

Prayer

Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

~ Notices ~

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

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ooOoo

A prayer for renewal of baptismal promises

I am no longer my own but yours.

*Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:*

*I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.*

ooOoo



Baptism of Christ

2022
(Year C)

Collect

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) God is working his purpose out
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liuxet4pJ-Jc>
- 2) Let us with a gladsome mind
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dG6kS1o5PpA>
- 3) Come down, O Love divine
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDgktutl>
- 4) Unto us is born a Son
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plr21lLgFpg>

Isaiah 43: 1-7

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.
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.
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.
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.
Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
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—
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.'

Psalms 29

Ascribe to the Lord, you powers of heaven, ♦
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; ♦
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders; ♦
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.
The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation; ♦
the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; ♦
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf ♦
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
The voice of the Lord splits the flash of lightning;
the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; ♦
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forests bare; ♦
in his temple all cry, 'Glory!'

The Lord sits enthroned above the water flood; ♦
the Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore.

The Lord shall give strength to his people; ♦
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Acts 8: 14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. 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 granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Commentary

Isaiah 43:1-7

Judah has complained that God has deserted them, his people, in the destruction of Jerusalem and in their exile. God has told them, "my servant" (42:19), that they are "blind" and "deaf" to his will and his way. They see but do not observe; their "ears are open" (42:20) but they do not hear. They are a devastated people, a "prey with no one to rescue [them]" (42:22) God asks, through the prophet, "Who among you ... will attend and listen for the time to come?" (42:23).

Now God tells them ("Jacob", 43:1), whom he has created, not to fear for the future: he has and will rescue, save, them. In all times, the Israelites are his, his people ("called you by name"). Even when in grave danger ("waters ... rivers ... fire", v. 2), "I will be with you". (Thunderstorms were considered evil, and the "waters", the seas, to be inhabited by demonic monsters.) Because the Israelites are so "precious in my sight" (v. 4), God will "exchange" them for other nations: Israel will be freed (at least spiritually) while Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba (in Yemen) will become Persian vassal states. Vv. 5-6 prophesy that Jews, God's people, will gather from the whole known world. So completely will God's children share divine life that they will be addressed by God's name ("called by my name", v. 7). When God's people observe and listen, they will contribute to his "glory". While here God calls his family "sons" (v. 6) and "daughters" (those to whom he imparts life), it is only after Jesus comes that we are told to respond with "Abba" and "Father" (Luke 11:2 and Romans 8:15).

Psalms 29

This psalm is probably based on one to the Canaanite god Baal, the storm god, who brings the annual thunder-storm, the source of fertility for the land. In Israelite hands it expresses God's supremacy and universal rule. In vv. 1-2, all other gods are invited to acknowledge the Lord's supremacy and the glory due to him. (Israel was not yet strictly monotheistic.)

Vv. 3-9 give us a picture of the storm. The "voice of the Lord" (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7-9) is thunder (repetitious claps). The storm is first seen approaching over the Mediterranean (v. 3); it sweeps in to the land, breaking the tall "cedars" (v. 5), as it advances across southern Lebanon. It vents its power on Mount "Lebanon" (v. 6) and then on Mount "Sirion"; it proceeds on into "the wilderness" (v. 8, the Arabian Desert). ("Flames of fire", v. 7, is lightning.) "Kadesh" (v. 8) is probably *Kedar*, part of the desert. The Word of God is indeed mighty. In v. 9, "all" the gods do acknowledge God's supremacy; they cry *Glory be to the Lord!* God rules over all from his throne (v. 10). May the Lord strengthen Israel and give it peace.

Acts 8:14-17

Philip was one of the seven chosen by the Church to ensure that widows received basic rations: see 6:1-6. When persecution has started in Jerusalem, he has travelled to Samaria to preach the good news there: the first known evangelism outside Jewish areas. The crowds there "listened eagerly" (v. 6) to what Philip told them, "hearing and seeing the signs that he did". Even Simon the well-known magician told them that Philip spoke and acted through God's power. Those who believed, including Simon, were baptised (vv. 12-13).

Now the apostles send Peter and John to Samaria. Usually in Acts, converts receive the Holy Spirit at baptism (see 2:38 and 19:5-6) or before it (see 10:44), but here they receive it some time after being baptised, and only when the two apostles, representatives of the mother church, come. In vv. 18-24, Simon *gets it wrong*: he offers the apostles money if they will give him the power to impart the Spirit to people. Peter reprimands him: the Holy Spirit is "God's gift" (v. 20); it cannot be bought.

Luke 3:15-17,21-22

People flock to John the Baptist, responding to his urging to start new, ethical lives – as a way of preparing for Jesus (vv. 3-6). John has condemned those who seek his baptism with no intention of reforming their ways (v. 7). He has warned that being Jewish is no assurance of being part of the renewed Israel. Failure to respond to his call to repentance can lead to condemnation at the end of time.

V. 15a, in the Revised English Bible, says: "The people were all agog, wondering about John ..." People expected a "Messiah", an agent of God who would restore Israel and the triumph of God's power and authority. John tells them that "one who is ... coming" (v. 16) is so great that he is unworthy even to "untie ... his sandals", a task done by slaves. Baptism purifies, removes sin. The agents the "one" will use are vastly superior to the water John uses. Jesus is also more "powerful", mightier, as leader of the final struggle against evil. (At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes with tongues of fire.) V. 17 uses the metaphor of harvesting to tell of Christ's action as judge at the end of time. The wheat was tossed in the air with a "winnowing fork": the grain fell to the ground but the chaff was carried by the wind to the edge of the "threshing floor". God will "gather" the godly but will condemn the ungodly (to burn in hell).

Jesus is baptised (v. 21) to show his solidarity with John's proclamation of part of God's plan for saving all who come to him. Jesus begins and ends (22:46) his ministry with a prayer. In vv. 21c-22, God shows himself to believers: an event beyond human language. The Holy Spirit, always with Jesus, is seen descending on Jesus, marking a milestone in Jesus' career. People really see the event ("in bodily form"). The Holy Spirit seems "like a dove" – a bird symbolizing the hopes of humans for love, life and union with God – hopes now realized in Jesus. The voice calls on Jesus as God's "Son" and servant ("well pleased", v. 22). Jesus is God's "Beloved", the one whom he chooses as his agent.