

Week of The Baptism of our Lord

First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.



Weekly Catechism section: Seventh Commandment and Meaning
Hymn of the Week: To Jordan Came the Christ our Lord (LSB 406)

Monday - Introit (Isa 6:1; Rev 19:1; Ps. 100:1-5)

Read Isaiah 6.

The Baptism of our Lord is observed during the Epiphany season, because this is how the Triune God revealed himself publicly, and the Son of God was revealed to be in the flesh. In our *Introit* we begin with words from God's revelation to Isaiah as well as his revelation to John. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on his throne, high and lifted up. John saw the multitudes of heaven praising God and declaring his almighty reign. These are very appropriate verses with which to begin our service, because they both point to God making himself known in the epiphany of his Son. Both revelations are of heaven. And heaven is revealed when the Father reveals Jesus of Nazareth to be his own beloved Son with whom he is well pleased. The countenance and favor of God for all nations is revealed when the Holy Spirit rests upon him in the form of a dove. The glory of the Lord, which fills the heavens and the earth, is revealed when Jesus is baptized by John.

Baptism is therefore how God makes himself known to you. Just as surely as God revealed his own incarnate Son in the waters of the Jordan, he revealed himself as your heavenly Father when you were baptized into Christ. His own Spirit was given to you so that you may cry out to him in true faith (Gal 3:26ff; 4:6). We did not give ourselves faith. But as Psalm 100 says that it is the Lord who has made us, this same Lord has caused us to be reborn to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3; 3:21). In this washing of regeneration, God reveals the light of his only begotten Son to us. This is why it is so appropriate that we recite the words of Isaiah and John in their revelations of God. Because the same God has been revealed to you. The eternal Lord who made atonement for Isaiah's sins (Is 6:6,7) is the same eternal Son of God who died for yours

as well, and as John's revelation tells us, he has clothed us with bright and clean linen (Rev 19:7,8). For as many as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ (Gal 3:27).

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Isaiah 42:1-9)

Read Isaiah 42:1-43:3.

Our Old Testament lesson from Isaiah 42 is a prophecy about Christ, the Servant of the Lord. In Isaiah 52 and 53 this Servant of the Lord is described as the Arm of the Lord who will be despised and rejected by his own people, crushed by God for our iniquities, and our propitiation before God. In Isaiah 42 he is described as having the Holy Spirit placed upon him to bring justice to all nations. He stands in contrast to the servant, Israel, who has failed to uphold God's righteousness (Is 42:19). And yet, this is the hope of Israel. Israel is only God's servant in view of this coming Servant, the Servant of the new covenant, not the old. God clarifies this by saying that the former things have come to pass, but he is revealing something new before it happens. It is in view of this coming Servant that God declares to his people in the following chapter:

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When 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. ³For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

God can speak the same of his people as he speaks of his righteous and faithful Servant, because the Servant of the Lord, who is the Lord himself, has passed through the waters in the Jordan. He has passed through the fire of God's wrath on the cross. This is his baptism. Here he doesn't come to shout at us with terror, but to uphold us. He won't put out a withering wick, but he remains with us, caring for our weak faith by his Word. He is the beloved Son of the Father, called and elected in righteousness from eternity to fulfill all righteousness for us. We have the fulfillment of this prophecy always in our baptism into Christ.

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Wednesday - Gradual (Psalm 72:18-19)

Read Psalm 72.

While there is not much festivity attached to the Baptism of our Lord, we

Christians should laud it as a very high day. It is no coincidence, after all, that besides the death, resurrection, and ascension, the Baptism of Jesus is the one event recorded by all four Evangelists. And why? Because on his Baptism the glory of God is revealed. The Son of God made flesh is made known publicly. After the wise men bringing gifts to Christ from the east, the Baptism of Christ is the first big event celebrated during the season of Epiphany.

Our Gradual comes from Psalm 72, written by King Solomon: "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory." In this Psalm, Solomon speaks of the future Son of the king who would rule the world in righteousness. "He shall have dominion," he says, "from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." This prophecy is first fulfilled at the Baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan River. Here is where the public ministry of Christ begins. Here is where God the Father declares from heaven that this man, standing in true flesh and blood, is his own beloved Son from eternity. Here is where the Spirit of God rests upon Jesus in the form of a dove, showing to be his own very Spirit. The Holy Trinity is revealed. But what does this revelation of God mean? That the Son of God is now baptized means that he has joined himself eternally to us, that he has pledged to bear our sins and anguish. So Solomon also records: "He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight." He promises to save us poor sinners from the violence of hell and all evil. Our blood is precious in his sight, so he takes it as his own. And by assuming our flesh and blood, he fills the entire earth with his eternal glory. Seem too wonderful? Well, God only does wondrous things.

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Thursday - Epistle (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:14.

When Jesus was baptized the wisdom of the wise was turned into foolishness. Ask the average person how we would fulfill all righteousness. You might hear something like, end all wars and bring about world peace. Sure, but how. How can you bring about true peace? How can you fulfill all righteousness? Well, maybe by a league of organizations devoted to the same goal; or if we all were more educated, more understanding, and less divisive; or maybe if we all just tried to

follow what Jesus did, then we could fulfill all righteousness. Everyone has some idea of what righteousness is. It is when everything is good and right.

And yet, how does Christ say that we fulfill all righteousness? It happens when he enters into the Jordan River and is baptized by John. Jesus said, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." So John permitted it. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness, not by having John submit to him, but by submitting to the ministry of John. Jesus submitted to his own ministry of Word and Sacrament. He submitted to his own Baptism. And it was in this way that the delight of the Father and the anointing of the Spirit were revealed. It was in this way that God's will was fulfilled. To the world this is utter foolishness. What good does water do for all the problems I have? I must be able to boast in something more than that. But you see, that's the point. Christ has made foolish the wisdom of this world so that before God no flesh may boast. By being baptized in our place, Jesus claimed all the sins of the whole world, which he would nail to the cross with a baptism of fire (Matt 3:11; Luke 12:50) and bury in the tomb by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 3:16). We therefore submit to the same ministry to which Jesus submitted. We put on the same baptism that covered him. And we thereby share through faith with Christ the fulfillment of all righteousness and the delight from the Father as his dear children.

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Friday - Alleluia (Psalm 143:10)

Read Psalm 143.

The Baptism of our Lord teaches us the incarnation. The man Jesus Christ is declared to be the beloved Son of God. The only begotten God is revealed in the flesh. But the Baptism of our Lord also teaches us the humiliation of Christ. The humiliation of Christ is when he put himself under the law on behalf of all sinners so that he could render obedience to God on our behalf. He says to John the Baptist, "Thus it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness." This is how Christ would fulfill all righteousness, namely, by taking the place of every sinner. Being baptized with a baptism meant for sinners was a testimony to this fact.

But what was the main thing Jesus did in his humiliation? What was the center of this righteousness he was fulfilling? It was faith. Our *Alleluiah* verse makes this point. We sing from Psalm 143, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground." These are words of Christ. Christ commended himself to the Father. This

was his righteousness. He trusted that the Father, whom he has known from eternity, would continue to lead him with his eternal Spirit. This is Christ's humble obedience. John the Baptist talked about his need to Jesus. "I have need to be baptized by you," he said. But Jesus came to be baptized by John so that he might take the place of all sinners and fulfill all righteousness. And by putting himself in the place of every sinner, Jesus made himself in need. He who is the creator of all things and the provider of all good things now makes himself one who has needs. But what does Jesus need? He needs nothing but the Spirit of God and the Father declaring, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." So this little verse from Psalm 143 gives us a taste of Christ's righteousness. It is his humility and his faith that the Spirit of the Father will lead him. Even though the Spirit would lead him into the wilderness to be tempted, his faith remained. This he did for us, that our weak faith might enjoy his perfect righteousness.

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Saturday - Gospel (Matthew 3:13-17)

Read Matthew 3.

This painting was done by one of the great artists of the Reformation, Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515-1586), son of Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553), the court painter for the electors of Saxony (where



Wittenberg was). He embraced the truth of the Reformation -- that a man is not justified by his own works but through faith in Christ and his merits, which alone have earned forgiveness of

sins before God. Cranach's sacred paintings are, in the spirit of the Reformation, filled with much theological substance. The above painting is no exception. As you can see, it is about the Baptism of our Lord, but when you take a closer look at it, you can see a beautiful depiction that is made.

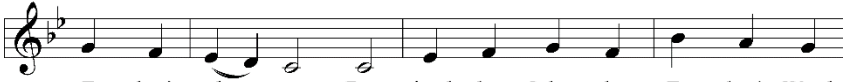
This painting is known as an "Epitaph." An epitaph was an oration, poem, or a painting, constructed in honor of someone who had died. In epitaph paintings, it was common to portray the deceased and his loved ones, worshiping in the presence of a Biblical event. He did this one in honor of John Bugenhagen, the pastor of the City Church in Wittenberg. He's the one with the white hair. You can also see Martin Luther in the background. What this painting portrays is what true worship is. True worship is receiving what the Triune God has given us. In the Baptism of Jesus, the Father declares him to be his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased, as the Holy Spirit rests upon him. This is what we receive through faith when we are baptized (Gal 3:26-27). Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matt 3:15), crediting to us his righteousness as he takes our sins upon himself (2 Cor 5:21). So we worship God in spirit and truth, having been baptized with our Lord Jesus into his death (Rom 6:3; Col 2:12).

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406 To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord



1 To Jor - dan came the Christ, our Lord, To do His
 2 O hear and mark the mes - sage well, For God Him -
 3 These truths on Jor - dan's banks were shown By might - y
 4 There stood the Son of God in love, His grace to



Fa - ther's plea - sure; Bap - tized by John, the Fa - ther's Word
 self has spo - ken. Let faith, not doubt, a - mong us dwell
 word and won - der. The Fa - ther's voice from heav'n came down,
 us ex - tend - ing; The Ho - ly Spir - it like a dove



Was giv - en us to trea - sure. This heav'n - ly wash - ing
 And so re - ceive this to - ken. Our Lord here with His
 Which we do well to pon - der: "This man is My be -
 Up - on the scene de - scend - ing; The tri - une God as -



now shall be A cleans - ing from trans - gres - sion
 Word en - dows Pure wa - ter, free - ly flow - ing.
 lov - ed Son, In whom My heart has plea - sure.
 sur - ing us, With prom - is - es com - pel - ling,



And by His blood and ag - o - ny Re - lease from death's
 God's Ho - ly Spir - it here a - vows Our kin - ship while
 Him you must hear, and Him a - lone, And trust in full -
 That in our Bap - tism He will thus A - mong us find



op - pres - sion. A new life now a - waits us.
 be - stow - ing The Bap - tism of His bless - ing.
 est mea - sure The word that He has spo - ken."
 a dwell - ing To com - fort and sus - tain us.

- 5 To His disciples spoke the Lord,
“Go out to ev’ry nation,
And bring to them the living Word
And this My invitation:
Let ev’ryone abandon sin
And come in true contrition
To be baptized and thereby win
Full pardon and remission
And heav’nly bliss inherit.”
- 6 But woe to those who cast aside
This grace so freely given;
They shall in sin and shame abide
And to despair be driven.
For born in sin, their works must fail,
Their striving saves them never;
Their pious acts do not avail,
And they are lost forever,
Eternal death their portion.
- 7 All that the mortal eye beholds
Is water as we pour it.
Before the eye of faith unfolds
The pow’r of Jesus’ merit.
For here it sees the crimson flood
To all our ills bring healing;
The wonders of His precious blood
The love of God revealing,
Assuring His own pardon.

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