

Behold the Lamb of God (John 1.29-34)
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe
Southern Hills Baptist Church
August 14, 2016

WELCOME

As always, it is a joy to have the opportunity to open up God's Word together. If you have your Bibles go ahead and open up to John 1. We will be picking up our study in verse 29 tonight.

John the Baptist intro

Last week Matthew walked us through verses 19-28, which provided a great introduction into who John the Baptist was. He was a man of God that God anointed and equipped in a special way. John the Baptist's job, his calling, was to prepare people for the coming Messiah. His message was one of repentance. He preached of the coming Messiah and called people to turn from their worldliness, repenting of their sin and idolatry, and to look expectantly for God's Promised One as His coming was immanent.

Encountering the Messiah

So John the Baptist's mission was to prepare people for Jesus. In our passage tonight John the Baptist recognizes the Messiah for the first time. He encounters this man whom he has been heralding and preparing people for. John didn't know who the Messiah was up until this point, but when he sees Jesus he knows.

Interesting Passage

I think the passage that we have in front of us tonight is really interesting for a few reasons.

He is FINALLY Here!

First, seeing John the Baptist's reaction is interesting. John the Baptist's life had been devoted to preparing people for the Messiah, he now stands face to face with the Messiah. Can you imagine the excitement? Try to put yourself in his shoes. You had been working towards something by faith. You have been making promises to crowds of people and calling them to change their lives for something that could not yet be seen. **Then in a moment, John the Baptist's faith became sight, as he saw the very man he had been preparing people for. I have to imagine incredible joy rushed over John the Baptist. Maybe even relief.** His faith was not a sham. The Promised One was here!

With this being true, how would John react? What would he say in this moment of incredible joy? We get to see that.

Less About the Story, More About the Person

Something else that is really interesting about this passage is what the Apostle John chooses to record. If you look at the first meeting between John the Baptist and Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke we see more of a story unfold with the baptism of Jesus. The Apostle John shares something much different. He focuses in on how John the Baptist identifies Jesus. **The details of what was taking place almost fade into the background as the Apostle John zeros in on what John the Baptist had to say about the identity of Jesus.**

Theologically- Rich Introduction

As we have called out on multiple occasions already the Gospel of John is the most theologically focused of the Gospels. As he continues to introduce us to who Jesus is, he does so in theologically rich terms, unfolding for us who Jesus is at the most significant levels and what He came to accomplish. Now, rather

than using his own words, he uses John the Baptist's words. This is what we have the pleasure of considering tonight.

5 Descriptions and Enjoyment

John the Baptist makes 5 different statements about Jesus that reveal a great deal about who He is. We are going to walk through each of them and my encouragement to you tonight is to simply enjoy Jesus.

- Bask in the greatness of our Savior.
- Worship Him in your inner man as we study God's Word.
- Then rejoice in knowing that if you have put your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior these truths about Jesus as the bedrock of your life.

Your hope in Jesus is never misplaced. Jesus is all that you need and so much more.

Let's Pray

Before we dive into our text, let's pause for a moment and pray...

Heavenly Father,

As we come to your Word tonight, help us see Jesus. Help us to see Him in all of His redemptive glory. Help us to see His ultimate supremacy. Help us to see Him as the Life Giver who gives us what we cannot get anywhere else, true hope. Help us to see Him as the perfect and powerful Son of God, fully God and fully man. Help us to not only see these things in your Word, but help us to savor them in our hearts so that we may love Him more and find all our sufficiency in Him. We ask these things in His holy name.

Amen

Our Text

Let's open up in our text...

John 1:29-34

[29] The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! [30] This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' [31] I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." [32] And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. [33] I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' [34] And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

The Setting

Our passage opens up with John the Baptist at the Sea of Galilee, likely preaching his message of repentance, preparing people for the coming Messiah. Try to put yourself in John's shoes. You are urgently and passionately preaching to your fellow countrymen and the crowds who have come to listen, that everyone needs to repent because the Messiah is coming. He is coming to usher in a new Kingdom and if you want to be part of that new kingdom repentance is the starting point. So prepare yourself now, repent of your sins, get serious about following God, because the Messiah is coming.

Face to Face with the One

And as you proclaim this message the very one you have been speaking of, the very one who is to usher in this new kingdom, the very one you have been preparing people for, the very one that you, yourself have set your hope in, the Messiah, He enters the scene! The description that John gives us is that John

the Baptist sees Jesus walking towards him from a distance and calls attention to Jesus, saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Behold!

The image that John paints here is that John the Baptist sees Jesus in the distance and before they talk, before they say hello to one another, before they exchange pleasantries, before they talk through the Scriptures to see if they are on the same page with everything, John the Baptist directs everyone’s attention to Jesus and then proceeds to prophetically proclaim exactly who Jesus is.

Prophetic Description

I say prophetically because I certainly believe his description of Jesus was inspired. God gave John the Baptist words that he likely didn’t have full understanding of himself as he announced who Jesus was in some incredibly significant ways. The Scriptures tell us that John the Baptist had the Holy Spirit dwelling within him from the time he was in his mother’s womb to equip him for this ministry and part of this equipping was for the announcing and introduction of who Jesus is as the Messiah.

So let’s take some time to break down these 5 descriptions that John the Baptist uses as he tells the crowds around him who Jesus is and as we do let’s revel in the greatness of our Savior.

THE LAMB OF GOD – THE WRATH-BEARING ATONEMENT (VS. 29)

The first description that John the Baptist gives of Jesus is maybe the most significant. He announces that Jesus is the Lamb of God, sent to take away the sins of the world. There is some incredibly strong imagery in calling Jesus the “Lamb of God.” The lamb played a significant role in the Old Testament. Consider these two images from the Old Testament...

Image 1

Passover Setting: The Exodus

First think back to Israel’s liberation from Egypt. I am sure you remember the story well. God sent Moses to free Israel. Pharaoh refused to let Israel go as they were serving as free slave labor used to build out his kingdom. So God brought plague after plague upon Egypt to demonstrate to Pharaoh that the God of Israel was serious about seeing His people set free. After each plague was set loose Pharaoh would relent and agree to let Israel go if the plague would but cease. Then after the plague stopped Pharaoh would go back on his word, thinking he was in the clear.

One Final Plague

After many plagues and much patience from God, God told Moses there would be one final plague. In this plague God would take the life of the firstborn of each household overnight. There was a plan for rescue. There was a way to have God pass over your home and not take the life of your firstborn. God laid this out very clearly with simple instruction so that any and all who put their faith in YHWH would be saved.

Exodus 12:3-6, 12-14

[3] Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. [4] And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, [6] and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

[12] For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. [13] The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. [14] "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

Meaning of the Passover Lamb

The Passover Lamb, as Israel would remember it, was a significant image in Jewish life. **The slaughter, the death, the blood of these lambs secured for those who obeyed in faith a shielding from the wrath of God.**

With a feast that was to take place every year to commemorate this act of redemption we have to know that the Passover Lamb was not forgotten. It served as a sacrifice so that Israel may live.

When John the Baptist calls Jesus the Lamb of God, this image was certainly in the minds of those who were there listening.

Jesus is Our Wrath-Bearer, Our Passover Lamb

Jesus is our wrath-bearer. He stood between us and God and absorbed the punishment that was due us. Our sin had earned us the wrath of God and God in His patience was allowing it to store up, giving us time to repent and turn to Jesus.

Romans 2:5

[5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

God's wrath was due us, but Jesus took it for us out of love...

1 John 4:10

[10] In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

What an amazing reality. **God the Son took the wrath of God the Father on our behalf so that we could become children of God! As John said, This is Love!**

Image 2

Substitutionary Sacrifice

Now, this isn't the only imagery of a lamb from the Old Testament that would have been on the minds of Jews like John the Baptist and the crowd who sat listening to him. Lambs were also used as sin-atonement sacrifices. Listen to what Moses records in Leviticus 4...

Leviticus 4:32-35

[32] "If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish [33] and lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. [34] Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. [35] And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on top of the LORD's

food offerings. And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.

Spotless Lamb / Atoning Lamb

Notice a few quick things in the instruction that God gives Moses. First the lamb was to be spotless, speaking to the quality of the sacrifice that was to be given. It was to be a perfect sacrifice. Secondly, notice the effect of the sacrifice. It made atonement for the sinner.

What Is Atonement?

What do we mean when we say, “atonement?” **To atone means to pardon wrongdoing, to make amends, to make things right so reconciliation is possible. So lambs were used in the Old Testament to remove the barrier of sin between man and God as God accepted their substitutionary sacrifice as an atonement.**

Here is the problem though. This atonement made with lambs was never good enough. Priests stood at the altar day after day offering up these sacrifices. They were never really going to save eternally.

Hebrews 10:4

[4] For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

We needed a better sacrifice, a better atonement.

Jesus Our Substitutionary Atonement

Jesus was that better sacrifice. He was the perfect substitutionary atonement. He stood in our place, offering up His perfect life and crediting it to our account so that we could not only avoid the wrath of God, but be made whole and find acceptance in God.

Listen to how Isaiah describes the work of Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Isaiah 53:5-7

[5] But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. [7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

Did you hear Isaiah? Like a lamb led to the slaughter he was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities and He did it all so that we may be healed and have peace with God.

One. Enough.

His sacrifice was better. Listen to what the author of Hebrews writes about Jesus' sacrifice...

Hebrews 10:11-14

[11] And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. [12] But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, [13] waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. [14] For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

The priests stood daily because the need for more sacrifices never ceased. Jesus made one sacrifice as the Lamb of God and it was sufficient for all of eternity and any and all who would repent of their sins and put their faith in Him.

God's Lamb was Better

This is what is meant by Jesus' title as Lamb of God. He was the Lamb that God offered up our sins. **The lambs that priests offered up would never truly solve our sin problem, it just punted it. The Lamb of God however was eternally spotless and perfect, saving to the uttermost, curing our terminal spiritual sickness.**

God Died for You?!?

Before we move on, marvel at this for a moment. The big message of the Gospel of John up to this point and really the big message of the Gospel of John in it's entirety is that Jesus is God, Jesus is the Messiah. **So what we should find shocking is that Jesus, God, Creator, the Author of all of time, space, and matter came to be the Lamb!!! What is this?!? The story of Christianity is that God, Creator, came and died for creation that creation might once again find life.**

Don't Get Comfortable with the Gospel

It's funny how comfortable we get with the story of the Gospel. God became man, lived a perfect life, fulfilling all righteousness, died in our place, taking our punishment, purchasing our salvation, and rising again to conquer sin and death. **Yes, that is true, but if you can say all of this without being in wonderment, without it affecting your heart, you need to take a step back and think through the Gospel again! God allowed Himself to be killed for your life.**

Enjoying the Lamb of God

Let's take a moment and step back to enjoy Jesus as the Lamb of God.

No Living in Fear

Knowing Jesus shielded us from the wrath of God we don't have to live in fear about what comes after this life. Jesus tells us what/who we should fear...

Luke 12:4-5

[4] "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. [5] But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

Jesus tells us to fear the one who will punish sin by casting rebellious sinners into Hell, but if you have put your faith in Jesus, **He, like the Passover Lamb, has absorbed the wrath of God on your behalf! God's justice has been satisfied in Jesus. Your account is now clear, which means you have no need for fear! Jesus as the Lamb of God not only removes the wrath of God from over us, but He removes fear.**

Our Atonement

More than bearing the wrath of God on our behalf, Jesus, the Lamb of God, has atoned for our sins. Remember, atonement is the making right of something that has gone wrong. And we, brothers and sisters, had gone wrong. That is putting it lightly. Yet Jesus did what no one else could do, He has made things right through His perfect sacrifice.

Rest in Jesus

This means that we can rest in Jesus. He has made things right. It isn't up to us to make things right with God. We don't have to live life in a frantic race to try to mound up good works trying to catch God's favor, as if we could ever do enough to live up to Him or His standard. Spiritually our lives are a mess. Even when we get things right for a period it is only a matter of time until we fall back into sin in some form or fashion and often into the very sin that we recently overcame. While we are a mess spiritually, as the Lamb of God, Jesus has come to set all things straight. He makes things right with God by giving us His perfection, something we had never achieved and could never achieve in our fallen state. It is only because we have Jesus, the Lamb of God come to take away the sins of any and all who believe in Him, that we can rest.

Rest from Works-Righteousness

Now, when I say rest, I don't mean lay aside good works. I mean we don't have to live under the pressure of churning out good works to try to hit some kind of goal to earn God's favor. We get to go and do good freely, out of hearts that abound in love for the Lamb of God who set us free from a debt to the law.

Transition

So this is the first description that John the Baptist has of Jesus. Let's continue on in our passage...

THE PREEMINENT- THE PREEXISTENT (VS. 30)

Let's reread verse 30 to pick up with what John the Baptist has to say next about Jesus...

John 1:30

[30] This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'

None are Better, None are Before

Here John the Baptist is testifying to the supremacy of Jesus. Jesus is preeminent. There is none greater than Jesus. And what is his reason for making this statement? He says that Jesus was before him. It was common back in this day and age for those who were older to have a higher social status, but what we need to know when reading this is that John the Baptist was born about 6 months before Jesus. John the Baptist was the older of the two and John knew this as they were cousins. This is recorded in Matthew and Luke for us. Yet, John the Baptist states that Jesus was before him. What is he saying here? He is testifying to something that the Apostle John has already spoken to back in verse 2, namely the eternity of Jesus.

Listen to Paul express a similar thought from Colossians 1...

Colossians 1:18

[18] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Jesus is preeminent. Why? Lots of reasons if you read Colossians 1:15-20, but one of the reasons is that Jesus is the beginning. There is nothing that comes before Jesus. There is **nothing goes beyond Him or stretches behind Him. You can't find someone who predates Jesus that could tell you about existence without Him. He is the starting point of all things, the beginning. He is the foundation, the sovereign authority as all of life, creation, existence, and salvation find their impetus in Him.** There is none greater. There is none better. There is nothing that we need outside of Jesus. He is everything. He is enough.

Enjoying the Preeminent One

Let's take a moment and rejoice in Jesus. Here is what you need to know about following Jesus... **when you put your faith in Jesus and follow Him you are never settling for second best. When you follow Jesus you needn't worry that maybe you jumped the gun and there could be something better in this life for you.**

It is this realization that led Paul to say and write the words from Philippians 3...

Philippians 3:7-8

[7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

I love verse 8, my favorite verse in the Bible, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

Rejoicing in Jesus' Greatness

There is none greater than Jesus.

He existed before all things. He has always been.

John 8:58-59

[58] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." [59] So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

His strength is unrivaled.

Hebrews 1:3

[3] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

He is Creator.

John 1:3

[3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

His salvation is full and complete.

Hebrews 7:25

[25] Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

His love is perfect.

Romans 8:37-39

[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He overcomes all opposition at the end of time. He IS the right side of history.

Philippians 2:9-11

[9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is the Supreme One, the Preeminent One. This is who we worship. This is who we belong to. This is who we follow!

Transition

We find the next description of Jesus by John the Baptist in verse 32...

SPIRIT INDWELT – THE ANOINTED ONE (VS. 32)

John 1:32-33

[32] And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. [33] I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’

Spirit and Confirmation of Identity

As John the Baptist continues to introduce Jesus the next thing he tells us about Jesus is that once He had been baptized the Holy Spirit descended from the Heavens and rested upon Jesus. This served as confirmation to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah he had been looking for. God had revealed to John that he would know the Messiah when he saw the Spirit of God descend from Heaven and rest upon Him.

Temporary Fillings

Something important to note is that we see the Holy Spirit come and dwell on great men of the Old Testament that God had anointed and equipped for specific ministries or callings. The Spirit came upon men like Saul and David, empowering them to lead Israel at crucial times.

Remained/Dwelt on Him

But what we see with Jesus is different. This wasn't a temporary filling of the Spirit. We read that the Spirit remained on Him, it rested upon Him. The Greek word here means to set up residence.

God's Visible Stamp of Approval

This kind of special anointing shows God's approval of Jesus and His ministry. **This is God's visible blessing of Jesus and His ministry.** Matthew, Mark and Luke all record God opening up the Heavens and audibly speaking, saying that Jesus is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. The Holy Spirit's anointing and dwelling are a visible representation of the same message.

Fulfillment of Isaiah's Prophecy

This descent and dwelling of the Holy Spirit was also a visible fulfillment of the prophecy given in Isaiah 11:1-2...

Isaiah 11:1-2

[1] There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. [2] And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

So consider what the dwelling of the Spirit upon Jesus means from Isaiah's prophecy. **Jesus' ministry is going to be defined by wisdom and understanding, might, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.**

Enjoying the Anointed One

Let's pull back and enjoy what this means about our great Savior Jesus. Jesus' ministry was perfect. Everything He said, thought, did, and felt, it was all perfect, as it was governed by the Holy Spirit...

- The Spirit of **Knowledge**, meaning that Jesus knew all things.
- The Spirit of **Understanding**, meaning that Jesus knew how all things fit and worked together.
- The Spirit of **Wisdom**, meaning that Jesus understood how to perfectly apply the endless knowledge that He had.
- The Spirit of **Might**, meaning that anything Jesus wanted to accomplish, He could. There was no power greater than Him and thus He exercised His will as He saw fit in His infinite knowledge, understanding and wisdom.
- The Spirit of the **Fear of the Lord**, meaning that Jesus did everything out of a desire to please God. He used his knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and might to glorify God and execute the will of God.

Everything at His Disposal

So as we continue our study through the book of John, watching Jesus minister to others, listening to Him talk and interact with others, sitting under his teaching, every move He makes, **every word He utters is perfect knowledge, wisdom, and godliness personified. There was no resource held back from Jesus. He had all knowledge. He knew how to execute it flawlessly. He had all the power He needed to carry out His will. He did it all from a place of pure love for God.**

The "What If..." Game

Sometimes when we read history we like to ponder how history might have been different if someone had more or different resources available to them. We wonder how things may have been different if authorities had more intelligence before a big terrorist attack occurred. We wonder how our own lives might have been different had we know to take a risk we were too timid to go after or how life would have been different if we were not so adventurous and a bit more conservative. We all play the "what if" game in our heads both with major events in our culture and with the smaller details of our lives.

No Games with Jesus

As we read the life of Jesus we don't have to do that. **His life and ministry played out EXACTLY as He wanted it to. He didn't lack any resource. So as we read and study His life and ministry we need to enjoy it for what it is, perfection personified.** And this should instill within us greater trust in Jesus. What we have in Him is exactly what God wanted us to have.

Transition

Let's continue on learning about Jesus from John the Baptist. The next thing he tells us about Jesus is found in verse 33...

BAPTIZES WITH THE SPIRIT – THE LIFE-GIVER (VS. 33)

John 1:33

[33] I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

Baptism Contrast

John has said multiple times up to this point that he baptizes with water and the contrast is that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Before we dive into what this means about Jesus and His baptism, let's just notice what this teaches us about baptism in general. John's baptism didn't have any spiritual power. It was an outward act of a contrite and repentant heart. This is true of baptism today. Baptism is a beautiful and wonderful thing, but it can't save you, it is an outward act that speaks to an inward reality, namely faith in the finished work of Jesus.

Baptizing with the Holy Spirit

Jesus' baptism is a different story however. Let's turn our attention to His baptism. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. What does this mean? It means a few things.

Jesus is the Source

First, it means that the Holy Spirit is given through Jesus. In the Old Testament we saw God the Father impart the Spirit to specific people for specific times and ministries, but now it is Jesus who is the source of the Spirit. Going forward the Spirit is never given to someone apart from Jesus.

Immersed in the Spirit

Secondly, Jesus' baptizing with the Holy Spirit means that He immerses people in the Holy Spirit. This is what baptize means, it means to immerse or to dip, to submerge. When you are immersed in something it means that it is all around you. There is no part of you that isn't touched by it. **What this is communicating is that believers have been pervasively impacted and influenced by the Spirit.**

Impact – Salvation and Sanctification

What is the pervasive impact and influence of the Holy Spirit? What happens when Jesus baptizes someone into the Holy Spirit? **I believe this is speaking to the act of salvation. Salvation begins with the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-8).** This is what Jesus teaches Nicodemus in John 3 when Nicodemus asks Jesus how he can be born again as an adult. Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born of the Holy Spirit. It is this gifting of the Spirit that awakens people to new life, spiritual life, giving them new desires, namely a hunger to live for God. **This is the fertile ground that true, saving faith grows in.**

God's Description of Salvation

Ezekiel 36 is a passage we turn to often and for good reason. It is a prophecy about how the New Covenant will be fulfilled, essentially speaking to what salvation looks like in Jesus. Listen to what God says in this promise...

Ezekiel 36:26-27

[26] And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Launches and Fuels Christian Life

So God promises to give us the Holy Spirit and we now know it is Jesus who does this work. And what is the result of this gift, this immersion, this baptism into the Holy Spirit? The Spirit causes us to walk after

God in obedience. **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the launching point of the Christian life, but it is more than that, as the Spirit who resides within the believer continues to work within them to transform them into the image of Christ and empower them for godliness.**

Enjoying the Life-Giver

Let's take a step back and enjoy Jesus, the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. **Jesus is a good gift-giver, isn't He? Not only did Jesus give us His life as the Lamb of God, but He also gives us the Holy Spirit. Those are the only two things we will ever really need.** They are gifts that keep on giving as well, aren't they?

In the Holy Spirit Jesus gives us the gift of life. Paul tells us that we were dead in our sins. The Spirit on the other hand...

John 6:63a

[63] It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.

The Spirit gives life and Jesus gives the Spirit. Jesus is the Life-Giver.

Your Faith Didn't Originate From Within

If you sit here tonight believing in Jesus as the Son of God come to save us from our sins, know that you didn't arrive at this place of spiritual life because you were wiser than others or out of sheer hard work, thinking through the issues.

Your Growth Isn't A Display Of Will-Power

If you can look back on your life and see growth, you can see ways in which you have become more like Jesus over the years, know that you didn't will-power your way to that change or growth.

Jesus Through the Spirit Did That

It is the Holy Spirit that Jesus has imparted to you that has given you life, that has opened your eyes, that gave you that fertile ground for true, saving faith, that gave you an appetite to be more like Jesus, that gave you the strength to persevere when it would have been easier to fall back into sin.

The Goal of Jesus' Gift

And it is Jesus who gave this wonderful gift of the Spirit to you. **His goal is to save you and ultimately to perfect you.** The perfection piece won't come until you are fully and finally saved, but He is going to make progress in the mean time.

What a wonderful Savior, who gives us unspeakably good gifts.

Transition

There is one description left about Jesus from John the Baptist. Let's read it now...

THE SON OF GOD – THE FULLNESS OF DEITY (VS. 34)

John 1:34

[34] And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

Children Share Parents Nature

The final title or description that John the Baptist uses to introduce Jesus to us is that of “Son of God.” This is the most commonly used title to refer to Jesus and it is theologically significant. My children share the same nature and make up that I do. We are all human. Thus we all have dignity and worth as designated by God. This means we are all also imperfect and fallen.

Son of God = God

When the title “Son of God” is used of Jesus the same thing is being communicated. **Jesus is divine in nature, just as His father is. Jesus shares in the same nature and status as His Father. For Jesus to be the Son of God is to say that Jesus is God.**

Jesus is God

This is the central message of the Gospel of John. Jesus is God. John has already said it a few times over already in the first chapter...

John 1:1

[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:18

[18] No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Enjoying Jesus as God

Let's pause and enjoy Jesus as the Son of God for just a moment. **Our faith in Jesus hasn't merely been placed in a good guy or an inspiring leader.**

- **Jesus is God, very God.**
- **In Him the fullness of the godhead is pleased to dwell.**
- **He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of His nature.**

Our faith in Jesus never needs to waiver. Jesus' leadership, His teaching can be trusted and rested upon. He is God!

God Become Man!

Yet another aspect of Jesus we ought to enjoy as we celebrate the fact that He is fully God is that He has come as a man. Try to put yourself in the shoes of someone in the crowd who is watching John the Baptist make these announcements about Jesus. Jesus, who just had the Holy Spirit descend from the Heavens and rest upon Him, has been declared to be the Son of God. What is so radical about this is that God, Creator of all things, Sovereign Ruler over the cosmos, has taken on the form of man and is living amongst us.

God In A Package We Can Begin to Understand

What an astounding gift that God has given us. God gave us the gift of Himself, but He packaged Himself in such a way that we would not be (a) consumed by His glory (Ex 33:20) and (b) that we can understand, relate to, and emulate.

Sneaky, Not Stinky

As I think of this, I think of how Rachel and I talk to our kids. I can remember a time a couple of years back when I was getting ready for church and was turning to leave our bedroom to go and iron a shirt. As I turned and began walking I almost ran over Avery. I stopped and told Avery,

"You are a sneaky little girl, I didn't see you there."

Little 3 year old Avery was offended and replied,

"I not stinky, you stinky."

She misunderstood me. She didn't know what the word sneaky meant and assumed I said stinky, which is a word she knows well. I then clarified,

"No, Avery, not stinky, sneaky."

She looked at me with a puzzled face. I then explained what sneaky meant by saying,

"It means to move about evading detection."

I said this jokingly. Sometimes I get a kick out of talking to my kids like they are adults sometimes. Again, she looked puzzled. So I had to break it down to her level. I had to put it on words and categories she understood.

God at Our Level

God has done the same for us. God transcends all that we are. His being is beyond our finite comprehension. But He lovingly has come down to our level in Jesus. He has met us where we are and given us The Word and The Image of Himself. **Jesus is God's gracious and sacrificial communication towards us, meeting us where we are at, stooping down to our level so that we may know Him!**

So as we think about Jesus being fully God, great thankfulness should well up within our hearts as we consider that He, God, took the form of man that we may know Him!

CONCLUSION

John's goal in writing this Gospel is that we would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, God in the flesh, come to save us from our sins. He will spend the majority of his writing working to establish this by unfolding vignettes of the miraculous life and self-authenticating glory of Jesus. For now though John wants to establish exactly who he has learned Jesus to be and John the Baptist's announcements of Jesus go a long way in wrapping up this introduction of who Jesus is.

And who is Jesus?

- He is the Lamb of God, the wrath-absorbing atonement, who lays down His life that we may find it.
- He is the Preeminent One, none come before Him and none stand above Him.
- He has been anointed by the Holy Spirit as God's perfect vessel of salvation.
- He baptizes with the Holy Spirit, imparting spiritual life to those who were dead.
- He is the Son of God, He is fully God and is of the same essence, nature, and status as God the Father.

We have a wonderful Savior. Our hearts should be full as we consider His greatness. Let's continue worshipping Him now through prayer and song.