

The Baptism of our Lord 2020

Matthew 3

Matthew 3:13–17 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

In the Name of Jesus.

‘May the Lord give strength to His people. May the Lord bless His people with peace!’

Beloved, what takes OUR strength, OUR peace, OUR washing at the hand of such a Lord, and makes it all more and more? ‘The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters!’

Oh, it is HIS goin’ down to the River Jordan; HIS washing at the hand of one not even LEAST in the kingdom of heaven: John, who did ALL...HE...COULD...to—MY Bible sez!—‘to...PREVENT...JESUS...BEING...BAPTIZED!’

How do I begin, my dear ones? How do I even BEGIN to share your miserable pastor’s bursting JOY...that the BAPTIZER...KEPT TRYING TO PREVENT THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST?! John, THE BAPTIZER! It’s part of His Name! ‘Oh, that’s not for YOU....!’ HA! If not for HIM, then no use to ME!

‘Oh, we’ve reached that part of pastor’s sermon when he’s going to mention Holy Baptism again.... Knew it was coming....’

The Other-wise Spirit of The God—The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Whose WORDS...THESE...ARE...

He mandates, right now, through majestic ME: never despair over what HE accomplishes in your Baptism; ANDDDDDD....You're not even allowed to despair over your despair: how LITTLE you and I reckon ourselves 'dead to sin, alive to God' by our Baptism. Jesus' Dove coos out to you and me—right now, through my far rawer breath!: No matter what YOU reckon, no matter your MIND, your HEART, YOUR...INTENTIONS...YOUR WORRY about your future, your standing with the Father above...

No matter what 'TRIES TO PREVENT' the glory, joy, peace and strength that are yours by YOUR Baptism into Christ: you done been baptized anyway; ANYONE can do it—I'm living proof of THAT!—

And there's water all over the place, 'many waters,' over which the Lord IS—THAT'S where HE...IS. 'I shall be WHERE I shall be!'

Where BE He? Glad you axed!

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”¹ Not just pretty words! There's AUTHORITY in, with and under those words:

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”²

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 28:20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 28:16–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

What's the problem with that pledge, that authority? That JESUS! Admit, confess, be strong! Y'ALL are BAPTIZED by that Jesus! Me too. And, he just ain't enough: delight, strength, peace. Instead, He's like this:

⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ³

I have told y'all before, I believe—my love HATES this! Sorry, dear!—

I've told y'all that what the Romans used a sponge on a stick for is what you and I call 'Charmin; TP.'

³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.' " ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. ⁴

The way Saint Matthew tells that Dark Day, not even His fellow crucified can help Him, in any way.

'And...no...folk...should...be...sad!'

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 27:47–50). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 27:35–44). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

‘Behold my servant....a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench...’

Brethren, sistren, how can I describe the times—dark times!—that in my youth, these precious words saved me, again and again. Y’all know how this is! Sure: we’re convinced—at whatever level, whatever sincerity—that this whole Jesus Thang, from manger to cross to throne to US—Yes, it’s the real deal!

But then, what comes along? Life! This world, ruled by the prince of darkness, voted into office nearly UNANIMOUSLY, year by year, daily and much...

And at the darkest spot, darkest time--

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”⁵

Yesss...beloved! THIS land’s DARKNESS is where the Dove in That King proves delightful to The God! Don’ y’all give up, just because it turns DARK!

There are TWO—not just ONE now, Hallelujah!—there are now TWO of these matters called ‘Righteousness.’ Kind of a scary words. That’s its job, by the way! It is the power behind all religious carrots and sticks, fear and hint of reward; it fuels governments, work placed, UNIVERSITIES—I tell you!—and even family units, friends, relationships...ugh!

‘When are you going to change?!’

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 27:45–47). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

‘When are you going to be sincere?!’

‘WHEN do you think I AM going to have enough of THIS?!’

Hey! I get—TOTALLY!—those words! And the longer God spares me, the more I learn the sincerity behind those words; the bruised, flickering sincerity; hope for a world where God is loved, not used; where men are loved, not used.

‘I, the Lord, am a jealous God!’ At Sinai, He put OUR words into HIS mouth—HOWWWW....can He communicate with you and me?

Well it sure weren’t SINAI! Took another PLACE for Him to reach us!

³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.⁶

Tryin’ to behave? Friends? Tryin’ to give GOD back the day He gave you; LIVE the LIFE He gave you, rather than run your own plans?

Howzat goin’?

Tryin’ to do right by others? Shining bright among men’s dark deeds? Or does more darkness fall, as WE rail against THE OBVIOUS WEAKNESS, failings, sins, of....whoever?!

‘I am baptized. Happy day!’ Swept up in the great rushing of water and the Lord’s hovering-care—when Jesus...the Bible says that JESUS was not only baptized with those confessing their ENMITY toward God...

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 27:33–34). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

But then...the Father and Their Spirit could NOT be kept from Joy, Peace, Strength, Blessing!

To confirm to John, to Jesus, to us, that THIS Man pleases the God we're against! Even though the day comes when This Man cries out that God has forsaken Him.

My dear ones:

HE saves us. He keeps us safe. From? USSSSS!!!!

There is no doubt that—when a young man—I found relief in those words of Isaiah: ‘A bruised reed He will not break; a smoldering wick He will not snuff out!’---

There is NO DOUBT, my dear ones, that a HUGE chunk of what my problem was then, was that I was trThere is no doubt that—when a young man—I found relief in those words of Isaiah: ‘A bruised reed He will not break; a smoldering wick He will not snuff out!’---

There is NO DOUBT, my dear ones, that a HUGE chunk of what my problem was then, was that I was doing exactly what The Servant forbids us all: ‘He who seeks to save his soul will lose it!’

No doubt—ALSO—I weren't as righteous, as good, as religious, as I could appear to be on the outside. Maybe I am an actor!

Thank God, though, that what I was without a doubt, was a Lutheran. Meaning, I HAD something that HEAVEN has been committed to getting, ZEALOUS to the point of God's Incarnation, Baptism, Suffering, Reign:

I had loads of sins; sins HE delights to wash away. Sometimes with pain; most often without.

You are righteous, in good standing with heaven, my dear ones:
NOT because YOU have not got in the right groove with heaven.
YOU must claim righteousness with heaven, peace, joy, strength,
because the Son of God FULFILLED righteousness! HE is
Baptized; just like you; more than you; with you! Me too.

And a bruised reed he will not break; and a faintly burning wick he
will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen!