



When Jesus Came to Jordan

Why was Jesus baptized? This hymn is a beautifully crafted answer to that question. Each stanza stands at a different place on the banks of the Jordan and views on the baptism from a different angle.

In our day, when the “denominational migration” of worshipers/members is so prevalent, we would do well to look at baptism from places other than our denomination’s castle on the beach. This is not to suggest that we forsake our doctrine. It is to suggest that common ground for acceptance of each other and discussion of differing “viewpoints” makes sense in our current local church environment.

What Pratt Green presents here, in the middle of the water is, ironically enough, common ground. Let us gather at the river, indeed. The world, along with Jesus (John 17), awaits the gathering.

The humility of baptism throws water on our heated and divisive doctrinal debates. Our differing views of baptism are important perspectives to be shared as we look at our One savior standing in the river. Let us hold and refine our doctrines of baptism, but as gifts to share, not barriers that segregate.

“Watch me!”...and the children splash. “Look at me!”...and the children pour. “Watch this!” ...and the children dive under the surface of the pool. “Come as little children” rings in our ears as the water drains out... no matter how it got there. Doctrine matters. So, too, does “being one.”

No matter where Jesus stands to teach, temple, dusty road, mountain top, mountain side, banquet hall, seashore, court room, river...no matter where Jesus stands to teach, his lessons continue to unfold their ever-deepening truths into our lives. This hymn celebrates that fact.

Oh how different are the scenes of Jesus’ coming to Jordan and our coming to Jordan. Our coming, too often underscores our Christian separation. Jesus’ coming, calls us to Christian unity.

“When Jesus Came to Jordan” is a beautiful story ready to be sung. “We we came to Jordan” is a beautiful story, perhaps still being written.

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