

January 10, 2021

The Baptism of the Lord

**He came to us to cleanse us with water and baptize in the Spirit!**

Isaiah 55:1-11

Isaiah 12:2-6

1John 5:1-9

Mark 1:7-11

Isaiah speaks of God's invitation to a special feast where one can eat and drink without cost. It resembles the call of Wisdom's feast described in Proverbs 9 and in this case, Wisdom is listening and heeding these words which renew the covenant made with David. The scoundrels are to forsake their ways and the wicked their thoughts and turn to God, generous in forgiving, for mercy. The people are reminded of the contrast between God's ways and their ways which cannot rise to heaven's loftiness.

Isaiah 12 is a prayer of thanksgiving to the Holy One of Israel. God is savior and brought the people back from difficult times and they are to acclaim the Name and make known the powerful deeds that eased them out of crises.

Our faith is in Jesus Christ, the Son begotten by God, and the love between Father, Son, and believers is the power that enables us to conquer the ways of the world. Water and blood testify to this day, to the waters of baptism and to the blood of the Eucharist. Spirit, water, and blood point to the presence of Christ and life eternal that he brings, and John wants each of us to realize that our belief in the Son enables us to possess this life.

John the Baptist speaks of one mightier than himself who comes and baptizes with the Holy Spirit. After Jesus was baptized, the Spirit, like a dove, descends upon him as the heavens opened and a voice says, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

God the Father speaks from heaven,  
Affirming Christ Jesus, his Son.  
The Holy Spirit descended like a dove.

In an act of humility our Lord Jesus offered himself for baptism to John who recognizes something very special happening. Jesus is affirmed by the Father's voice from above and anointed with the Spirit. The presence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit indicates the waters of baptism are now sanctified by our Triune God. It is by the water that we are born again and given new life, and by the Spirit, the Comforter, that we are guided as children of God.

It is clear that as Jesus grew into manhood he had an insightful understanding of intimacy with his Heavenly Father. A kind of new age was expected by the people of the time and John's preaching called attention to it, and to the one who was to bring it about. At the profound happenings of the baptism, Jesus saw a vision in which his Heavenly Father revealed to him the responsibility of messianic leadership in the coming Kingdom of God, one where the Spirit would guide his actions and his words. The responsibility called for the solution of difficult problems, discovering and making known to the people, a divine ideal, one which could be explained in simple terms and understood by the common person. The way in which he fulfilled his mission revealed the kind of person he was as he healed the sick, raised the dead, gave insightful lessons on life with simple stories, and opened the eyes of the people to a loving and personal Father, one he could relate to with the intimate word, "Abba."

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