

**PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE LEADERS**  
**John the Baptist, Jesus, and Apostles**  
**Jesus Christ**

**January 13, 2021**

Last week Vicar Hephzibah introduced us to John the Baptist.  
John baptized by immersion in the Jordan River.  
As the church started to evolve other ways to baptize were recognized.  
Affusion is the term that is used for the method that we use in our church.

**Background on Affusion**

It is a method of baptism where water is poured on the head of the person being baptized.  
Word comes from the Latin *affusio* meaning *to pour on*.  
It is one of four methods of baptism used by Christians –  
Submersion baptism, partial immersion baptism, aspersion (sprinkling) and affusion.  
Affusion and aspersion tend to be practiced by Christian denominations that baptize infants.  
It became the standard practice in the western churches around the 10<sup>th</sup> century.  
However, the earliest explicit reference to this kind of baptism occurs in the Didache.  
More on the Didache in my notes but for our purposes here this is a quote from Chapter 7.

**Concerning Baptism**

And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whoever else can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

Acts of various martyrs show that many were baptized in prison while awaiting martyrdom.  
Most common use was for ill or dying people who could not rise from their beds.  
It was consequently known as *baptism of the sick*.  
Practice was criticized at the time because people had delayed their baptism.



## **Names for Jesus**

Confirmation class is reading a book entitled *Lutheranism 101*.

In the chapters that talk about Jesus it offers 101 Biblical names and titles for him.

Some define his role –

Advocate	Judge of the Living and the Dead
Good Shepherd	King of Kings / King of the Nations
Great High Priest	Rabbi
Head of the Church	Savior

## **Jesus as Prophet (Continuity with the Old Testament)**

It is John the Baptist who sets the stage for Jesus.

After his baptism we see immediately that Jesus entered into a time of struggle.

It will become one of the main characteristics of his public ministry.

Although well received by many he will also be despised by those in authority.

Like the prophets of Israel, his preparation for public ministry included a period of testing.

The period mentioned in Mark (forty days) precisely matched the testing time of Elijah.

Important as his role was, John the Baptist brought to a close the old era.

With the coming of Jesus and the launching of his disciples a new era had dawned.

Jesus would draw special attention to the works of mercy bestowed on the least unlikely.

Through Jesus the powers of evil would be defeated.

Defeat was in preparation for the coming of the rule of God.

## **Jesus as Son of Man**

Term *Son of Man* derives from a Semitic idiom used in the psalms and by some prophets.

Ezekiel used the phrase to call attention to his own frailty and fallibility.

In Daniel the phrase is used to contrast the beasts with those whom God had chosen.

In the *Parables of Enoch* the Son of Man was a heavenly figure.

He had a redemptive role that lied wholly in the future.

In the gospels the Son of Man is already visible in the earthly life of Jesus.

It was in his capacity as the friend of outcasts and tax collectors that he was given designation.

## **Jesus in the Gospels**

Jesus of Nazareth is the historical base that established the community of the new covenant.

Evidence about him was written long after his death (last half of the first century).

Recorded events are a series of responses to Jesus by those who experienced him in some way.

First three gospels share a basic structure.

Narrative sequence in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is essentially the same.

Minor variants exist and some rearrangement but the common pattern is evident.

John diverges from the other three in sequence and in content.



In John . . .

Jesus is never actually baptized.

His ministry is carried on extensively in Jerusalem (rather than in Galilee and surrounding area).

Jesus cleanses the temple early in his ministry.

Exorcisms of demons are missing.

Jesus' style of teaching is different with long speeches intended for his followers.

Before the written word there was an oral stage of the tradition concerning Jesus.

Public scribes were prevalent in the cities and towns of the Roman Empire.

But we have no indication that such a role was assigned to one or more of Jesus' followers.

Neither is also no evidence that Jesus required his disciples to memorize his teachings.

Factors point to the oldest tradition about Jesus being preserved orally rather than in writing.

In Acts 4:13 the disciples are described as illiterate.

Even if they were literate the limited time to complete their work would divert their energy.

It was assumed that the end of time was within a matter of months.

Evidence indicates that the oral tradition was more highly regarded than written accounts.

Studies of the transmission of oral tradition showed that each presentation –

Had in it the element of a fresh performance.

Adapted to the needs and responses of the audience at each moment.

Basic themes survived relatively intact but there was no such thing as exact repetition.

For listeners, a recitation of something composed previously would be regarded as insincere.

Major source of interest was to see how the speaker would rework and adapt materials.

Imaginative variations testified to the skill of the speaker.

With the printed word there was an impression of order that conveyed control.

Early critics assumed that in the first century a simple shift occurred from the oral to written.

Gospels are far more than (and substantially different from) a mere accumulation of sayings.

Individual writers modified the material to suit his own purposes.

Although no copies have survived it is likely that collections of similar materials were used.

### **Jesus as Rabbi**

With Jesus we have the development of a new kind of faith community.

Participation in the new community was open to religious, moral, and social outsiders.

Religion was not as concerned with ritual purity or ceremonial performances.

For example true cleanliness was not a matter of washing hands but was a matter of the heart.

Jesus warned his listeners of the importance of readiness.

Yet the life of the follower of Jesus was not to be characterized by anxiety about his/her fate.

Disciples were called to live lives free of concern about food, shelter, and clothing.

Single objective was to be centered on the kingdom of God and its coming.

Once that solitary goal was the focus of their lives then all the other needs would be met.

However the kingdom was not something to be achieved by their striving.

It was the gift of divine grace.

## **Discipleship in the New Community**

In ancient Israel and in Rome, personal identity was intimately bound with the family. In Jewish families the male son regularly carried the name of his father. Much of the rituals commanded in the Torah were observed within the family context. For the Romans, the worship of the gods was essential for the stability and security of the family. Emperor was known as the *pontifex maximus* for the nation. Assumption was that he was then the father-priest for the whole Roman family. It was appropriate for the successor to be his son to provide familial continuity for Roman state.

Jesus overturned this pattern in several ways.

He had no home.

In the Mark tradition his family thought he was mad and was forced to leave his hometown. In the Luke tradition the case is even stronger against the family as the center of his identity. Routine family obligations were to be ignored in light of the urgency of the kingdom of God. Breaks with the family and the associated network of ordinary obligations were radical and total.

Values to be adopted and embodied by his followers were the exact reverse of usual life goals. It was the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful, the hated and the rejected who were blessed by God. Disciples were not to center on present possessions or social acceptance for fulfillment. All that they sought from God was to be sufficient.

## **Mark 6:6-13 and Luke 10:1-16**

Jesus chose twelve disciples to participate in his ministry.

Once they had been under his guidance for a while he sent them out (internship).

He gave them the authority to expel demons as well as to preach about the kingdom.

In other stories individuals responded to being healed by telling others about Jesus.

Disciples were to be different.

They were to participate directly in Jesus' own activity of bringing about the rule of God.

Jesus gave them the power to undermine the power of evil during their mission.

Before this most of the attention Mark gave to the disciples was their failure to understand.

This section deliberately recalled a successful mission.

Disciples could indeed carry out the ministry for which Jesus had chosen them.

At the same time they did not possess independent authority.

They were extensions of Jesus' own activity.

Some of what we read in these parallel stories carried over into the early church.

Early Christian practice of anointing the sick was attached to the mission of the disciples.

Missionary pairs seemed to have been the norm of early Christianity –

Jesus initially called pairs of brothers.

In Acts it refers to Peter and John in 3:11 and 8:9.

In Acts 11:25-26 it was Paul and Barnabas who were companions.

Dangers of travel made such arrangements necessary.

These collection of rules governed the conduct of traveling missionaries.

Luke contains even more radical conditions than Mark.

Luke emphasized the urgency of the eschatological judgment.

List of provisions for the journey vary in all three versions of the missionary command. Such variations confirm what we said in our background information. Rules may have been passed on by oral tradition. Mark permits staff and sandals (an accommodation to early Christian missionary practice). Disciples were to have adequate clothing but not a second tunic to protect them from the cold. They were to trust God to provide lodging each night. They were not permitted to carry money or extra provisions. Clear that the disciples were not to make money (could not be seen as charlatans or magicians). They were required to remain in the first house that welcomed them. They could not move to a household that offered more luxurious accommodations. Shaking dust off one's feet was a gesture of cursing a place. Elements of curse and divine condemnation are more evident in Luke. Clearing away the dust under one's sandals was a thorough rejection. It was more than shaking out garments and/or washing hands.

### **Parallel Story found in Matthew 10:5b-15**

In Matthew, the sending of the disciples just to Israel corresponded to his theological bent. After Easter, the Great Commission ends that restriction by extending the mission to all nations. Until then he preserves the mission to Israel because it was valid for the time of Jesus. In his view the mission to Israel was not abolished by the later command. Matthew preserves the strictness as a witness to the radical call to discipleship. In Matthew, the missionaries must be content with only the food necessary for survival.



Didache 11-13 illustrates both the importance of hospitality and the dangers of its abuse.

Customary for the Palestinian Jew returning to their land to shake off the dust of pagan countries.

Restrictions can only be understood in the eschatological framework of the whole discourse.

Jesus commissioned his disciples as though they were prophets announcing the last judgment.

### **Didache**

Also known as *The Lord's Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*.

It is a brief anonymous early Christian treatise written in Greek and dated to the first century.

Text is part of the oldest existing written catechism.

Main sections deal with Christian ethics, sacramental rites, and church organization.

Lord's Prayer is included.

Didache reveals how Jewish Christians saw themselves.  
It also showed how they adapted their practice for Gentile Christians.  
It is similar to the *Gospel of Matthew* because both texts originated in similar communities.  
Some Church Fathers considered it to be a part of the New Testament.  
Others rejected it as non-canonical and that holds true except in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

### **Portions of Chapter 11. Concerning Teachers, Apostles, and Prophets.**

But concerning the apostles and prophets, act according to the decree of the Gospel.  
Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord.  
But he shall not remain more than one day (or two days) if there is a need.  
But if he remains three days then he is a false prophet.

And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodges.  
If he asks for money then he is a false prophet.

And every prophet who orders a meal in the Spirit does not eat it (unless he is indeed a false prophet). And every prophet who teaches the truth (but does not do what he teaches) is a false prophet . . . But whoever says in the Spirit *Give me money* (or something else) you shall not listen to him. But if he tells you to give for others' sake who are in need, let no one judge him.

### **Chapter 13. Support of Prophets.**

But every true prophet who wants to live among you is worthy of his support. So also a true teacher is himself worthy, as the workman, of his support. Every first-fruit, therefore, of the products of wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and of sheep, you shall take and give to the prophets, for they are your high priests.

But if you have no prophet, give it to the poor. If you make a batch of dough, take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment. So also when you open a jar of wine or of oil, take the first-fruit and give it to the prophets; and of money (silver) and clothing and every possession, take the first-fruit, as it may seem good to you, and give according to the commandment.

### **Next Class on January 20**

Matthew 5 and Luke 6:20-46