

Baptism of our Lord 1/8/17
Psalm 29:3 {appointed Psalm}

THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS OVER THE WATERS; THE GOD OF GLORY THUNDERS, THE LORD OVER MANY WATERS.

When Israel was enslaved in Egypt, they multiplied and grew in exceeding number, and that made the Egyptians a little nervous. They were afraid that if a foreign enemy invaded them, the Israelites would join their enemies and fight against them. So, in order to keep the Israelites down, the Egyptians oppressed them and made their lives bitter with hard labor of brick and mortar, and in their work in their fields. And if the Egyptians didn't like the way the Israelites were doing their job, they just beat them up. But, the biggest thing they did to keep the Israelites down was that Pharaoh issued a decree saying that any son born to the Israelites had to be thrown into the Nile.

God didn't like that. He saw His children suffering and being oppressed, being beaten, and put to death, so He sent Moses. Moses, the one who had literally been drawn out of the waters of that Nile River to go to Pharaoh and say, "Let my people go". And to make a long story short, after 10 plagues, Pharaoh decided to let God's people go.

And he let them go all the way up to the Red Sea, and then Pharaoh changed his mind. He wanted Israel back. He wanted them back to do his hard labor, with brick and mortar, hard labor in his fields. So, he sent out his army and chariots after them.

And it was at time the voice of the LORD was over the waters and the God of glory thundered, saying to Moses,

"Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in

after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen” (Ex 14:16-18).

Moses obeyed the Lord, stretched out his hand over the sea, and Israel crossed over on dry ground. Pharaoh and his army pursued them, and the God of glory thundered once again to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen” (Ex 16:26). So, Moses did, and the water came crashing down upon the horsemen and chariots of Egypt.

God sees His people in crisis and acts. He sees them being oppressed, beaten up, dying, and God does something about it. “The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders.” That’s what God does.

We need that because our situation is not all that different from the children of Israel in Egypt. In and of yourself, you are blind to sin and in bondage to death and hell. Don’t be offended by that. You see, your condition is an inherited condition. You inherit it from your first parents, Adam and Eve.

They saw the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of god and evil, but they didn’t fear God’s command. They saw it was something desirable; something good; something that would make them wise, wise like God. They believed the temptation of the devil and they choose to eat of it. And when they did, their eyes were opened – open to sin, open to shame, open to death. And, they were blind to the will and ways of God, because that is what sin does to you.

You have inherited that sin from Adam and Eve. You come into the world blind to the will and ways of God, such that you don't see very well, either. You see sin as something fun, that will give meaning and purpose to your life, so you do. You sin. You make gods out of other sins; rather than fearing, loving, and trusting in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You bow down to worship the fame and fortune of a fallen world, even bowing down to worship yourself, your wants, your lusts, your unholy desires, all the while disregarding God and His Word and His will. You take advantage of your neighbor, beating him/her up every way imaginable; maybe not with your fists, but with your words and your thoughts.

This is what inherited blindness, this inherited sin, causes us to do. And the result of this inherited blindness and this inherited sin is bondage to sin, death, and hell itself, where Satan rules and reigns, just as Pharaoh ruled and reigned over the children of Israel in Egypt.

"The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders." Jesus is down at the Jordan River, being baptized by John. And when He comes up out of the water, the heavens were opened, the Spirit of God descended like a dove and came up to rest on Him, and the God of glory thundered, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17). God is well-pleased with His Son because His Son brings sight to the blind and He gives freedom to those in bondage to sin, death, and hell.

This is what the Lord Jesus Christ did in and for you in the waters of your baptism. For in your baptism, the voice of the LORD was over the waters, and the God of glory thundered, as the pastor poured water over your head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. With that water and Word, your blindness was taken away. Your eyes

were opened to the will and ways of God, and you were released from the dungeon of sin and death. That's what happens in Holy Baptism, because in that water and Word, you die with Jesus, you are buried with Jesus, and you rise with Jesus. And how wonderful is that!

The death of Jesus Christ took place upon the tree of Calvary, and He died on that accursed tree, carrying all of your sin. He gave His life as payment and sacrifice for your sins. He died for you, so your sins are forgiven.

And He was buried, but God the Father raised Him to life again, and He descended into hell to proclaim His victory over the devil, destroy the power of hell, and take from the Great Accuser Satan the power to rule and reign over you anymore. You are free from him and all his lies and accusations, Dear Child of God. So, when Satan comes to whisper his lies in your ear, "You're not good enough. Remember what you did. Do you really think God would love someone like you?" Remember your baptism, when the voice of the LORD was over the waters, and the God of glory thundered, "You are my beloved son/daughter, with you I am well-pleased."

And on the 3rd day after He died, Jesus rose again from the dead. He rose as the Victor over sin, death, hell, and the devil. And, that is the victory that He gives to you by means of the water and the Word of Holy Baptism, such that you are free from sin, death, hell, and the devil. You are a child of God, with whom He is well-pleased. You have this comfort, this assurance because the "voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders...over many waters".