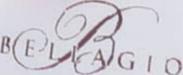


 ADVENT
2022

John the Baptist



TOUCHSTONE
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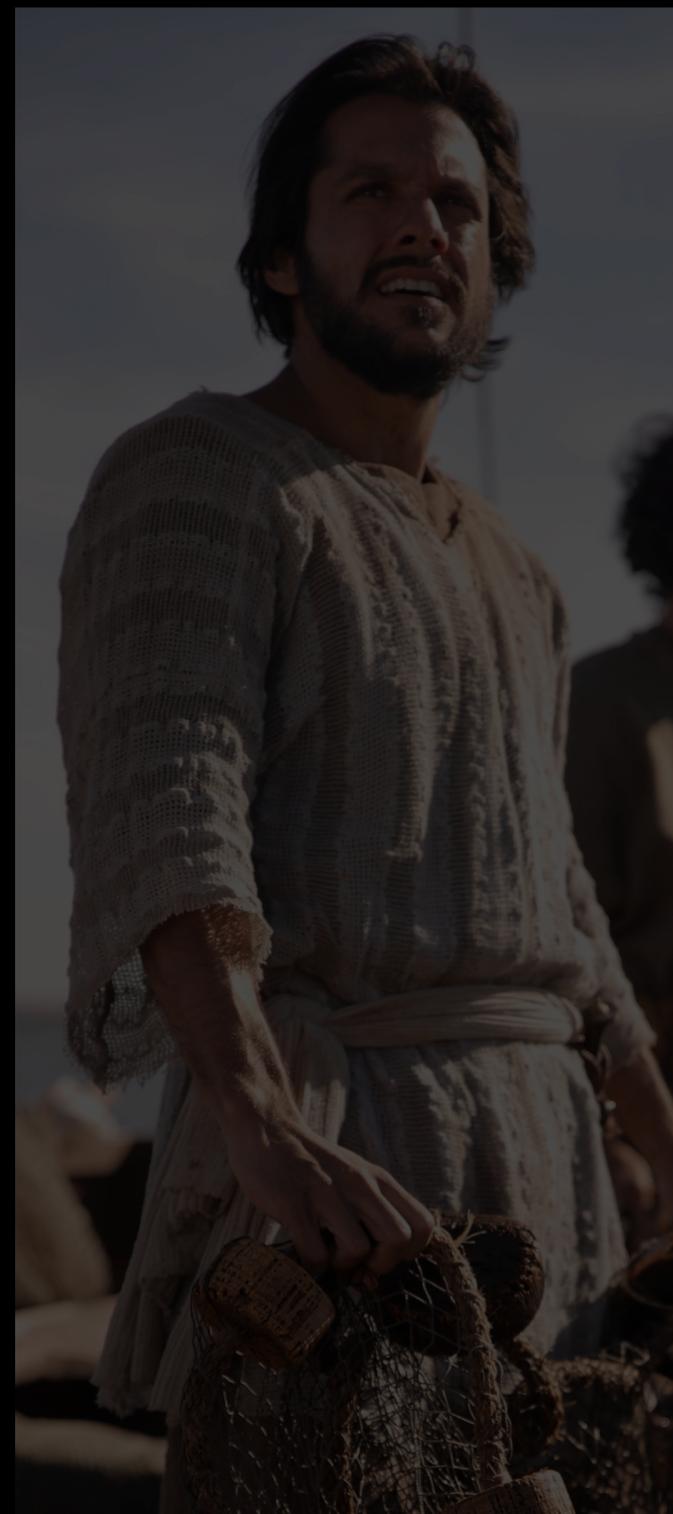




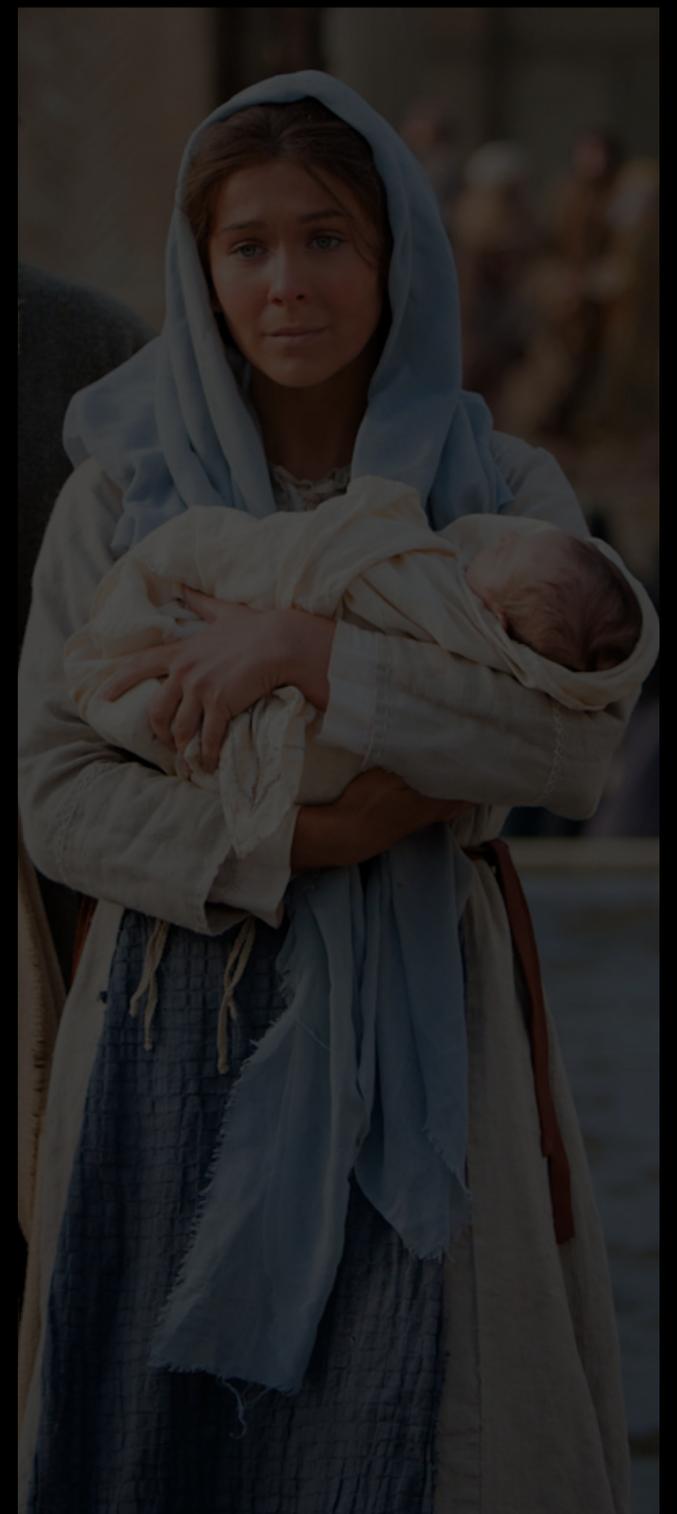
Herod



John the Baptist



Peter



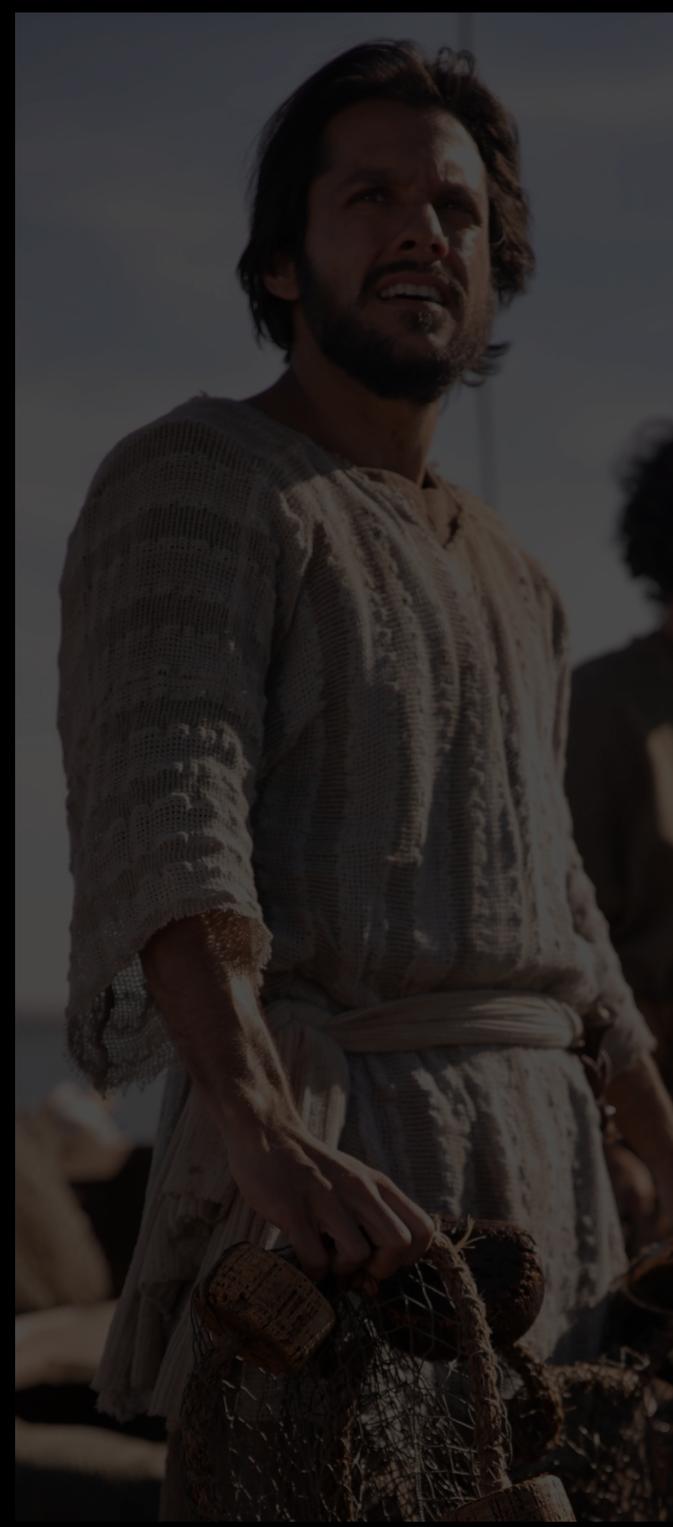
Mary



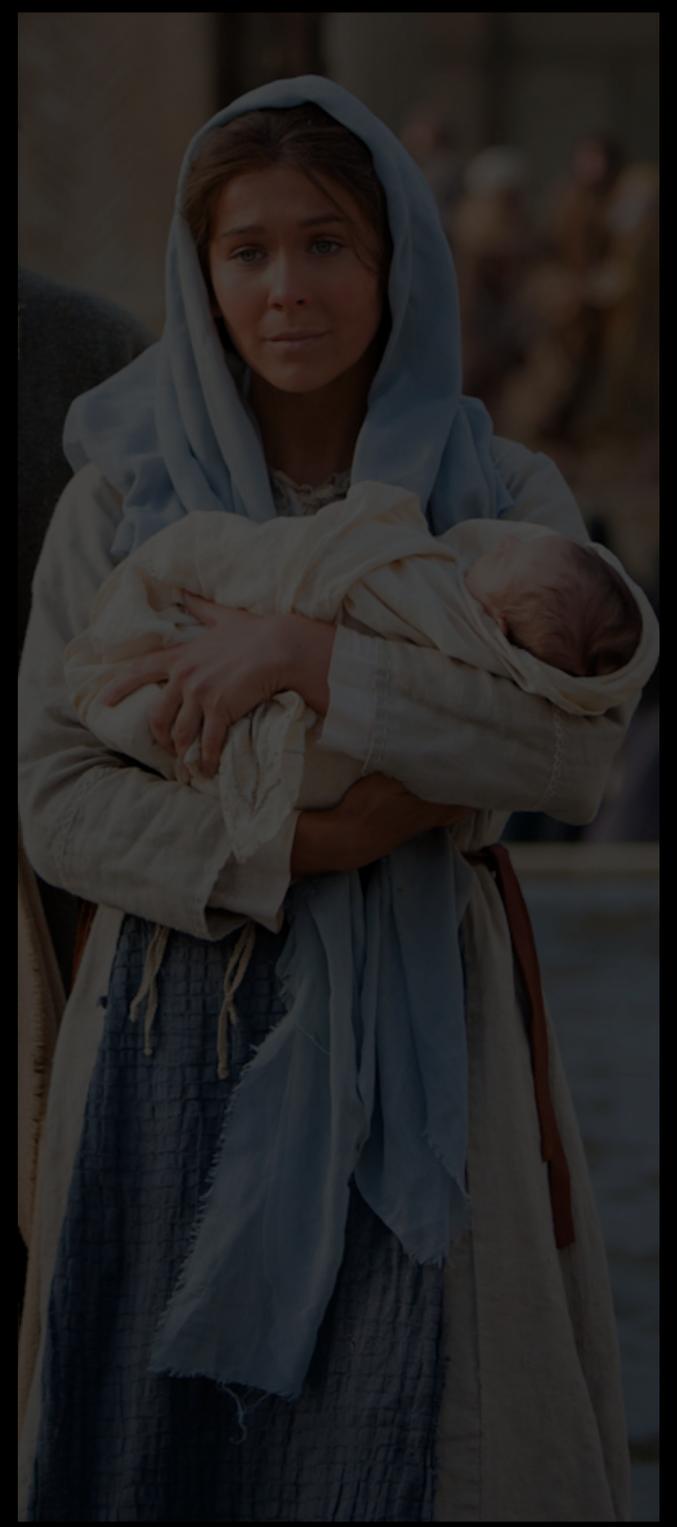
Herod



John the Baptist



Peter



Mary



When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:41)

Matthew
3:1-6



In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

Matthew
3:1-6



John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Matthew
3:7-10



But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Matthew
3:11-12



“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Luke
3:18-20



And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

Luke
7:16-23



They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

John’s disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”

Luke
7:16-23



When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?’”

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard:

Luke
7:16-23



The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”

Miguel de
Unamuno

(Tragic Sense of Life)



Those who believe they believe in God but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, and not in God himself.

God, why are you silent?
Why do you hide your face?









Matthew
9:32-34



While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.”

John
12:27-29



“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

Philip Yancey

*(Disappointment
with God)*



With remarkable consistency, the Bible's accounts show that miracles—dramatic, showstopping miracles like many of us still long for—simply do not foster deep faith. For proof, we need look no further than the Transfiguration, when Jesus' face shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzling, “whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.” To the disciples' astonishment, two long-dead giants of Jewish history—Moses

Philip Yancey

*(Disappointment
with God)*



and Elijah—appeared in a cloud with them. God spoke audibly. It was too much to take; the disciples fell down, terrified.

Yet what effect did this stupendous event have on Jesus' three closest friends, Peter, James, and John? Did it permanently silence their questions and fill them with faith? A few weeks later, when Jesus needed them the most, they all forsook him.

The true goal of faith is
to nurture a relationship
of love and trust in him.

Luke
7:22-23



So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”

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I could not help noticing an abrupt mood shift in the Bible around the Book of Acts. If you scour the rest of the New Testament, you will find none of the outrage of Job nor the despair of Ecclesiastes nor the anguish of Lamentations. Clearly, the writers of the New Testament were convinced that Jesus had changed the universe forever.

1 Peter
1:6-9



In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor

1 Peter
1:6-9



when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

God is good.

Life is good.





“These troubles and distresses that you go through in these waters are no sign that God has forsaken you; but they are sent to test you, to see whether you will recall that goodness, which up to now, you have received from Him and if you will live upon Him in your distresses. Be cheerful, Jesus Christ makes you whole.”

John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*