

Baptism of our Lord 1/13/19
Luke 3:15-22 C

NOW ALL THE PEOPLE WERE BAPTIZED, AND WHEN JESUS ALSO HAD BEEN BAPTIZED AND WAS PRAYING, THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDED ON HIM IN BODILY FORM, LIKE A DOVE; AND A VOICE CAME FROM HEAVEN, "YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON; WITH YOU I AM WELL PLEASED."

As John stood by the Jordan River, he preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And as the people made their way out to him, he proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel to them, saying,

"I baptize you with waters, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire (vv. 16-17)."

And the people who heard John preach that message that Jesus was coming went out to John to wade in the water, to be baptized by John.

Now, who exactly was it that went out to be baptized by him? Luke says it was "all the people." But, "all" the people is not "all" the people. Some people refused to be baptized by John. We know for a fact the Pharisees and Sadducees rejected the will of God for them, and they were not baptized. "All the people" is all the people who heard this Word of God and in whom that Spirit worked through that Word to bring them to repentance. That's all the people who waded into the water to be baptized by John.

Take a good look at them, and what do you see? You see idolaters, people who put their time, their talents, their money, their family, their hobbies, their careers ahead of God, and His name, and His day. You see people who have disrespected all forms of authorities: their fathers and

mothers, their religious leaders, their government. Next to them you find people whose hands and minds and hearts are stained with hatred and anger and murder. You see those who have committed lust and adultery and fornication and homosexuality wade into the water to be baptized by John. Standing next to them are those who have used their tongues to gossip, and lie, and spread innuendos. And with them are those who look at what their neighbor has and say, "I must have it." That's all the people that go out to be baptized by John in the Jordan. And they go and they are baptized. The waters of the Jordan are poured over them and their sins are washed away.

And there with them is one other – our Lord Jesus Christ. He also comes to wade in the water. He comes to be baptized by John. The sinless Son of God goes to the Jordan to the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He had no need for repentance. He had no need of the forgiveness of sins. He is the sinless Son of God, and yet there He is going to John to be baptized, wading in the waters and John baptizes Him.

Take a look at that water. It is polluted, filthy dirty. It is filled with idolatry, disrespect, murder, anger, hate, lust, gossip, innuendo, jealousy, and coveting. The Baptizer takes all that polluted, filthy water and pours it all over the sinless Son of God.

And when the Son of God comes out of the water, here's what happened: The heavens are opened and the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove. God the Father speaks from heaven and says, "You are beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." He wades into the water and the sin-filled water of the Jordan is poured all over Him and God the Father says, "You are beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." God the Father is pleased that His only-begotten Son is wading in the water of the Jordan

filled with sin? Yes! Absolutely! For the Bible says, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tm 1:15).”

Sinners, as in “all people” because all the people are sinners. All people, of all times, of all places. Jesus comes for them. Scripture is clear, “Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and death spread to all men because all sinned (Ro 5:12).” “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).” All sinners, all the people, which means you too. You too are a sinner, such that when you see all the people going out to wade in the waters of the Jordan, you have to see yourself: your idolatry, your disrespect, your murder, your anger, your hate, your lust, your gossip, your innuendo, your jealousy, your coveting. That’s the sins of “all the people.” But you know full well those are your sins, as well.

To save you from your sin and its death, Jesus comes and He wades in the water; He is anointed with the Holy Spirit to be your Savior; He is anointed to become sin for you because He takes all your sins from you. Christ Jesus is your substitute. Dear Saints of God, we must ever remember that **substitution** is the heart of the Gospel. Just as the ram took Isaac’s place on the mountain, just as the lifeblood of the lamb saved the firstborn in the land of Egypt, just as the blood of the goat was poured over the mercy seat to cover over the sins of the people, and the scapegoat carried away their sins on the Day of Atonement, the Lamb Jesus takes your place. That’s what He’s doing as wades into the waters of the Jordan; that’s what He’s doing as He goes out to face every temptation of the devil in the wilderness, just as you do, yet without sin. That’s what He does as He goes around teaching and preaching and healing and forgiving sinners.

That's what He does as He makes His way to Jerusalem, carrying the sins of all the people, of all time, and all places.

And when He gets to Jerusalem, He suffers the punishment that sinners like you deserve for your sins. That punishment comes as He is abandoned by His countrymen, His friends, and even God His Father. It comes as He is tried and convicted on false charges. It comes as He is beaten, mocked and crowned with thorns. It comes as He walks all the way to Golgotha carrying His cross. There, bearing the sin of all people, of all times, and all places, God pours out His wrath against sin on Jesus. He suffers and dies on that cross for you. Jesus takes your death for you. This is the death sinners deserve. And this is the death the Son of God wades in the water to take from you, to become your substitute, to die for you.

And, the third day, He rises again from the dead. He rises to bring you forgiveness of sins, life and salvation that He won for you by His life, His suffering, His death, His resurrection. He lives to give it all to you. He gives it to you by wading into the water of the font with you. There by water and Word, you were joined to Jesus Christ, you were crucified with Him, you died with Him, you rose with Him so that His victory over sin, death, and hell is your own victory over sin, death, and hell. Your sins are washed away and death no longer has any hold on you. It's all gone because Jesus waded into the water of the font with you.

And when you came up out of the water, living in Christ and Christ living in you, The Holy Spirit is given to you so that you find comfort and trust in Jesus alone as your Savior. And God the Father speaks of you, "You are my beloved Son; You are my beloved daughter; with you I am well

pleased (v. 22).” All that is yours because Christ Jesus waded into the water with you.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.