***Remembering My Baptism***

**Lent: Journey to the Cross #1 March 6, 2022**

***When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too.  
And as he was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit   
descended on him in bodily form like a dove.   
And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son,   
whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*Luke 3:21-22**

**The Lenten journey begins**

*21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*

*23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph . . . .*

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,  
2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil . . . .*

*14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.*

*16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*

*18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,*

*because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*

Luke 3-4 (and see the Bible.org poster for more on the “journey” theme)

1. John introduces Jesus, but Father and Spirit confirm!

2. Jesus identifies with all the baptized (no more arguing about the where, when or how!)

3. Luke’s genealogy emphasizes the idea of “Sonship” (see Galatians 3:26)

4. The Spirit is in the lead every step of this journey

5. We have forty days to prepare the next great step in God’s redemption plan and Jesus’ ministry

**Baptism: begin with identification**

*For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,* ***2****and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,* ***3****and all ate the same spiritual food,* ***4****and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.* ***5****Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

***6****Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.”*

1 Corinthians 10

*26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Galatians 3

*What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Romans 6

1. In a world of identity politics, baptism reminds us that our primary identification is with Jesus

2. Baptism: we have died with Jesus to our old selves and are raised with him to new life

**Baptism: always just a step before the wilderness**

***22****Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water.* ***23****When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah.* ***24****And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?”* ***25****And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.*

*There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them,* ***26****saying, “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer.”*

***27****Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.*

Exodus 15

1. Like the Israelites, Jesus responds to God’s testing by listening to the voice of God

2. Like the Israelites, Jesus leads the way from baptism to wilderness – where we are always safest

**Our journey through Lent**

1. The end of the journey is resurrection – for Jesus and for us!

*4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Romans 6

2. Remembering

Q 69.  How does holy baptism remind and assure you that Christ’s one sacrifice on the cross  
benefits you personally?

A.  In this way: Christ instituted this outward washingand with it promised that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly his blood and his Spirit wash away my soul’s impurity, that is, all my sins.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 26

Let us recall the teaching of Scripture concerning the sacrament of baptism. The water of baptism signifies the washing away of our sin by the blood of Christ and the renewal of our lives by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3: 5). It also signifies that we are buried with Christ (Rom. 6: 4). From this we learn that our sin has been condemned by God, that we are to hate it and consider ourselves as having died to it. Moreover, the water of baptism signifies that we are raised with Christ (Col. 2: 12). From this we learn that we are to walk with Christ in newness of life. All this tells us that God has adopted us as his children: "Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8: 17). Thus in baptism God seals the promises he gave when he made his covenant with us, calling us and our children to put our trust for life and death in Christ our Savior, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him in obedience and love. God graciously includes our children in his covenant, and all his promises are for them as well as us (Gen. 17: 7; Acts 2: 39). Jesus himself embraced little children, and blessed them (Mark 10: 16); and the apostle Paul said that children of believers are holy (1 Cor. 7: 14). So, just as children of the old covenant received the sign of circumcision, our children are given the sign of baptism. We are therefore always to teach our little ones that they have been set apart by baptism as God's own children.

Introduction to the sacrament, 1981 version

3. What one gives up for Lent is only to make space to listen to the Spirit (and his sword!)

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,  
2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil . . . .*

Luke 4

**Resources for our Lenten journey 2022**

*Bible.org* has some wonderful resources at [*https://bible.org/book/Luke*](https://bible.org/book/Luke)

I. Howard Marshall’s Greek commentary is my go to help (Eerdmans, 1978)

Bob Deffinbaugh’s sermon on this text focuses on the “Sonship” theme at [*https://bible.org/  
seriespage/baptism-and-genealogy-jesus-luke-321-28-1-samuel-161-13-2-samuel-78-13*](https://bible.org/seriespage/baptism-and-genealogy-jesus-luke-321-28-1-samuel-161-13-2-samuel-78-13)

I appreciate J.C. Ryle’s commentary on Luke at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l13.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l13.htm)

Spurgeon’s notes on this text focus on the prayer side at [*https://ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons56/sermons56.i.html*](https://ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons56/sermons56.i.html)

The CRC has an extensive collection of liturgy for baptism at [*https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms/baptism-children*](https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms/baptism-children)



# The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus Luke 3:21-28; 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 7:8-13

### Bob Deffinbaugh at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/baptism-and-genealogy-jesus-luke-321-28-1-samuel-161-13-2-samuel-78-13*](https://bible.org/seriespage/baptism-and-genealogy-jesus-luke-321-28-1-samuel-161-13-2-samuel-78-13)

### Introduction

A couple of years ago, we were having a great deal of trouble with our telephone system. With the breakup of “Ma Bell” everyone seemed to be placing the responsibility to fix the problem on another group. Finally, in frustration, I called a friend who works for the phone company, solely to find out who to call for help. In a matter of minutes there were supervisors on the line and things really began to happen. Soon, a supervisor from another part of town was at my office, solely to assure me that the repair man was on his way, and that the problem would be fixed, that night.

It began to dawn on me that my friend was a person of substantial influence and position in the phone company. When I asked the supervisor what my friend did in the company he responded, “When they call us, we drop whatever we’re doing and do what they say.” One’s position and one’s power has a lot to do with what he or she is able to accomplish.

So it was with our Lord Jesus Christ. From all outward appearances, our Lord was a person with no great power or station in life. He was born into a very poor family, as is evident by the circumstances of His birth. He was apparently a carpenter until the commencement of His public ministry. But at His baptism, there was a dramatic pronouncement from God Himself, which identified Christ as Israel’s King, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at this time endued Him with power to carry out His mission.

### Tensions of the Text

Perhaps the major tension of this text has to do with the necessity of Christ’s baptism by John. You will recall that John emphatically stressed the superiority of the Messiah to himself. One evidence of this was the superiority of His baptism:

John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming, and I am unfit to untie the thong of His sandals; He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire” ([Luke 3:16](javascript:%7b%7d)).

If John’s baptism was inferior to that of our Lord, then why did our Lord not baptize John, rather than have John baptize Him, just as John himself had protested in Matthew’s account?

A second tension has to do with the genealogy of our Lord. Not only does the genealogy differ from that of Matthew’s account, but it also is placed differently. Luke includes his genealogy just after the baptism of the Lord, and immediately prior to the beginning of His public ministry. Matthew’s account placed the genealogy at the beginning of his gospel.

### The Approach of this Lesson

In this lesson we will seek to learn the meaning of the events of our Lord’s baptism, and also the significance of His genealogy, as placed in conjunction with His baptism by Luke. We will seek to understand the significance of these things in conjunction with the ministry of our Lord. We will also attempt to determine what Luke’s unique contribution is by means of his gospel. Finally, we shall seek to learn the meaning and the implications of our Lord’s baptism and genealogy for us as well.

### The Meaning of “My Son” in the Old Testament

The key to understanding the baptism of our Lord is to be found in the technical meaning of the expression, “My son” in the Bible. It is directly related to the designation and appointment of the Israel’s king by God. Let us see how this concept of “sonship” is developed in the Old Testament.

[**1 Samuel 9**](javascript:%7b%7d) **& 10**

Israel’s first king was Saul. In spite of being forewarned of the high price of a king, the Israelites demanded a king, like all the other nations had (cf. [1 Sam. 8](javascript:%7b%7d)). God granted Israel’s request and it was the task of Samuel, the priest, to designate who the king would be. In [1 Samuel 9](javascript:%7b%7d) & 10 the entire process is described in detail. Saul and his servant were out looking for his father’s lost donkeys, and eventually came upon Samuel, who anointed him with oil, designating him as Israel’s ruler ([1 Sam. 10:1](javascript:%7b%7d)). Shortly thereafter, the Holy Spirit came upon Saul (10:6-13), empowering him for his task.

[**1 Samuel 16**](javascript:%7b%7d)

Saul, due to his disobedience, was rejected as God’s king, and another was destined to be his replacement. Since it was not just Saul, but his dynasty that was rejected, it was necessary for God to designate through Samuel who the new king would be. The account of this designation is found in 1 Samuel chapter 16. After viewing all of David’s older brothers and learning that none of them were to be king, David was sent for and anointed in the presence of his brothers as Israel’s new king, at which time the Holy Spirit also came upon him (16:13).

[**2 Samuel 7**](javascript:%7b%7d)

Later, God would make a covenant with the house (dynasty) of David, known as the Davidic Covenant:

“Now therefore you shall say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be ruler over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, and I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever”’“ ([2 Sam. 7:8-16](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

Note well that the relationship between Israel’s king and God is described as the relationship between a father and a son: “I will be a father to him and will correct him with the rod of men … ” (v. 14). The statement, “You are My son,” then, becomes a technical expression to designate Israel’s king, as can be seen in the second Psalm:

“But as for Me, I have installed My King` Upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware’” ([Psalm 2:6-9](javascript:%7b%7d)).

**“In Thee I Am Well-Pleased”**

Thus, the expression, “Thou art My beloved Son” designates Jesus as the king of Israel, Israel’s Messiah. At the announcement of His birth this was promised (1:32), and now God has declared it so. In addition, the expression, “in Thee I am well-pleased,” is also significant, underscoring the same truth. The words are intended to recall this passage in the prophecy of Isaiah:

“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed, Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.” ([Isa. 42:1-4](javascript:%7b%7d))

In this prophecy, Israel’s Messiah, God’s Servant, is the One in Whom God delights, and He is also the One on Whom the Spirit will come (42:1).

The evidence is more than sufficient to indicate to any willing person that the declaration of the Father, along with the descent of the Holy Spirit, designated Jesus as the King of Israel, empowering Him for the task which was before Him. Like Samuel, John the Baptist was privileged to play a part in identifying the Lord Jesus as God’s King. As our Lord commenced His public ministry, the fact that He was the King of Israel was acknowledged. In the words of Nathaniel, “*Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel”* ([John 1:49](javascript:%7b%7d)).

### The Genealogy of Christ (3:23-38)

The genealogy of our Lord immediately follows the brief account of our Lord’s baptism in the gospel of Luke. As we can see by comparing Luke’s genealogy with that of Matthew, there are considerable differences. They are not only placed in different locations in the gospel, but Luke’s genealogy runs from Christ back to Adam. Matthew’s runs from Abraham to Christ. The biggest difference is that after David, many of the names are different. It would seem best to explain the difference by viewing Luke’s genealogy as tracing the physical ancestors of Christ through Mary, while Matthew’s genealogy traces the kingly line of Christ through Joseph.

Luke’s genealogy ends with Adam, the “son of God” as the first ancestor. In one sense, Adam and Eve were to serve as “kings” over the creation, for they were created to “rule” over God’s creation ([Gen. 1:26](javascript:%7b%7d)). Adam and Eve sinned, and their “rule” was greatly diminished. As the “second Adam,” Christ would come to reign over God’s creation as Israel’s king. Luke’s next event is the temptation of Christ, for it is after our Lord’s victory over Satan’s solicitations that He is shown to have the “right to reign.” The baptism of Christ identifies Christ as Israel’s king, and demonstrates that He has the Father’s appointment and the Spirit’s anointing. The genealogy shows that our Lord has the right lineage, that He is indeed of the “throne of David.” The temptation proves that our Lord has the godly character to reign. In every way, Luke shows our Lord to be qualified for the task He has been given.

It would seem that Luke’s gospel has uniquely established the “kingship of Christ” in a way that would be meaningful to his Gentile readers:

To Greco-Roman hearers of Luke’s narrative this would evoke echoes of the Roman use of the flight of birds of omen to discern the decrees of fate. For example, Plutarch in describing how Numa was chosen king after Romulus tells how Numa insisted that before he assumed the kingship his authority must first be ratified by heaven. So the chief of the augurs turned the veiled head of Numa toward the south, while he, standing behind him with his right hand on his head, prayed aloud and turned his eyes in all directions to observe whatever birds or other omens might be sent from the gods. when the proper birds approached, then Numa put on his royal robes and was received as the ‘most beloved of the gods.’ In such a thought-world the Lukan narrative would be viewed as an omen of Jesus’ status. Exactly what that status was can be discerned from the bird involved, a dove, and the interpreting voice from heaven.

In Mediterranean antiquity the dove was symbolic of ‘the beneficence of divinity in love, the loving character of divine life itself’ (E. R. Good enough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period [New York: Pantheon Books, 1953], VIII: 40-41).[57](https://bible.org/seriespage/baptism-and-genealogy-jesus-luke-321-28-1-samuel-161-13-2-samuel-78-13#P935_262435)

### The Role of the Baptism and Genealogy in Luke’s Gospel

In the first chapters of his gospel, which are unique in their detailed accounting of the events surrounding the births of Jesus and John the Baptist, Luke has already indicated that Jesus Christ was the “King of Israel.” In the baptism of Jesus, both the Father and the Spirit bear testimony to this. The genealogy shows that Jesus Christ is one with man, and that He is also of the lineage of David.

The remainder of the gospel will play out the response of Israel to the claim of Christ to be their King. In chapter four, Jesus presented Himself as the King, which was initially welcomed, but was then rejected when the fuller implications of His coming were explained ([Luke 4:16](javascript:%7b%7d):-30). Jesus presented Himself (just as the Old Testament prophets had) as the King who would come to deliver the oppressed and the downtrodden, including the Gentiles. This was simply too much for the Jews, who sought to kill Him after hearing of this ([Luke 4:23-29](javascript:%7b%7d)).

In a variety of ways, Jesus spelled out the meaning of His kingship and of His kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount was a clarification of what the kingdom was to be like ([Luke 6](javascript:%7b%7d)). The opposition began to grow in proportion to an awareness of what Christ’s kingdom was to be like. No one could deny that our Lord had power, but as His message began to be rejected, His power was attributed to Satan. To this our Lord responded, “But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” ([Luke 11:20](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Christ’s power was proof of His claim to be Israel’s king. Ultimately, Israel rejected Her king. They even crucified Him on charges that He claimed to be their king ([Luke 23:2](javascript:%7b%7d)), and rejected Him as their King by saying, “We have no king but Caesar” ([John 19:15](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Just as God bore witness to the fact the Jesus was the Son of God, Israel’s King, at His baptism, so He testified to His kingship by raising Him from the dead, and sitting Him at His right hand. When the Spirit came upon the newly born church at Pentecost, Peter preached, demonstrating that Jesus was the King of Israel, and that God had raised Him from the dead. Peter’s conclusion was forcefully proclaimed,

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified” ([Acts 2:36](javascript:%7b%7d)).

King Jesus is now at the right hand of the Father, and He is going to return, to subdue His enemies and to establish His kingdom. It is no wonder that fear came upon the crowds and many professed Christ as their Savior and King on that day.

When the Jewish religious leaders forbade the followers of our Lord to preach the gospel, the church viewed this as a rebellion against Christ as Israel’s King. Their words reveal that they see these events as fulfilling the words of the psalmist in [Psalm 2](javascript:%7b%7d), which speaks of the Christ as God’s King:

“O Lord, it is Thou who DIDST MAKE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say, ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST’” ([Acts 4:24](javascript:%7b%7d)b-26).

### Conclusion

The declaration of Jesus as Israel’s king has many implications for us, as well as for those who had to respond to the personal appearance and claims of our Lord in the days of the New Testament. Let us consider some of these areas of application as we conclude our lesson.

First, if Jesus Christ is God’s King, then we had better listen to him carefully, and do as He commands. I do not believe that the disciples heard the words spoken by the Father at the baptism of our Lord. My impression is that only John and Jesus heard them. Virtually the same words are spoken in the hearing of three of the disciples from the mount of transfiguration, and here it is very clear that these words are intended to encourage the disciples to listen to Jesus very carefully:

“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; hear Him!”([Matt. 17:5](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The clear impact is this: If this is the Son of God, you had better “listen up”!

Peter says the same thing to his readers. If God’s words authenticated the words of Jesus, then Peter says that they also authenticated the apostolic preaching of the cross.

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”—and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. [2 Pet. 1:16-19](javascript:%7b%7d).

With this, the writer to the Hebrews is in agreement. He has written, For to which of the angels did He ever say, “THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE”?

And again,

“I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM, AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”? … For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? ([Hebrews 1:5; 2:1-3](javascript:%7b%7d)a).

Second, Jesus Christ, the King, is coming again, to reward the righteous and to overcome His enemies. The message which Peter gave to His audience is applicable to us as well. Jesus Christ is God’s King. He is presently seated at the right hand of the Father, but He will come soon. His return is described in detail in the book of Revelation. There is no question as to whether or not He is returning. The only question is whether you await Him as your King, or whether He will come unexpectedly upon you as an enemy. I urge you to accept Him today. This is the message of the psalmist, when he speaks of the King and of our response to Him:

Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! ([Psalm 2:12](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Finally, when Christ comes as King, all those who have trusted in Him will reign with Him. Not only is the Lord Jesus the Son of God, but all the saints are also known as the “sons of God,” who will reign with Him.

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God … For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of it own, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God … And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body ([Romans 8:14, 19](javascript:%7b%7d)-21, 23).

He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son ([Revelation 21:7](javascript:%7b%7d)).

May you be among that number, who are the sons of God, and who reign with Him forever.

Just as our Lord was baptized by the Spirit, designating Him as the Son of God, and empowering Him for His mission, so every true saint is baptized as well by His Spirit, and empowered to serve Him.[58](https://bible.org/seriespage/baptism-and-genealogy-jesus-luke-321-28-1-samuel-161-13-2-samuel-78-13#P965_270170)

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. ([1 Timothy 6:13-16](javascript:%7b%7d))

57 Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1984), p. 41.

58 “There is a remarkable correspondence in both content and sequence between the events and persons found in Luke and Acts (see C. H. Talbert*, Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974], pp. 15-23). Among these correspondences are the baptism of Jesus followed by prayer and the descent of the Holy Spirit in physical form, which is paralleled by the prayer of the disciples ([Acts 1:14](javascript:%7b%7d)) as they await their baptism in the Holy Spirit which then occurs with accompanying physical manifestations (2:1-13). For Luke the baptism-prayer scene in Jesus’ career is prototypical for his disciples’ experience. Just as the Holy Spirit had come on Jesus after the baptism of repentance and in response to his prayer to empower him for his work, so the Spirit which the risen Lord has poured out ([Acts 2:33](javascript:%7b%7d)) is given to his disciples, after prayer, to empower them for their mission. The one who was anointed by the Holy Spirit in 3:21-22 has become, by virtue of his exaltation, the one who pours out the Spirit, baptizing his followers with the Holy Spirit and fire. It is this baptism which empowers disciples for their ministry.” Talbert, p. 42.

J. C. Ryle’s commentary on Luke at [*https://gracegems.org/Ryle/l03.htm*](https://gracegems.org/Ryle/l03.htm)

**Section 19. The Effect of John the Baptist's Ministry, Luke 3:15-20**

*As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.*

**We learn, firstly, from these verses — that one effect of a faithful ministry, is to set men thinking.** We read concerning John the Baptist's hearers, that "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts about John — whether he might be the Christ."

The cause of true religion has gained a giant step in a parish, or congregation, or family — when people begin to *think*. Thoughtlessness about spiritual things is one great feature of unconverted men. It cannot be said, in many cases, that they either like the Gospel, or dislike it. But they do not give it a place in their thoughts. They never "consider." (Isaiah 1:3.)

Let us always thank God when we see a spirit of reflection on religious subjects, coming over the mind of an unconverted man. *Thinking* and *deliberation* are the high road to conversion. The truth of Christ has nothing to fear from *sober examination*. We invite *inquiry*. We desire to have its claims fully investigated. We know that its fitness to supply every need of man's heart and conscience, is not appreciated in many cases — simply because it is not known. Thinking, no doubt, is not faith and repentance. But it is always a hopeful symptom. When hearers of the Gospel begin to "muse in their hearts" — then we ought to bless God and take courage.

**We learn, secondly, from these verses — that a faithful minister will always exalt Christ.** We read that when John saw the state of mind in which his hearers were, he told them of a coming One, far mightier than himself. He refused the honor which he saw the people ready to give him, and referred them to Him who had the "winnowing fork in his hand" — the Lamb of God, the Messiah.

Conduct like this will always be the characteristic of a true "man of God." He will never allow anything to be credited to him, or his office — which belongs to his divine Master. He will say like Paul, "we do not preach ourselves — but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Corinthians 4:5.) To commend Christ dying, and rising again for the ungodly — to make known Christ's love and power to save sinners — this will be the main object of his ministry. "He must increase — but I must decrease!" will be a ruling principle in all his preaching. He will be content that his own name is forgotten — so long as Christ crucified is exalted.

Would we know whether a minister is sound in the faith, and deserving of our confidence as a teacher? We have only to ask a simple question: "Where is Christ in his teaching?" Would we know whether we ourselves are receiving benefit from the preaching we attend? Let us ask whether its effect is to magnify Christ in our esteem? A minister who is really doing us good — will make us think more of Jesus every year we live.

**We learn, thirdly, from these verses — the essential difference between the Lord Jesus and even the best and holiest of His ministers.** We have it in the solemn words of John the Baptist, "I indeed baptize you with water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Man, when ordained, can administer the outward ordinances of Christianity — with a prayerful hope that God will graciously bless the means which he has Himself appointed. But man cannot read the hearts of those to whom he ministers. He can preach the Gospel faithfully to their ears — but he cannot make them receive it into their consciences. He can apply baptismal water to their foreheads — but he cannot cleanse their inward nature. He can give the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into their hands — but he cannot enable them to eat Christ's body and blood by faith. Up to a certain point he can go — but he can go no further. No ordination, however solemnly conferred, can give a man power to change the heart. Christ, the great Head of the Church — can alone do this by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is His peculiar office to do it — and it is an office which He has delegated to no man.

May we never rest until we have tasted by experience, the power of Christ's grace upon our souls! We have been baptized with water — but have we also been baptized with the Holy Spirit? Our names are in the baptismal register — but are they also in the Lamb's book of life? We are members of the visible Church — but are we also members of that mystical body of which Christ alone is the Head?

All these are privileges which Christ alone can bestow — and for which all who would be saved must make personal application to Him. Man cannot give them. They are treasures laid up in Christ's hand. From Him we must seek them by faith and prayer — and believing we shall not seek in vain.

**We learn, fourthly, in these verses — the change that Christ will work in his visible church at his second appearing.** We read in the figurative words of His forerunner, "that He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into His garner — but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The visible Church is now a 'mixed' body. Believers and unbelievers, holy and unholy, converted and unconverted — are now *mingled* in every congregation, and often sit side by side. It surpasses the power of man to separate them. False profession is often so like true profession; and grace is often so weak and feeble — that, in many cases, the right discernment of character is an impossibility. The wheat and the chaff will continue together until the Lord returns.

But there will be a solemn separation at the last day. The unerring judgment of the King of kings, shall at length divide the wheat from the chaff, and divide them for evermore. The *righteous* shall be gathered into a place of happiness and safety. The *wicked* shall be cast down to shame and everlasting contempt. In the great *sifting* day — every one shall go to his own place.

May we often look forward to that day — and judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord. May we give all diligence to make our calling and election sure — and to know that we are God's "wheat." A mistake in the day that the floor is "purged" — will be a mistake that is irretrievable!

**We learn, lastly, from these verses — that the reward of God's servants is often not in this world.** Luke closes his account of John the Baptist's ministry, by telling us of his *imprisonment* by Herod. The end of that imprisonment, we know from other parts of the New Testament. It led at last to John being cruelly beheaded.

All true servants of Christ must be content to wait for their wages. Their best things are yet to come. They must count it no strange thing, if they meet with harsh treatment from man. The world which persecuted Christ — will never hesitate to persecute Christians. "Do not be surprised if the world hates you!" (1 John 3:13.)

But let us take comfort in the thought that the great Master has laid up in Heaven for His people — such things as surpass man's understanding. The *blood* that His saints have shed in His name — will all be reckoned for one day. The *tears* that often flow so freely in consequence of the unkindness of the wicked — will one day be wiped from all faces. And when John the Baptist, and all who have suffered for the truth are at last gathered together — they will find it true, that Heaven makes amends for all!

**Section 20. The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus, Luke 3:21-38**

*Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*

**We see in the passage before us — the high honor the Lord Jesus has put on baptism.** We find that among others who came to John the Baptist — the Savior of the world came, and was "baptized."

An ordinance which the Son of God was pleased to use, and afterwards to appoint for the use of His whole Church — ought always to be held in peculiar reverence by His people. If Christ Himself was baptized — then Baptism cannot be a thing of slight importance. The use of baptism would never have been enjoined on the Church of Christ — if it had been a mere outward form, incapable of conveying any blessing.

It is hardly necessary to say that errors of every sort and description abound on the subject of baptism. Some make an *idol* of it — and exalt it far above the place assigned to it in the Bible. Some degrade it and *dishonor* it — and seem almost to forget that it was ordained by Christ Himself. Some limit the use of it so narrowly, that they will baptize none unless they are grown up, and can give full proof of their conversion. Some invest the baptismal water with such *magic power* — that they would like missionaries to go into heathen lands and baptize all people, old and young indiscriminately, and believe that however ignorant the heathen may be, baptism must do them good. On no subject, perhaps, in religion — have Christians more need to pray for a right judgment and a sound mind.

Let it suffice us to hold firmly the general principle, that baptism was graciously intended by our Lord to be a help to His Church, and "a means of grace" — and that, when rightly and worthily used, we may confidently look upon it for a blessing. But let us never forget that the grace of God is not tied to any sacrament — and that we may be baptized with water, without being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

**We see, secondly, in this passage — the close connection that ought to exist between the administration of baptism and prayer.** We are specially told by Luke that when our Lord was baptized, He was also "praying."

We need not doubt that there is a great lesson in this fact, and one that the Church of Christ has too much overlooked. We are meant to learn that the baptism which God blesses — must be a baptism accompanied by prayer. The sprinkling of water is not sufficient. The use of the name of the blessed Trinity is not enough. The form of the sacrament alone conveys no grace. There must be something else beside all this. There must be "the prayer of faith." A baptism without prayer, it may be confidently asserted — is a baptism on which we have no right to expect God's blessing.

Why is it that the sacrament of baptism appears to bear so little fruit? How is it that thousands are every year baptized, and never give the slightest proof of having received benefit from it? The answer to these questions is short and simple. In the vast majority of baptisms, there is no prayer except the prayer of the officiating minister. Parents bring their children to the font, without the slightest sense of what they are doing. Sponsors stand up and answer for the child, in evident ignorance of the nature of the ordinance they are attending, and as a mere matter of form. What possible reason have we for expecting such baptisms to be blessed by God? None! none at all! Such baptisms may well be barren of results. They are not true baptisms according to the mind of Christ. Let us pray that the eyes of Christians on this important subject may be opened. It is one on which there is great need of change.

**We see, thirdly, in these verses — a remarkable proof of the doctrine of the *Trinity*.** We have all the Three Persons of the Godhead spoken of, as co-operating and acting at one time. God the *Son* begins the mighty work of His earthly ministry, by being baptized. God the *Father* solemnly accredits Him as the appointed Mediator, by a voice from Heaven. God the *Holy Spirit* descends "in a bodily shape like a dove" upon our Lord, and by so doing declares that this is He to whom "the Father gives the Spirit without measure." (John 3:34.)

There is something deeply *instructive*, and deeply *comforting* in this revelation of the blessed Trinity, at this particular season of our Lord's earthly ministry. It shows us how mighty and powerful is the agency that is employed in the great business of our redemption. It is the common work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All Three Persons in the Godhead are equally concerned in the deliverance of our souls from Hell. The thought should cheer us — when we are disturbed and cast down. The thought should hearten and encourage us — when weary of the conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The enemies of our souls are mighty — but the Friends of our souls are mightier still. The whole power of the triune Jehovah is engaged upon our side! "A three-fold cord is not easily broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:12.)

**We see, fourthly, in these verses — a marvelous proclamation of our Lord's office as Mediator between God and man.** A voice was heard from Heaven at His baptism, which said, "You are my beloved Son — in you I am well pleased." There is but One who could say this. It was the voice of God the Father.

These solemn words no doubt contain much that is deeply mysterious. One thing however about them is abundantly clear. They are a divine declaration that our Lord Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer, whom God from the beginning undertook to send into the world — and that with His incarnation, sacrifice, and substitution for sinful man — God the Father is satisfied and well pleased. In Him, He regards the claim of His holy law as fully discharged. Through Him, He is willing to receive poor sinful man to mercy, and to remember his sins no more.

Let all true Christians rest their souls on these words — and draw daily consolation from them. Our sins and shortcomings are many and great. In ourselves we can see no good thing. But if we believe in Jesus — the Father sees nothing in us that He cannot abundantly pardon. He regards us as the members of His own dear Son — and, for His Son's sake, He is well pleased.

**We see, lastly, in these verses — what a frail and dying creature is man.** We read at the end of the chapter a long list of names, containing the genealogy of the family in which our Lord was born, traced up through David and Abraham to Adam. How little we know of many of the seventy-five people, whose names are here recorded! They all had their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears, their cares and troubles, their schemes and plans — like any of ourselves. But they have all passed away from the earth, and gone to their own place. And so will it be with us. We too are passing away, and shall soon be gone.

Forever let us bless God, that in a *dying world* we are able to turn to a *living Savior!* "I am the Living One! I was dead — and behold I am alive forever and ever!" "I am the resurrection and the life!" (Revelation 1:18; John 11:25.) Let our main care be, to be one with Christ and Christ with us. Joined to the Lord Jesus by faith we shall rise again to live for evermore. The second death shall have no power over us. "Because I live," says Christ, "you shall live also!" (John 14:19.)

CRCNA Liturgy of Baptism (2016)  
at [*https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms/baptism-children/form-holy-baptism-infants-and-young*](https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms/baptism-children/form-holy-baptism-infants-and-young)

**Introduction**

Baptism was instituted by Christ after his victorious resurrection. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20). In this command, Christ himself makes baptis m the universal entrance into his church, and the mark of our discipleship.

1. **Baptism unites us to Christ in his death and resurrection.** In Romans 6:1-11, Paul identifies baptism as our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (vv. 3-4, NRSV). Baptism symbolizes a deluge of God’s grace through which the old self dies and a new self in Christ comes to life.
2. **Baptism brings us into the new society, the body of Christ.** This society lives by the norms of the kingdom of God. “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek . . . slave or free . . . male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:27-28, NRSV). We become members of Christ and members of each other in the one body.
3. **Baptism signifies the washing away of our sins.** Peter announced at Pentecost, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Paul argued that the Corinthians were to abandon their pagan ways of life because in baptism they were “washed” and “sanctified” (1 Cor. 6:11).
4. **In baptism we are adopted into God’s covenant family through Christ.** Being baptized “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” declares that we have a new name because we have been adopted through the Son into the family of the triune God.
5. **In baptism we are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.** After Peter calls people to repentance and baptism on Pentecost, he adds this promise: “And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
6. **Our children should also be baptized, for all the promises of baptism are for them as well as for us (Acts 2:39).** We are to teach our children that they have been baptized and prayerfully encourage them to affirm the promises of their baptism by professing their faith in Jesus Christ.
7. **All these blessings of baptism become ours through faith.** “In Christ Jesus you are all children of God *through faith*. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27, NRSV). While our faith is in Christ alone, the Heidelberg Catechism (Q&A 69) teaches that baptism *assures* us that Christ’s salvation is personally ours.

**Liturgy**

In baptism God seals the promises he gave when he made his covenant with us, calling us and our children to put our trust for life and death in Christ our Savior, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him in obedience and love. God graciously includes our children in his covenant, and all his promises are for them as well as us (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39). Jesus himself embraced little children and blessed them (Mark 10:16), and the apostle Paul said that children of -believers are holy (1 Cor. 7:14). So, just as children of the old covenant received the sign of circumcision, our children are given the sign of baptism. We are therefore always to teach our little ones that they have been set apart by baptism as God’s own children.

Hear also these words from holy Scripture:  
“All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (from Rom. 6:3-4)

Baptism is the sign and seal of God’s promises to this covenant people.  
In baptism God promises by grace alone  
      to forgive our sins,  
      to adopt us into the body of Christ, the church,  
      to send the Holy Spirit daily to renew and cleanse us, and  
      to resurrect us to eternal life.  
This promise is made visible in the water of baptism.

Water cleanses,  
      purifies,  
      refreshes,  
      sustains;  
Jesus Christ is living water.  
Through baptism Christ calls us to new obedience:  
      to love and trust God completely,  
      to forsake the evil of the world, and  
      to live a new and holy life.  
Yet, when we fall into sin,  
      we must not despair of God’s mercy,  
      nor continue in sin,  
      for baptism is the sign and seal  
of God’s eternal covenant of grace with us.