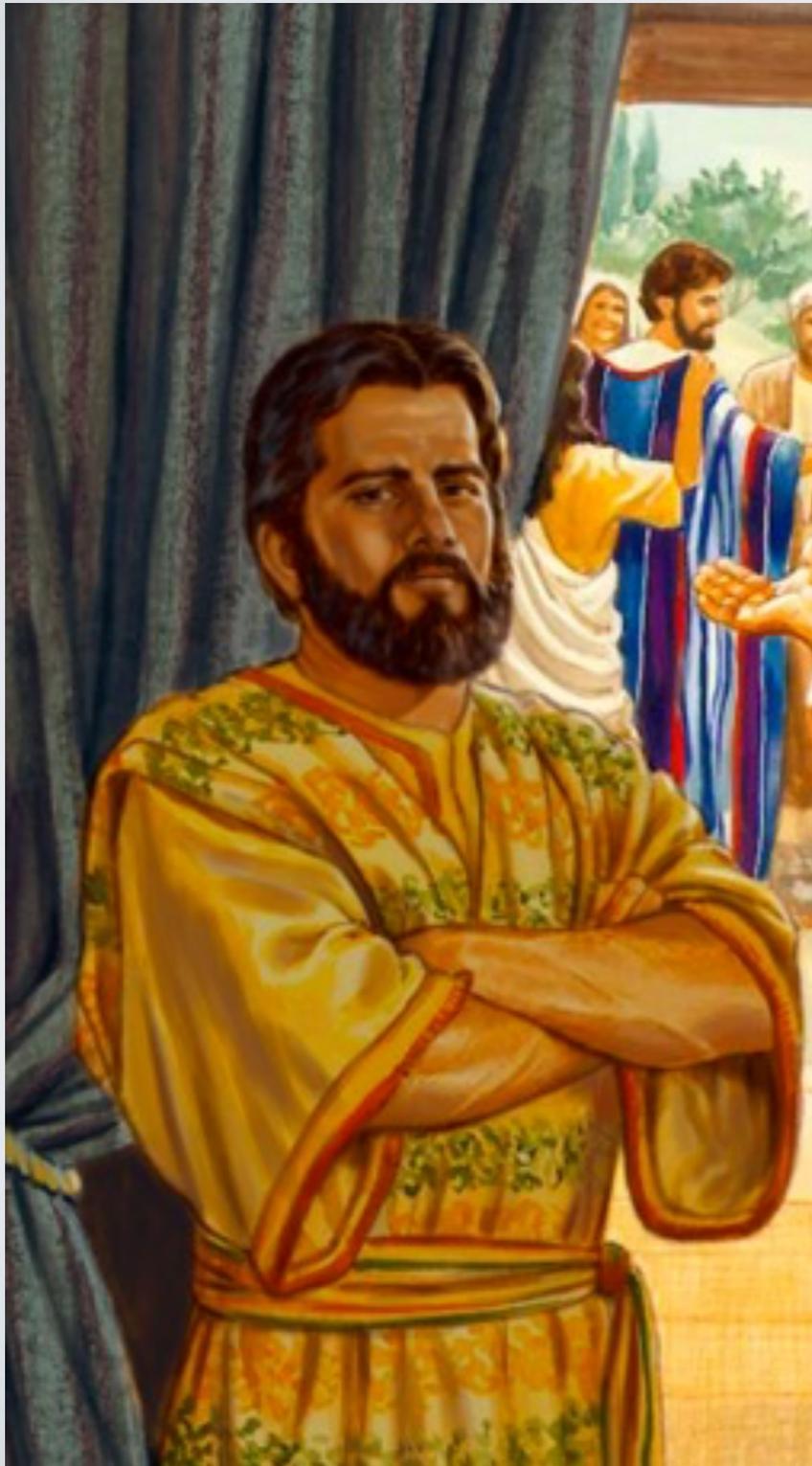
# PRODIGAL SONS



- **Lk 15: 7 - While** “... *there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.*” ...
- **who** in this parable is not joyful, and actually **is angry at the reconciliation** between the Father and the Younger Son?

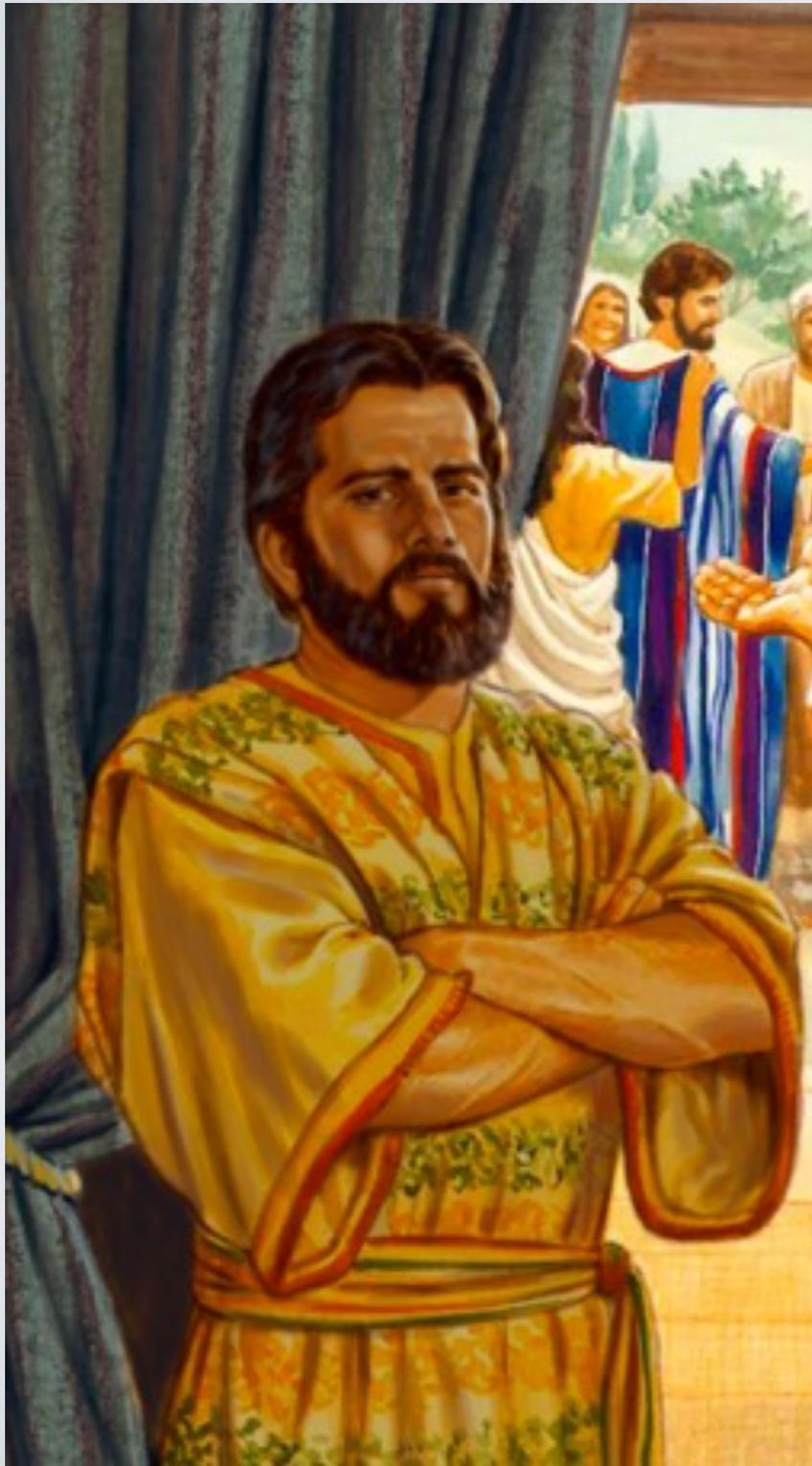
The older brother - eldest son

# PRODIGAL SONS



- **Who** is not happy to see the **Samaritans** restored to the God?
- **See Lk 15:2**
  - This parable is motivated by the **Pharisees and the Scribes**,
    - *(the Jews - Judah)*
    - who complain about how **Jesus welcomes and eats with *sinners***

# PRODIGAL SONS



- Jesus tells a parable, calculated to **remind them of their history, the *promised Restoration*** of Jacob's sons
  - represented by **Israel and Judah**
- And the parable **culminates** with the
  - **Father**, who **welcomes** and **eats** with his younger son,

# PRODIGAL SONS

- **Read vs 15:25-30\***

- If this were you - mixed feelings?
  - you are in your Father's field tending,
  - hear music and dancing,
  - fattened calf for **“that son”**
    - yet not even a goat for you?



**Any sympathy for the  
Older son?**

# PRODIGAL SONS

- There are some things about **God's mercy** that are hard for us to understand to the extent **we are oriented to Justice.**
- The **mischievous child** that gets all of the attention - He/she sometimes is that youngest sibling who seems to get away with everything you never could.
- What about the **Adolf Hitler type** who after a life of evil repents at the last moment and shares in the same heaven as Mother Theresa. **Fair?**



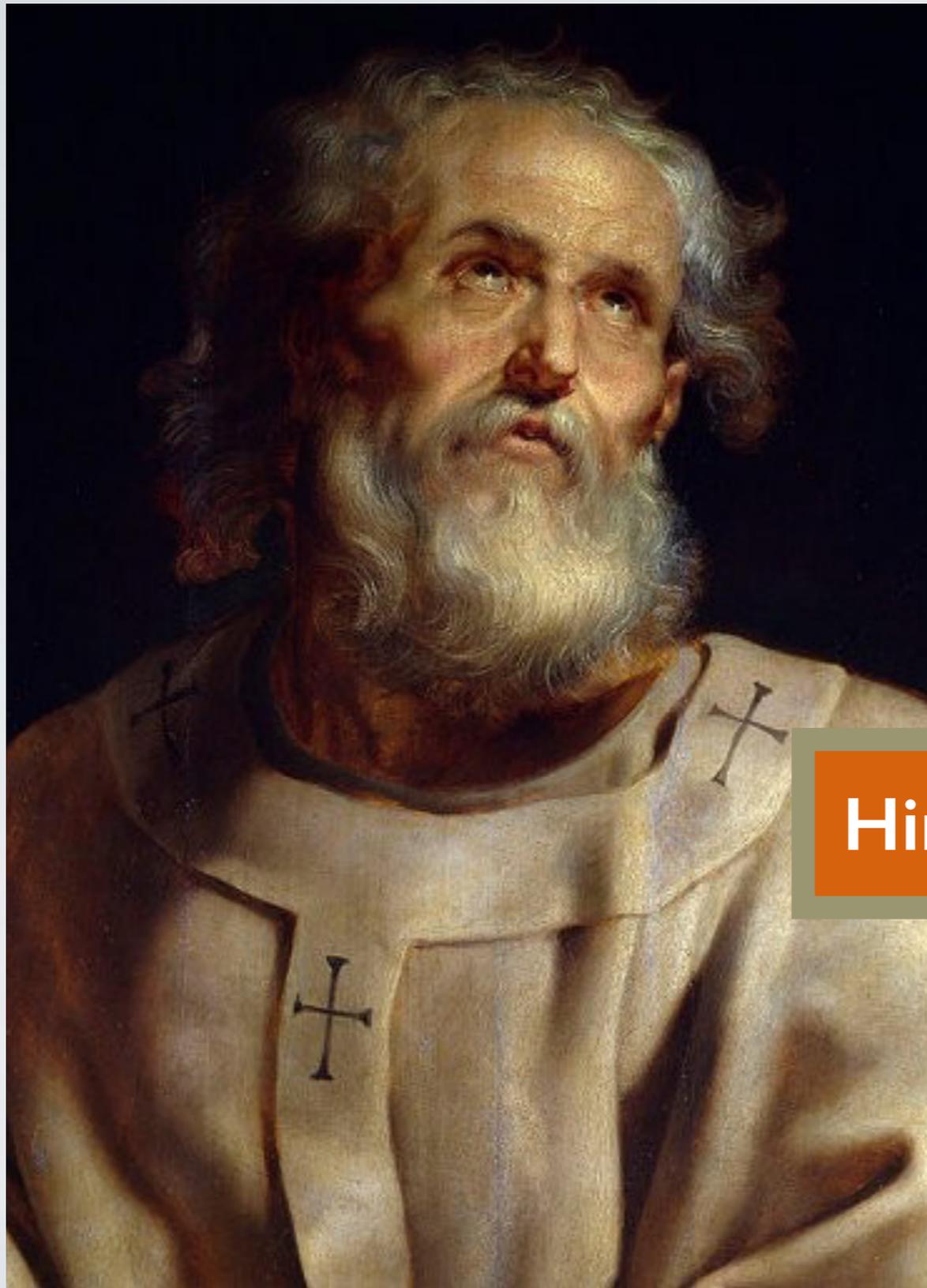
# PRODIGAL SONS



- It appears the Father sympathizes with the Older Son
- Otherwise why come outside and plead with him to join?
- **see v. 31-32\***  
**Rationale for not resenting the “your brother.”**

**‘My son,’ the father  
said, ‘you are always  
with me, and everything  
I have is yours.’**

**LUKE 15:31**



WHAT  
IS THE  
EVERYTHING  
THAT IS OURS?

Hint: St Peter knew the answer

**What is it that  
God wishes for us to  
share in?**

# INCARNATION

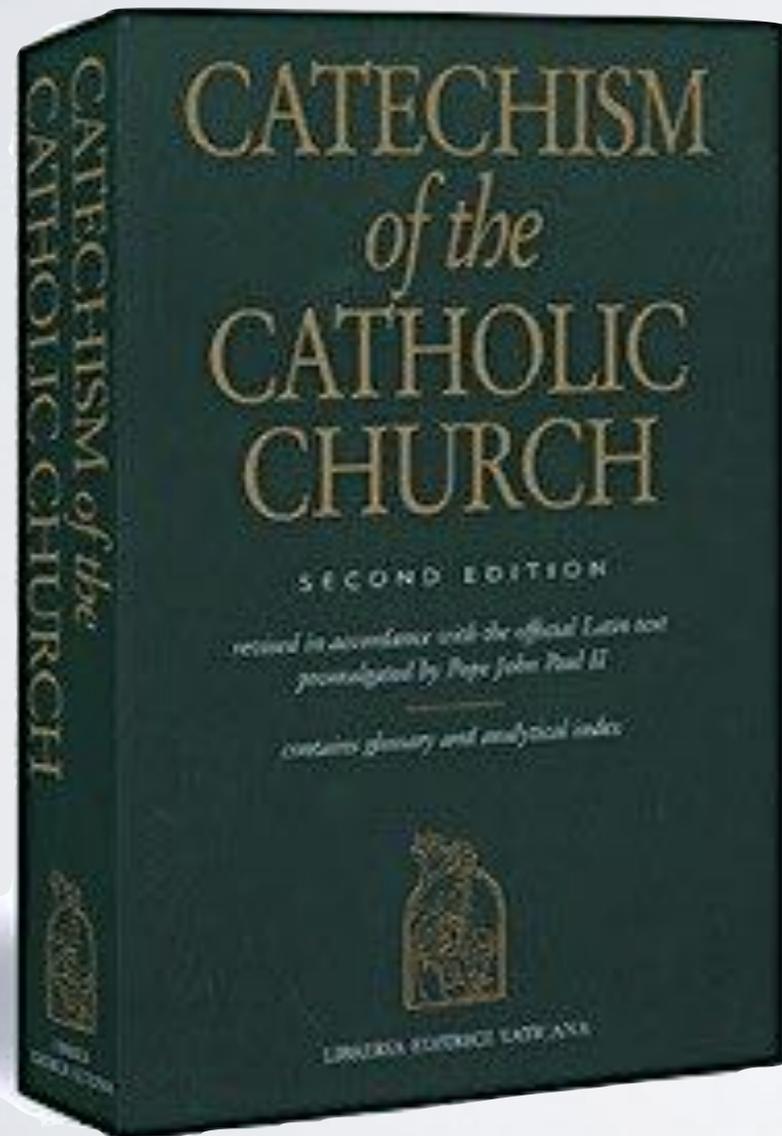
Lets us begin at  
the Beginning

- **Why** did Our Lord become and incarnate?
- **Why** did He become **flesh** and **dwell** among us (Jn 1:14)



# INCARNATION

- First ... What does the CREED say?



- **For us men** and **for our salvation** He came down from heaven.

*By the power of the Holy Spirit  
He was born of the Virgin Mary and  
became man.*

- **He came for our salvation.**
  - but **is there more?**

# INCARNATION



- There is more!
- What does **“For us men”** before **“and for our salvation”** **add** to it?

Why is that there?

- ***Why not just ....*** “For our salvation, He came down from heaven ...

# INCARNATION

- Regarding the mission of Jesus, and why He came - most Scriptures emphasize three common themes:
  1. To **save** us, (*for our salvation - reconcile us to God*)  
CCC 456-457
  2. To show How much **God** and He **loved** us,  
*implicitly revealing the Trinity in the process.*  
CCC 458
  3. To be a **model** of holiness for us to follow  
CC 459

# OUR SALVATION

- “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ **Jesus came into the world to save sinners**, of whom I am the foremost.”

1 Tim 1:15

- “And Jesus said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Mk 2:17

# OUR SALVATION

- “...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”  
Mk 10:45
- *regarding Zacchaeus* - “Today salvation has come to this house, ... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:5, 9-10

# OUR SALVATION

- “He is the **expiation for our sins**, and not for our sins only, but for those of the whole world.”

1 Jn 2:2

- “Moreover we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as the **savior of the world.**”

1 Jn 4:14

# THEREFORE



- If He came to Save us, He must have done so because He loves us.

# SHOW LOVE

- “For God so **loved** the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16
- “ I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment **love one another**, as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:11-13

# SHOW LOVE

- “The way we may be sure that we know Him (Jesus) is to keep his commandments. Whoever says, “I know Him, but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **But whoever keeps His word, the love of God is truly perfected in him.** This is the way we may know that we are in union with Him: whoever claims to abide in Him out to live as He lived.” I Jn 2:3-6
- “**And His commandment is this: that we should believe in the name of His son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.” I Jn 3:23**

# THEREFORE



- If He came because He loves us, then He would want us to holy like the One He loves most: His Father.

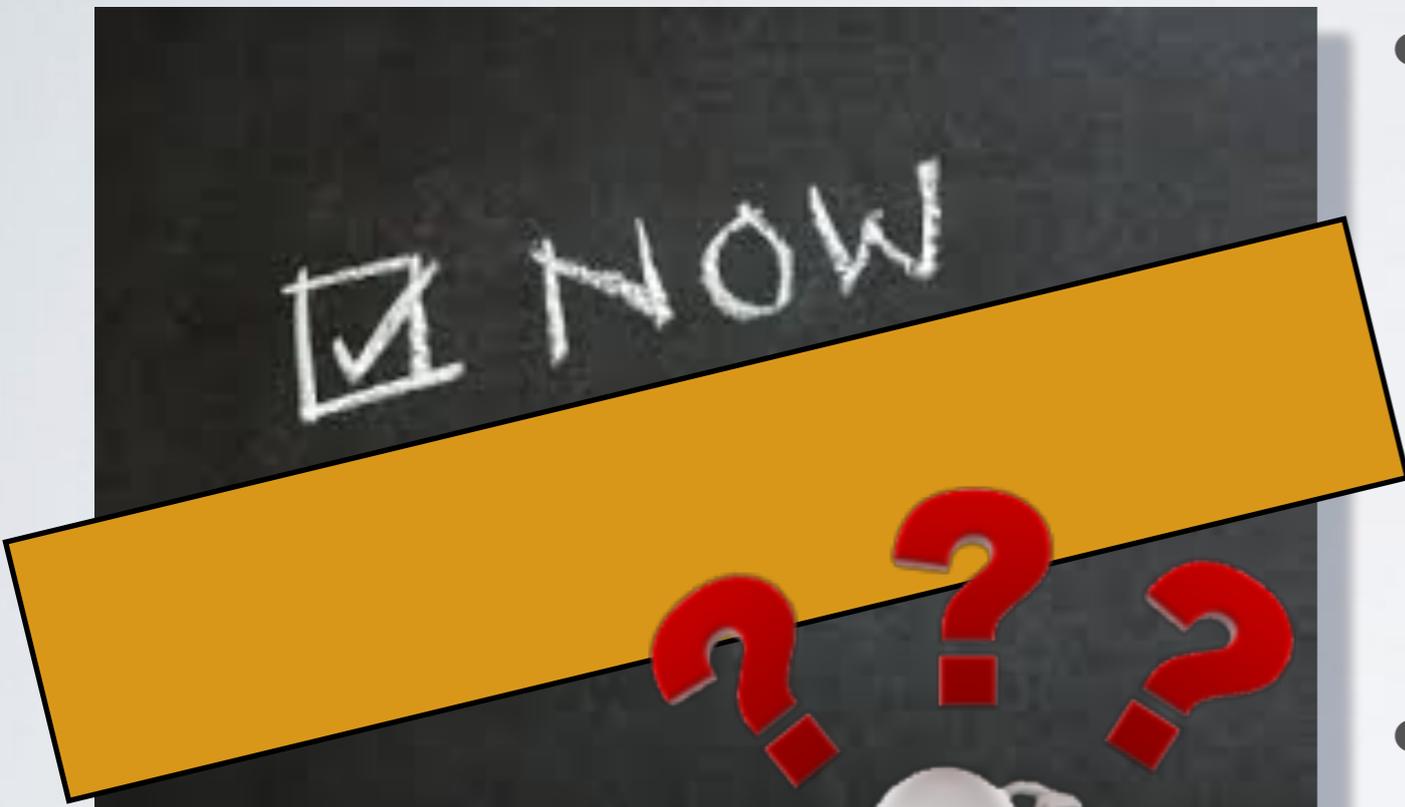
# MODEL FOR US

- “I have come into the world as **light**, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.” John 12:46
- “For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to **bear witness to the truth.** Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” John 18:37
- “I am **the Way**, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.” Jn 14:6

# MODEL FOR US

- “For I have come down from heaven, not to **do** my own will but **the will of Him** who sent me.”  
John 6:38
- Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Like obedient children ... [act] as He who called you is holy, **be holy** yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written,  
“Be Holy **because I am Holy.**” I Ptr 1:13-15

# THEREFORE



- If He wants us to be Holy... was all this *just for me, and just for now?*
- What is God's motive for all this? What is the point of it all?

# GOD'S END GAME

- “In this, the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, **so that we might live through him.” I Jn 4:9**

This leads us to the **MOTIVE** of **why** He came to Save us, **why** He came to be a Model for us, and **why** He came and showed his Love ...  
**That we might have life.**  
**Not just on earth but in Heaven with him.**

# ETERNAL LIFE

- “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.”  
John 6:51
- God so loved ... that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16
- ★ The Motive is the promise of **eternal life**, and,
- ☑ St Peter sees this as nothing less than the great promise of allowing us **to share in God’s Divinity.**

# PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE



- “...by which He (Jesus) has granted to us His **precious and very great promises**, so that through them you may **become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”

**2 Peter 1:4**

# PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE



- “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.”

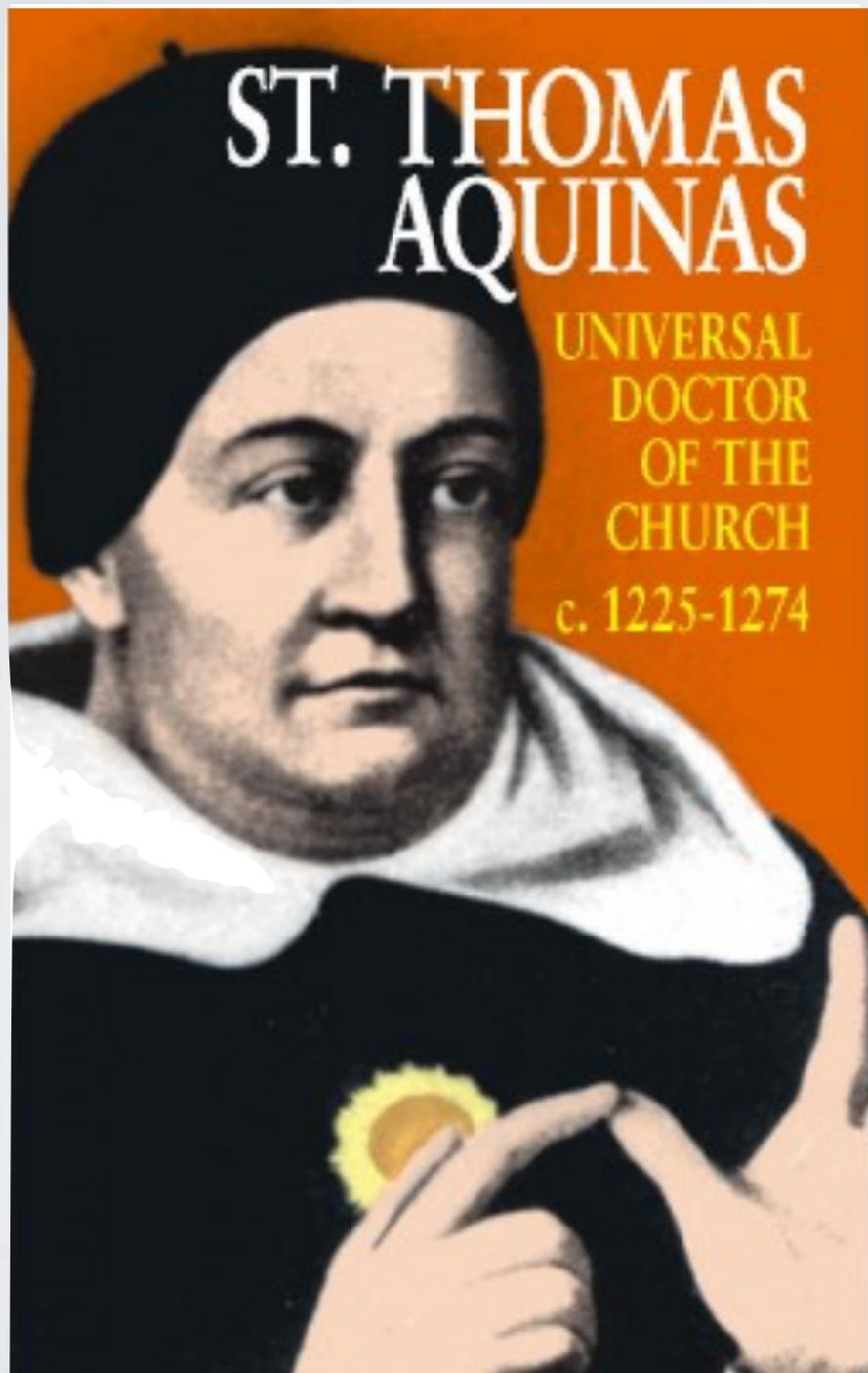
*St. Irenaeus*



- “For the Son of God became man so that we might become god.

*St. Athanasius*

# PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE



- “The only–begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.”

*St. Thomas Aquinas,  
Opusc. 57: 1–4.*

# GODS - ONE GOD

- **Ps 82:6** - I say, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like men, and fall like any prince.”
  - The text seems to refer to the **leaders of Israel** (**kings or judges**) who abuse their power (cf. 1 Sam 8:3; Ezek 34:4, 21) to the detriment of the poor (cf. Isa 1:16–17), *those that owe their office to God: in that sense they are called “gods, sons of the Most High”*
  - This included the **Levite Priests** in some contexts, or any who governed with authority over others - like Cesar. These were often referred to as ‘gods’

# GODS - ONE GOD

- **Lets read John 10: 27-38\*:**
- Jesus uses the understanding of 'gods' at the time - to make His point.
  - In calling Himself a **Son of God**, he is declaring implicitly His **divinity**, but more explicitly that He is a person of authority, a **King** of Israel. cf. Mk 1:22
- See also - **Ps 2:7** - Psalm of Coronation for King Solomon -to a son of David: **“You are my son, today I have begotten thee.” KJV**

# GODS - ONE GOD

- This is not to say that any referenced rulers under God's authority, apart from Jesus, were Divine Persons
  - **Isaiah 43:10** - "You are my witnesses, says the LORD, my servants whom I have chosen to know and believe in me and understand that it is I. Before me, no god was formed and after me there shall be none."
  - **Isaiah 44:6** - "Thus says the LORD Israel's King and redeemer, the LORD of Hosts: I am the first and I am the last; there is no God but me."

# DIVINE NATURE



- What does the Church then understand by the Petrine encyclical statement that:
  - We are to be **partakers of the divine nature?**  
2 Ptr 1:4
- Lets Read **2 Peter Ch I** for the statement's context.

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON



**Words - matter**

- **Nature v. Person**
- Does St Peter mean that we will one day be Divine Persons, such as the LDS church proclaims?
- If not, **what** does St Peter mean?

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- We say certain things about God and about us, but do we really know what they mean?
  - The Trinity, all share in one Divine Nature but are Three Persons.
  - The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, prior to the incarnation had a Divine Nature and was only One Person.
  - Jesus, after the incarnation, is still the Son of God, but now has a Divine Nature and a Human Nature, yet still remains only One Person.

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

**What does all this mean?**

What is the difference between

a

**NATURE**

and a

**PERSON?**



**I am pretty sure, that  
I am not sure ...**

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- If I talk about “**my nature**” - it means that there is a **person**, in this case -**me**- who possesses that nature.
  - *Otherwise I would say “nature’s me” if I was possessed by my nature.*
- **NATURE** is something a **PERSON** possesses, not the other way around.

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- Further, we see that **NATURE** and **PERSON**, answer TWO different questions:
- Pretend you are in a dimly lit room, and you see a shape or a shadow that is hard to distinguish. You might ask and get the following answers:
  - What is it? - It is a human being
  - Who is it? - That is Jerry
  - The **What** asks about the Nature,  
The **Who** asks about the Person.

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- Another Distinction between NATURE and PERSON.
- **A Nature** - decides what I can do. (and what I can't)
  - I can raise my hand, eat, laugh, sleep, think because these actions are available to someone with *a human nature*.
  - I can not lay an egg - because that goes with *a bird or reptile nature*.
  - If I bite another man, I do not thereby poison him - because that goes with *a snake nature*.

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- But ——— though it is **my NATURE** that ‘decides’ what **actions are possible or not possible** to me, “I” am the one who does them ——— the “I” who is a person.
- A Nature is the source of our possible operations, but it is a Person who either does them or does not.
- Therefore, “I” a person with a human nature, am the one who raises my arm, or I am the one that eats, or I am the one that laughs.
  - My nature does not laugh ——— I do.

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- So now we are ready to define GOD — God is a person who possesses a Divine Nature. The Divine Nature tells us what GOD can and cannot do:
  - *For instance, it is part of a **Divine Nature** to be able to create something out of nothing. (We, who have a Human Nature, lack this ability)*
  - **GOD can do this** this, but when there is a creation act - it is a Person who does it — we tend to attribute this act to the **Father**.  
— Amazingly, He can create by just speaking!

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- We know about God's DIVINE NATURE, from revelation - Scripture.
  - Creates out of nothing - Psalm 33:6-9
  - Power over death - doesn't die - Rev 1:18
  - Eternal - Rev 1:8 (*not everlasting*)
  - Omnipresent - Psalm 139:7-12
  - Sovereign - Raises and removes rulers - Dan 2:21
  - Sovereign - over nature - Job 37 and Mt 8:23-27
  - Completely Holy - Lev 19:1-2
  - Just and upright - Deut 32:4

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- **The Trinitarian Mystery** - *is not that God can or can't do certain things that are beyond our ability.*
  - The Trinitarian Mystery comes in something for which we have no equivalent:
    - **Three persons who share in one Divine Nature, such that there is One God.**
- **Human nature has no such ability — to be shared by more than one person. Three people can only possess their individual three human natures.**

# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- Applying our understanding using the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Human **nature** gives **persons** the **ability** to reproduce.
- The reproduction **act** is something **persons** do.



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- The Nestorian Heresy offered the following error:
- Mary is only the mother of the Human Jesus and therefore NOT the mother of God, because she would need to be God to give birth to God.



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- The error comes from a fundamental misunderstanding of the difference between **Nature** and **Person**.
- **A mother does not give birth to a nature, a mother gives birth to a person** - *who possesses a nature.*



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- Jesus possesses both natures: **Divine and Human**, but He is only **one Person** and that **Person is a Divine Person**.
- We know that Jesus is a **Divine Person**, because **we know He is the only begotten Son of the Father from all eternity**.



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- The Father begot a Son not another Divine Nature.
- That is why there are more than one person in the Trinity.



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- If the Father, using Nestorian logic, begot a Nature from all eternity, then His Son would not be a person — recall that Persons possess natures and not the other way around.
- After the incarnation, Jesus simply has two natures: His original Divine and new Human nature.



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- Most commonly: **cattle give birth to cattle and dogs to dogs** — hence Nestorius thought — Mary, being human **must** give birth only to a human.
- Plausible, *if the conception of Jesus had been the ordinary act of Human Reproduction, but it was not — and Luke tells us how it happened.*



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- In answering the cattle / dog - passing only its natures - false limitation to Jesus' conception ...
- we see that the Archangel Gabriel explains the uniqueness of the Incarnation event.
- the explanation is found at Lk 1:28-38



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- No human father - Hence, right away we can see that the **normative way that Human Nature provides for reproduction**: How a mother conceives a child, is not available. cf.: Mt :25
- This conception is **supernatural** - “**above natural**” not according to nature alone.



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- Instead the **HOLY SPIRIT** will come upon you, and the **POWER** of the **MOST HIGH** will **OVERSHADOW** you.
- **THEREFORE** the child to be born will be called **HOLY, THE SON OF GOD.**
- **Consent obtained:**  
“Let it be done ...”  
*for nothing is impossible for God.*



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- **St. Cyril of Alexandria** at the third ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431, convened to debunk the Nestorian Heresy, confessed:
- “The Word, **uniting** to himself in His Person the flesh animated by a rational soul, **became man.**”



# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- The Virgin Mary is the Mother of God, only if Jesus is a Divine Person, as Cyril of Alexandria described.
- If, however, Jesus is *only* a man, then Nestorius was right: Mary is the mother of the man Jesus.

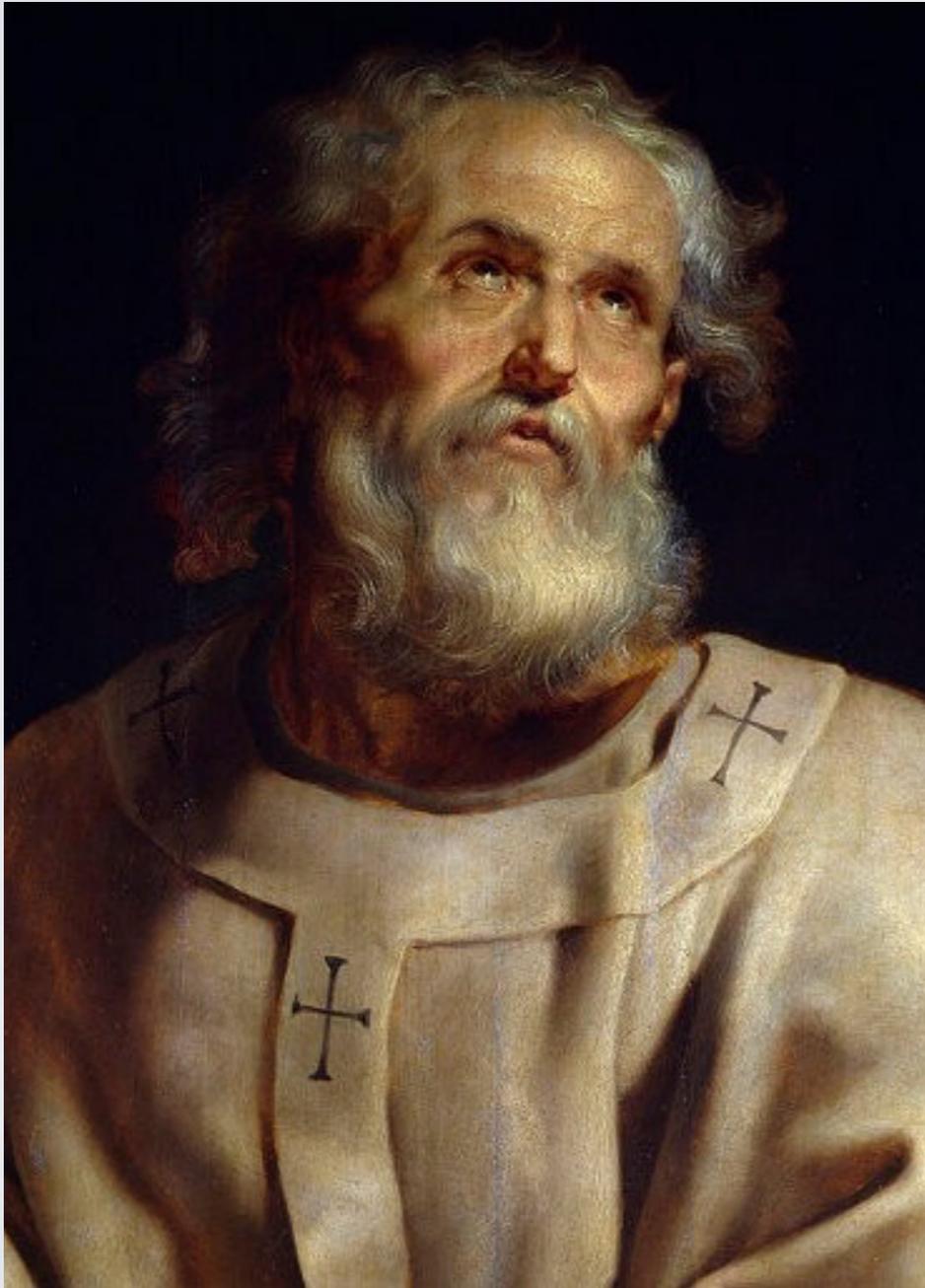


# NATURE *VERSUS* PERSON

- CCC 507 At once virgin and mother, **Mary** is the symbol and the most perfect realization of the **Church**:
- “The Church indeed, by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and Baptism **she** brings forth **sons**, who are conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the **faith** she pledged to her spouse.”



# PARTAKING NOW



- “...by which He (Jesus) has granted to us His **precious and very great promises**, so that through them you may **become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”

**2 Peter 1:4**

# PARTAKING NOW

- **CCC 1265**  
**Baptism** not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte “a new creature,” an adopted son of God,
- who has become a “**partaker of the divine nature,**”
- member of Christ and **co-heir** with him, and a **temple** of the Holy Spirit.”



# PARTAKING NOW

- **CCC 505**  
“By his virginal conception, Jesus, the New Adam, ushers in **the new birth of children adopted in the Holy Spirit through faith.**  
“How can this be?”
- **Participation in the divine life arises** “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but **of God.**”



# PARTAKING NOW

- We see then, that we are a “**new creation.**” 2Cor 5:17
- No longer **creatures** Mk 16:15-16\* but sons and daughters of God by **adoption.** Rom 8:15
- **Regenerated** Titus 3:5 we now participate in a yet incomplete union, in the **Divine Life of Christ**, through His Church which is His Body.



# PARTAKING NOW



- **CCC1391** **Holy Communion** augments our union with Christ.
- The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an **intimate union** with Christ Jesus.
- Indeed, the Lord said: “**He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.**”  
John 6:56

# PARTAKING NOW



- **CCC1391 continued.**
- Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet:
- “As the **living** Father sent me, and I **live** because of the Father, so **he who eats me will live** because of me.” John 6:57

# PARTAKING NOW

- **CCC 1988** Through the **power** of the **Holy Spirit** we take part in Christ's **Passion** by dying to sin, and in his **Resurrection** by being born to a new life; we are **members of his Body which is the Church**, branches grafted onto the vine which is himself: cf. 1Cor 12; Jn 15:1-4.”
- [God] gave himself to us through his Spirit. **By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature...** For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized.”  
**St. Athanasius,**  
*Ep. Serap. 1, 24: PG 26, 585 and 588.*



“We are **brethren not by nature**, but by the gift of **grace**, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real **share in the life of the only Son**, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection.” CCC 654 excerpt

# PARTAKING LATER



- What we shall it be like when we fully participate in the Divine Nature?

**The Beatific Vision**

# PARTAKING LATER



- The very life in heaven is expressed in **seeing**.
- Guardian Angels “**see** the face of my Father continually.” Mt 18:10
- St Paul tells us “ For now we **see** only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall **see** face to face. Now I know in part; **then I shall know fully**, even as I am fully known. 1Cor 13:12

# PARTAKING LATER



- St John tells us: “Beloved, **we are God’s children now**; **what we shall be** has not yet been revealed.
- We do **know** that when it is revealed **we shall be like him**, for **we shall see** Him as He is.” | Jn 3:2
  - We shall be like God, precisely because we will be in His presence and see Him. John tells us matter of factly, that we should already know this.

# PARTAKING LATER

- “Just as the **knowledge of God by faith**, is the root of the supernatural life here below, **the knowledge of God by sight** is *the very essence of knowledge in heaven.*”

Frank Sheed, *Theology for Beginners*, Ch 19



# PARTAKING LATER

- This will all take place in the context of a **new Heaven and a new Earth.** 2 Ptr 3:10 and Rev 21:1-4
- As residents of the new and final age, we will **more completely partake in the Divine Nature** - for we will be like Him ...
  - How? We need to wait just a little longer to “know Him as He is.”
- John the Apostle - **already had a vision** of this **reality** (Rev 4), so the testimony in his first letter is **trustworthy!**

# PARTAKING LATER



- A final thought on this mystery of partaking in the divine nature - can be found in our **Heavenly Worship here on Earth -**  
**the liturgy of the Mass.**
- Can you identify **when** we reflect on this truth during Mass?



# PRAYER

By the **mystery** of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

**‘My son,’ the father  
said, ‘you are always  
with me, and everything  
I have is yours.’**

**LUKE 15:31**

