



Open Heavens

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Bulletin VCMT114

04 January 2023

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:11-17).

Continuing with his preparation for the manifestation of Jesus, John preached, performed baptism for repentance, rebuked and taught the people. We glean insightful spiritual nuggets from this text:

- 1) John's message shows his deep understanding and high exaltation of who Jesus is. Although John was born before Jesus (something that could have easily brought about age pride), John considered Jesus far superior to him, that he (John) considered himself not worthy to bear His shoes (vs 11). He also spoke about the power and might of Jesus' ministry (vs 12).
- 2) It was in the background of this teaching that the unexpected happened - Jesus came to John to be baptised of him (vs 13). John was taken aback, and tried to dissuade Jesus (vs 14), but Jesus persuaded John “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (vs 15).
- 3) It is interesting to note the reason that Jesus advanced for persisting “... for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (vs 15). This makes it clear once and for all that the baptism of Jesus was not for the purpose of repentance from sin (of which He had none), but rather a focus on fulfilling all righteousness - a foreshad-

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ow of His bearing the sins of the entire world.

- 4) By submitting to water baptism by John, Jesus demonstrated a powerful humility that is beyond description. How could the creator come to be baptised by the created - what an incredibly powerful example for all to follow.
- 5) When John heard that this act was meant to fulfil all righteousness, he immediately withdrew all of his objections and went ahead to baptise Jesus (vs 15).
- 6) What followed the baptism was open heavens and a glorious manifestation of the Holy Trinity - The Father spoke from heaven to the Son, while at the same time the Holy Spirit descended from heaven as a dove upon Him (vs 16-17).
- 7) The message from the Father was clear and unmistakable “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (vs 17). This is God's endorsement and announcement of Jesus as His son. If God called Jesus, His son, it is only fools that can argue against it!
- 8) John later confirmed in John 1:31,33 that this was the unmistakable sign that God gave him to identify Jesus the Messiah and present Him as such to the world.

Acts of obedience in fulfilling all righteousness always precede open heavens. As Jacob experienced an open heaven at Bethel when running away from Esau for his life (Genesis 28:12), God has open heavens for you (and everyone) this year and beyond. Your priority is to satisfy His conditions of fulfilling all righteousness, and the open heavens (with all the associated benefits) will be yours in Jesus' name, Amen. God's open heaven will bring an end to famine and calamity in your life (2 Kings 7:2,19) as well as usher you into your ministry and destiny.