

“And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins...” – Luke 3:3

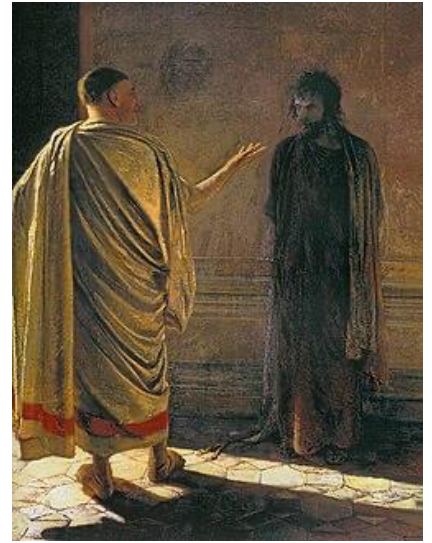


The Mission of the Forerunner

Paramoun of
Theophany

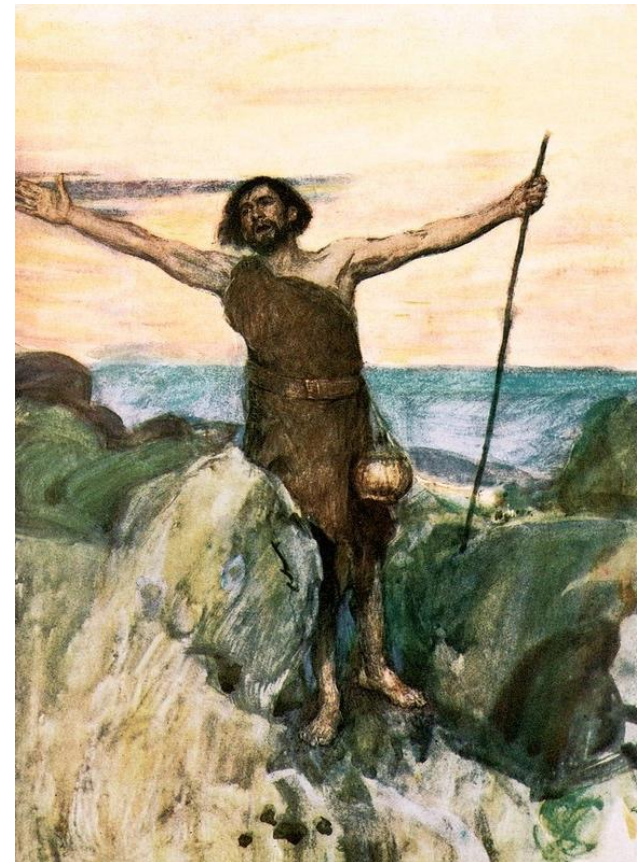
A Dim Atmosphere

- Emperor: Tiberius Caesar
- Governor of Judea: Pontius Pilate
- Tetrarchs:
 - Galilee = Herod
 - Iturea & Trachonitis = Philip (Herod's brother)
 - Abilene = Lysanias
- Chief priests: Annas and Caiaphas



The Voice Crying in the Wilderness

- "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'" (Lk. 3:4)
- "Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth..." (Lk. 3:5)



Practical Repentance

Brood of Vipers

- Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Lk. 3:7)
- Hateful to one another
- Venomous and fatal
- "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." (Matt. 23:15)
- Rebellious against God



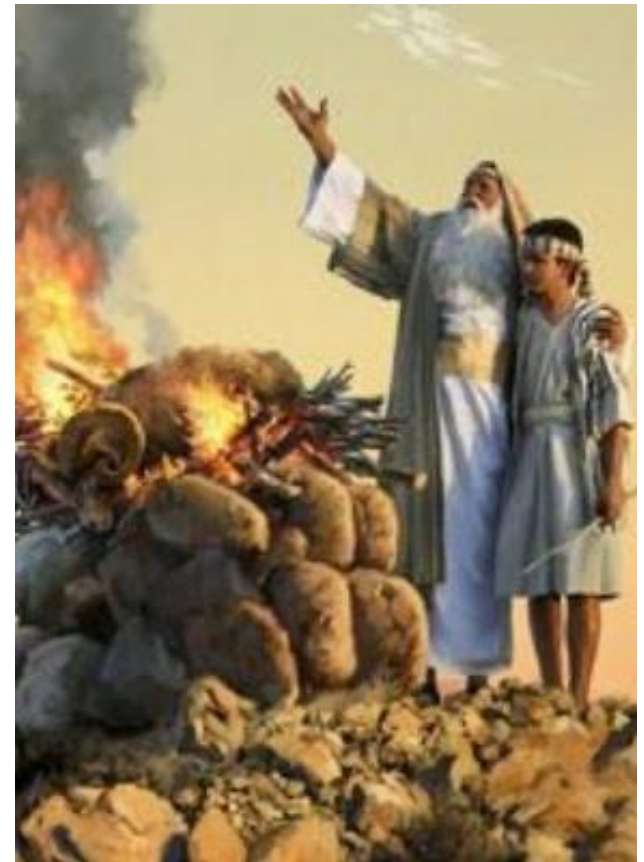
Brood of Vipers

- There is no way to flee the wrath to come, but by repentance.
- “...as **the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:21-24)



Do not rely on a title

- **“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”** (Luke 3:8)
- EX: Sarah’s womb
- EX: Rahab, Ruth, St. Moses the Strong, St. Augustine
- Let your deeds be your witness, not your title
- *“The martyrs come bearing their afflictions, and the righteous shall come bearing their virtues.”* (Conclusion of the Watos Theotokia, Midnight Psalmody)
- **“By what he does a man is known.”** (Sirach 20:30)



Do not be a fruitless tree

- **#1 Do not walk, stand, or sit with the ungodly**
- “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful...” (Ps. 1:1)
- **#2 Have your will in the Law of the Lord**
- “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.” (Psalms 1:2)
- “Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16)





Do not be a fruitless tree

- **#3 Be Planted by the stream of water**
- The tree is marked by strength and stability
- They bear natural fruit – NOT fake fruit
 - **"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish...first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also." (Matt. 23-25)**



Do not be a fruitless tree

- #3 Be Planted by the stream of water
- Fruit has a certain season
 - **“He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season...”**
(Psalms 1:3)
- The tree’s fruit is for the nourishment of other
- No mixed leaves
 - **“Whose leaf also shall not wither...”** (Psalms 1:3)

Proclaim Salvation for all: A Faithful Redeemer



- **“I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”** (Luke 3:16)
- **“Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.”** (Ruth 4:7)
- *“For being determined to give Himself up to death for the life of the world.”* (Liturgy of St. Basil)

Recap

- His mission was to prepare humanity – How?
 - **His Crying in the Wilderness**
 - **Practical Repentance**
 - Not to be like the Brood of Vipers
 - Do not rely on a title
- Do not be a fruitless tree – bear fruit
 - #1 Do not walk, stand, or sit with the ungodly
 - #2 Have your will in the Law of the Lord
 - #3 Be Planted by the stream of water
 - Continually nourished
 - Marked by strength and stability
 - They bear natural fruit – NOT fake fruit
 - Fruit is for the nourishment of other
 - No mixed leaves
 - **He is our committed Redeemer**