

Baptism of Our Lord

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 43:1-7

Israel's Only Savior

But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ³ For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. ⁴ Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. ⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶ I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Lutheran Hour Ministry Devotion:

43:1-2 Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Isaiah 43:1b-2

Linton, North Dakota, has had its share of problems. Yes, I know you and your community have problems too. But Linton has had *problems*.

First, one of the town's largest employers closed. That was rough. Then two tributaries from the Missouri River flooded, washing out bridges and roads, damaging more than 70 homes in a community of 1,500. That was devastating. But now, with the sandbags gone, Linton is coming back.

The fields are plowed and the pastures are green. Businesses have moved from the outskirts of town back to Main Street. For the first time in three decades, all the Main Street buildings are filled and downtown traffic is a reality.

But there's more. The spring floods have filled the community's lake, and boats can once again be launched. Anglers and vacationers are starting to return.

Linton has experienced quite a transformation. The co-publisher of the town's weekly newspaper calls it, "revitalization through devastation." I like that. I like it

because it's so theologically sound. Think about it. We Christians, once condemned sinners, have been revitalized through the devastation experienced by Jesus on the cross. We who have seen the Lord's love and commitment through the Savior's dedicated life, His unfair death, and His glorious resurrection have been forgiven, saved, recycled, and restored.

As Isaiah said, by the Savior's sacrifice we have been redeemed. Now, living in God's love, we know rivers cannot devastate us; we believe we cannot be overwhelmed.

In truth, in troubling times, whatever difficulties and destructions that sweep down upon us, we Christians can remain confident: God has called us by name; we are His.

43:1 BUT NOW – At the end of the exile. (TLSB)

The chapter begins with an unexpected thought. The last verse of the previous chapter announced God's burning wrath upon His people. They did not obey His law; they were blind and deaf to all that God had done for them. Because of their sins, God had sent the violence of war upon them. But they remained blind and deaf. We might have expected that Isaiah would continue with a fierce announcement of judgment. In spite of all God did for His people, they deserved God's judgment. God would have been justified in abandoning such ungrateful and stubborn people to their own sins. The phrase "But now," however, introduces something unexpected. We read tender words of faithful love from the Lord, the God of free and faithful grace. (PBC)

THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS – All of these words are very intense. "Do not be afraid, you seed of Jacob, because I have created you. You are My creature." This is the antithesis to the enemies who cry that the godly and the apostles are rebels and creatures of Satan. So they shake us as through a sieve and heap curses on us. But here God says, "Don't be afraid. I affirm that I am your Creator." The apostles are creatures made by God and created a new people. Of this creation He is speaking here. "I am He, I am the same God who created everything." When they hear about a new creation, people must not think of a new God. "I acknowledge you as My creature. Let the enemies say the opposite. It does no harm." (Luther)

created ... formed. God made the nation Israel as surely as he made the first man (see Ge 1:27; see also Isa 43:7, 15, 21; 44:2, 24). (CSB)

In the last chapter we heard the comfort of the church. This comfort keeps busy the affairs and schemes of the devil, who tries to disturb this consolation and righteousness. Hence this chapter offers similar consolation to raise up the church, as if she were already desperate and fallen. You see that the church is forever about to fall, and therefore there must always be consolations. Although

there would scarcely be a remnant, God is the protector of this poor little church. Paul especially used this argument against the Jews, calling himself (Phil. 3:5) “of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Paul made use of such and similar boasts to strengthen his church, even though it was always the most wretched in appearance. (Luther)

This smallness of the church is the supreme offense in the world. “Do you think you are the only ones who count?” they say. Here there must be an apostolic faith against this offense. Therefore the prophet consoles the church with these grand words, “Do not be offended.” While Christ was hanging on the cross, the church was practically nothing. It began with the malefactor, then came the apostles, etc. This offense hurts not only the simple but also the prophets and apostles, as David says (Ps. 62:9), “Men of low estate are but a breath, men of high estate are a delusion.” Don’t all the others amount to anything? Thus the whole world cries, “We are greater, we are older, you are recent and few, therefore you cannot possibly be right and we wrong.” To this the psalm (Ps. 91:7) replies: “A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand.” We, however, stand far apart from each other, like trees in an open field, while the ungodly are close together like a dense forest. We are a bucket, a little handful, yet that weak smallness is made certain by divine promises. Thus in the time of Elijah there remained 7,000. Where 100 got to heaven, 100,000 were lost. This offense, I say, has tormented all the most holy prophets. (Luther)

Fear not. See 41:10 and note. (CSB)

The Lord says “Fear not, sinner. Fear not my people. Instead of punishment and judgment I will give you deliverance. The unexpected announcement to set aside fear comes for three reasons; all three of them trace the comfort back to the Lord Himself. First, the Lord says, “I have redeemed you.” Second, God called His people by name. He singled them out from all the nations of the earth and called them. Third, these people were God’s own possession. He claimed them: “You are mine.” (PBC)

When we read these words thousands of years later, we too find comfort in them. The Lord has redeemed us too but from that greater bondage. By our sins, we were slaves of sin and in bondage to death and punishment. The Lord redeemed us from sin, death and hell. He bought us with the price of the blood of Christ on Calvary. God called us by name when He washed us in the water of Baptism. All believers belong to the Lord; they are His possession. (PBC)

redeemed you. See notes on 35:9; 41:14. The verb is also used in 29:22; 44:22–23; 48:20 (cf. Ex 15:13). (CSB)

His chosen people (Ex 6:2–8) are told to no longer fear. (TLSB)

“I am your Redeemer.” These are burning words. “I have created you in opposition to the people who are not in the church. I have formed and fashioned you by the Holy Spirit. Beyond that, I have redeemed you from tyrants, from the Law, from sin and death. All these I have overcome, they are all under My feet and cannot harm you.” This requires a strong faith. If we only believed this and put down our idol. (Luther)

The principle of redemption has been applied to more than just Judah’s release from Babylon. Redemption has come to be a familiar term to all Christians. We regularly confess that God has redeemed us. He paid the ransom necessary to secure our release from our spiritual bondage to sin, death, and judgment. The redemption did not come cheaply. God paid a dear price when He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, in exchange for sinful humanity. The apostle Peter wrote, “You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Luther paraphrased Peter in his explanation of the Second Article in the Small Catechism, “ Jesus Christ... has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.” (PBC)

summoned ... by name. God chose Israel to serve him in a special way. See 45:3–4 (Cyrus). In Ex 31:2; 35:30 the Hebrew underlying this expression is translated “chosen.” (CSB)

John 10:3: “He calls His own sheep by name.” He wants to distinguish and separate the church from the synagogue, for a name distinguishes one from another. “You now have a name that has been written in the heavens.” *I have called*, namely, through the Word. (Luther)

The Lord reminds His people that He has not forgotten His covenant promises to them. Cf Gen 32:26-29. (TLSB)

YOU ARE MINE – There you see that we are called to be His possession. Whatever, therefore, you do, you should do well, for these [works] are His. “All of your works are Mine.” Note these words, “I have created, I have formed, I have redeemed, you are Mine.” “When you baptize, teach, train, etc., whatever you do and experience, believe that I have done and experienced it.” So you see that all the activities and experiences of the church are those of God. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” (Acts 9:4). (Luther)

43:2 *waters ... rivers.* Probably an allusion to crossing the Red Sea (Ex 14:21–22) and the Jordan River (Jos 3:14–17). Cf. Ps 66:6, 12. (CSB)

He will not permit any disaster or obstacle to destroy them (cf Ps 32:6; 42:7–8; 124:4–5). Crossing the Red Sea during the exodus (Ex 14:21–31) and crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Jsh 3:14–17) are two examples. (TLSB)

walk through the fire. Fulfilled literally in the experience of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Da 3:25–27). Contrast 42:25. (CSB)

A pure piling up of words, as is the Hebrew custom. Waters, rivers, fire, flame shall not harm you, as if to say, “Before you cry and speak, I know what you need. Even though you might be in extreme trouble, nothing shall harm you, and you shall be inwardly safe. Do not become frightened. It is the form of the church to be in water, in rivers, in the fire. But I will be with you, so that nothing will harm you.” (Luther)

In the Sacred Scriptures water and fire denote trials. They went “through fire and water” (Ps. 66:12) and many other places. All of these things signify the trial and trouble of the godly. It is as if He were saying: “There is no one who is not after you. Thus you are in water and fire, etc. But do not be afraid, you are My creature, and for that reason, on My account, the world does not put up with you. Yet nothing can harm you.” This is the church of God, built on a solid rock, the rock of God’s promise. No tyrant can uproot it. Because the godly are in the church, therefore they will remain, even though the tyrants are raging. With their plans and schemes they try hard enough. They want to burn them, choke them, put them under, and banish them, but this passage and promise controls their planning and attempt. Thus God protects His own in the midst of ungodly men and preserves His church. We shall have the same experience. We have been called and chosen into the church by God, but we shall pass through waters and fires. There will be offense, but we shall be preserved. These are the promises given to the church. None of these trials shall do you harm. (Luther)

Armed with God’s promises, God’s ancient people faced the trouble of life. The Lord does not promise that His own faithful believers would escape all difficulty and pass through life without trouble. They would “pass through the waters” and “walk through the fire.” When the people of Israel left Egypt, they did indeed pass through the waters. By God’s power, Moses made a way through the Red Sea. That deliverance stood in the background of these promises. Just as the Lord provided such deliverance in the past, He would provide an even greater deliverance in the future. God assures His people that even their great trials will somehow work out for the best (Romans 8:28). (PBC)

43:3 I AM THE LORD, YOUR GOD – “For that reason you will be preserved, not because you are strong and righteous. No, but rather because I am the Lord.” (Luther)

Holy One of Israel. See notes on 1:4; 41:14. (CSB)

He, I say, God, whom you ignorantly worship, is the head of the church. So Peter in Acts preached in an outstanding way concerning Christ as the head of the church. If we keep this pure, nothing will harm you, if we can say that the Holy One of Israel is the head of the church against all claims to the contrary. (Luther)

Savior. Who delivers from the oppression of Egypt or Babylon and from the spiritual oppression of sin (see 19:20 and note; 25:9 and note; 33:22; 35:4 and note; 43:11–12; 45:15, 21–22; 49:25; 60:16; 63:8–9). The name “Isaiah” means “The LORD saves.”

ransom.† The Persians conquered Egypt, Cush and Seba, described by the Lord of nations as a reward or ransom for liberating Israel (see note on 41:2; cf. Eze 29:19–20). (CSB)

God restructured the whole ancient world for the sake of a small people apparently sinking into oblivion in a foreign land. Israel’s liberation is described as if God paid the Persians for giving the exiles freedom by giving the Persians Egypt. (TLSB)

This is a dark text. I would prefer to construe it to be a repetition of the preceding. This is what the prophets usually do when they want to say that God is powerful, so as to support the power of this God from what had gone before. This is the meaning: “I am the God who of old protected you against all your enemies, first the Egyptians, then the Ethiopians, then Seba, whose people are also Ethiopians. I have put them all down.” It is as if He were saying: “Don’t you remember how I protected you and put them in your place? Where you should have perished, I caused others to perish in your place. You indeed deserved to perish, as in Egypt when you murmured against Me. Thus you were set free, and others were killed. Thus the Midianites, Ammonites, and others wanted to fight against you, but they perished. You were as a sheep for the slaughter before them. They prepared an atonement and victims for you and thought they were doing God a service by killing you. This plan and work those who plotted it had to experience themselves, while you were preserved.” (Lu)

Cush. See note on 18:1. (CSB)

Seba. A land near Cush (cf. 45:14) or Sheba (Ps 72:10). It was probably either in south Arabia (see Ge 10:7 and note; see also Eze 27:21–22) or across the Red Sea in Africa. (CSB)

Cush and Seba are poetic, expansive expressions for Egypt. (TLSB)

4:4 SINCE YOU ARE PRECIOUS – Who says that? “The world does not say this. No, to the contrary, even in your own eyes you seem cast off. But in My eyes you are a noble jewel and emerald. Although in supreme trials you seem nothing in your own eyes and are condemned as one cast off by the world, in My eyes you are glorious. Therefore you may be vile in your own eyes, in the eyes of

the world, and even in those of your brothers. Fear not. In My eyes I regard you as a precious jewel.” This consolation applies to those already despairing and almost completely oppressed, so that they may lift themselves up by means of it. “Therefore you are also glorified, namely, because in My eyes you are precious. For that reason you should be glorified, even though you may be the reproach and dung of men. Let the cross go before, glory will triumph in the end. As I have done in the past, so I am still doing now.” It is our glory, therefore, to be worthless in our own eyes and in the view of the world. We must indeed be nothing in our eyes and in those of the whole world. *You are precious in My eyes.* “Because you are nothing to yourself, you are glorious to Me.” (Luther)

I LOVE YOU – The opposite seems to be true, “I do not love you.” When conscience hears God threaten, it says, “You are God’s foe and enemy.” So the whole world gives expression to the opposite view. Yes, the enemies themselves are the objects of God’s love, not we. Under this cross the flesh cannot believe that it is loved by God. The flesh says, “Love someone else also.” But here the prophet says, “Do not judge yourself according to your feeling but according to the Word, because I love you by hating you.” So you will be protected in supreme dangers. (Luther)

GIVE MEN IN EXCHANGE FOR YOU – In the exodus, Israel was “redeemed” at the expense of Egypt. Cf Pr 21:18. (TLSB)

This, too, seems like the opposite. Our side seems to be going under, while the enemies are on top. We are dying daily as sheep for the slaughter. All of these words are spoken as in darkness, and they are like words “in a dark place” (cf. 2 Peter 1:19), when I see the enemies victorious and myself imprisoned. “As for you, have confidence, when all men boast that they are the church of God, the sons of God, but you are condemned as a heretic, in that case cling to Me, because you are clear to Me and splendid in My eyes. It is necessary for Me to speak to you because you are in difficulties, but they are most glorious.” For that reason the promises must be spoken to those who are not glorious. (Luther)

43:5-7 Though the Lord’s people will be dispersed for their sins, He reminds them that they will be gathered to Him once more (11:11–12; 27:13; 60:4). (TLSB)

43:5 *Do not be afraid.* See 41:10 and note. (CSB)

God assures Israel of His constant presence even before they are gathered together before Him. (TLSB)

Why does He say *Fear not*? Because there are fears within and terrors without, the church is a tumult and a frightened people, beset by fear, despair, and sins. For that reason it has the Word, which is the breath of its life, so that it may be consoled by the Word. “Why are you afraid? Don’t be afraid. I am with you.” The opposite appears to be the case: “I am far away from you.” Since the conscience

feels that God is very far away from us, it is necessary for Him to say *I am with you*. These are hidden words. It seems that God is against us and with our opponents, because everything is going well for them. However, their end will be a most wretched one, even though their beginning was most favorable. (Luther)

east. Especially Assyria and Babylonia. See 11:11–12 and notes; cf. Ps 107:3. (CSB)

Now comes the consolation. “You appear worthless, a widow, barren, but you will be fruitful, and, on the contrary, those who are fertile in the eyes of the world will become barren.” So it will happen to us. It is not evident who will afterwards say the words to us, and no womb bears them, but they will come nevertheless. “I know of still other wombs which are full of children, in the east and in the west. If Italy and Germany are unwilling, there will be other areas to bring them forth, because I will bring your offspring from the east and from the west. If the people in Judea are not² willing to do it, Rome and Europe must do it. Therefore, if it is the Word of God, it will be upheld, even if we are unwilling. (Luther)

west. For example, the “islands” of 11:11 (see also 24:14–15; 49:12). (CSB)

43:6 *north*. For example, Hamath (see 10:9 and note; 11:11). (CSB)

south. Egypt. (CSB)

ends of the earth. See note on 11:12 (cf. 41:5; 42:10). (CSB)

God’s people will come not only from Babylon but from wherever they have been dispersed throughout the world. On the day of Pentecost, we note such a gathering of Jews from all over the Mediterranean world came to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 2). That day they heard the gospel, and God gathered them into His NT church. But a greater gathering is yet to be. It will occur on the Last day, when God will bring all His people into the heaven He has prepared for them, no matter where they have been scattered. (PBC)

It signifies that this group will be spoken against everywhere. It is as if He were saying: “You are barren, but you will be the most pregnant for Me, because I will order all, even the devil, to send you on your way in peace, whether they like it or not.” It is as if He were saying: “Just calm yourselves, you will not succeed, because I will forbid you.” Thus seeing how the church is despised in its own eyes and in those of the world, this dust, as it were, must press down the mountains and rocks. (Luther)

43:7 *called by my name*. People belonging to God. (CSB)

So believers today are called “Christians.” His name breaks their bonds and joins them as one. (TLSB)

They are the ones. “You shall not take them from Me or deprive Me of them, though the opposite may seem to be the case. The ones who are the glorious and honorable sons of God, they are the ones who were called by My name.” A Christian man is called by the name of Christ, just as the people of Israel were spoken of as the people of God and were called Israel, because their God is the God of Israel. Thus Christ is our Lord, and we are called by His name. Here every form of one’s own righteousness is rooted out. John, Peter, Augustinian, Franciscan will count for nothing. These are proper nouns. But “Christian” is a common noun which belongs to all believers. “As many as believed and gloried in My name, these are the sons of God. And although they appear to be few, they will nevertheless be numerous from the south and the north. There are fishermen enough to catch them.” (Luther)

created ... formed. See v. 1 and note. (CSB)

A Christian is already one with Christ and already has participation in Him. He is member of the member, and flesh of the flesh, just as a wife shares in the name and property of her husband. So the Christian in his entire being becomes a participant with God. Before, he was a most degraded creature, but now he is altogether glorious, not indeed by virtue of his own works and designs but because Christ has called him by name. So we are altogether Christ’s, since Christ has called us, and all our works are not our own but Christ’s. Therefore we are said to have been created for the glow of Christ. (Luther)

All of these things are said about godly people, who are called and who appear to be heretics before the world. On the contrary, it is said here that they have been created and formed. To create means to make something out of nothing. To form means to fashion a shape. Having been made a Christian, then, he is one who should serve his Creator. Outside of these resources of ours there is nothing. We have not created, formed, and made ourselves, but we have everything from God. (Luther)

EPISTLE
Romans 6:1-11

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with

him so that the body of sin might be done away with,^a that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

6:1 WHAT SHALL WE SAY...SHALL WE GO ON SINNING – With two deliberate rhetorical questions, Paul brings the readers – past and present – to focus on their current status, experience, and assessment of their lives as Christians. (CC)

Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? † This question arose out of what Paul had just said in 5:20: “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” Such a question expresses an antinomian (against law) viewpoint. Apparently some objected to Paul’s teaching of justification through faith alone because they thought it would lead to moral irresponsibility. (TLSB)

The question is not “Shall we continue to do sins?” but “shall we continue to pass our lifetime under the lordship of sin?” Another way to put it, with 5:20 in view, is this: Since Israel was given the Law code at Sinai so that trespass should increase until Good Friday in order that grace might super abound at Calvary, should we Christians continue to operate in daily life under Law in the kingdom of sin in order that – carrying the principle in 5:20 forward – grace might continue to abound more so? The answer is “No!” because the interlude of Sinai Law is over, its purpose having been served as of Good Friday. The reign of grace has now been established in all its super abundant fullness. It cannot “super abound” beyond its super abounding on Good Friday. Now, more behavior under Law in the kingdom of Sin will not produce any more grace – nor is any more needed. (CC)

Philip Melancton states, “There is in all men so great an infirmity of nature that when we hear the teaching about gratuitous imputation, we become less fruitful for doing good and carnal security is strengthened.

6:2 BY NO MEANS! – *ma genoito* – Could be said in the flowing ways: “Perish the thought! Certainly not! By no means! No, no!” This phrase has overtones of religious horror.

This is “an Optative of Wishing which strongly depreciates something suggested by a previous question or assertion;” fourteen of the fifteen NT occurrences of this phrase are in Paul, and in twelve of those “it expresses the apostle’s abhorrence of an inference which he fears may be (falsely) drawn from his argument.” (CC)

died to sin. The reference is to an event in the past and is explained in v. 3. (TLSB)

BLESSED Augustine says regarding this passage: "With this passage the apostle is giving a complete description of the man who has been placed under grace, where with his mind he is already serving God's law, although with his flesh he is still serving the law of sin." And he continues in his description of these two kinds of servitude of the Law and of sin, saying: "For this man does not obey the desire of sin, no matter how his lusts still continue to trouble him and call him to consent to them, until the time that his body is raised to life and 'death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:54). Thus because we do not surrender to these low desires, we are under grace, and 'sin does not reign in our body' (v. 12). But he over whom sin reigns, no matter how he resists sin, is still under the Law and not under grace." (Luther)

From this quotation the meaning of the apostle's words is clear. For all these propositions: (1) to be dead to sin; (2) but to live unto God; (3) to serve with the mind the law of God and with the flesh the law of sin, mean nothing else than this, that we do not yield to our evil lusts and to sin, even though sin still remains in us. This is the same as saying: (4) Sin does not have dominion, does not rule; but (5) righteousness does rule, etc. Hence later on, in chapter 13:14, he says: "And make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires," as if he were saying: "The desires of the flesh are themselves sin, that is, original sin and the rest of the paternal inheritance from Adam remain, but you must not obey them." Likewise he says, "That the body of sin might be destroyed" (v. 6), which takes place when our spirit resists sin and refuses to give in to it. (Luther)

We are in sin until the end of our life. For this reason blessed Augustine says: "Until our body is raised to life and death is swallowed up in victory, our evil desires will afflict us."² Likewise, we read in Gal. 5:17: "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." And below, in Rom. 7:19 Paul says: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do, etc." Again, in James 4:1: "What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members?" And in 1 Peter 2:11: "Abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul." And in this way all the apostles and saints confess that sin and concupiscence remain in us, until the body returns to ashes and a new one is raised up without concupiscence and sin, as 2 Peter 3:13 puts it, "According to His promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells," as if to say that sin dwells in this present world. Just so in Jer. 18:4 ff. in regard to the potter who repairs the broken vase by making another, the Lord says that He will do likewise. For the Lord hates this body of sin and is preparing to remake it into another; therefore He commands us to hate it also, to destroy and put it to death and to seek an escape from it and "the coming of His kingdom" (Matt. 6:10). (Luther)

There is a sense in which all true Christians, like their Lord are dead, dead with respect to sin. One cannot become a Christian until he dies, dies to sin. This happens when Christ frees us from sin and its power.

Death removes a person from the life of this aeon and so sets one free from the tyranny of lord sin. This is here stated as true in the forensic and baptismal categories. (CC)

WE LIVE IN IT NO LONGER – dzasomen – This means everyday living. **6:3–4**† The when and how of the Christian's death to sin. Baptism is a means by which we enter into a vital faith relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a means of receiving God's grace, and it depicts graphically what happens as a result of the Christian's union with Christ. Through faith we are united with Christ, just as through our natural birth we are united with Adam. As we fell into sin and became subject to death in father Adam, so we now have died and been raised again with Christ—which baptism effects. (TLSB)

6:3 WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH – The Baptism of our Lord himself gives us some clues to this connection between Baptism and death and new life. The Father spoke, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). These words quote from Is. 42:1, the first Suffering Servant Song, and Ps 2:7, which speaks of the enthronement of God's anointed Son as King. Christ was baptized into his role of suffering and death in order to redeem us from sin (cf. the last Suffering Servant Song, Isaiah 53, and Luke 12:50). But his Baptism also was the prelude to his enthronement in glory after his victorious resurrection (Ps. 2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 3, Part 3)

Blessed Augustine in Book 4, chapter 3, of *On the Trinity* says: "For our twofold death the Savior pays with His single death, and in order to achieve a twofold resurrection for us, He has set before us and offered us His own single resurrection in His sacrament and example. For having put on our mortal flesh and dying only in it and rising only in it, now only in it He joins these things together for us, for in this flesh He became a sacrament for the inner man and an example for the outward man. With regard to the sacrament for the inner man we have this word: 'We know that our old self was crucified with Him, so that the body of sin might be destroyed' (v. 6). But to the example for the outward man this statement is pertinent: 'And do not fear those who kill the body' (Matt. 10:28). He most strongly encouraged His followers to this course through His own death, which was of this kind." The resurrection of the body of the Lord is shown to pertain to the sacrament of the inner man through this statement of the apostle in Col. 3:1: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above." But to the example for the outward man this statement applies: "Not a hair of your head will perish" (Luke 21:18), along with the fact that He showed His body to His disciples after His resurrection. Thus in this passage the apostle is

speaking of the death and resurrection of Christ insofar as they refer to the sacrament, but not to the example. (Luther)

Hence we must note that death is of two kinds: natural, or better, temporal death and eternal death. Temporal death is the separation of the body and the soul. But this death is only a figure, a symbol, and like death painted on a wall when compared with eternal death, which is also spiritual. Hence in the Scripture it is very often called a sleep, a rest, a slumber. Eternal death is also twofold. The one kind is good, very good. It is the death of sin and the death of death, by which the soul is released and separated from sin and the body is separated from corruption and through grace and glory is joined to the living God. This is death in the most proper sense of the word, for in all other forms of death something remains that is mixed with life, but not in this kind of death, where there is the purest life alone, because it is eternal life. For to this kind of death alone belong in an absolute and perfect way the conditions of death, and in this death alone whatever dies perishes totally and into eternal nothingness, and nothing will ever return from this death, because it truly dies an eternal death. This is the way sin dies; and likewise the sinner, when he is justified, because sin will not return again for all eternity, as the apostle says here, "Christ will never die again," etc. (v. 9). This is the principal theme in Scripture. For God has arranged to remove through Christ whatever the devil brought in through Adam. And it was the devil who brought in sin and death. Therefore God brought about the death of death and the sin of sin, the poison of poison, the captivity of captivity. As He says through Hosea (Hos. 13:14): "O Death, I will be your death; O Hell, I will be your bite." This is prefigured in all the wars of the children of Israel in the Old Testament, when they killed the Gentiles. The other kind of death is eternal and very terrible. It is the death of the damned, where sin and the sinner are not the ones to die, while man is saved, but man dies, while sin lives on and continues forever. This is "the very evil death of the wicked." And when the apostle speaks of the death of Christ in a sacramental manner, he is speaking of the second spiritual death, and thus the meaning of his words is very plain. (Luther)

I used the term "sin of sin." What does this mean? The sin of sin is to act against the law of sin and to transgress the law of the members (Rom. 7:23) and to sin against the lusts of the flesh. This kind of sin is very good. Just as the death of death means to act against death, which is the same thing as life, so the sin of sin is righteousness. Hence Ecclesiasticus (Ecclus. 42:14): "Far better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing a good turn," that is, it is better that the spirit transgress the law of the flesh and act contrary to the flesh than that the flesh act according to its own law. These are the works of the Lord in which He delights and causes us to delight, as it is written: "The Lord shall rejoice in His works" (Ps. 104:31). And later on, in Rom. 8:3, he says: "For sin He condemned sin." The Spirit uses these negative expressions which are sweeter than the affirmative ones to describe the eternal nature of the things about which He is speaking. Because for death to be killed means that death will not return, and "to take captivity captive" means that captivity will never return, a concept which

cannot be expressed through an affirmative assertion. For a person can think of life without eternity. Thus it also says in the same psalm: “Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belongs escape from death” (Ps. 68:20), rather than the entrance of life. For the entering into life can, and necessarily must, become a departure from life, but the “escape from death” means to enter into a life which is without death. These are “the delights of Christ” of which it says in Ps. 16:3: “As for the saints in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight,” and in Ps. 111:2, “Great are the works of the Lord, sought out according to all His desires.” (Luther)

6:4 *buried with him through baptism into death.* Amplified in vv. 5–7. (TLSB)

That Christ not only died but was buried was part of the early Christian confession (1 Cor. 15:4). It confirms the undeniable reality of His death. So likewise baptism into His death effects for the baptized an undeniably real death and burial with Him. It also anticipates the resurrection from those who are buried and among the dead. (CC)

In the spiritual man all things ought to appear to men and to himself in the same way that Christ appeared to the Jews in death and burial. For He is our Precentor that we may address our responses to Him in all things. (Luther)

First, when Christ had died He no longer felt any of those things which happen in the outside world, even though He was still in that world. Thus the spiritual man, although he is present in all things with his senses, yet in his heart he is entirely withdrawn from these things and dead to all of them. This comes about when a man comes to hate all the things of this life from the very marrow of his bones, indeed, when he detests all the things which go on in this life and yet endures them with patience and even with joy and glories in the fact that he is like a dead body and “the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things” (1 Cor. 4:13), as the apostle puts it. But we must note that it is not necessary for all men to be found immediately in this state of perfection, as soon as they have been baptized into a death of this kind. For they are baptized “into death,” that is, toward death, which is to say, they have begun to live in such a way that they are pursuing this kind of death and reach out toward this their goal. For although they are baptized unto eternal life and the kingdom of heaven, yet they do not all at once possess this goal fully, but they have begun to act in such a way that they may attain to it—for Baptism was established to direct us toward death and through this death to life—therefore it is necessary that we come to it in the order which has been prescribed. (Luther)

There are thus three kinds of people in this order. First there are those who are impatient with a cross and a dying of this kind, and they are unwilling to die. These people are like the robber on the left, for they blaspheme Christ, at least in their heart and also in their work. The second class, however, are those who endure it, but with great feeling, difficulty, and groaning; yet they finally

overcome, so that at least they die with patience. It is very hard for them that they are despised and detested by all. They are like the robber on the right, indeed, a grieving and sympathetic Christ carried them in His body. But the third class are those who, as I have said, enter upon this death with joy, whom Christ Himself prefigured when He died with a loud shout like the most courageous giant. (Luther)

Luther in his large catechism says: “Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death. Oh, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone’s door such a treasure and medicine that is utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive.” (TLSB)

through the glory of the Father. By the power of God. God’s glory is his divine excellence, his perfection. Any one of his attributes is a manifestation of his excellence. Thus his power is a manifestation of his glory, as is his righteousness (see 3:23). Glory and power are often closely related in the Bible (see Ps 145:11; Col 1:11; 1Pe 4:11; Rev 1:6; 4:11; 5:12–13; 7:12; 19:1). (CSB)

This appears to be a confessional or doxological formula. The phrase may refer to the power of God gloriously in action as the means or instrument. But *dia* can also mean “in consequence of” and refer to the interrelationship of the glory of the Father and the glory of the Son, as in Jn 12:28: the vindication of the Son will glorify the Father’s name. (CC)

live a new life. Amplified in vv. 8–10. (CSB)

It should say “so also we were raised” to become kings with Him (cf. 5:18, where, however, the thought is also carefully expressed in a future tense verb). But instead, the completing verb is “we should walk,” a subjunctive form which refers to the Christian journey through a span of life stretching from his baptism to his death (or Christ’s return). He should traverse that pilgrimage “in newness of life,” under the reality of that life which is the gift of the new (eschatological) aeon in Christ. Thus the phrase refers to a gift and an outlook, one has while journeying (cf. 6:11), not primarily to “behaving in a new and better way,” or “being morally improved.” The outlook, of course does influence behavior. (CC)

Paul’s first concern is on bringing home to us the fact that through our baptism we share Christ’s resurrection now. The new life, the life of the world to come is a present reality, present and at work in the Word and Sacrament of the Gospel.

6:5 UNITED WITH HIM IN HIS RESURRECTION – Because of his resurrection I will rise. The point is that in all respects he is my benefactor. He cut me off from sin, he gives me newness of life, he will raise my body on the last day.

6:6 *our old self.* Our unregenerate self; what we once were. (CSB)

It was literally murdered in our Baptism, he did not die willingly, but was slain as one cursed of God.

The term “old man” describes what kind of person is born of Adam, not according to his nature but according to the defect of his nature. For his nature is good, but the defect is evil. However, the term “old man” is used not only because he performs the works of the flesh but more especially when he acts righteously and practices wisdom and exercises himself in all spiritual good works, even to the point of loving and worshiping God Himself. The reason for this is that in all these things he “enjoys” the gifts of God and “uses” God. Nor can he be freed of his perversity (which in the Scriptures is called curvedness, iniquity, and crookedness) except by the grace of God. Eccl. 1:15: “The perverse are hard to be corrected.” This is said not only because of the stubbornness of perverse people but particularly because of the extremely deep infection of this inherited weakness and original poison, by which a man seeks his own advantage even in God Himself because of his love of concupiscence. Ps. 72:14: “From usuries and iniquities He redeems their life.” Furthermore, this iniquity is so bottomless that no one can ever understand its depth, and in Scripture, by the grace of God, not the iniquity itself but only the love of it is rebuked. Ps. 11:5: “His soul hates him that loves iniquity.” And Ps. 32:6: “Therefore,” that is, because of iniquity, “let everyone who is godly offer prayer to Thee,” because He hates iniquity. This is symbolized in the curvedness of that woman in the Gospel whom Satan had held captive for 18 years, as the Savior said (Luke 13:11). (Luther)

body of sin. The self in its pre-Christian state, dominated by sin. This is a figurative expression in which the old self is personified. It is a “body” that can be put to death. For the believer, this old self has been “rendered powerless” (see NIV text note) so that it can no longer enslave us to sin—whatever lingering vitality it may yet exert in its death throes.(CSB)

Therefore the term “body of sin” ought not be understood as something mystical, as many people do who imagine that “body of sin” refers to a whole mountain of evil works, but rather it refers to this very body which we are carrying around. It is called the “body of sin” because it inclines against the spirit and toward sin. And the seed of the devil dwells in it; hence the Lord in Gen. 3:15 says: “I will put enmity between your seed and her seed.” The seed of the woman is the Word of God in the church, because it inclines toward righteousness and good works. The seed of the devil is sin itself, the tinder and evil lust in our flesh. And this enmity is active all the time, as the apostle says in Gal. 5:17: “The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.” The flesh has the seed of the devil in it and is seeking to bring forth sin and bear sinful fruit. But the Spirit possesses the seed of God and seeks to bring forth righteousness and the fruits of righteousness. And thus these two “are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would” (Gal. 5:17). (Luther)

DONE AWAY WITH – Paul does not pronounce the old man dead or the body of sin (sinful self) destroyed. They are nailed to the cross and rendered powerless, but yet crying out to be released and have their way. The fact that crucifixion was a slow death – taking hours or even day – fits in with this image of the old man nailed to the cross but not yet having died, as the Christian continues to pass a lifetime in the overlapping aeons. (CC)

The term “to destroy” is understood in a spiritual sense in this context. For if he were intending to speak of a destruction of the body, it would not be necessary that the “old man” be crucified for this. Because he actually will be destroyed anyway, whether we wish it or not, even in the case of those people whose old man is not crucified. Thus what is necessary cannot be command or counsel. Hence, also according to blessed Augustine, the apostle in explaining this destruction goes on to say, “That we might no longer be enslaved to sin” (v. 6). This is an interpretation (says blessed Augustine) of the expression “that the body of sin might be destroyed.”¹³ Thus to destroy the body of sin is to break the lusts of the flesh and of the old man by works of penitence and the cross and thus to diminish them day by day and to put them to death, as Col. 3:5 tells us: “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.” In fact, in this same passage he most clearly describes both the new and the old man. (Luther)

On the walk from baptism to consummation, the old man must be “drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death” and “the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous. So long as one lives, one must deal with a resilient “old man” who is rendered powerless only through incorporation into Christ’s death. (CC)

BE SLAVES TO SIN – Once again, the focus is primarily on the realm in which and the lordship under which one is living, not on how one is behaving. (CC)

6:7 *has died*. The believer’s death with Christ to sin’s ruling power. (CSB)

freed from sin. Set free from its shackles and power. (CSB)

The passive of *dikaioo* could here mean vindicated from any further legal charges, “set free from.” It is clear that Paul thinks of death as ending a relationship and so also ending the legal obligations involved in that relationship (cf. 7:1-6). (CC)

One might even consider “purged” for this verse and envision death not just the termination of that hopeless state in which a sinner is bound by law into a relationship in which he cannot fulfill what is required of him (7:2), but also as that transition experience through which a person is finally delivered out of the sin-defiled existence of this aeon and so “purged” of sin’s corruption. (CC)

6:8† As resurrection followed death in the experience of Christ, so the believer who dies with Christ is raised to a new quality of life here and now. Resurrection in the sense of a new birth is already a fact, and it increasingly exerts itself in the believer's life. (CSB)

WE WILL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM – The presence of this life is now a matter of faith; our life is hid with Christ in God. But when the Christ, who is our life, is made manifest, then also will we be made manifest in glory with Him. (CC)

6:9 WE KNOW – This refers neither to natural reason nor ecstatic illumination, but to faith seeking understanding. Paul models, and calls his readers to, theological thinking, the ministerial use of reason by a mind taken captive by the Word of God. (CC)

DEATH NO LONGER HAS MASTERY OVER HIM – The power and threat of the cruel master, death, is conquered, gone forever. For the believer death is not dying. It means everlasting life. (CC)

It should be noted that Lazarus, the son of the widow at Nain, and Jarius' daughter (and others) were raised from death but eventually died again. The resurrection of Christ is different. It is God's vindication of the life of the new aeon in Him. In a sense, those who had been raised and later died again were "raised again" when Christ was raised – along with many other OT saints waiting for "completion." (CC)

6:10 *he died to sin once for all.* In his death Christ (for the sake of sinners) submitted to the "reign" of sin (5:21); but his death broke the judicial link between sin and death, and he passed forever from the sphere of sin's "reign." Having been raised from the dead, he now lives forever to glorify God. (CSB)

Christ's life was determined and ruled by sin, namely, by the alien sin of men, which he took upon Himself. What he did, experienced, suffering in the days of his flesh, served to atone for and to destroy men's sin.

The meaning is that we must undergo this spiritual death only once. For whoever dies thus lives for all eternity. Therefore we must not return to our sin in order to die to sin again. This interpretation is in opposition to the Novatians, for in regard to the necessity and nature of the spiritual life it is to be laid hold on once, because it is eternal. For death does not put an end to this kind of life against its will, as it does with physical life, but this is the beginning of eternal life. Hence we read in John 11:26: "Whoever believes in Me shall never die," that is, as long as he does not willingly turn away from this spiritual life, he cannot die. This spiritual life will be strengthened in the future in such a way that a person cannot be turned away, for no one would want to be turned away who has been given the complete perfection of an eternal will. (Luther)

For just as the ray of the sun is eternal because the sun is eternal, so the spiritual life is eternal because Christ is eternal; for He is our life, and through faith He flows into us and remains in us by the rays of His grace. Therefore, just as Christ is eternal, so also the grace which flows out of Him is from His eternal nature. Furthermore, just because a man sins again his spiritual life does not die, but he turns his back on this life and dies, while this life remains eternal in Christ. This is what he means when he says: "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (v. 8). How shall we live with Him, "for we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again" (v. 9)? So also: "the death He died He died to sin, once for all" (v. 10). He has Christ, who dies no more; therefore he himself dies no more, but rather he lives with Christ forever. Hence also we are baptized only once, by which we gain the life of Christ, even though we often fall and rise again. For the life of Christ can be recovered again and again, but a person can enter upon it only once, just as a man who has never been rich can begin to get rich only once, although he can again and again lose and regain his wealth. (Luther)

to God. For the glory of God. (CSB)

Nothing lives to God, however, except that which lives eternally and spiritually, because God is eternal and a spirit, before whom nothing counts except what is spiritual and eternal; but the flesh and temporal things are nothing with Him. Therefore since this life is eternal, it is necessary that the man who dies to sin should die only once, since only an eternal life can follow this kind of death, and in this life there can be no death, for otherwise it would not be eternal. Nor can a person who died once to sin die to sin again, because eternal righteousness follows this death and this righteousness never sins again. (Luther)

A corollary follows: The Novatian heresy interpreted this text in a false way, as if those who fell had no hope of rising again, because a person must die to sin once and for all. But this expression "once for all" (*semel*) does not determine the number of acts of repentance, but rather it is a commendation of the eternal nature of grace, and it denies the possibility of some other kind of righteousness, so that the meaning is that whoever has been baptized or has repented has already so escaped sin and acquired righteousness that never again for eternity is it necessary to escape sin or to acquire another righteousness. But this single and only righteousness is sufficient forever. This is not the case at all with the righteousness of men, where according to moral philosophy, as soon as one virtue has been acquired, there are still others which must be acquired. But the meaning here is not that if a person should lose what he has once possessed, he cannot acquire it again. For the Scripture opposes this error in Prov. 24:16: "A righteous man falls seven times and rises again." And the Lord said to Peter: "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). Therefore, as I have said, this term "once for all" does not set forth or deny the number of the exchange, but it emphasizes the number of the diversity, or rather the eternal

nature of righteousness, which in this life can often be lost and regained without conflicting with its eternal nature. For even blessed Peter after the sending of the Holy Spirit sinned in his dissimulation, for example, in Gal. 2:11 ff., which surely was a mortal sin, because it was contrary to the Gospel and the salvation of the soul, since the apostle Paul expressly says that Peter did not act according to the truth of the Gospel. (Luther)

6:11 *count yourselves.*† The first aspect of the believer’s life (for the succeeding aspects see note on vv. 12–13). He is dead to sin and alive to God, and through faith he is to live in the light of this truth. (CSB)

λογίζεσθε which can be said as “reckon,” “consider,” “think of yourselves,” or “count yourselves.” (QV)

The Christian’s current attitude and behavior in the world are to be affected, shaped, by his belief in that reality which is forensic, sacramental, hidden and to be revealed in the eschaton. (CC)

in Christ. The first occurrence in Romans of this phrase, which is found often in Paul’s writings. True believers are “in Christ” because they have died with Christ and have been raised to new life with him. (CSB)

What Paul describes is possible only for the baptized, those who are in Christ. (CC)

GOSPEL Luke 3:15-22

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. ¹⁶ John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. ¹⁹ But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

3:15 PEOPLE WERE WAITING EXPECTANTLY – προσδοκῶντος δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ—The first of two genitive absolutes describes one circumstance surrounding John’s words to the people in 3:16–17. Like both Simeon (2:25) and Anna (2:38), the people are waiting expectantly for something to happen in connection with John’s preaching. This alerts the hearer to the heightened messianic expectations brought on by John’s baptism and to recognize their

climax when Jesus is baptized. On λαός as a term for God's people, (CC p. 146)

WERE ALL WONDERING – διαλογιζομένων πάντων ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν ... ὁ Χριστός—The second genitive absolute is more specific about the reaction of the people to John's words. The internal debate among the Jews was about whether John was the Christ. His preaching and eschatological washing made such a conclusion probable. (CC p. 146)

This verse, unique to Luke, creates a kind of pregnant literary pause, heightening the suspense. The people “wait expectantly” and “ponder in their hearts” (dislogizomai also of Mary in 1:29). Could John perhaps be the Christ they were looking for? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

3:16 MORE POWERFUL... THINGS OF WHOSE SANDALS – In Ruth 4, when Boaz redeems Ruth, he receives the sandal from the next of kind of Naomi's husband, Elimelech, who was not willing to buy her back. The receiving of the sandal by Boaz from the next of kin was a testimony that he had bought her back. Luke tells us that the people were wondering if John “was the Christ” (3:15). John responds that he is not the Christ and says that he is not worthy to untie Jesus' sandal and receive it as the one worthy of buying back humanity. John may be the “next of kin” from the perspective of the OT, but Jesus is the Redeemer. Curiously, there may be another oblique reference to Jesse (cf. 3:9) in that Boaz and Ruth give birth to Obed, who is the father of Jesse, the father of David (Ruth 4:17). Jesse's place in the genealogy becomes heightened. (CC p. 154)

baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Fulfilled at Pentecost (Ac 1:5; 2:4, 38). (CSB)

and with fire. Here fire is associated with judgment (v. 17). See also the fire of Pentecost (Ac 2:3) and the fire of testing (1Co 3:13). (CSB)

Thus by Pentecost, Jesus has been baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. He has undergone this baptism as the substitute for all. After Pentecost, Christian Baptism is based on Jesus' baptism and crucifixion. The post-Pentecost baptizing by Jesus' apostles incorporates people into Christ, his death and life. In this, Christ may be said to be the Baptizer. Those baptized into Christ are baptized with the Spirit and fire with which he was baptized. John's baptism cleanses with water, but Jesus' baptism cleanses with the Holy Spirit and fire, alluding to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (the Holy Spirit) and his “baptism” on the cross, where God's fiery wrath is laid upon him (12:49–50). Jesus' own baptism and atoning death make possible the baptism in the Spirit and tongues of fire at Pentecost. Jesus is the more powerful one, and his baptism in Spirit and fire initiates the people into God's end-time kingdom. When this post-Pentecost Christian Baptism comes, John's catechesis ends (cf. Acts 19:1–7), for the road

out of the wilderness to Jerusalem has been traveled by Jesus, whose death and resurrection make it possible for all flesh to see the salvation of God (Lk 3:6). (CC p. 155)

That's what water and fire have in common – they purify. Water cleans the outside, and fire purifies the inside – perfectly pure. When Jesus enters the water, perfect purity has been connected through Baptism. When the Lord enters our lives through Baptism, the perfect purity of grace has entered our lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

3:17 *His winnowing fork.* See note on Ru 1:22. The chaff represents the unrepentant and the wheat the righteous. Many Jews thought that only pagans would be judged and punished when the Messiah came, but John declared that judgment would come to all who did not repent—including Jews. (CSB)

As the husbandman separates the chaff from the wheat by a careful and repeated use of the fan, gathers the wheat into his granary, but burns the useless chaff, so Christ, as the Judge of the world, will deal with those that have been weighed and found wanting, that have the outward appearance and behavior of real believers, but lack true, sanctifying faith. (Kretzmann)

κατακαύσει πυρί ἀσβέστω—The final reference to fire as unquenchable is the most graphic, heightening the eschatological wrath of God upon those who do not greet the Messiah when He comes. (CC p. 147)

Fire suggests wrath and judgment of God, a common expression in the OT. In the Qumran scrolls, God's eschatological wrath is likened to ... "a consuming fire in all its streams, to destroy every tree, green and dry, from its banks. The enemies of God, will be hurled into everlasting destruction. One sees in this brief account of John's preaching that he proclaimed both Law and Gospel and that his words, cast in a picturesque form, must have proved gripping. It is clear that he did not preach an easygoing religiousness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 1)

3:19 *rebuked Herod ... because of Herodias.* Herod Antipas had married the daughter of Aretas IV of Arabia, but divorced her to marry his own niece, Herodias, who was already his brother's (Herod Philip's) wife (see Mt 14:3; Mk 6:17). (CSB)

3:20 *locked John up in prison.* According to Josephus, John was imprisoned in Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities*, 18.5.2). This did not occur until sometime after the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see Jn 3:22–24), but Luke mentions it here in order to conclude his section on John's ministry before beginning his account of the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see also Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14). He later briefly alludes to John's death (9:7-9). (CSB)

προσέθηκεν καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ πᾶσι - Of all Herod's sins, which were many, the arrest, imprisonment and execution of John were the worst. This placed John in the category of prophet rejected to the point of death, just like Jesus. (CC p. 147)

The Baptism of Jesus

21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

3:21 *baptized.* See note on Mt 3:15. (CSB)

One cannot understand the gospels or the Christian Gospel without first understanding the baptism of Jesus. Jesus now takes humanity's place to receive the wrath of God against sin. The first step in the fulfillment of John's prediction that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and *with fire* (3:16) is attained with Jesus' baptism. From this moment, Jesus stands in solidarity with sinful humanity. He, therefore, stands for us under the wrath of God, wrath that will culminate in his crucifixion for the sins of the world. The placement of this wrath upon Jesus in his baptism is prepared for by John's baptism of repentance to the forgiveness of sins (3:3) and his preaching of the coming wrath of God (3:7–9, 16–17). God's wrath burns the chaff in an unquenchable fire (3:17). Jesus takes his place as a sinner alongside of sinners, even though he has committed no sin. He subjects himself to the fire of divine wrath (cf. 12:49–50). Jesus' ministry is framed by two baptisms: his baptism in water and Spirit begins his journey to his bloody "baptism" on the cross (12:49–50). The presence of the Trinity at Jesus' baptism affirms that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is the one chosen to accomplish the messianic task of substitutionary atonement on the cross. (CC)

Christian Baptism is into Christ and continues the pattern of Christ's baptism with water (in the Jordan), with the Spirit, and with fire (his bloody "baptism" on the cross). Thus it is connected with "the total redemptive action which the baptism of Jesus set in motion." Christian Baptism, like Christ's own baptism, is trinitarian. It effects union with Christ and gives the Spirit, and so what the Father said of Jesus he also says of every person baptized into Christ: "This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." (CC)

as he was praying. Only Luke notes Jesus' praying at the time of his baptism. Jesus in prayer is one of the special themes of Luke (see 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29; 11:1; 22:32, 41; 23:34, 46). (CSB)

Luke pictures Jesus as praying more often than the other evangelists. Jesus prays at significant moments in his ministry, e.g. before the Sermon on the Plain

(6:12), at the confession of Peter and the first passion prediction (9:18), at the transfiguration (9:28-29), and before his betrayal (22:41). His final prayer is on the cross, when he cries out “Father into your hands I place my spirit” (23:46) (CC p. 158)

HEAVEN WAS OPENED – ἀνεωχθηῖναι τὸν οὐρανόν—This is a theological passive that has God as its subject, i.e., “the heaven was opened” *by God*. (CC)

The opening of heaven at Jesus’ baptism means that it will forever be opened to all humanity through the flesh of Christ by the Spirit of Christ. (CC p. 159)

3:22 *Holy Spirit descended.* Luke specifies “in bodily form.” To John, it was a sign (see Jn 1:32–34; see also note on Mk 1:10). (CSB)

καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον—Only Luke has “Holy Spirit” (Mt 3:16: “Spirit of God”; Mk 1:10: “Spirit”), conforming to his reference to the Holy Spirit in 3:16. Luke refers to the Holy Spirit more often than the other gospels. (CC)

The appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove recalls Gen. 1:2, when the Spirit hovered over the waters in the first creation. The dove also recalls Noah after the flood (Gen. 8:8) (CC p. 161)

You are my son, whom I love. See Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1; Heb 1:5. Two other times the Gospel writers record the declarations of a voice from heaven addressing Jesus: (1) on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:35), and (2) in the temple area during Jesus’ final week (Jn 12:28). (CSB)

When the Father announces, “You are my Son, the beloved, in you I am well pleased” (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα), he speaks from Scripture, citing Ps 2:7, which some manuscripts include here. But ἀγαπητός, “beloved,” may also refer to Gen 22:2, 12, 16, where Isaac is called the “beloved son” (τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν), and God asks for him to be sacrificed. This similarity to Isaac recalls the centrality of the covenant with Abraham (as in the Benedictus) and supports the suggestion that there are *sacrificial* overtones in Jesus’ baptism. He begins his substitutionary atonement by condescending to take his place among sinners submitting to a baptism of repentance. A strong sacrificial theme is also apparent from the similarity to Is 42:1, the first verse of the first Suffering Servant Song, preparing for the fourth Isaian Servant Song, Is 52:13–53:12. The connection to Is 42:1 also includes the placing of the Spirit upon “Jacob, my servant, ... Israel, my chosen one” (Ἰακώβ ὁ παῖς μου ... Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου). That Luke has ἀγαπητός, “beloved,” instead of ἐκλεκτός, “elect/chosen one,” is not significant, since Luke uses ἐκλελεγμένος, “elect/chosen one” (9:35), instead of ἀγαπητός, “beloved” (Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7), at the transfiguration. The Father’s goodwill (εὐδοκία), which rests on the “men of his good pleasure” (2:14), is now seen to flow down to the incarnate Son (ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα)—and through him to those who are in him. The Father’s good

pleasure with the Son is the source of his good pleasure for those upon whom his favor rests. This good pleasure of the Father will include the fact that the Gospel (proclaimed in the mission of the seventy[-two]), though hidden from the wise, is revealed to babies (10:21; πατήρ ... εὐδοκία). The Father is also pleased to give the kingdom to the little flock (12:32; εὐδόκησεν ὁ πατήρ). The words of the Father here will be repeated with minor changes at Jesus' transfiguration just before he turns his face to go to Jerusalem (9:35). (CC)