

Reading Sunday 10th January

Mark 1 4-11

John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus

We met John the Baptist in Advent when we were thinking about the coming of our Lord – in this reading we hear more about him, and then hear of the baptism of Jesus.

I think he must have been a charismatic character – we hear that ‘people from the whole Judean countryside, and the people of Jerusalem, were going to see him and were baptised. He is clearly eccentric – his clothes, and the way he lives are not the norm. I think that today he would probably not be accepted easily by the public, what do you think ?

His proclamation is very strong - he is proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. But he is also proclaiming the coming of Jesus – someone who is more powerful than John, and someone who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.

Then the last part of the reading tells us of the baptism of Jesus, and this is again, when we hear the confirmation from God, that this is his Son. ‘You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased’. In Mark’s gospel, we are not told that John recognises Jesus as he comes towards him, but this is reported in Matthew’s and John’s gospels. However, he would be in no doubt, as Jesus was baptised. We are told that ‘the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove’. Then we hear God’s voice.

So as we start a new year at a very difficult time in the progress of the virus, let’s try to look positively forward. The rolling out of the vaccine will hopefully bring us out of this pandemic. We hear the voice of God telling us that his Son was here on earth, and we know that in following Jesus we have the Holy Spirit in our lives. So let’s look positively for better times ahead.

Take care and stay safe. With love and blessings Jill Gollins xx