

*Baptism of Christ and Temptations*, by Michele Tosini

Art selection and commentary by [Heidi J. Hornik](#) and [Mikeal C. Parsons](#)

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Painted by Michele Tosini (called Michele di Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio, 1503–1577) in 1565 at the height of his career in Florence, this work combines the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21) with the three temptations of Christ (Luke 4:1–9). It should be read in a counterclockwise direction. The temptation to turn stones into bread, on the right, shows a hunched-over devil in discussion with an attentive Christ. “Command these

stones be made bread,” the tempter says to Christ. In the second temptation, directly above the baptism, the devil leads Christ up the mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world. Christ raises his right hand as if prepared to respond, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Tosini draws a contrast between Christ’s humility in the center of the painting toward John and his defiance of the devil. Christ and the devil stand on top of the dome of the Jerusalem Temple in the third temptation. The devil is suggesting that Christ throw himself down and be protected by the angels. Christ responds by raising his right hand in refusal.