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“The Baptism of Jesus” Mark 1:9-11

Introduction

We return after an unplanned break in the action to our regular study of the gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark this morning. Mark begins his fast-paced book in this way, “The beginning [the genesis] of the gospel [the stunning announcement of a coming king] of Jesus Christ [Messiah], the Son of God!” For the next 7 verses he then focuses on the ministry of John the Baptizer who was the forerunner, the preparer of the way, for the coming king Jesus. Then in verse 9 he actually begins the story of Jesus—not with background to his ancestors, an account of his supernatural birth, some riveting stories about his childhood, vignettes from his family life, or what he did from the time of his initiation into adulthood until him entering public life. Nothing like this at all. Rather, Mark, as he did with John the Baptist, just drops us into the very beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry with these words:

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 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. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” ” (Mark 1:9–11, ESV)

What words! **Brief words!** A mere fifty-three in the original Greek. Every gospel writer tells this story but none as economically as Mark does. Matthew has the fullest account of Christ's baptism (3:13-17) and Luke 3:21-22 and John 1:32-34 also record what happened at this time.

Unapologetic words. By that I mean, words that give no defense for the odd fact that Jesus submitted himself to this baptism that symbolized repentance from sin. That's odd because Jesus was sinless! What's going on here? Jesus, the perfect, sinless God-man willingly and voluntarily being identified with an act that identifies with sinful humanity? More on that in a few minutes. But what is stunning about this is that there is no explanation of it. No defense of it.

As commentator James Brooks points out, “So potentially embarrassing is the idea that the Christian Lord was baptized by a Jewish prophet in a rite that for others symbolized repentance for their sins that the early church would never have invented the story.” No one who was writing a fraudulent account of Jesus would have included this story. So we know it is authentic.

Cataclysmic words! In this brief, unapologetic account, there are earth-shaking events. The heavens rip open! God the Father speaks! And the Spirit descends, anoints and empowers Jesus for ministry! Only time we heaven tearing open! Only one of three times the Father speaks! And the only time the Spirit descends like a dove! Sit up, take note! Something supernatural is happening here!

So though brief, these words speak of something monumental unfolding! The baptism of Jesus has sweeping and far-reaching implications. James Edwards says it well,

The significance of the event is vastly disproportionate to its size, however. As the inaugural event of Jesus' public ministry, the baptism tells us not what Jesus does but what God does to him. A reference in Acts 1:21–22 testifies that from the earliest days of the Christian movement the baptism was regarded as a defining and indispensable fact of Jesus' life. When the apostles found it necessary to choose a replacement for Judas, the main criterion was finding someone who had accompanied Jesus from his *baptism* onward. Although the Gospel of John commences with the preexistence of the Word of God and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke with the portentous circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth, Mark begins the story of Jesus with the inaugural event that the church from its very inception regarded as commencing the saving significance of Jesus' life and ministry, his baptism in the Jordan by John (p. 34)

This is monumental because, as we shall see, you have all the members of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—present. God the Father affirms the Son. The Spirit indwells and empowers the Son. And the purpose is to inspire the readers and the hearers to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and to love and take pleasure in Him!

This event is monumental because it confirms the Sonship of Jesus and it is the commencement of His public servanthood in ministry. We indeed are standing on holy ground, beloved, as we consider these sacred, inspired words that recored the baptism of Jesus by John and the authentication of Jesus by the Father and the Spirit. Let's look at this text in those two parts: baptism and authentication.

The baptism of Jesus: His inauguration into public ministry

Verse 9 states some simple facts but leaves us to wrestle with some profound truths. “*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*” (Mark 1:9, ESV). First the simple facts, then a profound question.

When was He baptized?

The text tell us when Jesus was baptized. “In those days Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee was baptized.” According to Luke 3:23, Jesus was **about 30 years old** when he was baptized. According to a chronology of Jesus' life and John's life, he was baptized likely around 26-27 AD or so. John had been baptizing for six months. He would go on doing so and preparing the way for Jesus for another six months after this. Then Herod the King would arrest him and John would remain

in jail for about a year. Then to please his wicked wife, Herod would chop John's head off ending his prophetic and preparatory ministry!

By whom was He baptized?

The main character up to this point was John. That tells us by whom Jesus was baptized? Jesus now becomes the main character as “he came [an imperfect tense “was coming” which draws the reader into the action] from Nazareth of Galilee.” Remember that John is writing to a Roman or Gentile audience who would largely be unfamiliar with the geography of Israel—which is why he says “Nazareth of Galilee.” This term would also jolt his readers with a Jewish orientation. Let me explain.

Nazareth was an obscure village which is not ever mentioned in the OT, by Josephus—a well-known Jewish historian who lived around the time of Jesus, or in the Talmud—the definitive Jewish commentary on the OT. In fact, this is the only clear reference to Nazareth in all of Mark. It was virtually an unknown village 70 miles north of Jerusalem that enjoyed, let's say, a less than favorable reputation among the Jewish people. But it was Jesus' hometown.

“Nazareth of Galilee”. Galilee wasn't exactly a popular region among the Jews either. If you were a Jew you wanted to live as close to Jerusalem as possible. That's where the action was! That's where all the really important people lived. Jerusalem to the Jews was like New York is to the financial movers and shakers, like Washington, D. C. is to political power brokers, and like L.A. is to the media moguls. Nazareth was one of the least desirable places to live in Israel. In fact, it wasn't on anyone's list, nor was Galilee.

Oh sure, Galilee was part of the land conquered by Joshua but later it was invaded and ruled by the feared Assyrians who then deported and re-located all the Jews and populated the land with---Gentiles! When the Jews eventually re-settled much later in Galilee, they tried to get the Gentiles to be circumcised—but that didn't go over too well. Nor did the attempts to try to get these unclean Gentiles to convert to Judaism. So at this time Galilee was known as “Galilee of the Gentiles.” And Jews didn't like living close to the Gentiles. So if you were a Jew from Galilee you were pretty much on the fringe of that culture, you were blacklisted, scorned, hated, and despised by those who lived among the elite in Jerusalem and in Judea—which is where people were coming from to be baptized by John (1:5).

Nathanael pretty summed up the Jewish view of this region when he asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46) And when people heard him teach, “*some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? ”* (John 7:40–41, ESV).

They didn't expect Messiah to come from the ghettos of Galilee. No, he would certainly come from Jerusalem or at least Judea.

But you see they forgot what Isaiah the prophet said, “*In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.*” (Isaiah 9:1–2, ESV).

So Jesus from Nazareth comes out to John. What's fascinating about this is that they are related. John's mom Elizabeth and Jesus' mother Mary were cousins. Their moms both were pregnant with their sons at the same time. Elizabeth became pregnant six months before Mary found out that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and she would carry the Christ. They met shortly after this and as Mary and Elizabeth spoke, Elizabeth's baby leapt in the womb—the first time Jesus and John met we might say.

Can you imagine what it must have been like when these two mothers met at later family gatherings from time to time? The conversation must have inevitably turned to their children as it always does when moms get together. Maybe Elizabeth would ask Mary, “So how is your oldest, Jesus, doing? “Oh, he's perfect! Never disobeys! Never causes any problems! Perfect!” Well, that was right, wasn't it? What else could she say? Right?

And then imagine if Mary and Elizabeth ran into each other within the last year or so? “What's your son Jesus up to, Mary?” Elizabeth would ask. “Oh, he's running the carpenter's shop! Everyone likes his work. And how about John?” Mary replies. “Oh, he's really sort of an odd one. He doesn't dress too well—always wearing camel-haired garments, eats sort of odd, and he just likes spending time—well—out in the wilderness of all places. Hard to understand.”

Of course, we don't know all of that for sure, but as far as we know from Scripture, this is the only face to face meeting between John and Jesus. The only at least that Scripture tells us about. We know that John certainly knew about Jesus but we don't know even if he initially recognized him. But that's the scene.

Where was He baptized?

Notice, a second question; where was Jesus baptized. Well, we learned in 1:5 that John was baptizing “in the Jordan” and that's where Jesus was baptized as well. Now, let me tell you, the Jordan River is one of the most overrated rivers in the world. All the artists have this idyllic scene of John in the Jordan. But please understand that the Jordan River is only about 105 miles long if you flew from end to end. With all its twists and turns it is only about 200 miles long. Sure it begins up in northern Palestine and flows down emptying into the Dead Sea. But

even during flood stage it was rarely 100 feet wide and never more than ten feet deep and it is easily forded in several spots. The word “river” hardly applies to it. It is nothing say like the mighty Mississippi or the amazing Amazon River. But for some time, John has been moving up and down the Jordan baptizing Jesus and one day Jesus comes to the Jordan and, although the Gospels don't say, tradition says this baptism took place at the southern end of the Jordan.

How was He baptized?

How was Jesus baptized? That's a question that has answered differently by different groups in the church throughout its history. Based on the best available Greek grammars and language experts, I believe and we teach that Jesus was immersed under the water. I won't get technical here but the Greek says Jesus “was baptized by John *in* the Jordan”, a verb of motion suggesting “going into something.” And verse 10 reads “he *came up out* of the water” again suggesting movement. Of course our Christians brothers from other denominations in the household of faith would say this simply means that Jesus stood on the bank of the Jordan or actually just stood in the Jordan and John either sprinkled him or poured water over his head, but the language of the text seems to favor strongly “immersion.”

Disagreement over the mode of baptism is not a test for fellowship in the larger body of Christ, although it is a distinctive of churches such as Baptist, Bible and other non-denominational churches. Much more could be said about that especially when it comes to what we believe baptism symbolizes, but for now, I will just say the text itself supports immersion as the way John was baptizing.

Why was He baptized?

Important as the mode may be, the most pressing question that arises from the text is why was Jesus even baptized? I mentioned that no one in the church would have invented this story. Because it doesn't make any sense. I mean it didn't make any sense even to John at first. Turn over and let's look at Matthew's account. Here's how Matthew recounts it:

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ”
(Matthew 3:13–14, ESV)

Do you see this? John can't figure out why Jesus would come to be baptized by him. Jesus, he says, should be baptizing him, not he [John] baptizing Jesus. In fact, again in the original, it read, he was repeatedly trying to prevent him. There was quite a discussion, several minutes perhaps, here and it ended it seemed in a stalemate. This just didn't make any sense to John. Why? Because he knew Jesus had no sin, so there was no need of repentance of sin, no need of confession. Jesus wasn't under the coming judgment of God like the rest of the crowds

coming out to John. He didn't need conversion or transformation. He didn't need to flee God's wrath. Jesus was in a different category.

Now it 's true that John had already refused to baptize some people—namely the Pharisees and Sadducees who had come out to check him out. And now he refuses at first to baptize Jesus. But the first group he refused was due to there to their lack of repentance of pervasive sinfulness. Jesus is in a different category. John doesn't want to baptize him because of his sinlessness. I mean Matthew 3:14 is one of the greatest affirmations of Jesus' sinlessness anywhere in the Bible. John is really saying, “Jesus, this is a baptism of repentance for sins. You aren't in that category! You don't need this. You are the one mightier than I. I am baptizing with water, but you are coming with the baptism of the Spirit. I'm not worthy to even untie your sandals. Behold the Lamb of God [the spotless, unblemished, undefiled, perfect Lamb] who takes away the sins of the world.”

So, what's going on? Why was Jesus baptized by John? Well, there are certainly some unsatisfactory and biblically unsupportable answers that men have offered such as one offered by the false “Gospel according to the Hebrews which posits, ““Behold, the mother of the Lord and His brethren said to Him, John the Baptist baptizes for the remission of sins, let's go and be baptized by him.' But He said to them, ‘What sin have I committed that I should go and be baptized by him, except per chance this very thing that I have said is ignorance?’” So, this false gospel says Jesus was baptized to please his mother even though he had never sinned unless he had sinned just then with his ignorance of sin.” That's pretty far out.

Others suggest that this baptism would have been part of the initiatory rites of priests. That's not supportable. Other say this was proselyte baptism so he could identify with the Gentiles. I don't think so. And then some say Jesus was just letting John do his thing so he would validate John? Incorrect. And so is the view that this baptism was a vicarious act like on the cross in which He actually purchased righteousness and pardon for believers. None are correct.

I'm not sure why people just don't let Scripture speak for itself. I mean Jesus gives us the answer in Matthew 3:15, ““*But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.*” (Matthew 3:15, ESV). It's fitting, proper, the right thing to do “to fulfill all righteousness.” What's that? Righteousness is simply conforming to the will, to the law, of God. Did God require this baptism? Yes, according to John 1:33 where John says, God “sent me to baptize with water.” And so this is what God was commanding at this time. And Jesus was totally holy and obedient to the will of God. To be baptized was part of the plan of God and part of the perfect righteous life that Jesus would live on this earth. Bible theologians call this the active obedience of Christ. He was to fulfill all righteousness. He lived an absolutely perfectly righteous life. That's the

point of 2 Corinthians 5:21, “He who knew no sin [all righteousness] became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Did you get that? As one pastor says regarding every true child of God, “God treats Jesus Christ as if he had lived my life and he treats every believer as if he/she had lived Jesus life.”

Walter Wessel in the Expositors' Bible Commentary explains, ““All righteousness” is a reference to God’s plan and purpose for Jesus. Part of that plan was the complete identification of Jesus at the very outset of his ministry with man and his sin. This he did by submitting to baptism.”

Not only is there this active obedience involved in righteousness. There is also a passive obedience—death on the cross.

So, at the very outset of his earthly ministry, Christ is looking to the cross. He begins at the beginning of his public ministry to identify with sinners. Many commentators bring this point out:

“In his baptism he associated himself with us sinners and placed himself among the guilty—not for his own salvation but for ours—not for his guilt but for ours—not because he feared the wrath to come, but to save us from it. His baptism meant the Cross!¹

D. Edmond Hiebert concurs, “He thus deliberately identified with sinners, taking His place with them in order that, as their representative, He might redeem the. In entering upon His redemptive mission by a symbolic act, Jesus committed Himself to a program of death and resurrection which would in due course consummate in the reality of His death and resurrection on behalf of sinners.”

The authentication of Jesus: His coronation into messianic kingship

Now, that's the baptism of Jesus—the inauguration of his public ministry—the dividing line between his private and public life. The following verses then speak of the immediate response of the Godhead to this inauguration. And it is no less than the authentication of Jesus or His coronation as He commences His messianic responsibilities. Three things happen that signify this coronation: heaven opens, the Spirit descends and a voice from heaven speaks. All three show that Jesus is the more powerful one of Mark 1:7.

“And when he came up out of the water, immediately [Mark's signature phrase which he uses more than all the other three gospel writers do combined] he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” ” (Mark 1:10–11, ESV)

¹ Hughes, R. K. (1989). *Mark : Jesus, servant and savior*. Preaching the Word (24). Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books.

Dramatic opening

First, Jesus [and the word “he” is emphatic suggesting only Jesus saw these things happening. However John 1:32 indicates that at least John the Baptist saw this as well] saw the heavens being torn open!” This is HUGE! Monumental! Cataclysmic! Schizo! This is a cosmic event! And it isn't a vision! It is happening with eyes wide open!

It's a term that is used in the LXX (Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) to describe the parting of the Red Sea and when Moses strikes the rock and water pours out (Exodus 14:21; Isaiah 48:21). Zechariah uses the word in telling us how the Mount of Olives splits in two when Jesus comes again (Exodus 14:21; Zech 14:4; Isaiah 48:21). Both occurrences in Mark—here and in Mark 15:38 when the temple tears in two from top to bottom--reveal Jesus as the Son of God.

Way back in 250 BC we have this piece written by a Jewish rabbi and listen to how accurate it is in describing what would happen when Messiah comes:

The heavens will be opened,
and from the temple of glory sanctification will come upon him,
with a fatherly voice, as from Abraham to Isaac.
And the glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him.
And the spirit of understanding and sanctification
shall rest upon him [in the water].
For he shall give the majesty of the Lord to those who are his sons in truth forever.
(*Testament of Levi* 18:6–8; Charlesworth, *OTP*, 1.795)²

700 years before Christ, Isaiah spent several chapters giving us prophecy about the coming Servant of the Lord. Isaiah 40-53 are full of such rich material, the most well known of the Servant songs being Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Well, almost end of this great section after prophesying of the coming Servant, he writes, “*Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence—*” (Isaiah 64:1, ESV).

The heavens are now rending ! They are ripping open! Symbolic of the truth that God had not spoken through the prophets for 400 years. From Malachi in the OT until he speaks to Zechariah and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist, there had been no word from God! Now the heavens are opening! An era of new communication from God.

Divine anointing

Next, you have “the Spirit descending like on [better into] Christ like a dove!” Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest asserts, “His was the anointing with the Spirit for His three-fold ministry of Prophet, Priest, and King, the dynamic equipment

² Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament commentary (35). Grand Rapids, Mich; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

which would enable the Messiah to discharge the duties connected with these offices (Luke 4:16–19)³.

Now, please note Jesus doesn't become God at this point like some of the early Gnostic heretics taught when they opined that this was divinity entering Christ at his baptism and it left him just before the cross. No! This is simply the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1 which predicted of Messiah, “*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*” (Isaiah 61:1, ESV).

What is the significance of “the Holy Spirit descending like a dove”? Well, just note the whole phrase. It doesn't say the Holy Spirit is a dove or is even like a dove. I know I am probably going to cause fits for those who try to market religious products. I don't want to upset anybody here but despite all the holy hardware that feature a dove on it—Bible covers, jewelry and even church signs, the Holy Spirit is not a dove. It simply says he descended like a dove. That's it. There isn't some link between Noah's dove and this one or even between the dove as a common sacrifice. No, it simply says the Holy Spirit descended like a dove.

How do dove's descends? Well, they do it gently, softly, delicately. I guess you might say unlike an eagle or a vulture or a hawk! That's the point! The heavens rip open and hear comes this dove-like descent of the Spirit!

What was happening? Simply put, the Spirit is entering Christ as He begins His official ministry now as Messiah. Even previous to that the Spirit was upon Christ. The 19th century Scottish theologian George Smeaton, one of Jerry Bridges' favorite authors has written,

“We must ascribe to the Spirit all the progress in Christ's mental and spiritual development, all His advancement and knowledge and holiness the Spirit was given to Him in consequence of the personal union in a measure which no man could possess, constituting the link between deity and humanity, perpetually imparting the full consciousness of His personality and making Him inwardly aware of His divine Sonship at all times. This is great mystery that always must be considered.”

All Jesus' works, all His words were mediated by means of the Holy Spirit from His deity to His humanity, so that in Matthew 12 when the Jews said, “You do what You do and say what You say by the power of Satan,” remember that? By the power of Beelzebub. Jesus said, “You have blasphemed the Holy Spirit.” If that's your conclusion, that all that I say and all that I do is from Satan, you have just blasphemed the Holy Spirit because it is by the Holy Spirit that I do all these

³ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (Mk 1:10). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

things. The Holy Spirit is the means of everything, all knowledge, all action in the ministry of Jesus.

He was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who ministered to Him so that He grew in wisdom and favor with God and man. It was the Holy Spirit who came upon Him at His baptism, signaling that everything in His ministry would pass from deity to humanity through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

It was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness (v. 12). The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to preach. The Holy Spirit sustained him in the Garden and as He goes to the cross. *“For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”* (Hebrews 9:13–14, ESV)

When He came out of the grave, Romans 1 says, *“and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,”* (Romans 1:4, ESV)

Divine approval

Dramatic opening followed by divine anointing and now divine approval. “And a voice came from heaven [following the Jewish custom for using 'heaven' to refer to God], “You are my Beloved Son [my one son, the beloved one]; with you [emphatic—with this one in contrast to everyone else] I am well pleased [I was well pleased in the past and am right now—which is one reason that the idea that Jesus became God's Son at this point just doesn't fly]. This is one of three instances where as Jesus says in John 8:18, “The Father bears witness of Me!” The Son is coronated as Messiah with this statement!

This announcement coordinates and fulfills Psalm 2:7 which speaks of God's Son being the King as well as Isaiah 42:1 which prophesies of the Servant in whom is God's delight!

Powerful words here. James Edwards reminds us, “To no prophet had words been spoken such as the words to Jesus at the baptism. Abraham was a friend of God (Isa 41:8), Moses a servant of God (Deut 34:5), Aaron a chosen one of God (Ps 105:26), David a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14), and Paul an apostle (Rom 1:1). Only Israel (Exod 4:23) — and the king as Israel's leader (Ps 2:7) — had been called God's Son before.”⁴

⁴ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament commentary (38). Grand Rapids, Mich; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“You are My Son!” That is Jesus has the same nature as the Father. He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father! “*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*” (Hebrews 1:3, ESV) “

“You are my *beloved* Son!” The Son of my Love! Agapetos! Infinitely precious in my sight! No higher love than this. The Father cherishes the Son! His love for the Son is deep-seated and thorough-going. His love is as great as His infinite heart! A purposeful, vast, intelligent, tender, and timeless love! Oh, Mark gives us a portrait of a Servant, but here as well in 1:1 and several other times He also affirms the deity of Jesus Christ! (3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:1–11; 13:32; 14:61–62; and 15:39).

“With you I am well pleased!” I am delighted, take pleasure, and am satisfied in You! Mark uses a verb here that means “I have always been delighted, am currently delighted in, and will always be delighted in You! My delight has no beginning and no ending!”

And now this Son will perform all the acts of God in his earthly ministry as seen in his forgiveness of sins (2:5), acceptance of sinners (2:15), calling of tax collectors into discipleship (2:13), healing of the sick (1:40ff.) and casting out demons (1:24), recovery of the true intent of the Sabbath (2:28), and challenge to the Jewish religious establishment as represented in the oral tradition (7:1ff.), the temple (11:12ff.), and the Sanhedrin (14:61ff.). It is not coincidental that when Jesus is later confronted by the Sanhedrin asking, “‘By what authority do you do these things?’” he drives his questioners back to his baptism (11:27–33).⁵

What an event! Occurs in a remote wilderness setting but one with cosmic significance! And all three members of the Trinity are here! Bless God!

Here you have the confirmation of the Son and the commencement of His servanthood! And both of these—His claim to deity and His willingness to serve—are going to be tested in the next verse! But that is next week.

What comfort for all believers in this passage! Not only is the Son willing to serve and to be a sacrifice for sinners like us, suffering God's wrath in our stead, but the Spirit strengthens Him for such task and the Father is so delighted that He rends the heavens open and with expresses without shame His approval of His Son! All three are interested in our salvation! All three are One!

⁵ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament commentary (38). Grand Rapids, Mich; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

Christ is only object of saving faith! He alone can save You! God is the author of salvation! And the Spirit is the regenerating agent of salvation, that is, You need to be baptized by the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ—which happens at salvation. Being baptized with water after salvation is wonderful. But the most important baptism is that done by the Spirit when a person is saved. You may have been sprinkled, poured, immersed, or dry cleaned or whatever you have undergone! But you are not Christ's unless you have received the new birth through the Spirit, his cleansing from sin, and His empowering for service and godliness! If you have, then bless God today—Father, Son and Spirit! If not, then seek Christ this day!