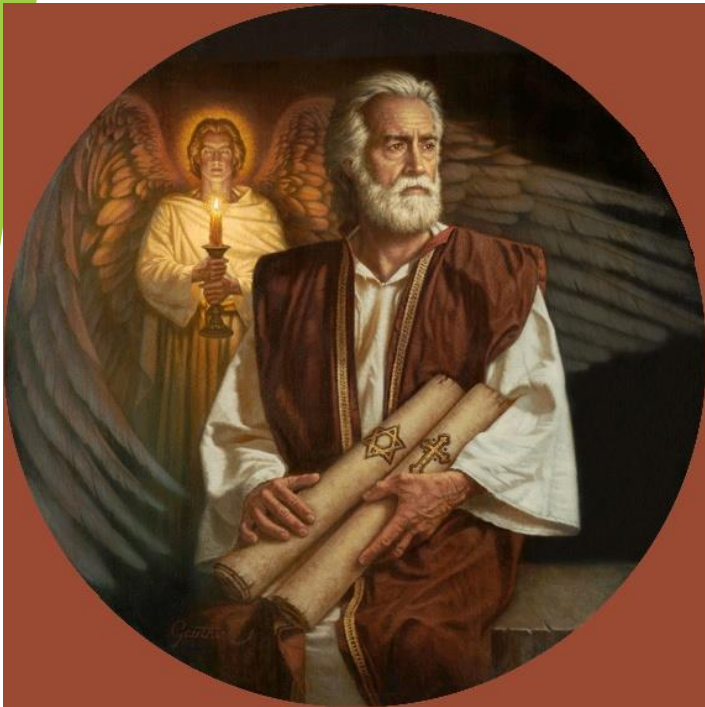


# The Gospel of Matthew

## Chapters 2 and 3

Lessons 3 and 4

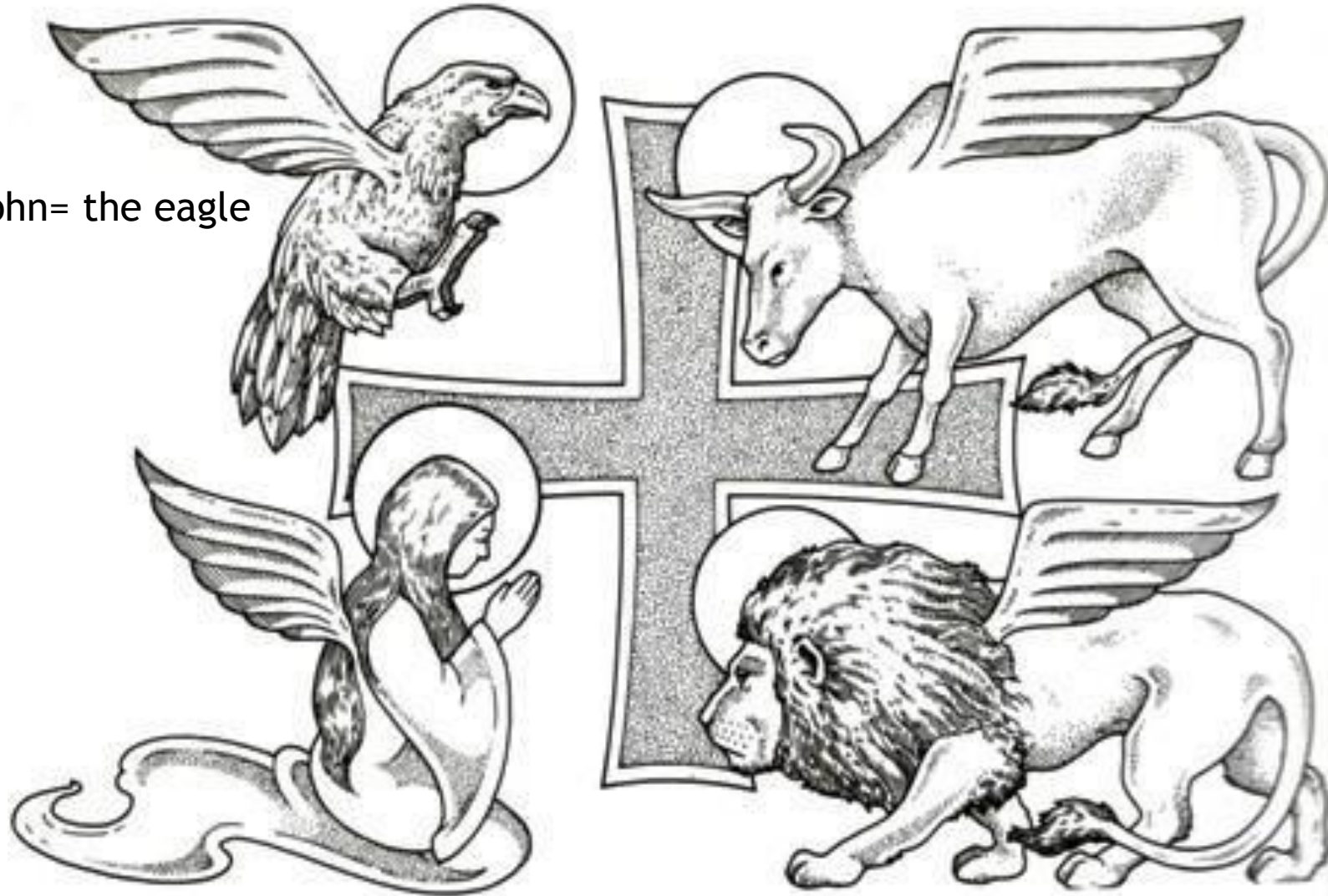


# The evangelists symbolized in art



- ▶ **Matthew** is represented as the winged man, because his Gospel begins with the human genealogy of Jesus.
- ▶ **Mark** is represented as the winged lion, as his Gospel begins with John the Baptist and a “voice crying out in the wilderness”; the lion being an animal of the Middle East’s wilderness.
- ▶ **Luke** is the winged Ox, because his Gospel begins in the Temple with Zacharias, the high priest, and the father of John the Baptist; the Ox is a sacrificial animal.
- ▶ Finally, **John** is represented as an Eagle, because John’s Gospel begins with a soaring overview of the Incarnation: “*In the beginning was the Word...*”

John= the eagle



Luke = the sacrificial ox

Mark = winged lion or the voice crying out of the desert

—Matthew = winged man



# Quick review

- ▶ Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Joseph, tracing his roots back to **Abraham**. Jesus' identity is tied to the Chosen People of God.
- ▶ This Gospel will continue to show how Jesus is the fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy. Over a dozen times Matthew proclaims  
*“All this happened in order to fulfill what the Lord declared through the prophet.”* (Matt. 1:22)
- ▶ The Gospel of Matthew was written anonymously.

It is often called the “most Jewish of the Gospels” because it appears to be written for a Jewish/Christian audience.

# *Similarities* between Matthew and Luke's versions of the Christmas narrative

- ▶ Mary and Joseph
- ▶ Conception by Spirit of God
- ▶ No Donkey
- ▶ Herod the Great is Mentioned
- ▶ Birth in Bethlehem



# The Nativity - the Birth of Jesus

## ▶ Matthew's Version

- ▶ Main Characters: Joseph, Angel, Magi, Herod the Great
- ▶ Location of Conception: *Bethlehem*
- ▶ Location of Birth: House (2:11)
- ▶ Adoration: Magi (Gentiles!) -How many? The text does NOT say!
- ▶ Star
- ▶ No angels in night sky
- ▶ Murder of the innocents & trip to Egypt
- ▶ Move to Nazareth instead of back to Bethlehem for fear of Archelaus (2:19-23)

## ▶ Luke's Version

- ▶ Main Characters: Zechariah, Gabriel, Elizabeth, Mary, Angels, Shepherds, Simeon, Anna
- ▶ Location of Conception: *Nazareth* (they go to Bethlehem only for a census)
- ▶ Location of Birth: Stable (2:7)
- ▶ Adoration: Shepherds (Lowly) - How many? The text does NOT say!
- ▶ No Star
- ▶ Angels in night sky
- ▶ No murder of the innocents & no trip to Egypt
- ▶ Return to Nazareth since they live there already (2:39-40)

# Why so many differences?

- ▶ **Consider this-**
- ▶ No telephone, telegraph, or television.
- ▶ No paper and pencil or photography
- ▶ Status of children is very low - lower than women!
- ▶ **How would *your* story be told by**
  - ▶ Your parents?
  - ▶ A childhood friend?
  - ▶ Your children?
  - ▶ A neighbor?
  - ▶ **How does the story differ according to the audience?**



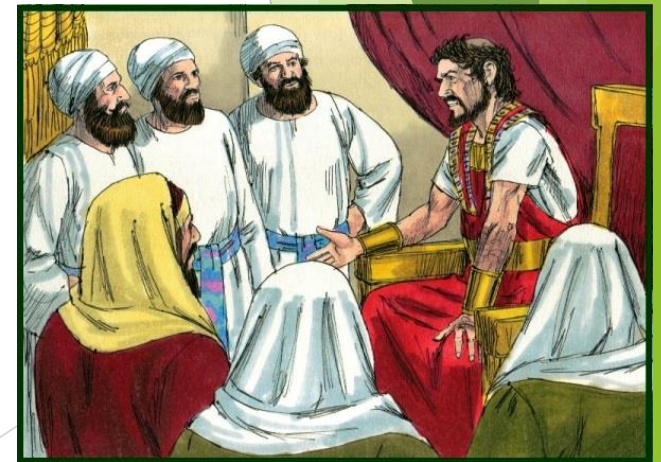
# Matthew Chapter 2

- ▶ Matthew chapter 1 focused on the *identity* of Jesus
- ▶ Who is this Jesus?
- ▶ Chapter 2 - dealt with the
  - ▶ 1. Visit of the Magi (2:1-12) (Zoroastrian priests? Gentiles!)
  - ▶ 2. The flight into Egypt (2:13-15)
  - ▶ 3. The slaughter of innocent children (2:16-18)
  - ▶ 4. The return from Egypt (2:19-23)



# Herod's attempt to kill Jesus fulfills prophecy..

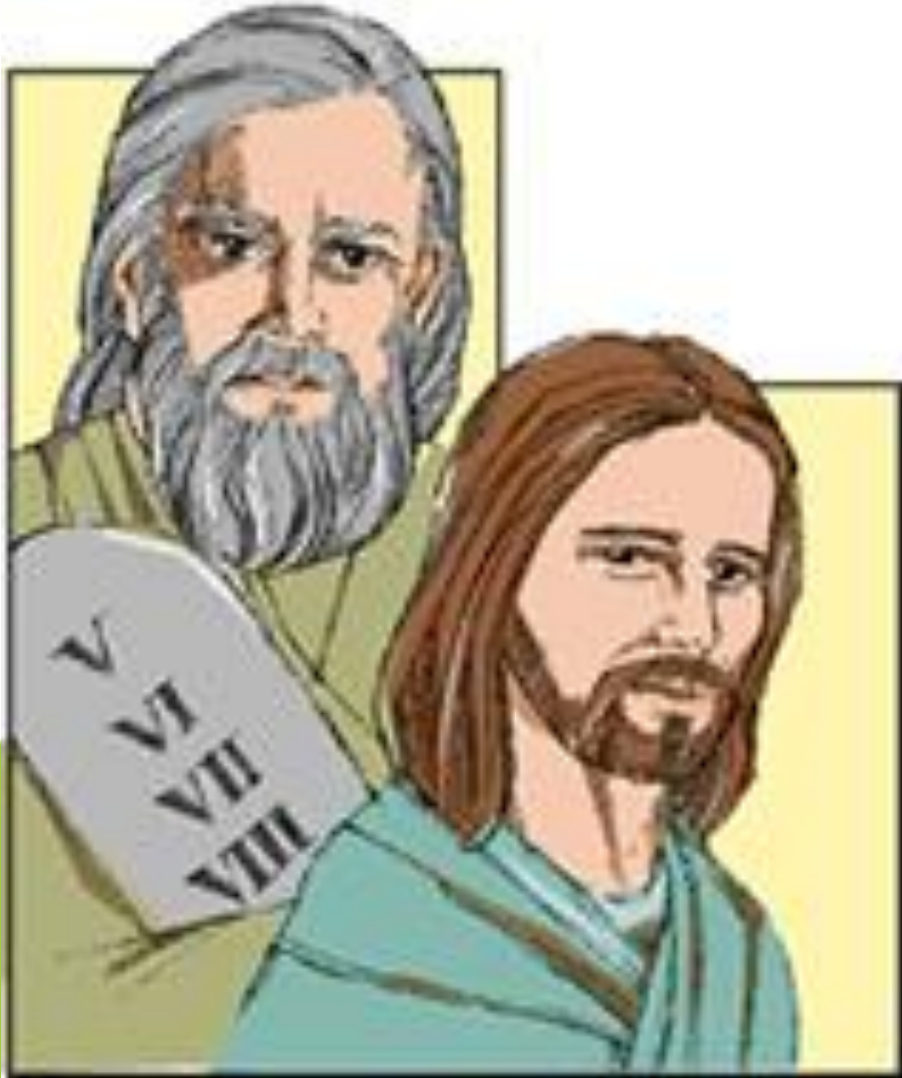
- ▶ Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." (Matt 2:7-8)
- ▶ Jeremiah 31:15
- ▶ <sup>15</sup> This is what the LORD says:
- ▶ "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."



# Compare King Herod to Egypt's Pharaoh and Jesus to Moses

<i>Moses</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
<p><i>The Pharaoh</i> orders that all of the Hebrew male infants are to be put to death. <b>Exodus 1:22</b></p>	<p><i>Herod</i> orders that all of the male children who are two years old or younger in Bethlehem to be put to death. <b>Matthew 2:16-17</b></p>
<p>Moses is saved by being placed into an ark on the <i>Nile</i>.</p>	<p>Jesus is saved by being taken to Egypt, the land of the <i>Nile</i>.</p>

# Jesus and Moses



*The baby Moses* survived the Egyptian Pharaoh's murderous schemes, and was called, as an adult, to *save his people from slavery and lead them out of Egypt*. *Moses* returns the chosen people to the promised land and brings them the sacred covenant.

The infant *Jesus* escapes another ruler's plot to kill God's chosen one. Like *Moses*, *Jesus* was summoned from *Egypt* to return to *Israel*. Ultimately *Jesus* is called to deliver his people from the enslavement (of sin and death). *Jesus is the New Covenant*.

# Egypt as a refuge for Jews

- ▶ Jacob and his family found refuge in Egypt during time of great famine. (1500 BC) Joseph, son of Jacob was already there.
- ▶ Genesis 46:1-3
  - ▶ So Israel (Jacob) set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.
  - ▶ And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, “Jacob! Jacob!”
  - ▶ “Here I am,” he replied.
  - ▶ “I am God, the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. <sup>4</sup> I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again.
- ▶ 400 years later Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.



# The return from Egypt

- ▶ The return from Egypt of the Holy Family is another fulfillment of prophecy.
- ▶ Hosea 11:1
  - ▶ “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.
- ▶ Matt 2:19-22
- ▶ When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”\* He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod,\* he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee.
- ▶ Archelaus ruled Judea from 4 B.C. until 6 A.D.



# Matthew Chapter 3

## ..almost 30 years later..

John the Baptist and  
The Baptism of Jesus



# John the Baptist



- ▶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

(Matt 3: 4)

- ▶ Many biblical scholars believe that John was influenced by the Jewish sect known as the Essenes. His practice of baptizing, calling for repentance and his simple manner of dress and food suggest an influence by this group. Since his parents were elderly when he was born, it is possible that he moved to Qumran after the death of Zachariah and Elizabeth. The Essenes were in the habit of taking in and raising young men in the faith.



# Baptism in the first century

- ▶ Baptism was not a *Jewish practice* until very late in the first century.

At that time it was used for proselytes, or new converts as a ritual of commitment. One would take a Mikvah, ritual bath, in the Temple, as a symbolic cleansing away of old ways before conversion to Judaism.

The Essenes were different. Repentance was essential to ushering in the Messianic age. Repentance was necessary before baptism. For for the Essenes, baptism was a sign of a spiritual state that had already been achieved. In itself it did not redeem a person.





**The Essenes** were a group of Jews who were disappointed with how the Temple was run in the first century. They opposed the “worldliness” of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem as well. The Essenes moved out to the desert of Qumran and began a **monastic** community. Women were not permitted. They relied on all of their own food to make sure it was properly prepared according to kosher standards. When away from the community they would eat “off the land.” (Locusts and honey for example)

The Essenes are thought to have written the Dead Sea Scrolls. The discovery of the scrolls gave the world the oldest existing copies of the Hebrew Bible. (Discovered in 1946)

The Essenes expected **two messiahs** to come. One would be a political messiah, a warrior king like David, who would free Israel from Roman rule and oppression. (Pharisees and Sadducees expected this model for Messiah)

The Second Messiah, expected by Essenes would be a spiritual leader who would restore the faith and the holiness of the Temple.

# Baptism and John -Matt 3:5-10

► *At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.*

*When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. **9** And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. **10** Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

► John was quite well known as a preacher. But like the Essenes, he required repentance, confession and good works before submitting to baptism. The baptism of John is not sacramental.



*We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (Matt 3:9)*

- ▶ C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* describes what he calls “**The Sin of Presumption.**”
- ▶ For Christians, Lewis suggested that those who presume they are saved by Jesus and believe they do not need to do anything else to be saved, possess the sin of presumption. Failure to live as repentant, loving human beings does not assure of salvation, according to Lewis.
- ▶ This concept seems to be what John is saying of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They assume they are the *chosen people* because they have a birthright or tribal line to Abraham. However, the chosen people are still called to follow God’s laws as their part of the covenant. Not all of Abraham’s descendants are part of the chosen people. John is calling them hypocrites for showing up for this baptism without being repentant or doing good works first.

# John the Baptist and the Mandaean sect

- ▶ John's popularity is evident in the existence of another sect that believed John to be the Messiah. Still in existence today, in very small numbers, *the Mandaeans* still baptize in the name of John the Baptist and believe that Jesus was a false prophet.
- ▶ The sect is over 2000 years old with roots in Iraq. Since the Iraq wars, their numbers are thought to be only around 5000 believers today. They are often compared to Gnostics.
- ▶ Mandaeans did not see baptism as a one time only sacrament. It is a action that can be repeated as often as necessary.



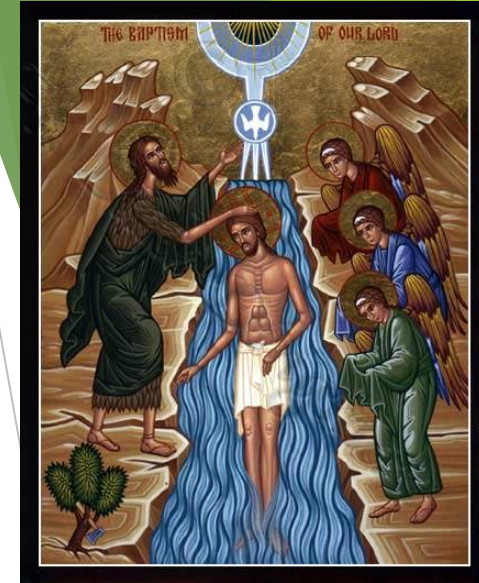


# Baptism

- ▶ According to the letters of Paul, baptism in the early Christian Church was a **two fold rite**.
  - ▶ It was a sign of one entering into the Covenant relationship with the Messiah
  - ▶ It was also a token of repentance and an instrument of pardon.
  - ▶ Interpreted along side the saving works of the Messiah, ***Baptism is the death of the old life of sin, and a new birth or rising again to righteousness.*** (Romans 6:3-11)
  - ▶ From Gal 3:26-27 we learn that baptism is the process of becoming sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
  - ▶ It is a once and for all event in our understanding as sacrament, just as the life, death and rising of Jesus is a one time event for the salvation from sin.

# Catechism of the Catholic Church

- ▶ **1213** Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),<sup>4</sup> and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ **1224** Our Lord voluntarily submitted himself to the baptism of St. John, intended for sinners, in order to "fulfill all righteousness."<sup>19</sup> Jesus' gesture is a manifestation of his self-emptying.<sup>20</sup> The Spirit who had hovered over the waters of the first creation descended then on the Christ as a prelude of the new creation, and the Father revealed Jesus as his "beloved Son."<sup>21</sup>



# The Baptism of Jesus in the Gospels

- ▶ Matthew 3:14-17
- ▶ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

# Compare the accounts of Jesus' Baptism in the Gospels...

- ▶ The synoptic Gospels are quite similar in the language used to describe the baptism of Jesus.
- ▶ Matthew and John both have language that reflects a culture very focused on honor, shame and authority. It is improper, in fact, it is thought to be a scandal for a humble preacher to baptize the Messiah or chosen one of God.
- ▶ John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”
- ▶ John recognizes the superiority of Jesus in this situation.
- ▶ The Gospel of John treats the baptism a bit differently. John was not aware of the Jesus as Messiah until the “the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, ..remained upon Him.” In John’s Gospel, the baptism of Jesus is distinguished from the baptism of John. “This is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”



# Why did Jesus need to be baptized?

- ▶ But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.
- ▶ This baptism administered by John is the result of the Will of God, so even the *Messiah must* submit to it. It is wholly fitting that the Messiah should be completely identified with his people, and subject to God’s will.
- ▶ It is also a moment of a definitive manifestation of Jesus’ identity.
- ▶ Both Matthew and Mark use language that says Jesus came “up out of the water”. This is a reference to Isaiah’s Servant Song  
( Isa 43:2)

“When you pass through waters, I will be with you;  
through rivers, you shall not be swept away.”

# This is my beloved Son..



- ▶ After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”