

Pastor Jim Lloyd

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Title: Jesus, Our Example in Baptism

Text: Mark 1:9-11 (All Scripture quoted from the NKJV)

Let's look to answer these 5 questions following the reading of today's scriptures: Who? What? Where? When? Why? Mark 1:9-11 – ⁹*"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"*

The answers: Who? Jesus, John, Holy Spirit & God the Father. What? Water Baptism. Where? Jordan. When? In those days. Why? That's probably the harder question, isn't it? We'll work on that answer as we go.

This passage records the first appearance of the Lord Jesus in Scripture since He was seen in the Temple at the age of twelve. All we know of the next 17 or 18 years of His life are summed up by Luke like this: *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man"* (2:52). Those silent years of the life of Jesus were years of mental, physical, social and spiritual preparation for His work as Messiah and Savior.

We are told in verse 9 that Jesus came *"in those days"*. Why did Jesus choose this time to make His identity and mission known to men? He came now because the time was right. John the Baptist had set the course as the forerunner of the Lord. John the Baptist's crowds were large and his ministry was at its apex. Jesus came at this time because John had completed his work and the time for John to decrease had come. John 3:30 – *"He [Jesus] must increase, but I [John the Baptist] must decrease."* Jesus came because it was God's appointed time for Him to be revealed.

The next phrase says, *"Jesus came"*. When Jesus Christ made His public appearance there on the banks of the Jordan River, it was one incredibly significant moment. Since the earliest days of mankind, mankind had been looking for a Redeemer who would come and reconcile men to God. Fallen humanity had waited for the appearance of a perfect man who would challenge sin and Satan to deliver the human soul from the bondage of evil. Humanity had never been able to produce one who could deliver it from its lost condition. Thousands and thousands of suns had risen and set on a world held fast in the grip of sin. But, THE DAY JESUS CAME – EVERYTHING CHANGED! When Jesus shows up, nothing remains as it was. Ask Zacchaeus – the Gaderene Demoniak – the woman with the issue of blood – the three Hebrew "boys" in the fiery furnace – Daniel in the lion's den – Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus – Simon Peter – ask anyone whose life He impacted.

Today I want us to look at these verses and consider the events surrounding the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we will find some blessings to grasp. There are some questions that need to be answered for us as well. I think there is a word here for every person in this room, not just those who are following Jesus in baptism.

- 1. The Appearing of the Son (v. 9).** As I have already mentioned, this is the first recorded appearance of the Lord Jesus in eighteen years. When He appears, he comes to John the Baptist to be baptized. Let's look at Mark 1:4 – *"John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."* This verse tells us that John's baptism was *"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"*. That makes the "WHY" part a bit more challenging to answer, doesn't it? As I see it, that verse tells us that the people who came to John were publicly confessing their sins and submitting to baptism as a symbol of their changed lives. So, why was Jesus baptized? Matthew 3:13-15 – ¹³*"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' ¹⁵But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."* When Jesus came to John for baptism, Matthew tells us that John at first refused to baptize the Lord. You see, John and Jesus were cousins. John probably knew the kind of life Jesus lived. John knew that if anyone was holy, it was Jesus. But, Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* The phrase *"to fulfill all righteousness"* means that Jesus was baptized *"to fulfill every ordinance of God."* In other words, God was working through John the Baptist in those days and Jesus wanted to identify Himself with EVERYTHING that was OF THE FATHER. Jesus DID NOT come to John to confess His sins and to be baptized to signify His repentance. Jesus had no sin that needed to be repented of. 2 Corinthians 5:21 – *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* 1 Peter 2:22 – *"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth."* Jesus was baptized for several reasons. Allow me to point out just a few of them. **A. He Appeared in Declaration.**

When Jesus presented Himself for baptism, He was making a public declaration of some important facts. **Jesus was baptized to identify with John the Baptist's ministry.** Look at what John had been preaching in Mark 1:7-8 – *“And he preached, saying, ‘There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’”* Jesus came to John to place His divine seal on what John had been saying. John had been preaching: “The Kingdom of God is at hand! The Messiah is coming”. Jesus came to be baptized of John to say to John and the people, “I am the Messiah!” **Jesus was baptized so that John would know that Jesus was the Messiah.** John 1:33 – *“I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”* Mark 1:10 – *“And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.”* **Jesus was baptized to signal the beginning of His public ministry.** So, the baptism of the Lord Jesus was a public declaration that He was, in fact, the promised Messiah. He was the Savior sent to reconcile God and man. John 14:6 – *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”* John 14:12 – *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* **JESUS IS STILL THE ONLY WAY TO GOD!** **B. He Appeared in Dedication.** In His baptism, Jesus was willingly and publicly accepting the mission He had been given by His Father. **Jesus had entered this world for the sole purpose of carrying out God's plan to redeem sinners.** Jesus came to offer the Kingdom to Israel and to offer His life on the cross as a ransom for sin. Mark 10:45 – *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* Israel rejected the offer of their Messiah, but God accepted the offering Christ made on the cross. 1 John 2:2 – *“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* Isaiah 53:11 – *“He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.”* So what was Christ's mission? Luke 19:10 – *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* **C. He Appeared in Demonstration. The baptism of Jesus served to allow Him to identify with the very people He came to save.** Every one of those people who came to John for baptism was looking for a new life. They were looking for forgiveness of their sins and for a relationship with God. Jesus Christ came to give those very things to lost people. He was born in a human body so that He might live among us and die for us. He was baptized to identify with us. His baptism identified Him with the fallen race He came to save. **His baptism also pictured His Own death and resurrection.** When Jesus submitted to John's baptism, He was picturing what would happen to Him some day. He would enter death on the cross and He would rise again in the resurrection. He knew that He was heading toward a baptism called death. Luke 12:50 – *“But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!”* Thus, Jesus Christ was demonstrating His resolve to lay down His life on the cross for our sins. Thank God that He came for us! We were headed to Hell and we could not save ourselves. Jesus left the glories of Heaven to live and die in this cruel world, identifying Himself with us, so that we might be saved. Ray Steadman gives the following illustration: “The grandfather entered the child's bedroom. A wide grin brightened his kind, warm face. ‘Davy!’ he said, spreading his arms for a hug. ‘Grampa!’ shrieked the delighted two-year-old from his playpen. ‘Grampa, hug!’ ‘Sure, I'll give you a hug, Davy,’ said the grandfather. And with that, the old man reached out to his grandson and scooped him up out of the playpen, snuggling the boy in his strong arms. After a big hug, the grandfather set the boy down outside the playpen, among his toys, and they began to play together. Minutes later, the boy's mother walked into the room. ‘Davy!’ she said sternly. ‘You know I put you in the playpen because you've been naughty! You shouldn't have told Grampa to take you out!’ Davy's eyes puddled up, and he began to cry. The grandfather instantly felt terrible. He didn't know that his grandson had been given a time out in the playpen as a punishment. Now he had made a bad situation even worse for his little grandson. ‘Grampa, play with me!’ the boy said in pitiful voice that broke the old man's heart. But the mother was unbending. ‘Davy, you know you have to go back into the playpen.’ She lifted the boy up and put him back in solitary confinement. The boy wailed in despair. What could the grandfather do? He knew he couldn't overrule the boy's mother. But his heart went out to the poor boy. Then the grandfather had an idea. ‘Dad!’ said the mother. ‘What do you think you're doing?’ ‘The only thing I can do,’ said the grandfather as he climbed into the playpen with his grandson. The child was being punished, and rightfully so. The only way the grandfather could show mercy to the boy was by descending to Davy's situation and taking Davy's punishment onto himself. And that is what happened in your life and in mine the day Jesus came. Jesus became one with us, accepting the restrictions of life in human form, accepting our punishment, and suffering our pain. Jesus came so that we could have life –

abundant life.” Amen! By the way, **Jesus was also setting an example for His people.** If He saw the need to be baptized to signal the beginning of His new ministry, He expects us to be baptized to show the world we have died to our sins and have been raised to a new life in Him.

2. The Anointing of the Spirit (v. 10). When Jesus was baptized, a strange thing happened. Mark tells us *“the heavens opened”* and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended on the Lord Jesus Christ. The words *“the heavens parted”* literally means that the “heavens were rent asunder”. Through this tear in the heavens, the Holy Spirit descended on the Lord Jesus in a visible form. We need to take a moment to consider the Holy Spirit and what He did in the life of Jesus. **A. A Picture of Sacrifice.** The Spirit came in the form of a *“dove”*. The dove was typically the offering of the poor man. Two *“turtledoves”* were the offering given by Mary and Joseph when they presented Jesus as a baby (Luke 2:24). In the minds of the people, doves were associated with sacrifice. Thus, when Jesus came into this world, He came to live a life of self-sacrifice. He did not come to live for Himself, He came to live and die for others. The Spirit of God anointed Jesus for a life of self-sacrifice. Doves are birds associated with peace, gentleness and humility. These were all attributes that marked the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Don’t forget that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh! He could have entered this world as a man of war, power and judgment. Instead, He came as the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 – *“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* He could have come to destroy the world and condemn sinners. Instead, He came to die on the cross so that He might convert sinners. He could have called the fire of God down from Heaven to incinerate all the enemies of God. Instead, He absorbed the fire of God’s wrath in Himself on the cross so that sinners could be saved! **B. A Preparation for Service.** We may ask why Jesus, who was God in the flesh, needed the Holy Spirit? Didn’t He possess all the power of the Godhead? Yes! Wasn’t He God in the flesh? Yes! Wasn’t He the Creator of the universe incarnate? Yes! Then why did Jesus need the Spirit’s anointing? Jesus needed the power of the Spirit because He did not come into this world to live as God, but because He came into this world to LIVE AS A MAN! When God made Adam and gave him dominion over the earth, Adam sinned and brought all of creation under the curse of sin. Romans 5:12 – *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...”* Jesus came as the Second Adam. He came to do what the first Adam failed to do. He came to live His life as a perfect man. While he was here on earth, Jesus laid aside His glory and the independent use of His divine prerogatives (Philippians 2:5-8). He needed the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish that. EVERYTHING Jesus did, He did as a Spirit-filled man. As a Spirit-filled man, He lived a perfect life. He satisfied the just demands of God’s law. He perfectly kept every rule and regulation. Then, as a man, He went to the cross to die so that He could shed His innocent, perfect blood as the atonement for our sins. The life of Jesus sets a tremendous example for the rest of us. We will never live perfect lives because we have something Jesus did not have: a sin nature. We sin and we fall short, but if we would yield to the power of the Spirit of God and allow Him to fill our lives as we are commanded (Ephesians 5:18), He would manifest the *“fruit of the Spirit”* in us (Galatians 5:22-23), and we would live lives of power that would bring glory to the name of God. Ephesians 5:18 – *“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit...”* Galatians 5:22-23 – *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”* When Jesus was here, He said this: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”* (John 14:12). Jesus was just one man who was filled with the Spirit of God. When He ascended back to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell every one of His saints. Now, there is the potential for every person who is saved to live a Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled life. When we do, we glorify Him, we carry out His work, and we accomplish much in this world. We need to seek His face for the filling of His Spirit! When He takes control of your life, He will cause you to be more like Jesus and He will be able to use you in greater ways than you ever imagined. He will use us like He did Jesus. That is, He will cause us to live lives of self-sacrifice. He will cause us to live lives that bring honor and glory to the Lord.

3. The Approving of the Father (vs. 11). In verse 9, Jesus was BAPTIZED BY JOHN. In verse 10, Jesus was ANOINTED BY THE SPIRIT – the dove descended. And in verse 11, Jesus was APPROVED BY GOD THE FATHER AS HIS SON – the voice of the Heavenly Father coming out of Heaven. The word *“are”* or *“art”* means *“have always been”*. Jesus did not become pleasing to the Father just because He was baptized. Jesus had been eternally pleasing to the Father. There had never been an instant when He was not pleasing to His Father. The word *“beloved”* indicated the special bond of love that exists between God the Father and God the Son. Let’s consider

this pronouncement by the Father as He watches the baptism of His Son. God was expressing His approval of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. Notice three thoughts from this verse: **A. It Was a Public Approval.** The Father was letting John the Baptist and everyone else who heard Him speak, know that He was pleased with His Son Jesus. God was placing His divine seal of approval upon the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. This would not be the last time the Father would speak to let men know that Jesus had His approval. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God said, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”* (Matthew 17:5). When God says that He is *“pleased”* with the Son, He is saying a lot. The word *“pleased”* means *“to find pleasure”*. For thousands of years, God had looked down on humanity and what He saw was sin, failure and weakness. When He looked at Jesus, He saw holiness, perfection and strength. God spoke to let the world know that the Son and His ministry have His seal of approval. **B. It Was a Personal Approval.** When God spoke that day, He was also speaking for the benefit of His Son. For thirty years, the Father had been watching Jesus as He grew and matured. He watched Him interact with Mary and Joseph. He watched Jesus as He interacted with His half-brothers and half-sisters. He watched Him at home, in the synagogue, on the playground, in town and in the country. The Father had watched Jesus every day of His life. He had watched Him in the secret place as He prayed. He listened in on every conversation. He read every thought. He heard every word. Now, after thirty years of observation, God passes His verdict on the earthy life of Jesus. God looks at Him and says, *“I am well pleased!”* Jesus was God in the flesh, BUT, He was also human. Like any child, He needed His Father’s approval. When He heard these words from Heaven, the resolve in His soul to carry out the will of the Father must have been greater than ever. JUST SO YOU KNOW: I like it when the Father gives me a vote of confidence, too! It is always a blessing to know when you are pleasing the Lord! **C. It Was a Profound Approval.** When God pronounced His approval of His Son, He was also voicing His approval of all those who are IN THE SON. When a person is saved, the righteousness of Jesus is *“imputed”* to them. Romans 4:22-24 – *“And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,²⁴ but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”* In other words, when God looks upon a redeemed saint of God, He does not see our vile sins and wicked ways. He sees His Son and His holiness. He looks at us as though we had never sinned! How is this possible? It is possible because when God saves us, He justifies us too. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”* That is, He puts our sins away from us forever. Psalm 103:12 – *“As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”* 1 John 1:7 – *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* He declares us to be righteous and when He sees us, He does not see our wretchedness, He sees Christ’s righteousness. When God looks down on His children, He says, *“They are my beloved children, in whom I am well pleased.”* That is only true if you are *“in Jesus”*. That is why Paul said that he wanted to be found *“in him”* – Philippians 3:9. *“In Him”* there is *“no condemnation”* – Romans 8:1. *“In Him”* there is salvation – John 3:16. *“In Him”* there is a new creation – 2 Corinthians 5:17. *“In Him”* there is eternal life – John 10:28. *“In Him”* there is acceptance – John 6:37. *“In Him”* there is hope, there is help and there is a home in Heaven. Are you *“In Him”*? If not, you need to be and you can be if you will come to Him.

4. **Conclusion.** Many things took place the day Jesus Christ was baptized by John in Jordan. The greatest thing was the beginning of a ministry that would end with Jesus on the cross dying for OUR SINS. Thank God for the life He lives, the ministry He fulfilled and the gift He gave. Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? If not, He died for you and you can be saved if you will come to Him. Are you living your life under the control of the Holy Spirit? Do you need to ask God to cleanse your vessel so that He can fill it today?