

Baptism (C) or 1st Sunday after Epiphany (C) or BaptismC or 1EpiphanyC

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalm 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

- baptism = sacrament by which new converts received
- sign + seal of incorporation into Christ
- some paedobaptism ~ covenant to Abraham
- marks one of most sacred moments
- opportunity to reflect on meaning of baptism
- rooted in Jesus baptized by John
- Acts + Luke
 - o connect Spirit with baptism
 - o no unambiguous answer to Spirit-baptism relationship?
 - o so baptism not ritual as rite of passage
 - o very divine presence that came on Jesus comes on his followers
 - o Spirit cannot be domesticated bought or sold
 - o one belongs to God
 - voice from heaven declares
 - o similar to Isaiah 43
 - I have called you / you are mine ([43:1](#))
 - o but “Son” and “beloved” as special vocation
 - o servant + agent of God’s reign
 - praised in Psalm 29
 - o commissioned to be subjects in God’s rule
 - empowered agents of reconciliation

Luke 3 – Texts for Preaching year C

- all synoptic have
- all connect with John
- show Jesus superior to John
- Matthew + Luke go further than Mark
- notice of John’s arrest + imprisonment
- no reference to who baptized
- hints that John did but no details
- no baptism by John in John

- also connect with Holy Spirit
 - o heightened emphasis on Spirit in Luke
 - o annunciation to Zechariah
 - o annunciation to Mary
 - o visit of Simeon
 - o Luke-Acts as book of the Holy Spirit
- both frightening and good news
 - o John's description ([3:17](#))
- different from descent of Spirit at Pentecost?
- what is baptism with Holy Spirit?
- water baptism? membership? prophecy?
- Luke "more concerned with asserting its presence + activity than charting its moves"
- Magnificat of Simeon
 - o coming of Christ overthrows + undermines
- gospel of mercy in prophetic mode
- (2) 2nd reference connects Jesus with Spirit of God
 - o Luke 3:21-22 + Trinitarian language
 - o Jesus' ministry derives from Holy Spirit
 - o Jesus is God's Son
 - o why exclude [3:18-20](#) from reading?
 - o price paid by those who act at behest of Spirit is often high

Luke 3, Fred Craddock, Interpretation

- 3rd last part of John's message
- response to those thinking John = Christ?
- how is John different?
- (1) not worthy to be slave of mightier one
- (2) Christ baptized with Holy Spirit + fire
- (3) Christ brings judgment
 - o Holy Spirit = hallmark of Christianity
 - o not a mark of John's community
- Spirit + fire = wind + fire
 - o powerful presence
 - o judgment
 - o chaff = explosive fire (!)
 - o repentance + forgiveness available -> so judgment = good news
 - o save the wheat! (not so much burn the chaff)

- response of Herod Antipas
 - Luke gets John offstage -> make room for Jesus
 - Herod tried to silence the messenger
 - John the Baptist spoke of repentance + reformation
- Luke 3:21-22
 - so familiar
 - does not mention who or where
 - moves camera onto Jesus alone
 - Jesus as part of a crowd being baptized
 - ? perhaps embarrassment Jesus baptized
 - Luke highlights “postbaptismal character of Jesus’ experience”
 - heavens opened -> baptisms proclaim God’s Christ to the world
 - (1) opened
 - recalls [Isaiah 64:1-4](#) + new exodus
 - (2) Holy Spirit marks ministry of Jesus
 - gift to church
 - dove? bodily form? (certainty – not just idea or feeling)
 - (3) voice
 - combined [Psalm 2:7](#) + [Isaiah 42:1](#)
 - sovereignty + service
 - adoptionism and Psalm 2:7b (variant)
 - “voice affirming Jesus’ relation to God important to overall structure of Luke’s Gospel”
 - voices in [3:21-22, 9:35](#) (Transfiguration + ???)
 - Spirit empowers Jesus for his ministry
 - not Jesus praying
 - Jesus presented as often in prayer
 - especially at critical moments
 - not mere historical interest
 - church in prayer before Pentecost
 - continued in prayer
 - Holy Spirit + pray are “available for life + ministry until close of the age. Luke’s history is witness” (52)