BIBLE STUDY
January 8-9, 2025

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7
Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22
Acts 10: 34-38

1. **Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7**
   - This passage comes from the second Isaiah, a disciple of Isaiah who wrote during the exile to encourage the people. He wrote four Servant Songs (42: 1-7, 49: 1-7, 50: 4-11, 52: 13—53: 12) who speak of a mysterious person that Christians have always seen as Christ. The title 'servant' was one of the first titles given to Jesus by the disciples after his resurrection. What is most important is the mission of the servant.
   - V. 1: Here we see the words of God the Father spoken to Jesus at his Baptism. God's servant has been anointed with the Spirit to fulfill his mission to bring justice to all the nations.
   - V. 2: The servant will not bring fear and punishment to accomplish his mission but love and mercy.
   - V. 3: Those persons who are bruised by life's hurts and who are weak because of fear will be healed not broken by him.
   - V. 4: The servant will not be weakened or hurt until he accomplishes his mission of bringing justice. People will wait for the word of the Lord to be preached by him.
   - V. 6: God himself has called and commissioned the servant. God has set him up to be a sign of God's covenant love to the people. He will also show God's light to all.
   - V. 7: Jesus fulfilled the mission of the servant by his healing miracles. He gave sight to the blind, he set those imprisoned by sin and death free and brought those in darkness into the light.
2. **Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22**
   - Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate the story of Jesus' baptism but with different emphasis. Mark states that Jesus was baptized after he came from Nazareth. After Jesus came out of the water, he saw the heavens ripped open (a reference to Isaiah) and the Spirit descended like a dove and there was heard the voice of God the Father. It seems as if it were a personal experience that Jesus had. Luke states that all the people and Jesus were baptized and then the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended, and the Father's voice was heard. Matthew deals with the question, 'why would Jesus get baptized if he is sinless?' John protests that Jesus should baptize him. Jesus answers that it is to fulfill all righteousness, i.e., to submit to God's plan for the salvation of humanity. Then, the heavens are opened "for him," the Spirit descends, and the Father's voice is heard.
   - One commentator has said that Jesus is proclaimed the Son of God when he is acting in solidarity with humanity. In hi baptism, Jesus joins with sinful

humanity in acknowledging their fault and seeking forgiveness. When he announces his passion, God the Father expresses his approval of Jesus as a beloved son at the Transfiguration as Jesus declares his embracing of the father's plan to save all people. When Jesus is in solidarity with God's plan and with God's people, he is acting like a beloved son. When we are in solidarity with God's plan and God's people, we are beloved sons and daughters.

- John's baptism is different from Christian baptism. His was a symbolic washing to express the desire for forgiveness. Our baptism springs from the death and resurrection of Jesus. It makes us participants in his death and resurrection. It accomplishes the forgiveness of sin and floods our soul with grace which is the divine life of God.
- The story of Jesus' baptism is another epiphany story that reveals to us Jesus' identity as the Son of God. The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is revealed.

3. **Acts 10: 34-38**
    - Peter has had a vision in which God reveals to him and end to the dietary laws of the Old Testament. God also reveals to him that a man, Cornelius, and his family, is seeking to become Christians. Peter is to go to him and bring him the good news of Jesus. Peter overcomes all his hesitation as a former Jew to entering the house of a Gentile. He is feeling the presence of the Spirit.
    - V. 34: In the house of Cornelius, Peter preaches the good news. God has brought peace through Jesus Christ the Lord to unite all people. God shows no partiality between Jew or Gentile. Jesus' ministry on earth was to bring about this peace by the proclamation of the good news through his healing miracles and his snatching people away from the devil and bringing them into the Kingdom of God.