



JOHN THE BAPTIST

- Time of Preparation (Luke 3:1-20)

PREACHING OF JOHN

Read Luke 3: 1-20

- **Again St Luke** - anchors the story in the context of a real historical timeframe.
 - Tiberias Caesar - 15th year
 - Pontius Pilate - governor of Judea (26-36AD)
 - Herod (Antipas) the Tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip the husband of Herodias.
 - High Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas

PREACHING OF JOHN

- “the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.”
- John is a Prophet - the *last* prophet of the OT.
- Reminder that John is a Levite - the son of a priest.
- prefigures encounter with Jesus

PREACHING OF JOHN

- Went throughout the **whole region of the Jordan**
 - proclaiming a **baptism of repentance**
 - for the forgiveness of sins.
 - **Fulfilling Isaiah 40: 1-5**
the promise of salvation.
 - The baptism was a penitential rite, but it prefigured the dispositions needed for Christian Baptism—faith in Christ, as the source of grace, and voluntary detachment from sin.



PREACHING OF JOHN

- “Brood of Vipers!” to the crowds (Mt 3:7 tells who the vipers are)
- Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance.
 - *act of the will - a command*
 - Claiming salvation as children of Abraham is insufficient.
 - even stones can be made sons of Abraham



PREACHING OF JOHN

- “Axe lies at the root of the tree”
- “Every tree that does not produce fruit will be cut down!”
- Jesus quotes John in Mt 7:19
- language of Judgment



PREACHING OF JOHN

- **Matthew 3: 1-6** adds:
 - In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
- **Jesus quotes John in Mt 4:17**
and **Mk 1:14**



PREACHING OF JOHN

- **Mark** 1: 1-6 adds:
 - And there went out to him **all** the country of Judea, and **all** the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, **confessing their sins.**



PREACHING OF JOHN

- Mark and Matthew tell us what he wore and ate:
- Now John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey
(Mt 3:4 and Mk 1:6)
- Malachi 3:23 (or 4:5)



PREACHING OF JOHN

- When Jesus praises John the Baptist (cf. Mt 11:7–9) he refers particularly to his **strength of will** and his **commitment to his God-given mission**. So faithful was he to his mission of preparing the way for the Messiah that Christ praises him in a unique way: **he is the greatest of those born of woman** (cf. Mt 11:11), **“a burning and shining lamp”** (Jn 5:35). He burned with love, and shone by the witness he bore.
- Christ was **“the true light”** (Jn 1:9); the Baptist **“came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him”** (Jn 1:7).

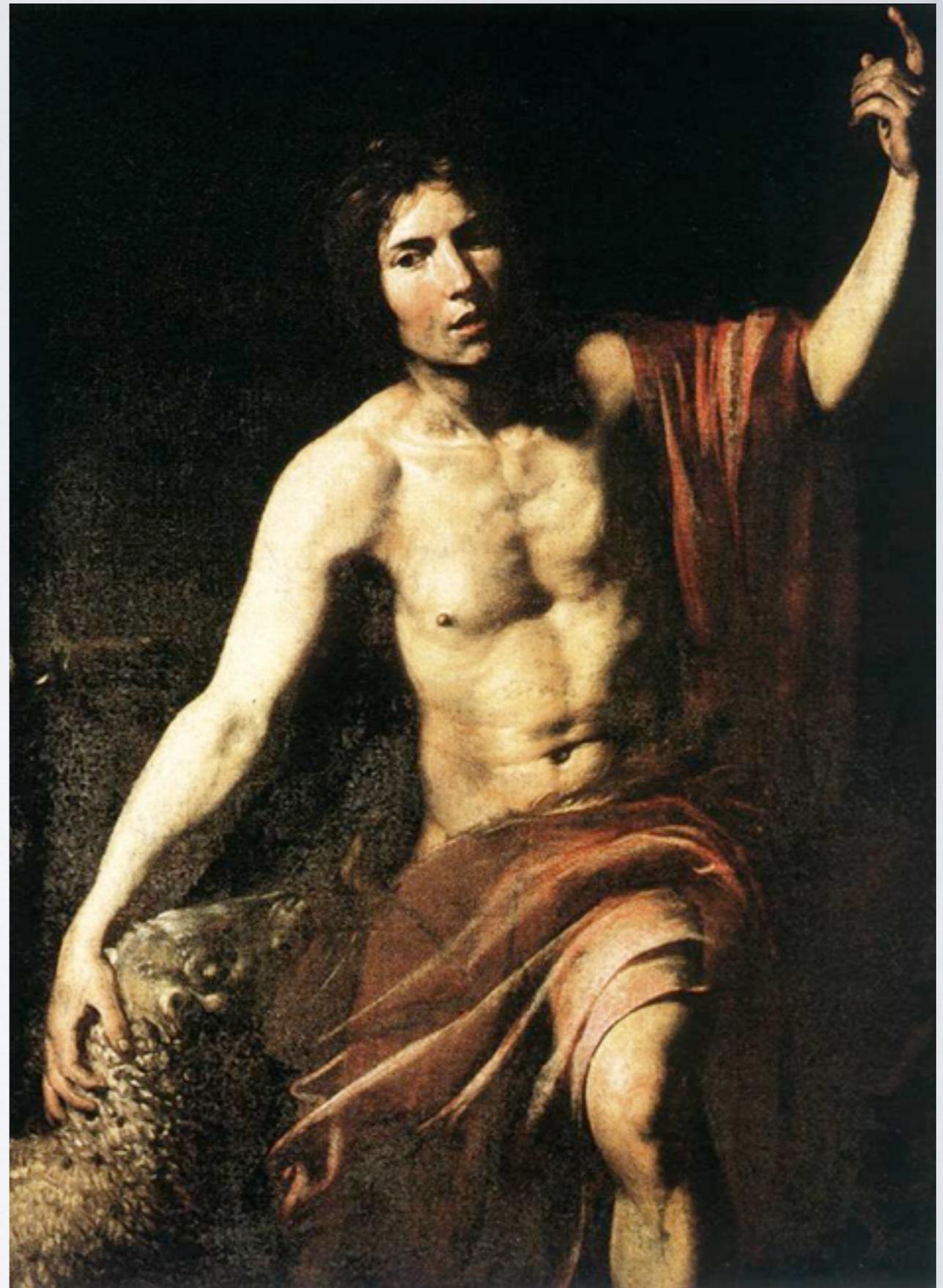
PREACHING OF JOHN

- v. 10-14 - **Answers to questions:**
 - two coats (cf. Js 2: 14-17)
 - food
 - tax collectors
 - soldiers (not Roman)



MESSIANIC TESTIMONY

of
JOHN THE BAPTIST
Lk 3:15-18



TESTIMONY

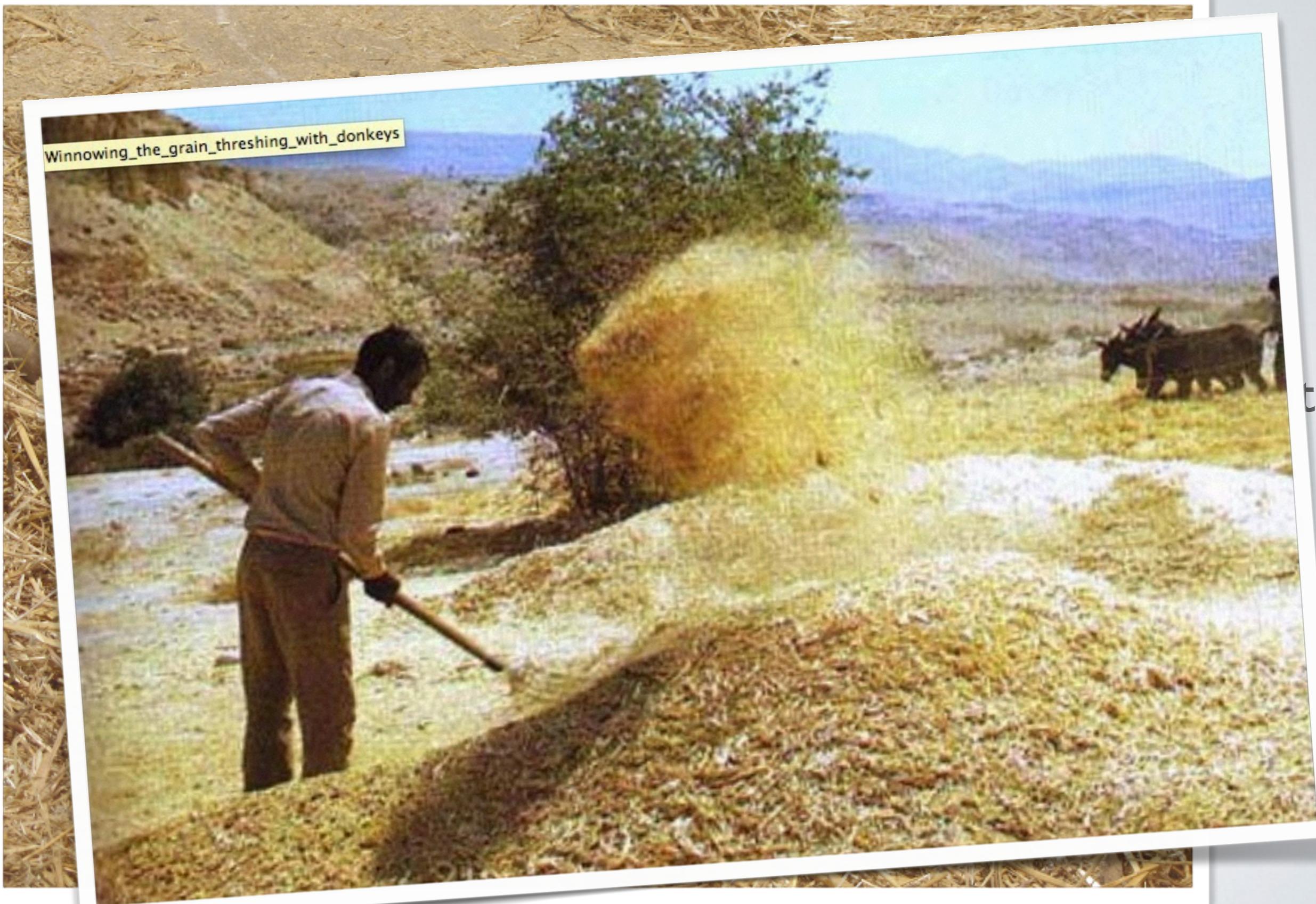
- Luke records John's words: "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."



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Winnowing_the_grain_threshing_with_donkeys





TESTIMONY

Holy Spirit and Fire

- Axe laid to the root of the tree ... winnowing fork - chaff will burn with unquenchable fire” Mt 3:10-12; Lk 3:9-17.
 - *Prophetic associations:*
 - Fire and judgment - Amos 7:4; Mal 3:2,19*
 - Spirit and judgment - Is 27:8; Jer 4:11-12*

TESTIMONY

ARE YOU THE CHRIST?

Read John 1: 19-28

- **St John's Gospel** records the answer he gives to the Pharisees. Not the **Messiah**
- **Elijah** (*Mal 3:23*)* - **The Prophet** (*Dt 18: 15-18*)*
- They asked him “Then **why are you baptizing**, if you are neither the **Christ**, nor **Elijah**, nor the **prophet**?”

TESTIMONY

ARE YOU THE CHRIST?

- St John's Gospel **also** sees the Baptist's mission as **fulfilling**
Is 40:1-5
- Not worthy to untie sandal strap
(cf Mt 3:11 whose sandals not worthy to carry)





BAPTISM OF JESUS

- Recorded in all 4 Gospels

Matthew 3:13–17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; ¹⁷ and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Mark 1:9–11

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; ¹¹ and a voice came from heaven, “Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.”

Luke 3:21–22

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, “Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.”

1. Holy Spirit appearance
2. Fulfill all righteousness
3. Beloved Son - well pleased

JOHN 1:29-34

- “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.’
- And John bore witness, “I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘**He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.**’ And I have seen and have borne witness that *this is the Son of God.*”



BAPTISMAL THEMES

- Sacramental Overlay
- Rabbinic Overlay
- Messianic Overlay
- Creation Overlay



SACRAMENTAL OVERLAY

SACRAMENTAL OVERLAY

- In Christ's baptism we can find a **reflection** (allegory) of the way the Baptism affects us. Christ's baptism was the **exemplar** of our own.
- - In it the mystery of the Blessed Trinity was revealed, and the faithful, on receiving Baptism, are consecrated by the invocation of and by the power of the Blessed Trinity.

(St Thomas Aquinas, Summa 3, 39, 5).

SACRAMENTAL OVERLAY

- - Similarly, heaven opening signifies that the power, the effectiveness, of this sacrament comes from above, from **God**, and that the baptized have the road to heaven opened up for them, a road which original sin had closed.
- - Jesus' prayer after his baptism teaches us that “**after** **Baptism** man needs to pray continually ... for though sins are remitted through Baptism, there still remains the *inclination* to sin which assails us from within, and also the flesh and the devil which assail us from without”
(St Thomas Aquinas, Summa 3, 39, 5).



RABBINIC OVERLAY

RABBINIC OVERLAY

- Jesus **age** at time of Baptism **(Lk 3:23)***
- John's Israelite **priestly** heritage (Lk 1:5)
- **Custom of the time - Rabbi**
(Teacher or Master)
 - Public **Tevilah** (see Lev 8:12*)
 - **Anointing** by a Priest
 - Acceptance of **followers**

JEWISH BOY CULTURE

- **Bet Sefer** - All Jewish boys studied and memorized Torah. By age 10.
- **Bet Talmud** - The best would then memorize the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures: Psalms, prophets and writings. Also began period of questions and answers (the art of understanding Torah) from age 10 to 12. Recall - Luke 2:46-47*
- **Bet Midrash** - Best of best continue studies so as to present themselves to a rabbi and become a disciple. Age 13-14.

JEWISH BOY CULTURE

House of the Book

- **Bet Sefer** - All Jewish boys studied and memorized Torah. By age 10.

House of Learning

- **Bet Talmud** - The best would then memorize the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures: Psalms, prophets and writings. Also began period of questions and answers (the art of understanding Torah) from age 10 to 12. Recall - Luke 2:46-47*

House of Interpretation

- **Bet Midrash** - Best of best continue studies so as to present themselves to a rabbi and become a disciple. Age 13-14.

JEWISH BOY CULTURE

- **Quizzed by rabbi** - focused on **his own philosophy and interpretation - his yoke**
 - "*Come, take my yoke upon you and become my disciple.*" would be the favorable response. A possibility of becoming a future rabbi was indicated. **cf Mt 11:30.**
 - "*Lech Acharai*" - Come follow me.
- The boy *would then leave everything*, (home, mother, father, synagogue, community...) and devote his entire life to being just like the Rabbi. He would discipline himself in the Rabbi's ways.

RABBI REJECTION

- In essence this would be **the form of a rejection:**
 - “Go home to your village.
 - Have sons. *Pray that they become rabbis.*
 - learn the family trade - fishing, farming, carpentry.
 - Because *you won't be studying to become my disciple.”*
- **This was the lot of almost all Jewish boys.**

RABBI JESUS

- Rabbis Acceptance of followers - **disciples**:
 - **Five followers** usually (designation of Rabbi)
 - Candidates came to rabbi.
 - **Similar to Andrew and the other disciple** - They sought Jesus as directed by John the Baptist
 - **Read Jn 1:35-42***
- Yet, **Jesus is seen calling his followers**, apart from their knowledge and based on his criteria. **cf Jn 15:16***



MESSIANIC OVERLAY

MESSIANIC OVERLAY

- Anointed Son of God - on whom the Spirit rests
- Christos, Mashiach



- Jn 1:33-34*
- Is 11: 1-3*
- Is 61: 1-2*
(later quoted by Jesus in Lk 4:18)

MESSIAH REVEALED

- Persons anointed in the Old Testament:
- Priests - Ex 40:13 - to offer sacrifice.
 - Jesus entered the *Melchizedek* priesthood (Heb 5:8-10) so He could become the High Priest and be the Holy Sacrifice.
- Prophets - 1 Ki 19:16 - to proclaim the word of God
 - Jesus was the Word of God become flesh
- Kings - 1 Sam 16: 3,13 - to rule over the nation
 - Jesus is the King of Kings, the promised son of David

MESSIAH REVEALED

- Persons anointed in the Old Testament:

- Priests - Ex 40:13 - to offer sacrifices

At what age were new priests consecrated to serve as Priests in the Old Testament?

Nu 4:3

- Prophets - I Ki 19:16 - to proclaim the word of God

- Jesus was the Word of God become flesh

- Kings - I Sam 16: 3,13 - to rule over the nation

- Jesus is the King of Kings, the promised son of David

ANOINTED BY BAPTISM

- We are anointed in Baptism - receive the Holy Spirit:
- To testify of the truth - 1 John 5:6 "This is the one who came by water and blood Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth."
- To be able to pray - Rom 8:39 and Eph 6:18 which says, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests..."
- To Live a righteous life - Rom 8:4 "in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit."

ANOINTED BY BAPTISM

- We are anointed in Baptism - receive the Holy Spirit:
- To be strengthened with power in your inner being - Eph 3:16 "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,"
- To be led by God - Rom 8:9 "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."
- To live in joy - Rom 14:17 "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,"

ANOINTED BY BAPTISM

- We are anointed in Baptism - receive the Holy Spirit:
- To live in hope - Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
- To receive spiritual gifts - 1 Cor 12:4 "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor 12:7 "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
- To bear spiritual fruit - Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

ANOINTED BY BAPTISM

- We are anointed in Baptism - receive the Holy Spirit:
- It is this anointing that opens our mind, teaches us, guides us, calls us to pray, empowers us, and enables us to be stronger disciples, more powerful laborers in the Kingdom.
- Not just people who seek salvation, but people who are abiding in Him, and capable of doing His will and love others.



POWER - IN THE GOSPELS

POWER - IN MATTHEW

- How does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of John the Baptist in his Gospel:
- **St Matthew** emphasizes that Jesus will have Power - to **heal and be merciful and righteous**, thus fulfill the prophesy of being a chosen *servant* of God. **Recall Mt 3:15***
- **(Mt 12:15-21)***

POWER - IN MATTHEW



- Power comes from **Holy Spirit**
- NOT from evil source - **Beelzebub**
- Pharisees **blaspheme** the Holy Spirit by attributing the Power of God to Satan.
- **Mt 12: 22-32***



POWER - IN MARK

- How does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of John the Baptist in his Gospel:
- **St Mark** emphasizes that **Jesus will be Mightier** than John (Mk 1:7) cf. Acts 1:8

POWER - IN MARK

- Power manifested in:
 - new teaching (Mk 1:22)
 - his healings (Mk 1:32-34)
 - forgiveness of sins (Mk 2:10)
 - and for St Mark - the Power is explicitly manifested in the exorcisms Jesus does.

POWER - IN MARK



- Exorcist Power manifested in four specific cases:
 - **1:22-28*** - demoniac in the synagogue
 - **5:1-20*** - against Legion in Gerasenes
 - **7:24-30*** - the Canaanite woman's daughter
 - **9:14-29*** - the epileptic boy

POWER - IN LUKE

- How does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of John the Baptist in his Gospel:
- St Luke emphasizes that Jesus will be baptize with the Holy Spirit and with Fire. (Lk 3:16)
- Acts 1:8* Power

POWER - IN LUKE

- The **Holy Spirit** is referenced:
 - 4-5 times in Sts. Matthew and Mark
 - **13 times in St Luke**
 - **41 times in Acts**, also written by St Luke

POWER - IN LUKE

- In **Acts 1:5** - St Luke places the **promise of Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the lips of Jesus himself.**
- **Pentecost** - St Luke links the Holy Spirit and Fire, by noting the **Tongues of Fire**, falling on the Apostles. (Acts 2:3)
- **St Peter** - St Luke documents, also connects the reception of the **Holy Spirit with Baptism** (Acts 2:38)

POWER - IN LUKE

- St Luke is also the only one to link Prayer with the coming of the Holy Spirit:
 - Lk 3:21
 - Acts 1:14
 - Jesus sets the example, and the Apostles and Mary and the Jesus' brothers follow it.

POWER - IN LUKE

- Sacramental overlay?
(*epiclesis*)



- St Luke, by linking Jesus' Prayer with the Coming of the Holy Spirit:
- helps eliminate conjecture that either John the Baptism, or his John's Baptism of Repentance conveyed the Holy Spirit on Jesus.
- The Spirit becomes present, because Jesus prays!

POWER - IN LUKE

- **St Luke** portrays Jesus ministry in the Holy Spirit as one of **healing and deliverance**.
- At **Nazareth**, He places his entire ministry under the **seal of the Holy Spirit**:
 - **Lk 4: 18-19** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

POWER - IN JOHN

- How does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of John the Baptist in his Gospel:
- **St John** emphasizes a **Theological Sacramental overlay**, that was already fully developed when he wrote his Gospel.
- While other Evangelists speak of **miracles**, **St John speaks of 7 signs!**

POWER - IN JOHN

- The **pneumatology** of the Fourth Gospel is quite rich!

pneuma = Wind or Spirit in Greek

- Interestingly, in Hebrew
ruach = Breath (*wind*) or Spirit

- Ruach HaKodesh

- Ruach Elohim

POWER - IN JOHN

- St John follows St Luke's approach of separating John's water baptism from Jesus' reception of the Holy Spirit.
 - Can you see HOW?
 - St John **never** mentions that John baptizes Jesus! Jn 1:29-34*
 - WHY?

TWO GOSPEL GOALS

- Among others, here are a couple of the goals of St John the Evangelist:
- This is what we call the “Author’s literal intent.”
 - Contradict Heretic Cerinthus;
 - Contradict lingering view that John the Baptist was a Messianic figure, on par with Jesus.

CERINTHUS

- Cerinthus (c. 100 CE) was a **gnostic** and to some, an early Christian, who was prominent as a **heresiarch in the view of the early Church Fathers.**
- **Contrary to proto-orthodox Christianity, Cerinthus school, followed the Jewish Law, denied that the Supreme God had made the physical world, *and* denied the divinity of Jesus.**

CERINTHUS

- In Cerinthus' interpretation, the Christ came to Jesus at baptism, guided him in his ministry, but left him at the crucifixion. A competing view saw Jesus as an emanation and not a true man.
- He taught that Jesus would establish a thousand-year reign of *sensuous pleasure* after the Second Coming but before the General Resurrection, a view that was declared heretical by the Council of Nicaea. Cerinthus used a version of the gospel of Matthew as scripture.

CERINTHUS

- **Cerinthus** taught at a time when Christianity's relation to Judaism and to Greek philosophy had not yet been clearly defined. ... In defining the world's creator as the demiurge, he emulated Platonic philosophy and *aligned with the Gnostics*.
- Early Christian tradition describes **Cerinthus** as a **contemporary to and opponent of John the Evangelist**. ...
(John chapter 6 - is written in a manner calculated to rebut Cerinthus)

CERINTHUS

- **Cerinthus** taught at a time when Christianity's relation to Judaism and to Greek philosophy had not yet been clearly defined.

DEMIURGE - (IN GNOSTICISM AND OTHER THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS) A HEAVENLY BEING, SUBORDINATE TO THE SUPREME BEING, THAT IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE CONTROLLER OF THE MATERIAL WORLD AND ANTAGONISTIC TO ALL THAT IS PURELY SPIRITUAL.

... Jewish tradition describes **Cerinthus** as a **contemporary to and opponent of John the Evangelist.** ...

(John chapter 6 - is written in a manner calculated to rebut Cerinthus)

TWO GOSPEL GOALS

- **Second Goal:** Contradict lingering view that John the Baptist was a Messianic figure, on par with Jesus.
- St John, in his Gospel, goes out of his way to record John the Baptist's comments praising Jesus as the Messiah, and distancing himself from the thought that he, John, was the Messiah.
- Ex: Jn 1:19-20; Jn 3:26-30; and Jn 1:37

TWO GOSPEL GOALS

- Jn 1:19-20 -

(The priests and Levites asked him)

“Who are you? ...

“I am not the Messiah.”

- Jn 3:26-30* -

(John is the best man not the bridegroom)

“The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease.”

TWO GOSPEL GOALS

- **Jn 1:29** - The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold the **Lamb of God**, who **takes away the sin of the world.**”
 - **see Is 53: 7**
 - **see Is 53: 11-12**
 - St John records that John the Baptist understood the Messiah would be the **suffering servant** of Isaiah’s prophesy.

POWER - IN JOHN

- **Pneumatology** - The branch of Theology concerned with the study of the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit **came down and remained** upon Jesus. (Jn 1:32-34)
 - Jesus **permanently possessed** the Holy Spirit.
 - Yet, in St John's Gospel there is **not a single exorcism**, and there is **no temptation in the desert**.

POWER - IN JOHN

- Instead, John records the greater accusation that **Jesus is possessed by the devil.**
 - Jn 7:20; 8:48 and 10:20 (among others)
- Jesus' **battle with Satan**, in St John, is limited to the the time of his **Passion and Death.**
 - Jn 12:31*; 13:27*; and 14:30* - *for example*

POWER - IN JOHN

- *Finally* St John, Jesus offers the **promise of living water.**
 - First to the **Samaritan woman (4:10)**
 - To the **Judean people in Jerusalem (7:37-39)**
- **On the cross,** St John sees Jesus deliver.
 - **Jn 19:34 - water and blood flows from the side of Jesus.** (*symbols of Baptism and Eucharist*).

CREATION OVERLAY



CREATION OVERLAY

- Elements at **Baptism of Jesus**
 - Father speaks
 - Spirit hovers over the Jordan River
 - Jesus is present
 - **Genesis - 1:1-26**
 - Father Speaks
 - Spirit hovers over the waters
 - Let us make man in Our image

CREATION THEME

- Creation theme in St John's Gospel
 - In the beginning (1:1) Prologue and Baptism of Jesus
 - Jn 1:29 The next day ...
 - Jn 1:35 The next day ...
 - Jn 1:43 The next day ...
 - Jn 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana ...



THE TEMPTATION

Lk 4: 1-14