



The First Sunday of Epiphany

The Baptism of Christ

9th January 2022

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

HYMN 55 NEH

Hail to the Lord's anointed;
Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgressions,
And rule in equity

He comes, with succour speedy,
To those who suffer wrong:
To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong:
To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turned to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Were precious in His sight.

He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth:
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth:
Before Him, on the mountains,
Shall peace the herald go;
And righteousness in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing;
To Him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend;
His kingdom still increasing,
A kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious,
He on His throne shall rest;
From age to age more glorious,
All blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand for ever
His changeless name of love

Introduction to confession

Because God was merciful,
he saved us through the water of rebirth
and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.
But through sin we have fallen away from our baptism.
Let us return to the Lord and renew our faith in his promises
by confessing our sins in penitence

Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of peace:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary:
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are Word made flesh
and splendour of the Father:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins,
that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect for the First Sunday of Epiphany

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

A Reading from The Old Testament Isaiah 43 1-7

Restoration and Protection Promised

43 But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
3 For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
4 Because you are precious in my sight,
and honoured, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
5 Do not fear, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
6 I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
and to the south, "Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Psalm 29

1 Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendour.
3 The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over mighty waters.
4 The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
7 The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.
8 The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.



9 The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in his temple all say, "Glory!"

10 The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.

11 May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace!

A Reading from the New Testament

Acts 8 14-17

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply

been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN 23 NEH

Behold, the great Creator makes
himself a house of clay,
a robe of virgin flesh he takes
which he will wear for ay

This wonder struck the world amazed,
it shook the starry frame;
squadrons of spirits stood and gazed,
then down in troops they came

Hark, hark! the wise eternal Word
like a weak infant cries;
in form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies

Glad shepherds ran to view this sight;
a choir of angels sings,
and eastern sages with delight
adore this King of kings

Join then, all hearts that are not stone,
and all our voices prove,
to celebrate this Holy One,
the God of peace and love

The Gospel
Luke 3 15-17, 21-22

Alleluia, alleluia.

This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

Alleluia

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory be to thee O Lord

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to thee, O Christ

Reflection

Why, did Jesus come for baptism? John the Baptist's, message was a call to *"...a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"* and the scripture teaches us in several places that Jesus was without sin

For Jesus this is a moment of transition. Prior to this event are the hidden years working in Nazareth, living with his family. From this moment he never returns to the carpenter's bench and we are told in all three gospels that he is driven out into the wilderness to prepare for his ministry.

It was a moment of approval. Mark records the words *“You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased”* The voice of the Father is heard.

It was a moment of equipping. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus symbolised by a dove, an image not chosen by accident. Doves in scripture are symbols of peace, innocence and sacrifice. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, *“the Holy Spirit will come upon you”* the angel says to Mary; the Holy Spirit was already present in his life. But in this moment the Holy Spirit comes *upon* him for the purpose of his ministry.

It was a moment of identification. Jesus visibly identified himself with us in his baptism. Although he was like us in all things yet without sin, in his humanity he understands our struggles and joys. He is able to sympathise with us.

The Baptism of Christ – a parable

The queue along the river bank now stretched back into the tree line as people slowly made their way towards the water. There was not much talking as they shuffled along; each person had their own story, their own regret and sorrow for the past, and a desire for change. John’s words rang in their ears; *“Come and get ready – wash the past away – something is coming soon, something wonderful!”*

As they joined the queue, they had to pass a little hut where they were given a number of labels – a bit like post-stick notes – which they had to stick on themselves. ‘Cheat’, liar, selfish, bad temper, murderer, thief, adulterer, gossip etc. etc. No one got past without a handful and it just made things worse to see how many you were given.

But the man in the hut was puzzled by the next person who joined the queue. Although he hunted for this man’s labels but could find none, he shrugged his shoulders, surely there must be something?

Bewildered, he watched as the man began to pull the labels off the person in front of him and stick them on himself. He moved down the queue to the next person and the next and the next taking all their labels each time.

By the time he reached the river he was quite covered from head to foot. He waded into the water...

John stared hard and beneath the labels recognised his cousin Jesus. *“Why do you come to me?”* he asks but already he is beginning to understand. As he pours the water over Jesus, and as he falls back into the river, the labels drop away. He rises to stand, a voice from heaven is heard; *“You are my Son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased.”*

At Christmas we celebrate a child- Jesus; God coming among us. At his baptism Jesus begins his public work and in the act of baptism, prefigures the purpose for his coming.

Is the river muck still stuck with my sins?
Have sunken stones fossilised my offence?
Did my Lord descend with such a shameful load
and lodge it in the Jordan river bed?...
Is this His solemn hour drawing close?
He rises from the stream with sudden breath.

Rita Simmonds

This only picks up one aspect of Jesus baptism, but perhaps it helps us understand other scriptures which tells us that Jesus was 'made sin', identified with sin in his death on the cross. Man's disobedience has fractured the relationship with our creator so that all creation is out of sync. In the cross all that is broken, twisted, evil and destructive is focussed into one point and dealt with.

Which helps us understand our own forgiveness. It is not so much our individual offences and failings, small or great that are forgiven but the whole principle of sin. Sin which separates us from a holy God is dealt with by God and a Way opened for us to become forgiven children of God. The final denouement will be the gathering of all things into Christ when all is made new.

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. **Amen.**

Intercessions

Jesus calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.
Washed clean by the waters of baptism,
let us pray that we may live the life to which he has called us.

Let us worship the Saviour with joy
and make our prayer to our heavenly Father.
The magi came from the east to worship your Son:
Father, grant to Christians everywhere
the spirit of adoration ...
Lord of glory,
hear our prayer.

The infant Christ received gifts of gold, incense and myrrh:
Father, accept the offering of our hearts and minds
at the beginning of this year
Lord of glory,
hear our prayer.

The kingdoms of this world have become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ:
Father, grant an abundance of peace to your world ...
Lord of glory,
hear our prayer.

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death:
Father, look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless,
and all who suffer ...
Lord of glory,
hear our prayer.

Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth:
Father, protect in your love our neighbours,
our families and this community of which we are a part ...
Lord of glory,
hear our prayer.

Father, we rejoice in our fellowship
with the shepherds, the angels, the magi,
the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph
and all the faithful departed.
In your unfailing love for us and for all people,
hear and answer our prayers through your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
who came upon the beloved Son
at his baptism in the river Jordan,
pour out his gifts on you
who have come to the waters of new birth.
and the blessing of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you
and remain with you always
Amen.

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
and at Cana, wedding guest,
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Sun and moon shall darkened be,
stars shall fall, the heavens shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
all will see his glorious sign;
all will then the trumpet hear,
all will see the Judge appear;
thou by all wilt be confessed,
God in man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy Word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany;
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.