

JESUS AND THE TRINITY

The baptism of Jesus in Luke 3:21-22 presents incredible audio-visual affirmations by God, both visible and verbal, to present Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the promised Messiah. When Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit descended, and the voice of God proclaimed. In this demonstration, we see not only the Triune God, but also His purpose in salvation.

1- "You are My beloved Son." The apostle Peter affirms what he heard, writing in 2Peter 1:17-18, "we were eyewitnesses when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'this is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven." Wonderful as this is, Peter says in verse 19, "we have something more sure, fully confirmed, the prophetic word, to which you do well to pay attention." Not the audible but the written-down Word of God, accessible to all people and times and places, the authoritative and authentic revelation of God's very words to His people, as the standard to which all words are measured.

2- The Christ. RC Sproul observes, "three times God speaks, three times the heavens are opened and the voice of God is heard to declare the dignity and glory of His unique Son." The prophetic hope uttered 700 years before, in Isaiah 64:1, "O that You would rend the heavens and come down, to make Your name known." It is now fulfilled as the Holy Spirit anoints Jesus as Christ. God's attestation here splices together "You are My beloved Son" from Psalm 2 and "with You I am well pleased" from Isaiah 42.

3- Anointed One. The phrase "beloved Son" refers to the baptized man Jesus of Nazareth, now anointed with the Holy Spirit as "the anointed one" of Psalm 2 and Hebrews 1, where the phrase "today I have begotten You" also appears. This references the incarnation of the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, in the flesh for the mission of Messiah. There is one God, the Godhead in three persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal, and who act in perfect accord to do the will of God.

4- Son of God. This affirmation also draws attention to the kingly messianic rule of the Christ. Just as God reigns in heaven, so God the Son becomes incarnate to rule on earth as Messiah. As the anointed Christ, He will fulfill numerous Old Testament prophecies, such as in Psalm 2, which emphasizes the Son of God as king of kings and lord of lords, doing the will of God. In Luke 1:35 the angel said Mary's son would be called "the Son of God." In Luke 4 the Son of God appears with unique supernatural powers. In Luke 9:35, the Father testifies that the Son speaks for Him, "listen to Him." In Luke 10:22 the Son reveals what the Father has given Him to reveal. In Luke 22:70 Jesus' accusers call Him the Son of God.

5- "With You am I well pleased." Isaiah 42:1-9 says "behold My servant whom I uphold, My chosen in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him." Because the Christ will do God's will, redeeming His people, bringing justice, given as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations. God is well pleased in Jesus four times in Luke: In 2:40 as He "grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon Him;" in 2:49 for being about His Father's interests; in 2:52 "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man;" in 3:22 at His debut to the world as incarnate Son of God.

6- Word of God. All these affirmations point to Jesus' preparation by learning God's written Word. RK Hughes notes, "for 30 years, Jesus grew from grace to grace, holiness to holiness, in subjection and love, without a single stain of sin, perfectly righteous, ready to be the perfect sacrifice for sin." As the suffering servant of Isaiah 53:10, "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, it was the will of the Lord to crush Him, to bear their iniquities." The obedient Son of God does the Father's will in the power of the Spirit.

7- Triune God. JC Ryle observes that in this remarkable proof of the Trinity, all three persons of the Godhead are seen cooperating and acting at one time. This is in full view of people just baptized in repentance for forgiveness of sins, and in Luke 3:21, right after Jesus was baptized and was praying, in an attitude of submission as the obedient Son. Picture the scene: Jesus Christ the incarnate Son, in an attitude of obedient prayer while the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity anoints Him to serve, while the Father affirms Him as Christ with divine accolade. God appoints Jesus Christ in divine orchestration of all three persons of the one Triune Godhead: the architect of our salvation, arranged by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit. God's promises unfolding before our very eyes!

8- Christ and YOU. John 1:34 "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." John 3:34 "He whom God has sent utters the words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure. For the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand; whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on Him." John 1:11-12 says those who believe and receive Jesus the Christ are those born from above by the Spirit.

RK Hughes notes, "perhaps you feel utterly beyond understanding and grace? You are wrong! The gospel is good news of divinely wrought righteousness, by grace through faith by the power of God, the Trinity who delights in saving the unsavable." It is the concerted work of the Triune God to transform believers to conform to the image of Christ the obedient Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of Christ pictures how God will transform those who TRUST & OBEY HIM. Will you? ☐