

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

The Baptism of the Lord | For Sunday, January 9, 2022

The Baptism of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Son of God

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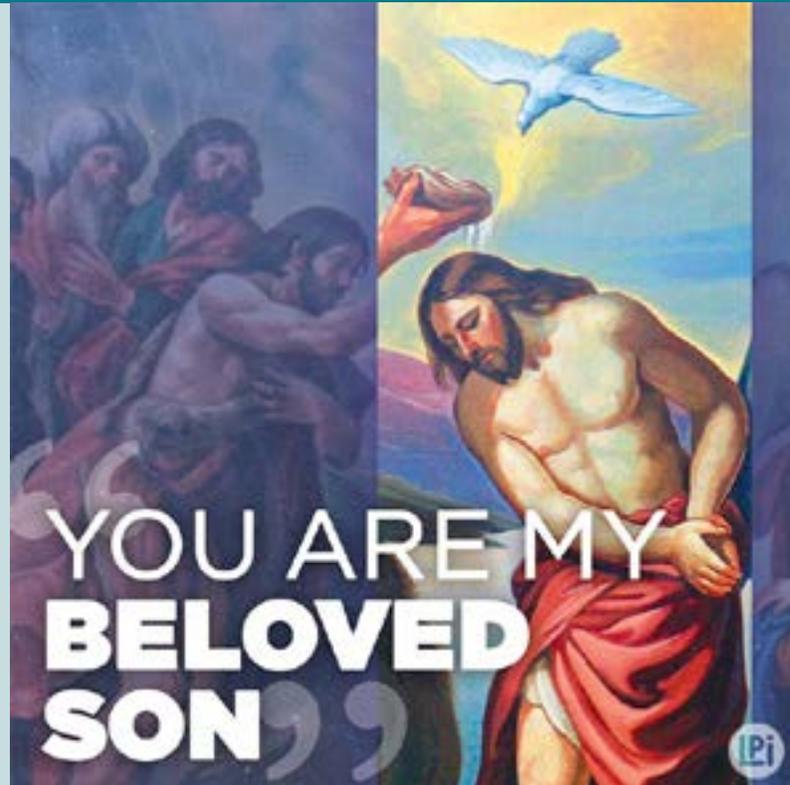
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

or Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Acts 10:34-38 or

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22



Who is Jesus Christ?

It is a question people asked as they witnessed him preach, heal the sick, and work other wonders. It is a question people have asked through the centuries as they studied the gospels and tried to pattern their lives on his example of self-giving love. If we are to be his followers and pass on the good news to the next generation of believers, it is a question we must constantly ask ourselves.

Today's feast of the Baptism of the Lord and, in particular, the beautiful reading from the [gospel of Saint Luke](#) teach us that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God.

First, Jesus is the Messiah. The words "Messiah" and "Christ" both mean "Anointed One." Throughout their history, the people of Israel have awaited the one anointed by God to lead them to freedom. This anointing meant that the Messiah would save them not by his own power, but by the power of God.

At his baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. The Heavenly Father was anointing Jesus with power to preach the good news, to give sight to the blind, and to bring freedom to captives. Jesus received this anointing to make it clear that he is the Messiah.

What does that mean for us today? It means that we have no other Savior than Jesus Christ. If we are to find true and lasting freedom, it is only through him. If we are to experience true and lasting justice and peace it can only be through Jesus Christ. As Saint Peter declares on Pentecost Day in the Acts of the Apostles, "No other name is given to us in heaven or on earth by which we are to be saved." This means that in everything we do, whether as individuals, as a Church or as a nation, we must look to Jesus if we are to find the justice, truth, freedom, and peace our hearts yearn for.

Secondly, Jesus is the Son of God. After the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus, God's voice from heaven is heard, "You are my beloved Son."

When we call Jesus, "Son of God", we are not saying that he is like God, or that he is very close to God. Rather, we are saying that Jesus *IS* God. As we say in the Creed, he is God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God. Whatever we can say about God, we can say about Jesus. He is eternal. There has never been a time when he has not existed. He is All-Powerful. There is nothing he cannot do. And he is All-Knowing. He knows the future and knows our hearts. There is no limit to his power.

For this reason, we do not only revere Jesus as a great man, but we worship him as our God. We bow our heads when we hear his name. We kneel when he appears before us in the Eucharist. We pray to him, entrust our needs to him, and praise him.

Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. We look to him to save us and we worship him as Almighty God. Just as John the Baptist pointed to him, so we must point him out to others as the only Savior of the World. Just as John the Baptist led others to him, we are to lead our family and friends to recognize him as the Messiah our hearts long for. Just as God from heaven declared that he is the beloved Son, so we are to declare to others that Jesus is the God we should follow and obey.

Douglas Sousa

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
We acknowledge you as the Messiah,
The Son of God.
Through your anointing with the Holy Spirit
Give us power to preach the good news,
To heal the sick, and to free the captives.
As Son of God, give us a renewed sense
Of our dignity as adopted daughters and sons of God.
May we look with hope to our promised inheritance
As we work to make your Kingdom a reality.
Amen.