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Gregory of Nyssa on Epiphany

We're sometimes asked "Are you sure the adoption of humanity is the gospel? I've never heard it before." That's why we like to bring in the thoughts of various theologians from history to add to our understanding of the gospel.

The following passage is from an Epiphany sermon by Gregory of Nyssa, who lived in the 4th century:

> Christ, then, was born as it were a few days ago—He Whose generation was before all things, sensible and intellectual. To-day He is baptized by John that He might cleanse those who were defiled, that He might bring the Spirit from above, and exalt humanity to heaven, that those who had fallen might be raised up and he who had cast them down [i.e. Satan] might be put to shame. And marvel not if God showed so great earnestness in our cause: for it was with care on the part of him who did us wrong that the plot was laid against us; it is with forethought on the part of our Maker that we are saved. . . Christ, the repairer of his [Satan's] evil-doing, assumes human nature in its fullness, and saves humanity, and becomes the type and figure of us all, to sanctify the first-fruits of every action, and leave to His servants no doubt in their zeal for the tradition [i.e. baptism]. Baptism, then, is a purification from sins, a remission of trespasses, a cause of renovation and regeneration. ~ *Oration On the Baptism of Christ*

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