

Notes on the Readings

There is a reflection on **Genesis 1:1-5** in the Sunday Link *Out of the Water*. Below are Rachel's thoughts on both the other passages.

Thought for the Day from Rev. Rachel Young

The Baptism of Christ – Sun 10 Jan 2021 Readings: Mark 1:4-11 & Acts 19:1-7

I wonder whether you have been baptised? If not, I wonder what difference you think it might make to the lives of others? And if so, what difference do you expect it to make to your own life?

Two of our readings today – Acts 19.1-7 and Mark 1.4-11 - talk directly about baptism and particularly about the baptism of Jesus.

Baptism is a particular rite involving water that was prevalent amongst some Jewish sects, including the Essenes of which John the Baptist was thought to be a member. It was a sign of membership of the group, but more than that in John's case. Mark describes it as "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". John says to the people, before Jesus comes to him, "I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit". John knew that there would be a difference in the baptism offered by the Son of God. It seems that some of his own followers continued baptising people, some of which were encountered by Paul and we read about that in Acts 19. After Paul laid hands on them, the work of the Holy Spirit was then evident in their lives.

So the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus is the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. If we have been baptised, I wonder, which baptism have we received?

We can live as though we were baptized into the baptism of John – just repenting and wanting forgiveness of our sins. But God's intention is that we should have more than that. The Holy Spirit is like an invisible force of power – of God's love, his grace – which we can receive to help to power our lives, to give us experience of the fruit of the Spirit and some gifts of the Spirit too, to be used for the building up of others and the church.

Today, as we celebrate the Baptism of Christ, let's reflect on what difference being baptised makes to our lives. In *Common Worship* there is the opportunity to give thanks for baptism, and for the baptised to repent of those times we have not lived as baptised people, including the following invitation:

'Come,' say the Spirit and the Bride.
'Come forward, you who are thirsty,
receive the water of life,
the free gift to all who desire it.'
(cf Revelation 22.17)