

Dear Friends,

John 1: 29-34

We are taking a lingering look at the journey of the Spirit from heaven to Jesus in the story of his baptism. We have seen the first three phases of this journey. The Spirit (1) comes from God; (2) longs for Jesus; and (3) fixes the gaze upon Jesus.

Phases two and three are held together in the story of a group of Greek people. They come to one of the friends of Jesus with an urgent request. They say, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus". The word "wish" is a strong one. It's not just that they've got a bit of a whim to see Jesus. No, it's we wish, we desire, we are determined to see Jesus. The word "see" is also a strong one. It's not just "We fancy getting a quick glimpse of him," like spectators viewing something from a distance or from the back of the crowd. No, it's we want to see, know and understand Jesus. We want to get to know him and we want to have that knowledge deep down in our hearts. They long for Jesus and they desire to fix their gaze upon him.

Next in the Spirit's journey comes phase four. The Spirit **moves towards Jesus**. This movement of the Spirit is described as being like that of a dove. I imagine the flight path of the bird to be direct. This is not an ambling, meandering journey. It's not taking the scenic way while viewing all the sights. No, it's taking the most direct route between A and B. It's like a mother bird with food to give to her chicks who gets back to the nest as quickly and directly as possible. It's like the arrow shot by the archer that goes straight to the target. It's like the mad dash at the end of a Romantic Comedy when one of the lovers has to rush as quickly as possible to their beloved so that they don't lose them forever.

When you move towards Jesus you are in tune with what Jesus wants and is working to make happen. The desire and longing of Jesus is for you to be with him. The purpose of the action of Jesus is to bring you to himself. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you". He says "I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also". Jesus completes this work through the cross. He says, "I, when I'm lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself".

You are invited to unite with the Spirit in moving towards Jesus. When you do this, you give in to the natural flow of creation. You have come from God and are made to return to God. Jesus is working, patiently, lovingly to bring you back to himself. Simply say "Yes" to God and allow God to love you by drawing you home. God is the good shepherd who wants to take care of you. The prophet says "God will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom".

And lastly, phase five, the Spirit **remains on Jesus**. John the Baptist says that the Spirit descended on Jesus and remained on him. The word translated "remained" is one of the favourite words of the writer of John's gospel. This is the first time that he uses it. It means to remain, rest, stay, abide, dwell, make your home, set up your tent. The Spirit comes to stay with Jesus. The same word is later used for God

the Father abiding in Jesus; for Jesus and his friends abiding in each other and for the Spirit abiding in the friends of Jesus.

The Spirit descends upon Jesus and makes his home with Jesus, he comes to stay. You are invited to join with the Spirit in abiding in Jesus, in making your home in him.

The Spirit goes through these five phases in the movement towards Jesus. You are invited to join yourself with the Spirit in coming from God, in longing for, gazing upon, moving towards, and remaining with Jesus.

God bless you,

Tony