

Introduction to John the Baptist

Luke 1:5-17

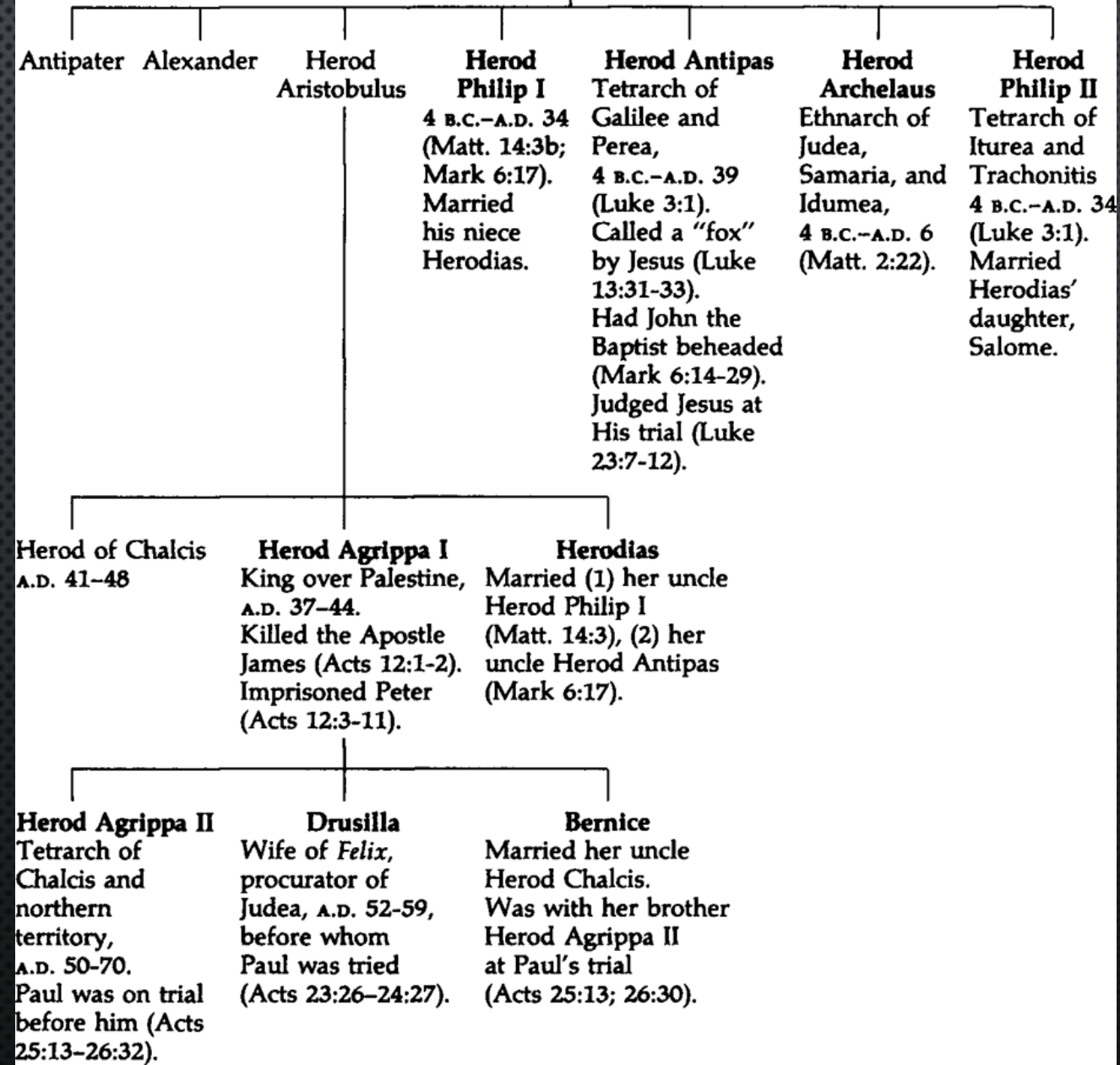
- A. Luke begins to reveal the results of his research (1:5-7).
- B. In the line of his duty as a priest, an angel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, and he was gripped with fear (1:8-12).
- C. But the angel delivered nothing but good news (1:13-17).

A. Luke began to reveal the results of his research (1:5-7).

1. Luke mentioned a “beginning” in both vv. 2, 3. The first in vs. 2 was connected with “eyewitnesses and servants,” which seems to relate to Jesus’ public ministry. The second seems to go back further to John the Baptist’s & Jesus’ supernatural conceptions (RSB p. 1618).
2. The time frame is given as “in the days of Herod, king of Judea,” Herod the Great whose reign as King of Palestine (Judea) was 37-4 BC. BLB link next slide.

Herod the Great

King of Palestine, 37-4 B.C. (Luke 1:5)
Killed Bethlehem baby boys (Matt. 2:1-17)



Who Were the Herods?
(blueletterbible.org)

Herod the Great
Governor of Galilee (r. 47–37 B.C.E.)
King of the Jews (r. 37–4 B.C.E.)

Jesus

HE TRIED TO KILL

OTHER WIVES

Doris

Phaedra

Pallas

unknown

Elpis

unknown

Herod the Great's Family Tree

CHILDREN

WIVES

GRANDCHILDREN

GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

Mariamne I
a Hasmonean princess

Malthace
the Samaritan

Mariamne II
of Jerusalem

Cleopatra
of Jerusalem (not Egypt)

Herod Antipas
2nd husband of Herodias

Herod Archelaus

Herod Philip
1st husband of Herodias

Philip the Tetrarch

King Herod Agrippa I

Herodias

Berenice

King Herod Agrippa II

Antonius Felix

Drusilla

Salome

John the Baptist

Peter

Paul

James the son of Zebedee

HE EXECUTED

HE IMPRISONED

HE LEFT PAUL IN PRISON

SHE ASKED FOR HIS HEAD

HE REBUKED THIS MARRIAGE

3. In vs. 5, in this bizarre time frame, in the plan of God, “there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah.” Each division was named for its leader. The list is found in 1Chr. 24:7-18. Abijah, mentioned here, is the eighth division of 24 and is found in 1Chr. 24:10b.
4. Not surprisingly, “he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.”
5. Ethically, “They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord” (vs. 6), yet not

6. sinless. The term “requirements (lemma, δικαίωμα)” is translated “righteous acts” in Rv. 19:8b, where it stands for the believer’s rewards.
7. Such a couple would have expected to be blessed *greatly* with material resources & a quiver full of children (Ps. 127:5), “But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years” (vs. 7) i.e., there was no hope that they would *ever* have children. Elizabeth referred to her state as one of disgrace (vs. 25 - ὄνειδος) meaning, a “loss of standing connected w/ disparaging speech.”

B. In his duty as a priest, an angel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, and he was gripped with fear (1:8-12).

1. (vs. 8) As we saw, and BK confirms, “This division was one of 24 groups of priests, drawn up in David’s time (1Chr. 24:7–18). The priests in each division were on duty twice a year for a week at a time.” So, it was time for Zacharias to serve in his division of Abijah, “performing his priestly service before God.”

2. (vs. 9) “According to the custom of the priestly office, he (Zacharias) was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.”
 - a. A “custom (ἔθος)” is a “long-established usage or practice common to a group” (BDAG).
 - b. Zacharias “was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.” BK says, “By means of lots the various divisions (of the priests) undertook their service (1Chr. 24:31; cf. v. 5; Lk. 1:9) so that all were treated alike in the kinds of service they rendered (cf. 1Chr. 23:28–32).”

b. (cont.) The casting of lots took the opinions of men out of the decision so that men got only God's point of view. "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Pr. 16:33). Aaron cast lots to choose the goat for the Lord as a sin offering and the other as a scapegoat (Lev. 16:8-10). It was how Jonah was found out in Jon. 1:7. It was how Mathias was chosen to replace Judas in Ac. 1:26. Ac. 2 marked the coming of the Holy Spirit, and we do not see any more casting of lots after that.

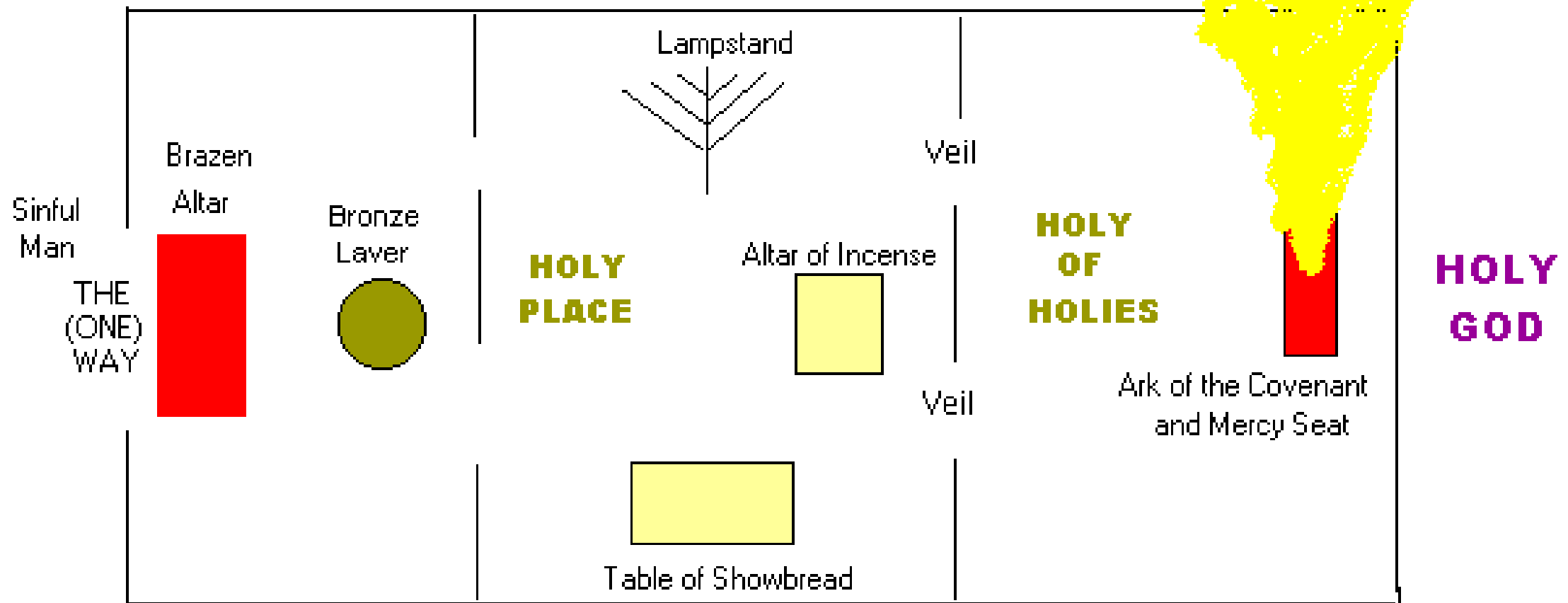
- c. There were many priests at the time of Zacharias, so a man would be chosen to offer up incense only once in his lifetime. This was a special and great day for Zacharias. God was clearly in this decision to send him in to offer up incense. Indeed, it was a divine appointment.
- d. (vs. 10) This was solemn time, “And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.” “Many godly people...assembled in the temple courtyards for this daily offering, as was customary. This was

- d. (cont.) probably the evening incense offering (3:00 p.m., cf. Dan. 9:21; Acts 3:1)” (Constable). It is interesting that in Revelation, incense stands for the prayers of the saints (Rv. 5:8; 8:3-4).
- e. (vs. 11) In keeping with the above scene, “an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.” See diagram.

THE TABERNACLE

How Holy God Has A Relationship With Sinful Man

**SHEKINAH CLOUD
OF GLORY**



Brazen Altar- The Cross of Christ

Laver- Sanctification

Table of Showbread- Christ is the Bread of Life

Lampstand- Christ is the Light of the World

Altar of Incense- Christ Our Intercessor

Ark of the Covenant- Christ is the Word Personified

Mercy Seat- Blood of Christ

Delivers from the Penalty and Power of Sin

- c. probably the evening incense offering (3:00 p.m., cf. Dan. 9:21; Acts 3:1)” (Constable). It is interesting that in Revelation incense stands for the prayers of the saints (Rv. 5:8; 8:3-4).
- d. (vs. 11) In keeping with the above scene, “And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.” See diagram.
- e. (vs. 12) Naturally, “Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.”

C. But the angel delivered nothing but *good* news (1:13-17).

1. (vs. 13) The angel noticed the fear of Zacharias and said: “Do not be afraid, Zacharias,” - poss. to obey?
 - a. “for your petition has been heard,”
— *petition*???
 - b. “and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,”
— God determined the gender & revealed it.
 - c. “and you will give him the name John.” (“Gracious”)
2. (vs. 14) “You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.” All *good* news!!!

3. (vs. 15) The reason for the happiness of the previous verse:

- a. “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord;”
- b. “and he will drink no wine or liquor,” (“John voluntarily took on himself a Nazirite vow, refusing to drink anything fermented [Num. 6:1–21]. Luke did not specifically state that John would fulfill all aspects of the Nazirite vow.” - BK)
- c. “and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb,” enabling him to know and do the will of God. See Lk. 1:39-45.

4. (vs. 16) “And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.” It appeared that all Israel was going out to be baptized by him (Mk. 1:4-5), but the leaders “rejected God’s purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John” (Lk. 7:30b).
5. (vs. 17) The angel continued, “It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah,” (Lk. 1:76; Mt. 11:14; Mk. 1:6; 2Kg. 1:8). Mal. 4:6 says John’s ministry was “TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN”

5. (cont.) with an emphasis on repairing divisions in families. Further, it was to turn “the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” After all that John did, the people were not, and still are not, ready for the Lord, that is, ready for the kingdom. Such will remain the case until the end of the tribulation period, when they look on Him “whom they pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son” (Zec. 12:10) “and so all Israel will be saved” (Rm. 11:26a).