

JJ¹

In less than two weeks you could say that this most recent election cycle will finally be over. On January 20th, a new president will be sworn into office. Now whether this person was your candidate or not, the process is always long, drawn out and particularly frustrating. Perhaps one of the biggest frustrations comes when the field of candidates forms on either side. Maybe you've looked at the options over the years and wondered, "That's it? This is what we're supposed to choose from?"

What if one day there were a person groomed for office from the very beginning? All their upbringing and schooling both in the classroom and real world, political and practical, prepared them to be president. Their agenda was one of service to the citizens. This person was calm and collected, humble and gracious. They didn't clamor and shout on screen or off. They were a genuine person, not just a politician. They really cared for people. They wanted justice for all in accordance with the truth, and so on. Would you vote for that person? Would you want that person to be president?

You're probably thinking, "Well yes, of course I would!" Yet, you and I know, that person doesn't really exist. While we

may feel that many politicians aren't fit for office, there is one who is perfectly fit for the office he fills. But this person isn't filling some earthly political office, and he wasn't voted into office either. I'm talking about our Lord, Jesus Christ. Today as we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, we turn to an Old Testament prophecy about him that shows us that Jesus was and is in every way, **FIT FOR OFFICE**.

The office Jesus fills is that of Messiah, The Anointed One. While God the Son was Immanuel come to save us from our sins from the moment of his conception, his public ministry didn't begin until he was 30 years old when he was baptized by John the Baptizer in the Jordan River. Jesus' baptism, was in a way, his inauguration.

Yet even as the Son of God, Jesus didn't assume this office of Savior of the world, like some ministers today assume the office of the ministry for themselves apart from any group of believers calling them into that office. No, not even the Son of God was so arrogant! Today we again see that our Savior is entirely unlike us in so many ways, even though he came into this world to be just like us in every way, yet was without sin (Heb. 2:17; 4:15). This

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

is what he needed to be in order to be **FIT FOR OFFICE**.

The first verse of our text brings us right into our Gospel today. The LORD says through Isaiah: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight." The Father said much the same at Jesus' baptism: "This is my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with him" (Mt. 3:17). The LORD says through Isaiah: "I am placing my Spirit upon him." In the Gospel we heard, "Suddenly, the heavens were opened for him! He saw the Spirit of God, descending like a dove and landing on him..." (Mt. 3:16). The LORD says through Isaiah: "He will bring forth the verdict for the nations." And in response to John's reluctance to baptize Jesus, he responded: "Let it be so now, because it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15).



Now let's see why Jesus was qualified and **FIT FOR OFFICE** in the first place.

The LORD says through Isaiah: "He will not cry out. He will not raise his voice. He will not make his voice heard in the street." The Servant does not come like so many vying for office in the world. The Servant doesn't come as a talking face for a pet agenda that doesn't know how to be quiet for one minute. The Servant doesn't come to be a soapbox preacher, harassing

people in malls or clamoring for attention on the television. The Servant doesn't come raising his voice just to be heard or to incite people. No, the Servant comes calm and collected, humble and gracious. This is exactly what we see in Jesus. He is **FIT FOR OFFICE**.

The LORD says through Isaiah: "A bent reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not snuff out. He will faithfully bring forth the verdict." The

Servant comes completely unlike the powers in this world. Kings and leaders take and exert power by force, even over the weakest of a nation's citizens. In fact, in the world, it is the weakest who are often the most abused. But not so with the Servant. The Servant is going to use all his authority and power to heal and restore. In response to evil, he will love. When confronted with weak, even dying faith, the Ser-

vant will fan it into flame and give it new life. The Servant does not come to conquer and destroy except to conquer and destroy that which makes us weak—our sin and the power of Satan!

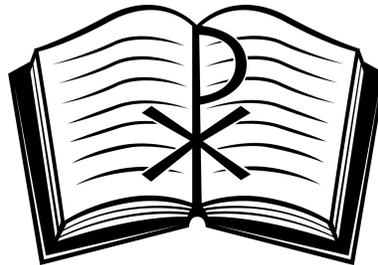
And lest anyone think the Servant is weak because he comes in gentleness and humility, The LORD says through Isaiah: "He will not grow dim, and he will not be crushed until he establishes the verdict on the earth." Where we grow faint and

weary, the Servant will not. Where we are crushed, the Servant will not be.

Yet one day he would be crushed, but not because of his own weakness. As the LORD says through Isaiah in chapter 53: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities..." (Is. 53:5a NIV84). The Servant would be crushed in order to "faithfully bring forth the verdict." And what is that verdict? "...the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Is. 53:5b NIV84). The world would be declared forgiven through the sacrifice of the Servant.

Again, friends, this is exactly what we see in Jesus, as Paul reminds us: "God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8 NIV84). In the courtroom of God, we are found not guilty because the Servant would be found guilty for us. This is exactly what we see Jesus do. He is **FIT FOR OFFICE**.

And if we have any qualms over the one who appointed Jesus to this office, God the Father gives us his own credentials: "This is what the true God says, the LORD, who creates the heavens and stretches them out, who spreads out the earth and everything that comes out of it, who gives breath to the people upon it and life to those who walk on it."



Friends, our Lord Jesus perfectly fits the qualifications to be our Savior. But there's a problem you and I all have with this by nature. In a way, this problem may even parallel with your thoughts at the conclusion of an election cycle. Maybe the person you thought was most qualified, most fit for office didn't make it out of the primary process of the election. Maybe you thought your choice was exactly the imaginary candidate I described earlier, but many didn't see that or agree with you. Well, to a far greater extent, it's far worse when it comes to Jesus.

Jesus is perfectly **FIT FOR OFFICE** but we would have never chosen him to be our Savior. By nature, we reject him. By nature we are blind to the truth and believe the devil's lies. You might think, "Oh no, I would choose Jesus. I would want him just as he

is!" Really? Do you think that by nature you're any better than those who walked this earth with Jesus, actually heard the words resonate from his vocal cords and witnessed his miracles? Remember what they wanted Jesus to be? They wanted him to be a bread king, an earthly king to make their nation great again (Jn. 6:15).

Friends, by nature we are just as blind. Neither *would* we nor *could* we choose Jesus as our Savior. But the Father did choose him and appointed him "to be a covenant for the people, to be a light for the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of the dungeon and to

bring those who live in darkness out of prison.”

Jesus is perfectly **FIT FOR OFFICE** and he has used that office, not to serve himself, but us. Jesus was like us in every way, all so that he could be entirely unlike us by perfectly fulfilling the law and then give himself as a sacrifice so that a verdict of “forgiven” could be declared to the world. But Jesus didn’t stop there. His love and authority reaches even into our sin-darkened souls and breaks the chains of our slavery to sin and prison of hell. This is what the Servant would do. This is what Jesus has done, for you. Jesus was and is in every way, **FIT FOR OFFICE**. Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for “To God Alone Be The Glory”. This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn’t about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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