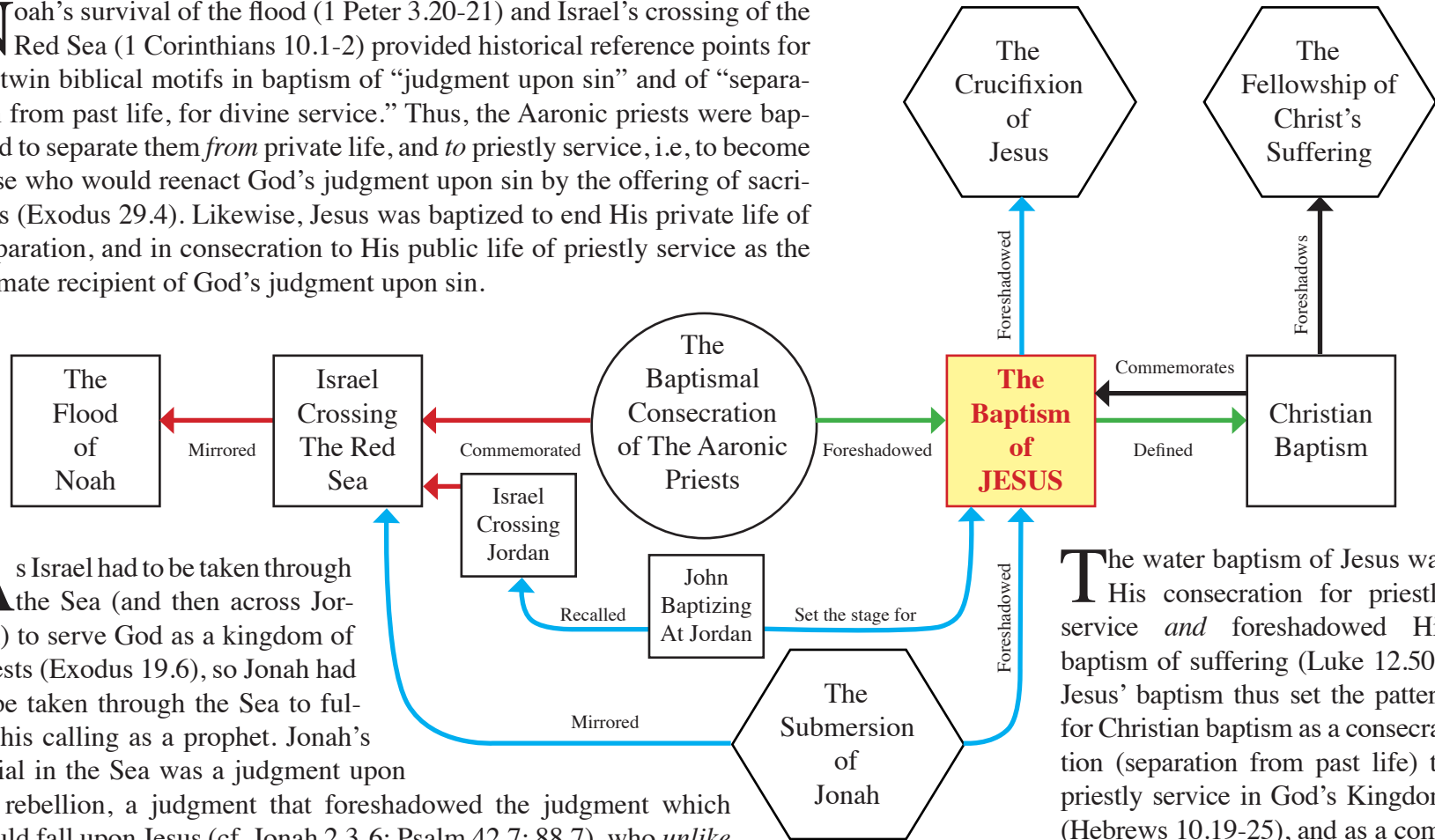


# The Biblical Antecedents & Significance Of Christian Baptism

Noah's survival of the flood (1 Peter 3.20-21) and Israel's crossing of the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10.1-2) provided historical reference points for the twin biblical motifs in baptism of "judgment upon sin" and of "separation from past life, for divine service." Thus, the Aaronic priests were baptized to separate them *from* private life, and *to* priestly service, i.e, to become those who would reenact God's judgment upon sin by the offering of sacrifices (Exodus 29.4). Likewise, Jesus was baptized to end His private life of preparation, and in consecration to His public life of priestly service as the ultimate recipient of God's judgment upon sin.



As Israel had to be taken through the Sea (and then across Jordan) to serve God as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19.6), so Jonah had to be taken through the Sea to fulfill his calling as a prophet. Jonah's burial in the Sea was a judgment upon his rebellion, a judgment that foreshadowed the judgment which would fall upon Jesus (cf. Jonah 2.3-6; Psalm 42.7; 88.7), who *unlike* Jonah would suffer for the rebellion of others, but who *like* Jonah would emerge from the "tomb" in three days to fulfill a divine destiny (Matthew 12.40; Luke 11.30).

The water baptism of Jesus was His consecration for priestly service *and* foreshadowed His baptism of suffering (Luke 12.50). Jesus' baptism thus set the pattern for Christian baptism as a consecration (separation from past life) to priestly service in God's Kingdom (Hebrews 10.19-25), and as a commitment to suffer whatever was necessary for the Kingdom's sake (Philippians 3.10; Colossians 1.24).