

What's Happening In Sunday School?

Today's texts deal with one of the more difficult facts of the holy Gospel: the baptism of our Lord. Since today, for good reason, is also called the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, let's deal for a brief moment with the difficult problem of why Jesus was baptized by St. John. We can frame the problem this way: The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance; Jesus was without sin, and thus did not need to repent; why, then, was Jesus baptized. First, the gospel for today makes clear that Jesus submitted to baptism "to fulfill all righteousness." Remember that a "baptism" in our Lord's day was a prescribed rite under the old law. Jesus was demonstrating his submission to the law as an act of His own righteousness. Second, notice how the other texts today deal with the issue of the anointing with the Spirit. In both Isaiah and in St. Peter's sermon in the Acts, the fact of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the promised Messiah is treated as a prophetic demonstration of the identity of the Christ. So, it would appear that Jesus' baptism was also meant as a prophetic sign of His identity as the Christ of God. We can look at the Gospel for today as a fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus, who "fulfilled all righteousness" by submitting to baptism shows that He was "called in righteousness" as Isaiah says, and then shows further, in the anointing of the Holy Ghost, that He has the glory of the Father which "[the Father gives] to no other" than the Lord.

Digging Deeper

- Who baptized Jesus?
- How were they related?
- Who was older and by how much?
- How many times does God the Father speak in the New Testament?

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Baptism of Jesus

G N I D N E C S E D S C J G W
M U N A U J V N B P M J N H E
S F A O I U H O I J S T J S L
I M J A S B J R D V H R P I L
T S W Z S D I E A B A T E B P
P R I G H T E O U S N E S S L
A Y N H O J P V U J L Z N E E
B I P F C K W R O I O E M Z A
H I G E V K O Z L L C R Q V S
P O C I V P J A Z X E M D V E
D U K R H I G E G R A B J A D
X J L R F U L F I L L P E I N
P L B Z L H G V J Q V M S I G
C U L W P O E N S X G Z U G D
N N Q X P R K Y L U L D S B K

BAPTISM

DOVE

JESUS

RIGHTEOUSNESS

SPIRIT OF GOD

BELOVED SON

FULFILL

JOHN

RIVER

WELL-PLEASED

DESCENDING

GALILEE

JORDAN

