

The Heavens Opened

The Gospel for this coming Sunday, we will celebrate Baptism of Our Lord is Luke 3:15-22. This text has three short segments. The first deals with the curiosity of the people about John and the Christ. The second one with the narrative of Herod and his dislike of John the Baptist. Finally, is a picture of Jesus' baptism and Father and Holy Spirit.

Verse 15 says: *people were in expectation*. They had been waiting for the Savior for a long time. Some were thinking that John might be the Messiah. John sets them straight in a hurry. John's baptism was with water and Jesus would baptize them with fire. In fact, John adds that he is not even qualified to unlatch Jesus' sandals.

The next section is about Herod and his anger at John for being called out about his illegal marriage to his brother's wife. It ultimately gets John thrown into prison.

The last part speaks of Jesus being baptized along with others that have come to John. Jesus did not need to be baptized for his sins. He did it so that Scripture would be fulfilled. This showed that Jesus did not skip any part of his Father's salvation plan. It was perfectly carried out. That means we can be absolutely certain that Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection takes care of our salvation.

A very significant endorsement comes in verse 22. Heaven was opened. The opening of heaven at Jesus' baptism means that it will forever be opened to all humanity through the flesh of Christ by the Spirit of Christ. At this time the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus. Then the crowning touch is when the Father says: *You are my son, whom I love*. It is impossible to get a more convincing affirmation than that.

This text gives us great comfort concerning our salvation. We can have such incredible confidence concerning our eternity in heaven and the strong support we have for our daily life in our Baptism.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the nature of your kingdom, and so move me to live a life worthy of your Gospel by reaching out with the Good News that leads to everlasting life. Amen. (TLSB)