

8th Sunday after Pentecost July 15, 2018

Seventh Sunday after the Trinity Proper 10 (15)

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

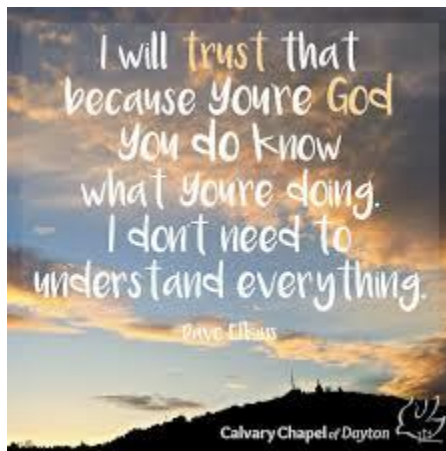
*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
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Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104



<https://highlandparkministries.org/sermon-archive/faithfulness-of-the-forerunner/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 743 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 347

“Jesus, priceless treasure”

“... Johann Franck (1618-1677), who penned “*Jesus, Priceless Treasure*”, knew of many difficult hardships. In fact, he chronicles a variety of them in this hymn, e.g. “storms”, “empty glory”, Satan’s tempting, and others. How he confronts them—in some instances quite defiantly, can provide encouragement to the reader/singer. Clearly reflected is a confident Biblical faith that enables this positive confrontation.

Realizing Franck was born the same year the 30 Years War commenced, and living several decades thereafter, he would have known from firsthand experiences and observation about dealing with various kinds of deprivation, unnatural loss of lives, property and possessions, and premature death for many.

Yet, what shines through in this hymn is the stalwart assurance he finds in the “Priceless Treasure”. Boldly, even exuberantly, Franck’s words can help us confidently sing of where true, enduring safety, peace, and “purest Pleasure” are to be found.

Several complementary components contribute to the widespread appeal of this hymn in America. Deserving particular recognition are the buoyant chorale tune “*Jesu, meine Freude*” and the splendid English translation that are commonly partners when it is sung. Separated from these, it is hard to imagine this poem having its breadth of recognition and being included in multiple Christian hymnals in this century.

Some of its textual richness can be further appreciated by focusing on various expressive adjectives, verbs, and salient nouns, each of which assists in illuminating a bit more brightly and clearly a life that has its abiding trust in Jesus, the priceless Treasure...”

- <https://www.cuchicago.edu/globalassets/documents/center-for-church-music/devotions/hymn-of-the-day-devotion---proper-10-series-b.pdf>
Donald Rotermund, Retired Cantor, Zion Lutheran Church, Dallas TX
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t7jhdxZfGE> Higher Things, Bread of Life 2016, Fort Collins CO
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mrfR7bLJzs> “Rare organ and violin duo music recorded in Richmond, VA by Dutch/German composer Jan Bender.” Published on Sep 7, 2011. This link also has a good biography of Jan Bender.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

Amos 7:7-15; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading from Amos or 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19) (Next week: Jeremiah 23:1-6; RCL, the same reading from Jeremiah or 2 Samuel 7:1-14a)

The prophet Amos reads somewhat like a long scolding one receives from an angry boss or guardian. It certainly is not a book you want to read if you are in need of easy

encouragement. For this reason, many have avoided the passages from Amos because these texts often feel harsh or disconnected from the types of things we want to talk about in our regular preaching life. However, by looking closer at this text, I believe there are significant points of connection for our contemporary life together that can be good and transformative news..."

<https://www.aplainaccount.org/single-post/2016/07/05/Amos-717> Stephen Riley | School of Theology and Christian Ministry, Northwest Nazarene University

⁷ This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸ And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"Behold, I am setting a plumb line
in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass by them;
⁹ the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

Amos Accused

¹⁰ Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹ For thus Amos has said,

"Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land."

¹² And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, ¹³ but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

¹⁴ Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "I was^[a] no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. ¹⁵ But the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

a. [Amos 7:14](#) Or *am*; twice in this verse

"Amos is tough and blunt. He says things no one wishes to hear today any more than they did almost 3,000 years ago. He's enough to make even the boldest 21st century preachers and teachers shy away from both his message and him.

In the text the Lectionary appoints for this particular Sunday, God shows Amos a vision of God standing near a wall that had been built straight. There God holds what most modern translations call a "plumb line" (8). While Amos 7's preachers and teachers may be tempted to

go to great length to describe a plumb line, it's probably enough to simply say it helps to measure a wall's straightness.

Of course, the Lord is more concerned with moral than physical "straightness." So God speaks of setting "a plumb line among" God's "people Israel." God's conclusion? Israel is "out of plumb;" she's morally crooked. She deserves to be knocked down because she has failed to keep her part of God's covenant with her.

Yet Israel assumes God is still on her side. God even seems to reinforce that by referring to her in verse 8 as "my people." Yet that relationship between God and God's people is strained, not by God but by Israel's actions. God hasn't rejected Israel. Israel has rejected the Lord. Amos 7 doesn't explicitly describe how Israel has proven to be God's unfaithful covenant partner...

Yet Amos 7:13 also at least hints at some of Israel's crookedness. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, one of the northern kingdom's major shrines, speaks it. Yet while he's a priest, he makes it clear that he derives his authority not from the living God, but from his king. Amaziah is more interested in Jeroboam's security than the truth of God's Word. In fact, the first person to whom the priest speaks in this text is not Amos with whom he so sharply disagrees, but his boss, King Jeroboam.

Amaziah claims Amos is trying to undermine both the monarchy and Israel. He lies by claiming the prophet is raising a "conspiracy" against Jeroboam. On top of that, Bethel's priest enigmatically warns his king, "the land cannot bear all his words" (10). It's not clear whether he means Amos' words may lead Israel to repentance, destruction or something else. It is clear, however, that Bethel's priest's first priority is not the living God or God's Word. So while Amaziah recognizes Amos as a "seer" (12), he does his best to silence the prophet or at least redirect his criticism to other people.

What's more, Bethel's priest calls Bethel, one of the northern kingdom's major shrines, "the *king's* sanctuary and the temple of the *kingdom*" (italics added). So to one of Israel's religious leaders, Bethel is not God's sanctuary or temple. It's Jeroboam and Israel's. Amaziah claims what actually belongs to God for his king and country...

In verse 9 God prompts Amos to tell crooked Israel that God will destroy her religious and political "high places." But with verses 16 and 17 Amos' warnings become far more personal and, arguably, more ominous. When Amaziah demands that Amos stop prophesying against Israel, Amos responds by warning that God will punish Israel's wives, sons and daughters. What's more, he warns Amaziah that he'll suffer the humiliating fate of dying in a pagan land. And to top it all off, God's prophet warns God will send Israel, whose priest tried to chase Amos out of the land, out of the land God had promised to give Israel into exile...

Finally, however, when we read, preach and teach Amos 8 in the light of God's work in God's Son, Jesus Christ, we're amazed to see how much we escape through Jesus Christ. He experiences in his own person the destruction and exile God promises Israel. Jesus Christ, in a sense, falls by the Roman sword for our sakes, for our forgiveness. We escape Old Testament Israel's fate only because of God's amazing grace manifested to us in Jesus Christ and received by us through faith.

- http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-10c/?type=old_testament_lectionary Doug Bratt

Psalm 85: (1-7) 8-13; RCL, Psalm 85:8-13 or Psalm 24 (Psalm 23; RCL, Psalm 23 or Psalm 89:20-37)

“Reflecting on Psalm 85:8-13 without the first 13 verses is akin to a liturgy that omits the call and prayer of confession, moving instead straight to the assurance of pardon.

The words are applicable alone, yet are designed as part of a whole. The psalm is a communal prayer for help and can be divided into three sections or stanzas, verses 1-3, 4-7, and 8-13...”

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1386 **Beth L. Tanner**,
Professor of Old Testament, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, NJ



Revive Us Again

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

*85 LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.*

*² You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you covered all their sin. **Selah****

*³ You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.*

*⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!*

*⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?*

*⁶ Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?*

*⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.*

*⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.*

*⁹ Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.*

*¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.*

*¹¹ Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.*

*¹² Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.*

*¹³ Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.*

*Just as an aside, you might notice that word “Selah” in the margin of v2. It occurs seventy-one times in Psalms but its meaning is uncertain. Maybe it comes from the Hebrew “to lift up,” and so it is a direction for the community, at this point, to raise their eyes or their voice in song. Or maybe it means “to bend,” and so the people are supposed to either bow or kneel as an expression of humility. Or maybe it was just a cue to pause; maybe there was a musical interlude and the people were supposed to reflect and silently meditate. Whatever the case may be, a preacher might point out the fact that at least this psalm (and many others, of course) was intended for a corporate worship setting. It is something to be read/prayed/sung with other people, and so we need some direction to worship God well...”

- <https://www.aplainaccount.org/single-post/2016/07/18/Psalm-85> Jay Wilson
Pastor, Belton Church of the Nazarene, Belton, MO

“An interpretation of Psalm 85:8-13 needs first to find a context in the whole of Psalm 85. The psalm is a prayer in the midst of crisis for the ancient faith community. They prayed for joy, joy that can come from God's presence in the midst of the community. It is divided into three parts:

- God's previous restoration of the community (verses 1-3)
- A plea for God to bring restoration in a new crisis (verses 4-7)
- A message of assurance (verses 8-13)...

The phrase "restored the fortunes" in verse 1 is at times used to describe ancient Israel's return from exile (for example, cf. Jeremiah 30-33), but the phrase is not limited to that context. Rather, it can be adapted, so both this phrase and the psalm are applicable to a variety of settings of trouble and woe. The plea is for God to restore the worshiping community in the way **verses 1-3** remember. Our focus is the concluding verses of the psalm that offer hope in the midst of the current trouble.

The opening section of the psalm brings to mind a fond memory of a time when God restored the fortunes of Jacob/Israel and forgave them. God turned from wrath to forgiveness. In **verses 4-7**, the praying community pleads that this same God with whom they have a salvation history will again act to restore so that the community can praise and thank God. "Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation" (verse 7).

The third section of the psalm (**verses 8-13**) begins with a reference to the speaker who is revealing a word from God, a word of peace to the faithful. This word is not in the form of direct divine speech, but is in a style characteristic of the psalms and of announcements of salvation in the Old Testament.

Imagine the scene as the worship leader rises to proclaim a word of hope. The verses are filled with terms central to Old Testament faith. Verses 8-9 characterize the word as peace (wholeness or health) and salvation (wellness) for the community. God's glory will again come to the land. In other words, God will again be present to bless the community and nurture it to fullness of life. And this gift is for the faithful, those whose lives are centered in relationship with God.

The images of God's salvation delightfully pile up in verses 10-13. In verse 10, God's unchanging love and trustworthiness come together to bring the community into right relationship with God and each other (i.e. righteousness). God's righteousness brings peace. The personifications in

verse 10 are worth quoting: "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other."

In addition, faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will come down from the heavens. This exuberant poetic picture is clearly in excess of any possible human achievement, and so is focused on God's presence and activity for the faithful...

The conclusion of the psalm proclaims that God will bring increase to the land, alluding to the beginning of the psalm that remembers a time when God was "favorable to the land." Even more, God acts to bring the community into righteousness (right relationship), in turn making a path for God to walk with this community of faith...

Psalm 85 thus models for the community the act of prayer in a time of crisis and the celebration of salvation articulated in the promises of verses 8-13. Such salvation can only come from the God who is present to bless and who comes to deliver."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=377 **W. H. Bellinger, Jr.** W. Marshall and Lulie Craig Chairholder in Bible, Baylor University, Waco, Texas

Ephesians 1:3-14; RCL, the same reading (Ephesians 2:11-22; RCL, the same reading)

The readings from Ephesians that will continue through September 2.

"The Second Lesson for this Sunday is the first in a series of readings from the Letter to the Ephesians extending over seven Sundays.

Of the total verses in Ephesians (155), nearly half (75 of them) will be read during these seven Sundays.

Reading Ephesians by way of the lectionary is necessarily selective. What is striking in reading through the assigned texts is that those chosen tend to be the most edifying in terms of theology, which can be expected. In addition, one finds the most general verses in terms of ethical admonitions, leaving aside some of the more specific instructions.

For example, the important and well-known passage on the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16) is included on the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 18). But the "household code" (Ephesians 5:21-6:9) that lists the duties of wives, husbands, children, slaves, and masters is not included, and many a preacher will be glad for that..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=342 **Arland J. Hultgren** Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful^[a] in Christ Jesus:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us^[b] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known^[c] to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee^[d] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,^[e] to the praise of his glory.

1. [Ephesians 1:1](#) Some manuscripts *saints who are also faithful* (omitting *in Ephesus*)
2. [Ephesians 1:5](#) *Or before him in love, ⁵having predestined us*
3. [Ephesians 1:9](#) *Or he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known...*
4. [Ephesians 1:14](#) *Or down payment*
5. [Ephesians 1:14](#) *Or until God redeems his possession*

“...Ephesians 1, which has baffled generations of believers with its declaration that God “chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined (or *prestined* in the NIV translation) us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will” (NRSV).

To be “chosen” and “predestined” by God is a wonderful thing, and certainly Christians can be proud to be “marked with a seal” as the chapter tells us. However, reading these words with pride can leave the impression that we believers were somehow handpicked by God as the best, leaving all others in the position of being losers — second-class creations of a Creator who loves us above all others and for obvious reasons. When we interpret (with pride) that this sorting took place even “before the creation of the world,” it’s a short step to a belief that God made his picks based on his infallible reckoning of our innate spiritual superiority, just an impartial umpire calling them like he saw them.

I’m not God, but my experience in “predestining someone for adoption to become a child of God” offers a different explanation of how it went down.

Jumping into adoption

With three little boys born by blood, my wife and I decided to adopt. We chuckled at being required to enroll in parenting classes and have our home inspected, but we did it. We jumped through the hoops and placed our names on the list as potential parents with a private, Christian-based agency. Then we waited. We did not try to help God along by identifying the kid we

wanted. The only stipulation we made — that although we are white we would prefer a biracial child — was because we knew that nonwhite babies were tougher to place in our state of Alabama.

Other than that, all we knew was that somewhere out there in Selma or Tuscaloosa or Punkin Center, a child would be born eventually and become part of our family. Sigh unseen we began to love our fourth child, months or maybe years before his or her birth.

When a 2-day-old boy was placed in our arms, he was already our full-fledged, beloved son. We had chosen him because we knew that he needed to be chosen, needed to be loved. We knew nothing about him. We knew nothing about who he would become.

That was 16 years ago. That baby is now an artist, a dancer, a topnotch gymnast. I can draw only stick figures. I am too embarrassed to even try dancing. I somersault only if I trip over one of my left feet. We love him more than ever, but it has little to do with him fitting our mold better than any other child could have. We love him because we chose him; we chose him because we love him. There is neither chicken nor egg to it...

Hold that story in your mind as you read Ephesians 1, and a different light shines through the chapter. You can't read about being chosen and predestined and simply lift your chin in the air like the proud-praying Pharisee of Jesus' story: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people" (Luke 18:11, NIV).

Instead, you read it and realize that God loves you because he chose to love you, and he chose you because he loves you. Lift your eyes from that passage, look around humbled by the epiphany of it..."

- https://www.huffingtonpost.com/doug-mendenhall/rising-above-the-lowwater_b_4519489.html Doug Mendenhall

Q: Would you explain the LCMS position on "predestined" in Romans 8 and Ephesians 1? If one is predestined to be adopted as a redeemed child of God, then does it follow that another is predestined to not be adopted and therefore damned?

A: The LCMS believes that Scripture clearly teaches (in passages such as those mentioned in your question) a predestination to salvation by God's grace in Jesus Christ alone. The LCMS does not believe that Scripture teaches a predestination to damnation: God desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4). Like so many teachings of Scripture (e.g., the Trinity, eternity, the two natures of Christ, the love of a holy God for rebellious sinners), this teaching seems contradictory and is incomprehensible to human reason. We believe it not because it "makes sense" to human reason, but because this is what we find taught in the pages of God's holy Word.

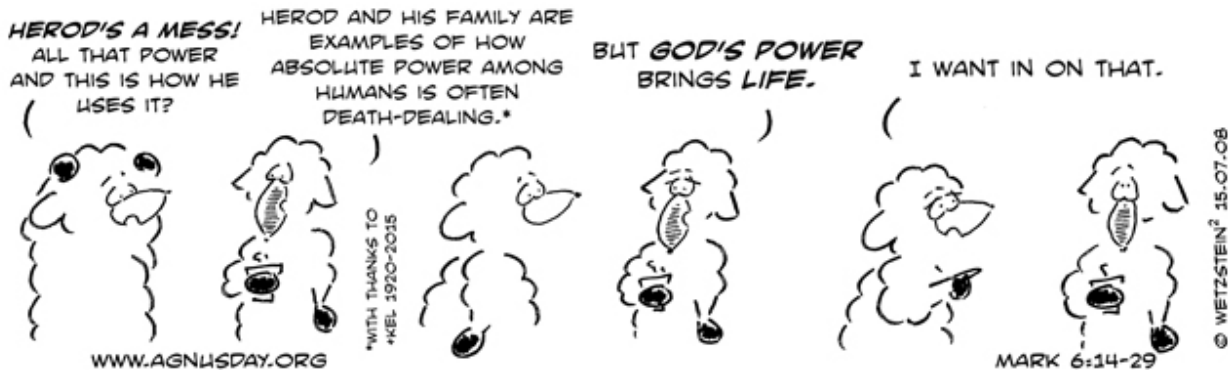
For a helpful summary of the LCMS position on predestination, see the section on **Of the Election of Grace** in the Synod's Brief Statement (adopted in 1932). *Excerpts on page 12*

- Google [Frequently Asked Questions - The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod](#)

Remember what Paul had to say last week in 2 Corinthians 12 – “²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows...”

THE MARK CHALLENGE

How are you doing?



Mark 6:14-29; RCL, the same reading (Mark 6:30-44; RCL, Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56)

“...Mark frames the story of Herod Antipas' murder of John the Baptist within the story of the mission of the twelve. In Mark, the twelve begin their mission in 6:7-13, which is followed by the Herod story in 14-29, which is then followed by a return to the mission in v. 30. Mark connects the two events, and places the Herod story within the larger context of the apostolic mission...” Continued after the reading

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 6th Chapter”

The Death of John the Baptist

¹⁴ King Herod heard of it, for Jesus^[a] name had become known. Some^[b] said, “John the Baptist^[c] has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵ But others said, “He is Elijah.” And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.” ¹⁷ For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. ¹⁸ For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” ¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²² For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.” ²³ And he vowed to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.” ²⁴ And she went out and said to her mother, “For what should I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.” ²⁵ And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” ²⁶ And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. ²⁷ And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's^[d] head. He went and

beheaded him in the prison ²⁸ and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

1. [Mark 6:14](#) Greek *his*
2. [Mark 6:14](#) Some manuscripts *He*
3. [Mark 6:14](#) Greek *baptizer*; also verse [24](#)
4. [Mark 6:27](#) Greek *his*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“...**The death of John the baptist:** In his history of the period, Josephus said that Antipas killed John because he was nervous over the John's high level of political support in the region--"Eloquence that had so great an effect on the people might lead to some form of sedition," said Josephus.



Herod decided, therefore, that it would be much better to strike first and be rid of him before his work led to an uprising, than to wait for an upheaval, get involved in a difficult situation, and see his mistake. (Antiquities, 18, v. 2)

Mark gives us a different reason. One should keep in mind that Mark is not writing to give us historical facts, but rather to give us an interpretation of the life of Jesus in the context of his times. Josephus' analysis is probably correct in terms of history, but Mark has a larger agenda.

Mark wants to expose the venality of the Herodian court by showing us what happens when the power structure gets together for a party. This is in sharp contrast to the party about to be thrown by Jesus in the two upcoming "feeding stories"--the feeding of the 5000 in 6:34-44, and the feeding of the 4000 in 8:1-10.

The juxtaposition is stunning. The meal of Herod is about corruption and violence. The meals of Jesus reconcile both Jews and gentiles. The meal of Herod is for the upper-crust elite. The meal of Jesus is for the crowds. The highlight of the Herod "liturgy" is the ceremonious delivery of the head of the Baptist. The highlight of Jesus' meal is the giving of food for everyone. Mark wants us to see the contrast between the Black Mass of Herod and the Great Thanksgiving of Jesus.

Mark makes a skillful attack. In his portrayal of this incident, the prerogatives of royalty are exposed as profligate and deadly. Moreover, he plays on a particular political weakness of Antipas, his (false) Jewish *bona fides*...

- http://www.progressiveinvolvement.com/progressive_involvement/2012/07/lectionary-blogging-mark-6-14-29.html Posted by [John Petty](#) on July 09, 2012
-
- Picture of “Beheaded” John the Baptist at Notre Dame Cathedral
<https://watsontownnumc.org/tag/john-the-baptist/>



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“Of the Election of Grace

By the election of grace we mean this truth, that all those who by the grace of God alone, for Christ's sake, through the means of grace, are brought to faith, are justified, sanctified, and preserved in faith here in time, that all these have already from eternity been endowed by God with faith, justification, sanctification, and preservation in faith, and this for the same reason, namely, by grace alone, for Christ's sake, and by way of the means of grace. That this is the doctrine of the Holy Scripture is evident from Eph. 1:3-7; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9; Matt. 24:22-24 (cp. Form. of Conc. Triglot, p. 1065, Paragraphs 5, 8, 23; M., p. 705)...

But as earnestly as we maintain that there is an election of grace, or a predestination to salvation, so decidedly do we teach, on the other hand, that there is no election of wrath, or predestination to damnation. Scripture plainly reveals the truth that the love of God for the world of lost sinners is universal, that is, that it embraces all men without exception, that Christ has fully reconciled all men unto God, and that God earnestly desires to bring all men to faith, to preserve them therein, and thus to save them, as Scripture testifies, 1 Tim. 2:4: "God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." No man is lost because God has predestined him to eternal damnation. — Eternal election is a cause why the elect are brought to faith in time, Acts 13:48; but election is not a cause why men remain unbelievers when they hear the Word of God. The reason assigned by Scripture for this sad fact is that these men judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, putting the Word of God from them and obstinately resisting the Holy Ghost, whose earnest will it is to bring also them to repentance and faith by means of the Word, Act 13:46; 7:51; Matt. 23:37...

Christians can and should be assured of their eternal election. This is evident from the fact that Scripture addresses them as the chosen ones and comforts them with their election, Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13. This assurance of one's personal election, however, springs only from faith in the Gospel... Faith in this truth leaves no room for the fear that God might still harbor thoughts of wrath and damnation concerning us. Scripture inculcates that in Rom. 8:32, 33..."

- <https://www.lcms.org/about/beliefs/doctrine/brief-statement-of-lcms-doctrinal-position#election-of-grace>