

CHRIST UNSER HERR ZUM JORDAN KAM, BWV 7

Feast of John the Baptist

Isaiah 40:1-5; Luke 1:57-80

Chorale Cantata: Martin Luther 1541 (verses 1, 3, 7 - mov'ts. 1, 3, 7; source for the other movements)

1. Chor

Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam
Nach seines Vaters Willen,
Von Sankt Johannis die Taufe nahm,
Sein Werk und Amt zu erfüllen;
Da wollt er stiften uns ein Bad,
Zu waschen uns von Sünden,
Ersäufen auch den bittern Tod
Durch sein selbst Blut und Wunden;
Es galt ein neues Leben.

1. Chorus

Christ our Lord came to the Jordan
according to his Father's will,
he received baptism from Saint John,
to fulfill his work and destiny;
thus he wishes to draw us a bath,
to cleanse us from sin,
to drown bitter death as well
through his own blood and wounds;
it permitted a new life.

2. Arie B

Merkt und hört, ihr Menschenkinder,
Was Gott selbst die Taufe heißt.

Es muß zwar hier Wasser sein,
Doch schlecht Wasser nicht allein.
Gottes Wort und Gottes Geist
Tauft und reiniget die Sünder.

2. Aria B

Mark and hear, you humans,
what God himself calls baptism.

Indeed water must be there,
yet not merely water alone.
God's word and God's Spirit
baptises and purifies the sinner.

3. Rezitativ T

Dies hat Gott klar
Mit Worten und mit Bildern dargetan,
Am Jordan ließ der Vater offenbar
Die Stimme bei der Taufe Christi hören;
Er sprach: Dies ist mein lieber Sohn,
An diesem hab ich Wohlgefallen,
Er ist vom hohen Himmelsthron
Der Welt zugut
In niedriger Gestalt gekommen
Und hat das Fleisch und Blut
Der Menschenkinder angenommen;
Den nehmet nun als euren Heiland an
Und höret seine teuren Lehren!

3. Recitative T

This God has clearly
provided with words and with pictures,
at the Jordan the Father allowed openly
Christ to hear his voice during baptism;
He said: this is my beloved Son,
with whom I am well pleased,
he is, from the high throne of heaven
for the world's sake
come in lowly form,
and has taken on the flesh and blood
of humanity;
now take him as your Savior
and listen to his valuable teachings!

4. Arie T

Des Vaters Stimme ließ sich hören,
Der Sohn, der uns mit Blut erkauft,
Ward als ein wahrer Mensch getauft.
Der Geist erschien im Bild der Tauben,
Damit wir ohne Zweifel glauben,
Es habe die Dreifaltigkeit
Uns selbst die Taufe zubereit'.

4. Aria T

The Father's voice can be heard;
the Son, who bought us with his blood,
was baptized as a true man.
The Spirit appeared in the image of the dove,
so that we might believe without doubt,
the Trinity itself has
prepared baptism for us.

5. Rezitativ B

Als Jesus dort nach seinen Leiden
Und nach dem Auferstehn
Aus dieser Welt zum Vater wollte gehn,
Sprach er zu seinen Jüngern:
Geht hin in alle Welt und lehret alle Heiden,
Wer glaubet und getauft wird auf Erden,
Der soll gerecht und selig werden.

5. Recitative B

As Jesus there, after his passion,
and after the Resurrection
was ready to go to the Father out of this world,
he spoke to his disciples:
Go forth into the world and teach the heathens,
he who believes and is baptized on earth,
he shall be justified and blessed.

First Performance 6/24/1724

6. Arie A

Menschen, glaubt doch dieser Gnade,
Daß ihr nicht in Sünden sterbt,
Noch im Höllenpfuhl verderbt!
Menschenwerk und -heiligkeit
Gilt vor Gott zu keiner Zeit.
Sünden sind uns angeboren,
Wir sind von Natur verloren;
Glaub und Taufe macht sie rein,
Daß sie nicht verdammtlich sein.

7. Choral

**Das Aug allein das Wasser sieht,
Wie Menschen Wasser gießen,
Der Glaub allein die Kraft versteht
Des Blutes Jesu Christi,
Und ist für ihm ein rote Flut
Von Christi Blut gefärbet,
Die allen Schaden heilet gut
Von Adam her geerbet,
Auch von uns selbst begangen.**

6. Aria A

People, believe yet this grace,
that you do not die in sin,
nor are lost in the pit of hell!
Human deeds and holiness
matter not at all before God.
Sin is born within us,
we are by nature lost;
faith and baptism purify,
so that you are not damned.

7. Chorale

**The eye sees only water,
as the water is poured by man,
faith, however, understands the power
of the blood of Jesus Christ,
and it is for faith a red stream
colored by Christ's blood,
that heals well all harms
that were inherited from Adam,
also that we brought about ourselves.**

Original Chorale text:

**Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam
Nach seines Vaters Willen,
Von Sanct Johann's die Taufe nahm,
Sein Werk und Amt zu 'rfüllen.
Da wollt' er stift'en uns ein Bad,
Zu waschen uns von Sünden,
Ersäufen auch den bittern Tod
Durch sein selbst Blut und Wunden,
Es galt ein neues Leben.**

**So hört und merket alle wohl,
Was Gott heißt selbst die Taufe,
Und was ein Christen glauben soll,
Zu meiden Ketzer Haufen:
Gott spricht und will, das Wasser sei
Doch nicht allein schlecht Wasser,
Sein heiligs Wort ist auch dabei
Mit reichem Geist ohn Massen,
Der ist allhie der Täufer.**

**Solchs hat er uns beweiset klar,
Mit Bildern und mit Worten,
Des Vaters Stimm man offenbar
Daselbst am Jordan hörte.
Er sprach: das ist mein lieber Sohn,
An dem ich hab Gefallen,
Den will ich euch befohlen han,
Daß ihr ihn höret alle
Und folget seinen Lehren.**

**Christ our Lord came to the Jordan
in accordance with his father's will,
he received baptism from Saint John,
to fulfill his work and ministry.
By this he wanted to establish for us a bath
to wash us from our sins,
to drown also bitter death
through his own blood and wounds.
This meant a new life.**

**Therefore hear and mark well
what God himself calls baptism
and what a Christian should believe
to avoid a load of heresies:
God says and means, there is water
but not just water alone,
his holy word is also present
with the rich, measureless Spirit –
He is here the one who baptizes.**

**This he has shown clearly to us
with pictures and with words,
the Father's voice was openly
heard in that very place at the Jordan.
He said: this is my dear son
in whom I have delight,
concerning him I give orders to you
that you should all listen to him
and follow his teaching.**

Auch Gottes Sohn hie selber steht
In seiner zarten Menschheit,
Der heilig Geist hernieder fährt
In Taubenbild verkleidet;
Daß wir nicht sollen zweifeln dran,
Wenn wir getaufet werden,
All' drei Person getaufet han,
Damit bei uns auf Erden
Zu wohnen sich ergeben.

Sein Jünger heißt der Herre Christ:
Geht hin all Welt zu lehren,
Daß sie verlor'n in Sünden ist,
Sich soll zur Busse kehren;
Wer glaubet und sich taufen läßt,
Soll dadurch selig werden,
Ein neugeborner Mensch er heißt,
Der nicht mehr konne sterben,
Das Himmelreich soll erben.

Wer nicht glaubt dieser großen Gnad,
Der bleibt in seinen Sünden,
Und ist verdammt zum ewgen Tod
Tief in der Höllen Grunde,
Nichts hilft sein eigen Heiligkeit,
All sein Thun ist verloren.
Die Erbsünd machtz zur Nichtigkeit,
Darin er ist geboren,
Vermag ihm selbst nichts helfen.

Das Aug' allein das Wasser seiht,
Wie Menschen Wasser gießen,
Der Glaub im Geist die Kraft versteht
Des Blutes Jesu Christi,
Und ist für ihm ein rothe Fluth
Von Christi Blut gefärbet,
Die allen Schaden heilen tut
Von Adam her geerbet,
Auch von uns selbst begangen.

Here also God's son himself stands
in his gentle humanity,
the holy spirit comes down here
clothed in the image of the dove;
so that we should have no doubt
when we are baptized
all three persons have baptized,
thereby with us on earth
they give themselves to dwell.

Christ the Lord calls his disciples:
go and teach all the world,
so that those who are lost in sin
may turn to repentance;
who believes and is baptized
shall thereby become blessed,
he is called a newborn man
who can die no more
but shall inherit the kingdom of heaven

Whoever does not believe in this great mercy
remains in his sins,
and is condemned to everlasting death
deep in the depths of hell.
His own holiness is of no use,
all that he does is lost,
it is nullified by original sin
in which he is born,
he is unable to help himself at all.

The eye sees only water
when the water is poured,
faith in the Spirit understands the power
of the blood of Jesus Christ
and for him it is a red stream
coloured with Christ's blood
that heals all the injuries
we have inherited from Adam
and also those we have brought upon ourselves.

Isaiah 40:1-5

1. Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Luke 1:57-80

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.