

Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: February 24, 2008

New Consecration, New Empowering; New Leading, New Opposition

by Dan Trygg

“Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’”
Lk. 3:21-23

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.” Lk. 4:1-2

We were earlier told that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, just like other children (Lk. 2:40,52). Hebrews 2:17 says that, **in His earthly sojourn among us, Jesus had to be made like us in all things human, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest.** Part of that process was that He was tempted, and experienced injustice and suffering, tested in all things as we ourselves are, yet never yielding to sin (Heb. 2:18; 4:15,16). Through these experiences of the human condition, He learned compassion for our weakness, and can come with understanding to help us in our weaknesses and struggles. Even though He was God’s Son, sinless and without defect in His humanity, nevertheless He had to learn to trust His Father through the things He suffered. This was, apparently, a long process, filled with difficulty, pain and inner struggle. Once again, however, He did not sin, but grew strong in faith, and became prepared for His great mission as our Sinbearer and Savior (Heb. 5:7-10). These kind of struggles continued right up until His death. The world was not a friendly place to the Prince of Righteousness. Neither will it be so for us. **Jesus came to be our example, and our first leader, the author of our faith-walk** (Heb. 12:1-3). If we are following Him, we can expect the same kinds of struggles and opposition.

The first thing we notice from today’s passage is that **Jesus was *one of many people who were baptized.*** There was no special show or honor paid to Him, no special spotlight or attention paid to Him by the throngs of people. In the eyes of the crowds that were there that day, He was just one of the hundreds who came to the river for baptism. Even His cousin, John, who personally knew Him and respected His righteous walk enough to say, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?”, had no idea that He was the Christ. It was only *after* Jesus’ baptism, when John saw the signs God had told him to watch for occur over Jesus, that John would realize that his cousin was the One who would come after him, the One who was greater than he was (Jn. 1:29-34).

Why was Jesus baptized? He, Himself, said that it was “fitting” or “proper” so that they might “fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:14,15). Even though He had no sin, it was suitable and appropriate for Him to be our example and lead us all through the waters of baptism. **John’s message was two-fold: (1.) it was repentance’s baptism towards a *remission*** (lit., a “sending away”, a dismissal, or canceling) **of sins** (Mk. 1:4); **and, (2.) it was repentance’s baptism towards a *dedication to the good news that the kingdom of God was here*** (Matt. 3:1-3). **Even though Jesus had no sin of His own, these two purposes merged together in His life.** He was the personification of God’s grace, the *basis* for the good news, because He had come to take away the sins of the world, His death being the *basis* for the “sending away” of sin. **The time was fulfilled. It was time for Him to leave His past life behind and commit Himself to walking out the kingdom purpose of communicating the good news of God’s promise, and to do His part in “sending away” sin.** We, too, are called to the same two realities. Repentance is a change of mind or perspective. When we perceive what the purpose of God is, what He has done for us and made available to us, and what we are called to, our whole life purpose takes on a new significance. This glimpse of reality from a new perspective is the convincing work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:7-15). **Repentance involves a choice. To perceive is one thing; to believe is another** (Jn. 6:40,45). **Awareness grows into conviction. Repentance is the faith-response where conviction grows into commitment. A true repentance will result in a change of orientation and behavior.** John invited the people who had a change in mind and orientation to express that in a baptism, an act of separation and dedication. Not only was it an opportunity to separate themselves from their own sinful past, but it also represented a commitment to live for the reign and rule of God. **Baptism was an outward statement that the person was dedicating his or her life to serve the purposes of God, to join *with* Him in the spreading of the good news and the “sending away” of sin. It was for this that Jesus was baptized. It was a sign of His commitment to live for His mission.**

The next thing we read is that “the sky was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily appearance like a dove, and a voice out from heaven came, ‘You are My Son, the Beloved One, in You I am well-pleased.’” **The principle should be noted: When we draw near to God; He draws near to us** (Jas. 4:8). When we

honor God, He will honor us (1 Sam. 2:30). When we respond to the call of God, He is pleased with us. Those who have chosen to love and serve Jesus are beloved by the Father (Jn. 16:27). **Another principle illustrated here is that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God.** Here, the Spirit comes upon Jesus in the appearance of a physical form, so that John could see the sign and identify what God was doing. Similarly, at Pentecost, visible flames of fire were seen over peoples' heads, so that they would know that the Spirit had come (Acts 2:1-3). It is not always the case that a physical sign will come to indicate the Spirit's presence, but it is clearly stated that God gives the Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Jesus said that the sign that people should be able to see is that we love one another. The Spirit is made visible through *our* words and actions, as we serve, encourage and support one another.

After this affirmation by God, the next event we read of is in the beginning of the next chapter, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness..." **The filling of the Spirit is always given in preparation for change or action.** Jesus was not led to stay by the Jordan. It was not profitable to stay there. Too often, when we have some spiritual high, we want merely to stay there and soak it up. We want to extend and maintain that experience. Instead, if we recognized that the fullness of the Spirit is given to bring about some kind of change or action, we would begin to ask, "Father, what do You want us to *do* with Your power?" Usually, when the filling of the Spirit comes, it is in response to the need of the moment. There is no need to ask what needs to be done, because the need is obvious.

It is important to note that **Jesus**, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and never quenched the Spirit through any sin, still **needed to receive the ongoing empowering of the Spirit to do His ministry.** Again, during His time here, He had to be like us in every way (Heb. 2:17). Peter clearly understood this, and described the ministry of Jesus to Cornelius and his loved ones, "*You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him*" (Acts 10:38). Also, Luke 5:17 says that Jesus was teaching the people and "the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing". **Jesus was very aware of His dependency on the power coming from God through the Spirit.** He attributed the works He did, and the words He said, to the working of His Father abiding in Him (Jn. 10:37,38; 14:10,11). **He then extended the same operating principle to the disciples**, saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the one believing in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father" (Jn. 14:12). What would happen when He would "go to the Father"? He was going to send the Holy Spirit to empower them so that they could minister as He did. "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (Jn. 14:16). At Pentecost, Peter exhorted the crowd, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." (Acts 2:38,39). **Clearly, the Spirit is available to all of us. We need His power to do the work of the kingdom.**

As Jesus was led out into the wilderness, He sought the Lord with prayer and fasting. He was well aware of the dramatic changes that were to take place in His life, and **He diligently did what He could to be sensitive to the Father's leading.** We see the practice of solitary prayer was significant part of Jesus' life, and one that He often *made time for*, even when demands were pressing upon Him (Mk. 1:35; Lk. 5:16).

Note that **the Spirit was "leading Him about" in the wilderness.** The Greek indicates an ongoing or repeated action. Like ancient Israel, led by the pillar of cloud or fire (Num. 9:18-23), Jesus was being prompted to move about at the initiative of the Spirit. He did not just camp out for 40 days in one spot. **He was led to journey from place to place. There may have been no apparent reason for moving, except to learn to hear and respond to the Holy Spirit.** During all of this time, He was fasting, which made the moving about more challenging, as time went on. He had a continual battle with the resistance of His body. **Jesus had to learn to disregard the desires of the flesh** (put His flesh to death) **in order to follow the leading of the Spirit** (Heb. 5:7). **We must do the same**, because the desires of the flesh are often set against the desires of the Spirit, and the mind set on the flesh will not be responsive to the leadings of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16,17; Rom. 8:5-8). **Do not be surprised if God may lead you to do apparently innocuous things. He is building responsiveness and obedience into your life.**

Finally, notice that during this entire time, He was repeatedly being tested by the devil. **Any advance in the kingdom of God, any significant step toward the fulfillment of our calling in Christ, will be met by a counter assault by the enemy. Count on it.** He is not giving up territory for nothing. He is looking for any opportunity to attack, and remove any threat we may pose to him. Do not be surprised (1 Pet. 4:12-19; 5:8,9). Be strong in the Lord, and **be ready for the evil day, for it will come. But, if we are strong in the power of God, we will be able to stand firm** in the day of testing (Eph. 6:10-13).