

Pastor Writes

We are now into the second week of 2015 and we look forward to this year with all its joys and challenges. We meditate on the theme, 'At his Baptism Jesus is revealed as the Son of God.' How does the Baptism of Jesus and his revelation as the Son of God affect us in our day to day lives? In the movie PK we see that the protagonist is an alien who's in search of God to seek his help to find out his stolen remote which was the only way he could signal the spaceships to take him back. He finds that as he goes in search of God from one religion to another nobody is able to connect him to God and each one of the 'managers' (priests and godmen) lead him to a 'wrong number'. Finally he comes to the conclusion that there is only one true God. This true God can only be understood by revelation. Human beings with their own capacities cannot know God. God in his infinite mercy has chosen to reveal himself in and through his Son Jesus. When we see Jesus we understand who God is.

Mark records for us that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John is the one who prepares the way for Jesus to come. But how does he do it? He comes as a *prophet* who foretells that the one who is coming after him was indeed far superior to him and though John baptizes people with water Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. John also sees himself as the *messenger* who was sent before Jesus to give the good news about the coming of Jesus and to prepare the people for that coming. His message was one in which he called people to repent of their sins because the kingdom of God was at hand. John was in many ways a *forerunner* of the Messiah and that is why he said, 'After me will come one who is more powerful than me. I baptize with water but he will baptize with the Holy Spirit' (vs. 7)

Mark records for us that at that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan river. But why did Jesus who was sinless need to be baptized by John? It was a public proclamation of what he had come to do – to fulfill the plan and purpose of God. It was the beginning of his public ministry and Jesus was probably about 30 yrs old, when he began his ministry (Luke 3:23). Adult baptism or Confirmation is a public proclamation in the midst of the congregation. Likewise we see Jesus publicly proclaiming his divine purpose.

Secondly, his *identification* with us. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling with us (John 1:14). Though he was without sin he identified with sinful human beings (2 Cor. 5:21). God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Thirdly, it was a *Revelation* about who Jesus was and is. It was a revelation that Christ was the Son of God. Different opinions existed about Jesus. Some said he was a prophet, some that he was Elijah, others that he was a good man and still others who considered him a rabble rouser. But God's revelation was, 'this is my Son whom I love, with him I am well pleased.' The Holy Spirit descends on him in bodily form like a dove to confirm that he is indeed the Son of God. This was done so that all the righteous requirements would be fulfilled. All God's righteous requirements for the Messiah were fully met in Christ. He fulfills the role of the servant which has been portrayed in Isaiah 42:1-7.

Jesus came into this world as a human being to be with us and identify with us. He took our sin upon himself so that we may be saved. At his baptism we have the witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit testifying that Jesus is indeed God in human flesh and that we ought to listen to him. May we in this New Year listen to his words and be obedient to them.

Shalom
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