

13 January 2013 - First Sunday after the Epiphany/Jesus Baptism.
Readings: Isaiah 43:1–7; Acts 8:14–17; Luke 3:15–17, 21–22.

Theme: *Open heaven* – Luke 3:21, “When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, **heaven was opened.**”



INTRO: An open heaven means at least three things for us all...



I. CAN KNOW- RECEIVE GOD/A NEW IDENTITY.

Luke 3:22, “And a voice came from heaven: “**You are my Son**, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Isaiah 43:1, 4, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; **I have summoned you by name**; you are mine... you are precious and honoured in my sight... I love you.”

God says the same to us at our baptism...

2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

1 Peter 2:10, “Once you were not a people, but **now you are the people of God**; once you had not received mercy, but **now you have received mercy.**”

Illustration: *Les Misérables*, “Who Am I?” – Valjean.

NOTE: New identities WILL be challenged!



Led Zeppelin, “And she's **buying** a stairway to heaven.” **WRONG!**

Luke 4:3, 9, “The devil said to him, ‘**If you are the Son of God... If you are the Son of God**’...”



II. CAN DWELL IN HIS PRESENCE/A NEW REALITY.

Luke 3:22, “and the Holy Spirit **descended on him** in bodily form like a dove.”

John 1:33, “And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘**The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain** is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’”

Cf. The Old Testament. The Spirit came upon people for a time, season or event. It did not REMAIN, stay or “tabernacle” with them.



John 14:17, 23, “the Spirit of truth... you know him, for he lives with you and will be **IN** you.”

John 15:4, “**Remain in** me, as I also **remain in** you.”

Genesis 28:16-17, “When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “**Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.**” He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”



III. TO ADVANCE HIS KINGDOM/NEW OPPORTUNITY.

Luke 3:23, “Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when **he began his ministry.**”

Lenski: “What Jesus does by accepting baptism by John is to enter into his Messianic office by means of this act.”



Classic Theology New - stretch your theological imagination

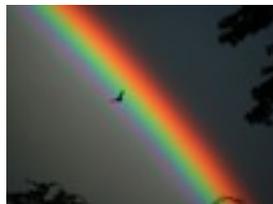
Genesis 28:13-14, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.”

John 1:51, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”

This is now a New Year with new opportunities to change the world...
Eg. Prayer (Lent). “as he was praying” – v. 21.



“See, heaven’s got a plan for you!”



CONCLUSION: This last week saw bush fires wreck many people’s lives and plans. Coming to work last Wednesday I saw this in the sky. It was God’s reminder to me (us) that He has made a covenant with us. “Every believer has an open heaven” (Bill Johnson). Let us live and grow in that awareness, In Jesus’ name. Amen. – Pastor Aldi ☺