

*For 1st Sunday after Epiphany: January 10, 2021*

Soon we in this country will see another presidential inauguration. These have occurred every four years. Each president has left his inauguration fully authorized for his office. Usually, a big crowd gathers to see the event. Even without a crowd, though, the authorization would still occur.

In our church service this coming Sunday, we will focus on the baptism of Jesus. In some ways, this event resembles a presidential inauguration. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke offer details about the crowd, or the conversation between Jesus and John the Baptizer. However, Mark's account concentrates on Jesus and His authorization from God. It says:

“And it happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. And when He came up from the water, immediately He saw the heavens split open and the Spirit coming down on Him as a dove. And there was a voice from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son. In You I am well-pleased’” (Mark 1:9-11).

With this event, the story of Jesus begins in Mark. He is the eternal Son of God, certainly qualified to be the Messiah. Now He enters upon His office. God the Father was pleased with Him and what He is doing.

He does not waste time. He gets right to work. Later He said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!” (Luke 12:50). There, He was speaking of His death.

What began when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan eventually ended on the cross. Jesus died as the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

The split-open heavens at Jesus' baptism showed what was happening. When He bears your sin, God opens heaven for you.