

1. **Baptism of Jesus: You are my beloved Son. All is very good like in Paradise as it should be!**

1.1. Highpoint: Exaltation – Glory – Accreditation, Acknowledgement and Acceptance.¹ It was practically the situation of the first Adam there in Paradise. Living one on one with God. Seeing him in all his goodness and mercy. Like Father and son in the very best and perfect life – and the Holy Spirit intonation perfect unity and harmony. This was their joint plan. That's how the triune God planned and executed our salvation. Dei+

1.2. We're no longer in paradise, rather far from home – out in the sticks really. The wilderness. That's where Jesus – the 2nd Adam - goes, because he's all out to seek and find the lost sheep, his brother, who has lost his way and gone to the dogs. Find and heal the one, fallen under the robbers. Bring him home, back to the good father. Heal him, forgive him and restore him to that prime condition of the sinless beginning. It takes humiliation, he takes up our iniquities and bears the sins of the world... cf Isaiah 52-53

2. **Out in the wilderness** – to destroy the works of the devil, free the captives and restore us to the kingdom of God: For this he goes out to catch the devil in Weakness, vulnerability, suffering at his low point. Satan takes the lure, swallows the bait hook, line and sinker. Hell and tries to tempt him.

2.1. **Stress situation. "Vasbyt"**² Trials.

2.1.1. Time factor³: 40 days – that's nearly 6 weeks/one and a half months.

2.1.2. Wild animals: Life threatening, grave danger, nothing romantic.⁴

2.1.3. Alone – with our fears, sins and darkest hours.

2.1.4. **Temptations of the Devil.**⁵

2.1.4.1. Putting God's faithfulness, love, grace and mercy into question:

2.1.4.1.1. Did God really? Genesis 3⁶

¹ Confirmation, endorsement,

² Emotional, physical and psychological effort and strain a student experiences while completing this tough phase. Pushing oneself to the limit, and then still a little further is what Vasbyt is all about. How does one react when pushed so far, no-one knows until it's done.

³ *Die Länge trägt die Last.*

⁴ Spreading fear, anxiety, survival of the fittest. It's a fight over life and death – limited resources.

⁵ He wants us to lose faith. Hate God and man. Fear him more than God himself. Loose hope, mistrust God's promises and despair – or become haughty, proud and self-righteous.

⁶ He comes like an angel of light (not stinking of fire and brimstone, with a tail and horns) rather politically correct, beautiful, tempting, seemingly good to eat.

- 2.1.4.1.2. Abraham: Give up your son!
 - 2.1.4.1.3. Satanic verses and enticements, lures and incentives cf Mt.4⁷
 - 2.1.4.1.4. Promises heaven on earth, but disappoints all the way...
 - 2.1.4.2. Doubting God's fatherly goodness, care, compassion and trustworthiness.
 - 2.1.4.3. Scaring us, so that we would fear other things more than God himself.
 - 2.1.4.4. IX tempted like us – but without sin. He doesn't fall for the temptations of the evil one like us. He's consistent in his trust in God, he doesn't doubt God's holy and perfect law, but abides to it to the very letter and smallest iota.
 - 2.1.4.5. Not an easy task, by no means. Just recall Gethsemane. But IX is up to it.
 - 2.1.4.6. Cup of wrath : bitter, poisonous, deadly... I thirst.
 - 2.1.4.7. He remains faithful + To the very end he prays: Not my will, but yours be done!
 - 2.1.4.8. He does this for us – vicariously, out of sincere love and true compassion.
 - 2.1.4.9. Father: Forgive them!
 - 2.1.4.10. Fulfills all the demands and goals of God's law until all is done right to the last iota. Nothing is left undone!
 - 2.1.4.11. The angels come and serve him. The comfort and support him.
 - 2.1.4.11.1. Like those ravens did with Elijah at the brook of Kerith.
 - 2.1.4.11.2. Like thousands of heavenly hosts did with Elisha and his servant.
 - 2.1.4.11.3. Like that angel there in Gethsemane...
3. **John's arrest and IX proclaims the gospel:** The story goes on and it's not over yet. Not by a long shot. The devil does not sleep. The troublemaker is still around. He goes around like a roaring lion and seeks, whom he can devour! **The story of St. John the Baptist illustrates this.**
- 3.1. Innocent voice of God's prophet against the high and mighty. Speaks the truth to power! And he loses his head in the process. Unfairly! Unjust! Mocking law and order – even in those days.
- 3.2. Jesus comments on this. He says:

⁷ Riches, Power, fame and glory.

- 3.2.1. The time is fulfilled. This is not a time to hide away. This is the time to stand up and fight and be counted. It's the time to be manly and brave. It's going to be the critical test!
- 3.2.2. Confidence and no reason to fear: Kingdom of God is at hand. All authority is in IX hands. He's with us (Immanuel) Therefore don't let the suffering, hardship and wilderness put you off. We're not in heaven yet. We're still outside of Paradise, but Paradise has been restored. IX is alive. He rules at the right hand of God. There's no need to fear. All authority in heaven and earth has been entrusted to him. Therefore Go and make disciples of all nations... It's daytime still. Not time to rest and fall asleep. But rather to be wide awake, pray and fight the good fight of faith. All the trouble in this world is only a sign that the end is near – the kingdom of God.
- 3.3. John's imprisonment and killing – his martyrdom. (Victims of Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists)
 - 3.3.1. Suffering of the innocent: Test for the faithful. Temptation to loose faith.
 - 3.3.2. Stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong, manly and brave.
 - 3.3.3. Do the work, you have been raised for and called to do... look at your position in life (table of duties) do it faithfully, trusting God's promises and it will be ok. God will see to it...
 - 3.3.4. Don't loose heart – it's only a short time now. Not too long to go!
 - 3.3.4.1. The time is fulfilled. Everything is fulfilled for us and our salvation.
 - 3.3.4.2. The kingdom of God is at hand! Taste and see, how friendly our God is.
 - 3.3.4.3. Heaven's doors are wide open, paradise is regained, we're right back in the presence of God and our brother IX says: Come to me all of you, who are weary and heavily burdend, I will give you rest. Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace + Amen.