

## Jesus Stands With New Life

**Luke 3:15-22** <sup>15</sup> Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, <sup>16</sup> John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> "His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." <sup>18</sup> And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison. <sup>21</sup> When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. <sup>22</sup> And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Was Jesus baptized in the Jordan? Was it John who did the baptism? We know these things to be true but not from Luke's gospel. If the only account we had was Luke's we might seriously doubt that it was John who baptized Jesus, since Luke talks about Jesus' baptism after John was already in prison. In fact Luke doesn't talk about Jesus baptism directly at all. He mentions it seemingly only to let us know what happened afterwards. After Jesus was baptized, while He prayed, the heavens were opened and the Spirit came down and voice of the Father spoke from heaven. This is my beloved son.

There is no doubt that the baptism of Jesus was and is a very important event. However, Luke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is certainly less concerned with the baptism itself than he is with the result of the baptism.

There Jesus stands on the bank of the Jordan, baptized with the people, filled with the Holy Spirit, and declared to be the Christ by the voice of the Father. There he stands ready to begin the work of salvation, the work of bringing new life to the people of God. This is what Luke would have us focus on. The people prepared and Jesus standing ready to bring new life.

Just one chapter earlier in the same gospel of Luke, in our sermon text from last week, Jesus told his parents this same thing.

Jesus told his parents, and here I paraphrase slightly "Where else would I be other than doing my father work, the work of salvation"

And so now here in chapter 3 Luke presents Jesus prepared, anointed, ready to begin that work, the word of our salvation, the work of bringing new life to God's people.

**Before the new can be created the old must be swept away.**

On Monday morning I should be starting preparation for next Sunday. But I often find myself delaying, because I cannot start working on next weeks' sermon until I clear last week's clutter from my desk.

If you look in Luke 3:3 a few verses earlier than our text, we read

**Luke 3:3 he [John] went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,**

This was the purpose of John the Baptist and of the baptism which God gave to him. It was a baptism of repentance, calling on people to repent of their sins and have that sin and that old life washed away so that when Jesus arrived, they would be ready for the new life that he brought.

Luke goes to great lengths to show us John preparing the way for Jesus by the removal of sin and evil. The Baptist confronts soldiers and tax collectors, even pharisees and the king himself. There is no sin no matter how powerful the person that John will leave in the dark. The Baptist warns that whatever sin is left unrepented at Jesus arrival will be burnt. Jesus will burn away like the chaff. Whatever evil fruit is left Jesus will cut down. The sin and evil must be cleared so that Jesus can bring the new life, and thus John preached a baptism of repentance, the washing away of sin.

Concerning the baptism of Jesus however John says:

**Luke 3:16 <sup>16</sup> John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

The baptism that we have from Jesus is not less than the baptism of John, but more. It is not missing anything that John's baptism had but John's baptism is missing something that we have.

When you go to grocery store and buy dishwasher soap, whether you buy the packets or the detergent, you have a choice of cascade original, complete or platinum. Cascade platinum is not missing anything that the original has it is all the power of the original plus more.

Jesus' baptism, the baptism that we have is all that John's baptism was plus more. It uses water like John's but also gives the Holy Spirit. It is also a baptism of repentance, washing away our sins, even though it also gives more.

On Pentecost Peter told the people:

**Acts 2:38 <sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

Through baptism Jesus stands ready to give us new life, but first He washes away the old. The sin is gone. The old man is drowned. Baptism prepares us for new life by washing away the old. Just as the flood prepared the earth for new life by first washing away the evil that was.

### **The giving of new life comes from the Holy Spirit**

Jesus stands ready to begin this work of new life within us and there also is the Holy Spirit hovering over Jesus. Just as the Holy Spirit was hovering over the face of the deep in Genesis 1:2 as God prepared the work of the first creation, so also the Spirit is hovering ready to bring life to the second creation, which is the new life that Jesus creates in us.

Just as the dove went out from the ark and flew back and forth over the dead earth after the flood, as it was being prepared to bring forth new life, so also here the Holy Spirit in the physical form of a dove hovers over the earth as Jesus prepares to begin the work of bringing new life to us.

Notice that Luke emphasizes this point, that the dove was physical, “bodily” it wasn’t just an vision. But the Holy Spirit took on the physical form of a dove.

This is one of the promises that we have from the Baptist as well as from the rest of scripture that makes our baptism, the baptism of Jesus greater than that of John.

### **Luke 3:16 He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit**

And

### **Acts 2:38 and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

In baptism our sin was washed away, the dead things were removed, just like the baptism of John. However, they had to wait yet for the life-giving Spirit. We do not have to wait. We have both the washing away and the filling of the Holy Spirit in one baptism. We have the cascade platinum of baptisms.

The same Spirit who hovered over the earth to give it new life, hovers in our hearts as well to bring life where there was only darkness

### **This new life is complete within us.**

And finally, Luke makes it clear that even as Jesus stands ready to begin the work of the new creation, the new life, it is already complete.

The Father speaks from heaven and says “this **IS** my beloved son in whom I **AM** well pleased.”

Since when does a father tell his son “good job,” when he has not yet begun? Or when does a teacher give a student an A before the student does the worksheet? Yet this is part of the unknowable mystery of our God and of His Christ. Already God accepts Jesus’ work as complete and sufficient when He has only begun.

So too, our baptism is the beginning of that new life, the beginning of the Holy Spirit at work within us, the beginning of the washing away of our sins. It is a beginning which continues throughout our whole lives, but it is complete.

As Paul tells the Ephesians:

**Ephesians 2:5-6** <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus

And as Jesus tells us in

**John 5:24** <sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Sometimes people mistakenly think that in baptism and the Lord's Supper only some sins are forgiven and that is why we need to keep coming. But the mystery that we cannot fully comprehend is that the forgiveness in these sacraments is complete and full and that is why we *want* to keep coming to receive often the full complete new life which Jesus came to give us.

Jesus stands at the bank of the Jordan ready to wash away our sins. He stands ready with the Holy Spirit to create a new life within us, a life which is already complete even as it continues to grow daily. Jesus stands ready to give us new life.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.