

“This is the One”
John 1:32-34
(Preached at Trinity, January 4, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. One of the characteristics of John's Gospel is the absence of detail regarding the humanity of Christ. He gives no biographical information. There is no birth narrative, no genealogy. The Gospel of John begins in eternity – “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.”
2. From the moment we entered John's Gospel his chief emphasis has been the deity of Christ. He wants us to know the Word that became flesh is none other than the eternal God. As God has no beginning, He has no beginning. He is from everlasting to everlasting. To behold Him is to gaze upon God.
John 1:14 NAU - "and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
3. **Verses 32-34** are actually referring to the baptism of Jesus and yet there is no word of this event. John seems to take for granted that his readers are familiar with the synoptics where the baptism of Jesus is described in detail.
Matthew 3:13-17 NAU - "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. ¹⁶ After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, ¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
4. In **Verse 32** the Apostle turns our attention back to the testimony or witness of John the Baptist. In **Verse 7** we read that this was the purpose of John the Baptist.
John 1:7 NAU - "He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him."
5. John says in **Verse 32**, "I have seen . . ."
John uses the perfect tense translated well in the NASB. "I have seen"
The perfect tense speaks of an event accomplished in the past with results existing afterwards. He is not talking about something that he saw one time and then ended. He is talking about something that had continuing effects.
6. The Gospel of John doesn't record the baptism of Jesus. John is more interested in what took place immediately after our Lord's baptism. John wants to direct our focus upon the descending of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. John wants us to understand that the Holy Spirit affirmed the identity of Christ.
John 1:33 NAU - "He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit."

- b. John says the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove. The Holy Spirit doesn't have a bodily form but is described as descending like a dove. Luke describes this dove as possessing bodily form. It was a Theophany—a visible appearance of the invisible Spirit.
Luke 3:21-22 NAU - "heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove"
- c. John also tells us that the Holy Spirit “remained” on Him.
- I. What was the meaning of the Holy Spirit descending as a dove?
- A. Many draw our attention to the nature of a dove
1. The Puritan Thomas Goodwin called attention to the faithfulness and gentleness of a dove.
 “For a dove is the most meek and the most innocent of all birds; without gall, without talons, having no fierceness in it, expressing nothing but love and friendship to its mate in all its carriages, and mourning over its mate in all its distresses.” ¹
 2. Genesis 1:2 says the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. William Barclay: “The Rabbis used to say that the Spirit of God moved and fluttered like a dove over the ancient chaos breathing order and beauty into it.” ²
 3. Looking to the testimony of Scripture we can also see the dove as a symbol of faithfulness, but also of peace.
Genesis 8:8-9 NAU - "Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; ⁹ but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark"
Genesis 8:11 NAU - "The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf."
 a. The dove was used as the messenger of peace to Noah
 b. Of course, Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace
- B. But what was the meaning of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus?
1. The Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit had not yet come into being.
 - a. John doesn't give us the Christian understanding of the Gospel until later. He doesn't describe the work of the Spirit until Chap14.
John 14:16-17 NAU - "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

¹ Ryken, Philip Graham. (2009). *Luke*. (Reformed Expository Commentary) (p. 135). Philipsburg: P&R Publishing.

² Barclay, John. (1956). *The Gospel of John*. (Volume 1) (p. 135). Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

- b. The Jews saw the Spirit as the source of power and synonymous with God. It was the Spirit who inspired and illuminated the prophets.
Micah 3:8 NAU - "On the other hand I am filled with power-- With the Spirit of the LORD-- And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin."
- c. This illumination would be extended to all of God's covenant people
Isaiah 59:21-60:1 NAU - "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever. Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you."
- d. Not only did the Spirit give the illumination of God's Word. He gave the power to preach it with boldness.
- e. But with the Jewish concept of the Spirit He would come and then depart. There was nothing about an abiding presence.
2. John saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus and "remain."
 Surely in His deity there was always and eternally an intimacy among the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were one God. Christ's divine nature was in no need of being strengthened – in fact it could not be.
3. It is the humanity of Christ that is the focus here. John wants us to know that the Eternal Word has become flesh. In His humanity Jesus needed the Holy Spirit to equip Him for His ministry.
4. The timing of this event is important. This is at the beginning of His ministry. Jesus has just been baptized. Now the Holy Spirit is being poured out upon Him. The Holy Spirit came upon Christ and remained.
5. It would be the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted and it was by the power of the Spirit that He resisted the temptation.
6. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus preached with power
Luke 4:14-15 NAU - "And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. ¹⁵ And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all."
Luke 4:18 NAS - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are downtrodden,"
7. It was by the power of the Spirit that Jesus cast out demons
Matthew 12:28 NAU - "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

8. It was by the power of the Spirit that Jesus offered Himself upon the cross for our sins.
Hebrews 9:14 NAU - "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
 9. And it was by the power of the Spirit that He was raised from the dead.
Romans 1:4 NAU - "who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,"
- C. With the descending Holy Spirit Jesus Christ was validated as the Lamb of God, as the Savior of His people.
1. This is what John is telling us here. "This is the One"
John 1:33-34 NAU - "He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."
 2. With the descending of the Holy Spirit Jesus was thus anointed and declared to be the Mediator for His people and He was equipped to carry out this work. This is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy
Isaiah 42:1 NAU - "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."
 3. **Verse 33** – John received this knowledge about Christ by Divine revelation. - "He who sent me to baptize in water said to me"
 - a. The same was true of the Apostle Peter.
Matthew 16:17 NAU - "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."
 - b. It's possible that John didn't know Jesus before this time
John 1:33 NAU - "I did not recognize Him" – from οἶδα which means "to know." Although they were related Jesus was raised in Galilee and John in Judea.
 - c. More likely, John didn't understand (know) that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit until he saw this sign:
John 1:33 NAU - "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'"
This was the validation.
 4. Along with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the heavens opened and the voice of God was heard.
Matthew 3:16-17 NAU - "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, ¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

5. This is the anointed Son. This is the One.

By Divine revelation John declares what he knows

“This is the Son of God” – **Verse 34**

Thus, at the beginning and at the end of the Gospel of John we have the declaration that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

John 20:30-31 NAU - "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

II. As we consider the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus we need to consider one more important point. If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit in His earthly ministry how much more do we? How much more do we need His sweet influences upon us?

- We need His illuminating work to teach us from God’s Word
- We need His anointing work to kindle our affections for God
- We need His sanctifying work to enable us to live a life of devotion and holiness in the fear of the Lord
- We need His comforting work to lead us to Christ our great sympathetic High priest
- We need His empowering work to equip us for the work of the Kingdom.

A. We have the same Holy Spirit that anointed Jesus in us

1. God is with us by His indwelling Spirit

Acts 10:38 NAU - "*You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*"

2. It is the Holy Spirit that brings to bear the graces of the Christian life
We bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)

3. We are built up and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit
Ephesians 3:16 NAU - "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man"

4. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us
Romans 8:11 NAU - "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

B. This is the wonderful gift given on behalf of the resurrected Christ

John 14:26 NAU - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

Acts 1:8 NAU - "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Conclusion:

1. The importance of the Holy Spirit in our life is often underestimated by Christians. The outpouring of the Spirit marked the beginning of our Lord's earthly ministry. And He marks the beginning of our Christian life.
2. John the Baptist said of Jesus - **Luke 3:16 NAU** - "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." This baptism of Christ is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the lives of His people. It is our union with Him and immersion into His life. Through this baptism we are purged from our iniquity and enabled to walk in purity.
John 1:33 NAU - "this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit."
3. Through the Holy Spirit we are raised to walk above this world. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in us. May we look to Him, and submit to His gracious leadership. Paul admonishes us:
Ephesians 4:30 NAU - "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."