

the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Matthew 28.16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

There are further seasonal suggestions at

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/initiation/presedinit/baptismreadings.html>

And there is some more general information about baptism at

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/lifeevents/baptismconfirm/baptism1.html>

Bible Readings and Psalms at Holy Baptism

These are some suggestions for readings at a Baptism service. If you are only having only one reading it is often better to choose one of the Gospel readings (the Gospels are the part of the Bible telling about the life of Jesus). However it is not compulsory and you may choose any Bible reading you like, unless the baptism is part of the main Sunday service when we have set readings. If you would like further suggestions please contact the priest taking the service.

Psalms

Psalm 66.5-12

He turned the sea into dry land;
the river they passed through on foot; ♦
there we rejoiced in him.
In his might he rules for ever;
his eyes keep watch over the nations; ♦
let no rebel rise up against him.
Bless our God, O you peoples; ♦
make the voice of his praise to be heard,
Who holds our souls in life ♦
and suffers not our feet to slip.
For you, O God, have proved us; ♦
you have tried us as silver is tried.
You brought us into the snare; ♦
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.
You let enemies ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water; ♦
but you brought us out into a place of liberty.
I will come into your house with burnt offerings
and will pay you my vows, ♦
which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.

Psalm 46.1-7

God is our refuge and strength, ♦
a very present help in trouble;
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved ♦
and though the mountains tremble in the heart of the sea;
Though the waters rage and swell ♦
and though the mountains quake at the towering seas.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, ♦

the holy place of the dwelling of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; therefore shall she not be removed; ♦
God shall help her at the break of day.
The nations are in uproar and the kingdoms are shaken, ♦
but God utters his voice and the earth shall melt away.
The Lord of hosts is with us; ♦
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Psalm 89.21,22,25-29

'My hand shall hold him fast ♦
and my arm shall strengthen him.
'No enemy shall deceive him, ♦
nor any wicked person afflict him.
'I will set his dominion upon the sea ♦
and his right hand upon the rivers.
'He shall call to me, "You are my Father, ♦
my God, and the rock of my salvation;"
'And I will make him my firstborn: ♦
the most high above the kings of the earth.
'The love I have pledged to him will I keep for ever ♦
and my covenant will stand fast with him.
'His seed also will I make to endure for ever ♦
and his throne as the days of heaven.'

Psalm 51.1-6

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; ♦
according to the abundance of your compassion blot out my offences.
Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness ♦
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my faults ♦
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you only have I sinned ♦
and done what is evil in your sight,
So that you are justified in your sentence ♦
and righteous in your judgement.
I have been wicked even from my birth, ♦
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Old Testament

Isaiah 43.1-7

But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way" –
"a voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

And so John came, baptising in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

John 15.1-11

Jesus said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

John 3.1-8

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no-one could perform

Galatians 3.27-4.7

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Titus 3.3-7

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

1 Peter 3.18-22

Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Gospel

Mark 1.1-11(9-11)

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in Isaiah the prophet:

have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Isaiah 43.1-7

Thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth – everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

Genesis 17.1-8

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell face down, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are

now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 22.15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

2 Kings 5.1-15a

Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman’s wife. She said to her mistress, “If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. “By all means, go,” the king of Aram replied. “I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: “With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.” As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, “Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!” When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: “Why have you torn your robes? Make the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.” So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house. Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.” But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?” So he turned and went off in a rage. Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much

more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed?’” So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God.

Genesis 7.1,7-16

The LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month – on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights. On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

New Testament

Romans 5.6-11

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.