

Leader guide

In this lesson:

SCRIPTURE

Mark 1:9-11

CORE PRACTICE: PRAYER

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20): I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

MEMORY VERSE

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

TAKE HOME TRUTH

Similar, yet different, Jesus' baptism is ultimately the affirmation that he is the Savior we desperately need.

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The Baptism of Jesus



OVERVIEW

You will often hear that baptism is the first step of obedience for the follower of Jesus Christ. This gives us some insight into the baptism of Jesus. Why was He baptized? What was unique about His baptism? How is His baptism different from our baptism?

NOTE: This week's sermon will be delivered early via video. Todd is opting to share some personal application this Sunday during the FFC Ankeny worship services on the topic of witnessing and sharing Jesus with others. The sermon for Mark 1:9-11 will be available prior to Sunday. As soon as it is posted, I will send you the link. If you are using the coordinated curriculum for your small group study, you can share the link ahead of time with your group members so they are up-to-speed on the content of the sermon.

INTRODUCTION

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How do people typically show approval of others?

What is one form of recognition you received growing up, whether at school, at home, or from friends?

Looking back at your notes from this week's sermon, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

Make sure you ask this question this week. It gives people the opportunity to discuss questions or issues that come up beyond the written questions. People's responses can often lead to one of the questions in the "Digging Deeper" section. Also, some weeks this question will result in a lot of discussion, other weeks, not so much.

READ THE TEXT

Read Mark 1:9-11. NOTE: Jesus' baptism is recorded in Mark 1:9-11, and also in Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-23, and John 1:29-34.

Mark 1:9-11 (ESV)

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

DIGGING DEEPER

In this section, feel free to develop your own questions to help guide your group's discussion. Below are some suggestions. Remember, if you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have to time to discuss every question. You may start with one that catches your attention so you don't run out of time. For example, it's not odd to start with Question #6, then go to Question #5 and if you have time come back to Question #4.

In his message, Todd described three facts about the baptism of Jesus that help us understand why He was baptized. Review these three facts as a group.

1. His baptism was singularly Trinitarian.

All three persons of the Godhead were present and active in all four accounts, showing us at the least that the ministry of Jesus wasn't a siloed life apart from his Father or the Holy Spirit. He had the Father's approval and the Spirit's power. Here's a beautiful depiction of the perfect unity of the Godhead; three persons, but one God.

Incidentally, we are called to baptize in the same manner....Matthew 28:19-20. And "name" is singular in that verse! Trinitarian baptism is meant to affirm our belief in the Trinity, and second to proclaim the work of all three in unity in saving anyone! Succinctly, the Father planned it, the Son purchased it, and the Spirit applied it. No one is ever saved without the work of all three!

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The traditional site of Jesus' baptism.

Charles Swindoll provides this picture of the Trinity as depicted in Mark 1:

The instant Jesus came up out of the water, a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit descended from the sky. Mark describes the visible form as “like a dove” and notes that “a voice came out of the heavens” addressing Jesus as “My beloved Son.” These two verses and their parallels (Matt. 3:16-17; Luke 3:22) feature all three persons of the Trinity. All three persons are God—the Father speaking from heaven, the Spirit descending like a dove, and the Son seeing the Spirit and hearing the voice. Without ceasing to be fully God, the three persons are distinct in that they interact with one another. In other words, God doesn’t emerge from the water as the Son, race to heaven from the body of Jesus to utter His affirmation as the Father, and then fly down again as the Holy Spirit to become the Son again. On the contrary, God is shown in this passage to be three and one simultaneously. While we see this interchange for a mere instant, the Trinity has always existed this way. As Wayne Grudem so expertly describes the “tri-unity,”

*God eternally exists as three persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
and each person is fully God,
and there is one God.*

[Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Mark (Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 2) (p. 21). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.]

2. His baptism was publicly inaugural.

Just as this began Jesus’ ministry, so baptism begins our life of service. Baptism isn’t the final step of membership, but the first step in discipleship. No wonder, as the apostles continued the ministry of Jesus, they called for baptism as the first step. It’s the sign and symbol we are willing to obey.

3. His baptism was perfectly identifying.

- Identifying in our condition as sinners.
- Identifying in our solution as Savior.

In summary, he was baptized to display his deity, begin his ministry, and identify with sinners.

In three keywords Jesus was baptized to SHOW who he really was, begin his ministry to SERVE, and point to his perfect ability to SAVE sinners.

Swindoll adds to the our understanding of why Jesus was baptized?

Perhaps even more significant to the Lord's plan, Jesus presented Himself for baptism in order to give the symbol of immersion in water a new meaning. Without a doubt, the significance of baptism changed on that day. With that simple ceremony, Jesus officially began a journey that would lead to His ultimate destiny—His atoning sacrifice for sin. He thus made baptism a symbolic doorway to a new kind of life, through which He would be the first to walk. On behalf of the nation, and of all humankind, Jesus received the new covenant (cf. Ezek. 36:25-28. See also Isa. 44:3; 59:21; Jer. 31:31-33; Ezek. 37:14; 39:29; and Joel 2:28-29). By our baptism into Christ, we enter that covenant and partake of all its blessings. [Swindoll, 20]

We learned last week that John preached a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (v. 4). Why did Jesus need to be baptized if he was sinless (1 Peter 2:22)?

Many critics of the deity of Jesus Christ see this admission by Mark as a “gotcha” point. Yet, there is a good reason for the Servant Jesus to submit Himself to baptism. The editors of Tabletalk Magazine explain this well:

First, in light of everything the Bible teaches about our Lord, we must agree with John Calvin that “the general reason why Christ received baptism was, that he might render full obedience to the Father.” Jesus saw His baptism as fulfilling “all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15); it was part of His vocation to obey every commandment God gave Israel. As Dr. R.C. Sproul has frequently noted, Christ had to keep every stipulation the Lord has given His people in order to secure a perfect righteousness for us before God. God sent John the Baptist to command the Jews to be baptized in preparation for the arrival of His kingdom, so Jesus, as our Savior, had to keep that command.

Christ's perfectly keeping the law of God falls under the category of what theologians call His “active obedience.” It was not enough for Jesus to suffer and die as the substitute for sinners. The atonement provides for our forgiveness, which is of course necessary, but the Lord demands more than a clean slate from us. Just as Adam had to actively obey God in order to pass His probation in the garden (Gen. 2–3), so men and women must have a positive record of righteous obedience in order to be citizens of heaven. By faith alone, Christ's perfect record is credited to us (2 Cor. 5:21). [Tabletalk Magazine, January 2016: Apologetics: Giving an Answer for Our Hope (Sanford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, Inc., 2016), 39.]

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Humanly speaking, what did Jesus leave behind in Nazareth to travel to the Jordan River and be baptized?

Jesus' baptism involved a decision and a surrender, a momentous decision and a total surrender. Note the words "Jesus came from Nazareth...and was baptized in Jordan." In Nazareth Jesus had all that most people dream about: a happy home, a close-knit family, a profitable occupation (carpenter), friends, and all the fond memories that accumulate through the years of childhood and youth. Yet He left it all; He left Nazareth to be baptized by John in the Jordan. Why? Within Jesus' mind was the call of God to launch the mission to save the world, a mission that demanded the sacrifice of everything:

- *the sacrifice of all that He had in Nazareth.*
- *the sacrifice of a long earthly life. By choosing the mission of God, He was to be killed in only thirty-six months.*
- *the sacrifice of His Godly righteousness. He was to become the sin-bearer for the world.*
- *the sacrifice of God's presence. In death, God was to forsake Him.*

Why should believers today follow Jesus in baptism?

The decision to follow Jesus involves both baptism and the identifying of ourselves with Jesus the Messiah, the Lamb of God. If Jesus had not been baptized, He would not have identified Himself as the Messiah, nor would He have been known as the Messiah. How much more with us. If we are not baptized, we do not identify ourselves with Jesus, nor are we known to be identified with Jesus.

NOTE: The next baptism in Ankeny is on February 24. Have you obeyed by being baptized?

Acts 2:38 (ESV) And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:48 (ESV) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Acts 22:16 (ESV) And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Does God still "commission" believers today for service?

Every true believer is commissioned and empowered by God to do the work of God. Some commissioning experiences are dramatic (the heavens are torn apart); other experiences are not so dramatic (the still small voice of God's Spirit tugs at the heart with an awareness that one is called). Nevertheless, every true believer is commissioned and empowered by God's Spirit.

The awareness of the commission and power, however, is a different matter. Too many are not aware of God's commission and of the Spirit's presence within. What makes the difference? The first two points: one's decision and submission, one's beginning and identification. Too many of us lack a consistent commitment in both steps. As a result, we wander through life unaware of God's commission and the presence of God's Spirit empowering us to do the task.

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Too many of us do not make a decision to follow Christ totally; we do not surrender all we are and have to Christ. Therefore, we are not aware of the great call and commission of Christ.

Too many of us do not begin with Christ; we just never identify with Him. We may be baptized, but we never follow through with Christ. The world never knows that we are a follower of Christ, not a committed, genuine follower.

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 26:16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Isaiah 6:8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

Book Study: Twelve Ordinary Men

This portion of our group lesson is based on Twelve Ordinary Men by John MacArthur. This week's discussion is based on the Introduction and Chapter 2: The Men Jesus Called: Perfectly Average, Outstandingly Ordinary.

What was extraordinary about the men Jesus choose to become His apostles to the church?

What is extraordinary about the 12 men chosen to become apostles is how ordinary they were as men. John MacArthur describes their extraordinary ordinariness:

... they were perfectly ordinary men in every way. Not one of them was renowned for scholarship or great erudition. They had no track record as orators or theologians. In fact, they were outsiders as far as the religious establishment of Jesus' day was concerned. They were not outstanding because of any natural talents or intellectual abilities. On the contrary, they were all too prone to mistakes, misstatements, wrong attitudes, lapses of faith, and bitter failure—no one more so than the leader of the group, Peter. Even Jesus remarked that they were slow learners and somewhat spiritually dense (Luke 24:25).

They spanned the political spectrum. One was a former Zealot—a radical, determined to overthrow Roman rule. But another had been a tax collector—virtually a traitor to the Jewish nation and in collusion with Rome. At least four, and possibly seven, were fishermen and close friends from Capernaum, probably having known one another from childhood. The others must have been tradesmen or craftsmen, but we are not told what they did before becoming followers of Christ. Most of them were from Galilee, an agricultural region at the

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intersection of trade routes. And Galilee remained their home base for most of Jesus' ministry—not (as some might think) Jerusalem in Judea, which was the political and religious capital of Israel.

*Yet with all their faults and character flaws—as remarkably ordinary as they were—these men carried on a ministry after Jesus' ascension that left an indelible impact on the world. Their ministry continues to influence us even today. God graciously empowered and used these men to inaugurate the spread of the gospel message and to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Ordinary men—people like you and me—became the instruments by which Christ's message was carried to the ends of the earth. No wonder they are such fascinating characters. [John F. MacArthur Jr., *Twelve Ordinary Men: How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness, and What He Wants to Do with You* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2002), xii-xiii.]*

Why did Jesus choose 12 men to become apostles? Why not eight or 18 or any other number of men?

The number twelve was filled with symbolic importance. There were twelve tribes in Israel. But Israel was apostate. The Judaism of Jesus' time represented a corruption of the faith of the Old Testament. Israel had abandoned divine grace in favor of works-religion. Their religion was legalistic. It was shot through with hypocrisy, self-righteous works, man-made regulations, and meaningless ceremonies. It was heretical. It was based on physical descent from Abraham rather than the faith of Abraham. In choosing twelve apostles, Christ was in effect appointing new leadership for the new covenant. And the apostles represented the new leaders of the true Israel of God—consisting of people who believe the gospel and were following the faith of Abraham (cf. Romans 4:16). In other words, the twelve apostles symbolized judgment against the twelve tribes of Old Testament Israel. [MacArthur, 19]

What is one qualification that is conspicuously missing in every one of the men chosen to serve as apostles?

What is common among these uncommon men was that none of them, not one, came from the religious ruling class—the priests, scribes, Pharisees, or Sadducees. In fact, they were complete outsiders from this class of people.

As we will see as we work our way through the gospel of Mark, there were two groups that openly opposed Jesus and His message and His work: the demons and the religious leaders. In fact, MacArthur describes the religious leaders as “the chief adversaries” of Jesus:

So we are first introduced to Jesus' chief adversaries in Luke 5:17, and Luke's account of their opposition fills the text through the end of chapter 5 and well into chapter 6. Luke describes the escalating conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of Judaism. They opposed Him when He healed a paralytic and forgave his sins (5:17–26). They opposed Him for eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners (5:27–39). They opposed Him when He permitted His disciples to pluck heads of grain and eat them on the Sabbath (6:1–5). And they opposed him for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (6:6–11). One after another, Luke recounts those incidents and highlights the growing opposition of the religious leaders.

The conflict reaches a high point in Luke 6:11. The scribes and Pharisees “were filled with rage, and discussed with one another

what they might do to Jesus.” Both Mark and Matthew are even more graphic. They report that the religious leaders wanted to destroy Jesus (Matthew 12:14; Mark 3:6). Mark says the religious leaders even got the Herodians involved in their plot. The Herodians were a political faction that supported the dynasty of the Herods. They were not normally allied with the Pharisees, but the two groups joined together in collusion against Jesus. They were already hatching plans to murder Him. [MacArthur, 6]

What can we learn about how God calls men and women to ministry from our Lord’s selection of these 12 specific men to serve as apostles?

The Twelve were personally selected and called by Christ. He knew them as only their Creator could know them (cf. John 1:47). In other words, He knew all their faults long before He chose them. He even knew Judas would betray Him (John 6:70; 13:21–27), and yet He chose the traitor anyway and gave him all the same privileges and blessings He gave to the others.

Think about the ramifications of this: From our human perspective, the propagation of the gospel and the founding of the church hinged entirely on twelve men whose most outstanding characteristic was their ordinariness. They were chosen by Christ and trained for a time that is best measured in months, not years. He taught them the Scriptures and theology. He disciplined them in the ways of godly living (teaching them and showing them how to pray, how to forgive, and how to serve one another with humility). He gave them moral instruction. He spoke to them of things to come. And He employed them as His instruments to heal the sick, cast out demons, and do other miraculous works. Three of them—Peter, James, and John—even got a brief glimpse of Him in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9).

It was a brief but intensive schedule of discipleship. And when it was over, on the night of Jesus’ betrayal, “all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26:56). From an earthly point of view, the training program looked like a monumental failure. It seemed the disciples had forgotten or ignored everything Christ had ever taught them about taking up the cross and following Him. In fact, their own sense of failure was so profound that they went back to their old vocations for a time. And even at that, it appeared they would fail (John 21:3–4).

But encouraged by the risen Lord, they returned to their apostolic calling. Empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they valiantly undertook the task to which Jesus had called them. The work they subsequently began continues today, two thousand years later. They are living proof that God’s strength is made perfect in weakness. In and of themselves they were clearly not sufficient for the task (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:16). But God led them in triumph in Christ, and through them He diffused “the fragrance of His knowledge in every place” (v. 14). [MacArthur, xiii–xiv]

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BECOMING A HOUSE OF PRAYER

“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices; Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” – Isaiah 56:7.

Prayer is an important part of being in a small group. Group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

1. WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

2. PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

3. WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.

NEXT STEPS

Questions to consider as you continue to reflect on what you learned this week:

- Take Action: Do you need to follow Jesus in believer's baptism? The next baptism at First Family Ankeny is February 24. If you would like to talk to someone about baptism, simply email info@ffclife.com and one of our leaders will contact you.

- Take Courage: As we will see throughout our study this spring, Jesus continues to call common people to an uncommon task. If you are a believer, He is calling you to a life of discipleship and service.

Work to memorize this week's memory verse: John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

This week's Core Practice: Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20): I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Take Home Truth is “Similar, yet different, Jesus' baptism is ultimately the affirmation that he is the Savior we desperately need.”

Remember to use the Daily Bible Reading plan as part of your walk with Christ, taking the time to reflect on each passage and what it means for your lives.

Mark 1:9-11 (ESV)

9] In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

The public ministry of Jesus left no room for doubt about whom he was or why he came. At the age of thirty, he is ready to begin the work of a Jewish Rabbi. It is humorous to think about how many people believe Jesus was a carpenter, in fact, Jesus was called Rabbi numerous times in the Bible, even by his scoffers. At the age of thirty, a real Jewish Rabbi would be baptized, then go choose his twelve disciples or students. Jesus was about to attain one of the highest levels one could attain as a Rabbi. In reality, Jesus had been training for this time since he was a child. At the age of twelve, he would have been chosen to become a student of one of the two leading Rabbis of his day. The last 18 years of his life he was developing his "yoke" or his set of teaching. In order to attain this next level one had to have two miracles in their lives, Jesus was about to have them. The heavens opening up and the dove descending upon him was the first miracle, and then the voice of God approving of him as his son would have been the second miracle. This was not just a regular baptizing that Jesus was taking part in; this was the beginning of something awesome. [Cantrell's Bible Commentary Snapshots]

Jesus comes to John probably in the middle or latter days of John's ministry. He comes to be baptized, an event so significant that it is recorded in all four Gospels (cf. Matt 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:28-34). Mark uses the word baptize/baptism six times in the first nine verses of the book. Still, this act is surprising: Why was He baptized? Matthew tells us that John the Baptist was opposed to baptizing Christ, and he had a pretty good argument (Matt 3:14; cf. Mark 1:7). Jesus, however, says it must take place "for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15). But then, what does that mean? I believe we can tease out the answer as we look at seven truths His baptism teaches us. The baptism is the beginning of His humiliation as He faithfully submits to the Father's will and willingly identifies Himself with sinful humanity. It is no more odd for Jesus to be baptized in the Jordan River than for Him to hang on the cross at Calvary as the sinless and spotless Son of God (Dever, "Jesus' Debut").

Get to Know the Lord Jesus. I often say to brand-new believers that the Gospel of Mark ought to be the first book they read. It will acquaint them with the Lord. It will help them know what He did and how He lived during His earthly ministry. In some places, it will explain why. It is written for the person who is not acquainted with the Old Testament. It's written with action in mind. The Swindoll Study Bible NLT (Kindle Locations 117752-117755). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

"...shoes": Make a remez study of shoes: Deut 29:5; Neh 9:21; Lk 15:22; Eph 6:15; Ex 3; Ruth 4; John 1. Shoes speak of your walk.

Why Was Christ Baptized?

It even seemed to John that there was a contradiction in Jesus' baptism: Matthew (Mt 3:14) records John's protest. It would seem to contradict the truth of the announcement: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

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Every year, Jewish families would choose a Passover lamb and examine it with care to assure that it was free of any spot or blemish. (They would take it into their home for three days and then kill it.)

Jesus was baptized to be identified with His sinful people under the law of God.

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Galatians 4:4,5

Jesus was voluntarily identifying Himself as a man, undertaking the obligation to fulfill the requirements of the Law, to accomplish His purpose to save His people from their sin.

10] And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Six men saw the heavens opened:

- Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1)
- Jesus (Mk. 1:10)
- Nathanael (Jn. 1:51)
- Stephen (Acts 7:56)
- Peter (Acts 10:11)
- John (Rev. 4:1; 11:19; 19:11)

Immediately—This is the first of many times (no fewer than forty-one) when Mark will use his favorite Greek adverb, euthys [2117], “immediately.” Sometimes we should interpret the word literally to mean the given action occurred the very next instant. Other times, however, “immediately” is merely Mark’s way of connecting two related stories or infusing a sense of drama or surprise into the narrative. Mark’s intention seems to be to show readers that the ministry of Jesus was an exciting time, often punctuated by surprising events. [Swindoll]

The heavens being torn open ... The Holy Spirit descends on Jesus through an opening in the sky. Jesus sees the heavens being “torn open.” The word occurs only one other time in Mark’s Gospel, when God the Father tears the temple curtain in two from top to bottom! At His baptism and at His crucifixion the Father intervenes supernaturally, eschatologically, declaring that Jesus is the Son of God.

The presence of the Spirit on the Messiah was promised in Isaiah 42:1: “This is My Servant; I strengthen Him, this is My Chosen One; I delight in Him. I have put My Spirit on Him; He will bring justice to the nations.” The prophet elaborates on this promise in Isaiah 11:2: “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”

Jesus is the fulfillment of these promises. Like a dove (it was not literally a dove), in gentleness and purity, the Spirit came into Jesus, and He was equipped for His ministry. Even though the Spirit came into Jesus (Gk eis), this is no “adoptionistic” Christology. He did not become the Son of God at the moment of His baptism. No, He was declared to be and empowered as the Son of God for the Suffering Servant ministry. John Piper says,

When Jesus was baptized along with all the repenting people who wanted to be on God’s side, it was as though the commander-in-chief

had come to the front lines, fastened his bayonet, strapped on his helmet, and jumped into the trench along with the rest of us. And when he did that, his Father in heaven, who had sent him for this very combat, signified with the appearance of a dove that the Holy Spirit would be with him in the battles to come. (Piper, "Christ in Combat")

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"...like a dove"—The Poet's Dove:

*The dove that abandoned Noah
...did not rest on Abraham: he lied;
...did not rest on Moses: he failed;
...did not rest on David: he sinned...*

11] And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus' Baptism Revealed the Triune God. Adrian Rogers said, "The doctrine of the Trinity is not beyond logic and reason—just above it!" And as difficult as it can be to wrap our minds around the concept of a triune God, we clearly see all three persons of the Godhead at Jesus' baptism. The Son is baptized, the Father speaks, and the Spirit descends into (eis) Jesus "like a dove." Like the ending of Matthew's Gospel (28:19–20), the beginning of the Gospel of Mark gives us a brief glimpse into the nature of our God, the great Three in One. It also serves as a confirming witness concerning the identity of Jesus the Son.

"...**beloved**": The word "beloved" *agapetos* not only declares affection; it also carries the meaning of "the only one." Three years later, at the mount of the Transfiguration, as Moses and Elijah stood beside Him, once more a voice out of heaven used the same words (Mk 9:7).
