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So few words and such a great depth of meaning for us this morning here. This will be a wonderful study. This is the real launch of the whole book. The other stuff is like prologue. The background story to the story.

Today, with the baptism of Jesus by John, the ministry of Jesus really begins. This is the launch pad.

Now Luke is very brief. Just 2 verses because this has already been covered by Matthew and Mark in more detail. So Luke is incredibly brief with something so incredibly important.

If all you ever had was the book of Luke, say you're a first century christian living in Rome or Phillipi or Macedonia, and Luke's gospel was all you ever got to read, it's enough.

But we have the privilege in 2019 to have all 4 accounts, and so we'll probably compare bits and pieces of the other 3 accounts in order to re-create the most thorough recapture of these things we can.

Let's begin with Matthews account of this day. Matthew 3

13 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."

It's probably 65 - 75 miles from where Jesus has grown up in Nazareth to where John, who we will see later has been told directly, in some manner by the word of God, to begin his baptizing ministry in the desert at the Jordan river.

And John's ministry is to prepare Israel for their Messiah. He is calling people to repentance. To agree with God over their sinfulness and to ask Him for forgiveness. And the physical act of baptism is a humbling acknowledgement that they are coming to him as spiritual bankrupts.

For the jews baptism was only for the gentiles who through proselytes would want to be jews, want to be like Ruth, to have the jews God as their God and the jewish people as their people.

Baptism signified that you were leaving the filth and dirt of the old world behind and embracing judaism and the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Non jews leaving their old world behind and becoming Jews.

So it was humbling to the jews for this prophet of God, the first prophet in more than 400 years to say, you've got to approach Messiah in the same spirit that gentiles do when they leave their sin behind and come out of their old world and into a new life as a jew.

And Matthew says; *13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.*

The word *arrived*, in the greek, has all the tenses and other things I'm not good at to let us know, Jesus has made this journey with great purpose. This wasn't a random thing. It was with direct import, direct purpose according to the greek that Jesus has come to John.

As far as we know, Jesus and John have never met. Their mothers were relatives of each other. There's a family connection. But there is this distance of a 3 day walk. If the families ever got together before this meeting when they were both boys, we don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us.

Now, all of a sudden, the time is right, and Jesus must go see John, and begin His public ministry.

Until this event, he was just a boy, and then a man, living in Nazareth, working with His adopted dad in the family business. Nobody thought of Him any differently than that. Now the time has come, and with all the purpose of the God of the universes, Jesus must go to John and this baptism must take place.

13 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?"

John is confused. Why would the Holy Child, the Son of God want to submit Himself to a baptism that is a symbol of repentance. What does the sinless Son of God want to repent of. What will all of the onlooker's think?

John uses the same logic we all would. I need YOU to baptize me. I'm just a sinful prophet. You're the Son of the Most High. How can I . . . baptize You??

And it's a question that theologians have been batting around for 2000 years, with a lot of error attached.

So let's digress here to an old error and talk about it for a few moments. You probably have never heard of it or given it a moments thought. The ancient name was Sebelianism. But today we call it modalism. It is a

heretical teaching linked today to the United Pentecostal Church denomination and what it says briefly, is this;

God is one. And He only appears in one place at one time but in different modes. Sometimes He's God the Father. Sometimes He appears in the Jesus mode, human flesh. And sometimes He's the Holy Spirit. But always just one God appearing in different modes. Not three persons co-existing, all equally God and fully God.

And you might be thinking, well, that's easier to understand. Our brains can't conceive the Trinitarian God, and it's a stumbling block to Jews, this trinitarian God that our brains can't comprehend.

Modalism is brought on partly by pride. When we try to unscrew the inscrutable, we get ourselves in a jam, and it's cause is pride. Whadya mean I can't understand it. Who do you think you're talking to here? Pride. Nobody else can understand it, but I can. I'm the first one. And you come up with something like modalism.

But the New Testament clearly teaches that God is one. One God who is 3 persons. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 3 distinct persons of the Godhead who are all somehow one God. God in 3 persons, blessed trinity, the old song says.

But I don't understand that. That doesn't compute. Some day we will understand it, but now, our mental capacity is not equipped to fully understand what the Bible clearly teaches.

But pride gets in the middle of that and you're too proud to admit that God is God and you are you and it's perfectly OK to not fully understand. So pride says, I can figure this out, because after all, I'm pretty darn smart. And the next thing you know you've got modalism or worse. You've got Jesus being Lucifer's brother and who knows what all. Wait long enough and you'll be god.

Our passage this morning has all 3 persons of the Godhead, all 3 persons of the Trinity in one place at one time. Modalism is heresy. The Father opens the heavens and we hear His voice. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And God the Spirit descends out of heaven in a visible bodily form and rests on God the Son in the Jordan river.

Part of the heresy of Modalism, Sebelianism is that they teach that Jesus is just an ordinary sinful man until this point. It's at this baptism that God first takes the mode of Jesus and He becomes God. Before this He is like every other man.

That's heresy. Because Jesus must be perfectly sinless, perfectly righteous in order for God to impute my sin to Him and God to impute His perfect righteousness to me. If modalism is right, there's no perfect sacrifice to die in my place and there's no perfect righteousness to impute to my account.

There was a big dust up about 5 years ago over this very thing. James MacDonald and his elephant room conference bringing in T. D. Jakes who is a pentacostal prosperity gospel preacher and who believes the heresy of modalism.

There was a big outcry from the evangelical church at large. A lot of confusion. And MacDonald was in the news this week. His church has finally got him to step down.

So that was one heretical view of what happened at the baptism of Jesus. What DID happen. Why does the sinless Son of God need to be baptized by a sinful prophet?

Well, He's going to tell us. John is making a fuss. This is all backwards. I shouldn't baptize you, You should baptize me. You're sinless. I'm sinful. I'm down here baptizing everybody and there's nobody to baptize

me.

And Jesus says; *“Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.*

How does the baptism of Jesus fulfil all righteousness. It's the same thing as what Jesus always does. He fulfils all of God's law, in His perfection, He does it anyways. In order to live that one perfect life, to be the one perfect Son of God, Jesus perfectly obeys God's will in every point.

Jesus didn't need to go to the feasts. All of those events were pictures of Him. He didn't need to participate in the passover with His disciples, the passover is a picture of what His blood will do for all of us. He doesn't need to participate in any of these things that God instituted for His people to be separate and righteous from the world. But He does.

The baptism is like that. It's what God desired the righteous people who belonged to Him in Israel to do. And Jesus doesn't need to participate to be righteous, He is the perfect righteous one. But He fulfils all righteousness. Everything in the law. Everything God instituted for His people. Jesus fulfils all of it with sinless perfection.

And this one act, this baptism is in the plan of God, the unveiling of His Son. The event that identifies Him and that launches His ministry.

There is a little window into this in John's gospel. John tells us what John the baptist said about it in John chapter 1; John the baptizer says;

33“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.’ 34“I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

This is a window into how God directs His prophet. *I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me,*

John is baptizing as a result of being told to baptize. Direct revelation in some form from God the Father. He sent me to baptize. And God the Father told John to go baptize my people in water. Revelation of God to His prophet.

He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

This entire event is being orchestrated by God. John, you go baptize. Jesus, you go down to John to be baptized. Nothing here is happening by accident.

Jesus walks down to the Jordan river. He asks John to baptize Him. John says, that's just backwards. I need you to baptize me. Jesus says, let's do it God's way, shall we, in effect, and John submits to the plan of God and we're back in Luke's abbreviated account at this juncture.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

Luke is the only author of the 4 gospel writers that tells us that Jesus was praying as He was being baptized by John. *while He was praying, heaven was opened,*

We talked for most of a morning just a couple of weeks ago about this phenomenon our minds cannot grasp of heaven being opened. With our modern science and telescopes and learning we can understand more of the awe of the skies than any previous generation.

The great expanse, the limitless universes beyond our own. We can even measure distances. Millions and billions of light years away. We can do the math, and it's good enough to get our feeble little vehicles to far away planets.

Yet this book describes those very skies as nothing more than a veil between us and the Almighty. We can't measure or understand the vastness of it. He can open up those skies like tearing a garment. At will.

Isaiah 64:1 says; *Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, That the mountains might quake at Your presence--*

It wasn't in God's plan for the mountains to quake this day, but when Jesus was praying to His Father as he was being immersed in the waters of the Jordan, God opened the heavens, and spoke with an audible voice. And the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven in a bodily form, and rested on Jesus.

All 3 persons of the trinity in one place at one time, revealing to John that this Jesus is indeed, the Lamb of God.

In Isaiah 42 God told 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.*

And God told John; *He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'*

This is the unveiling, the revealing of God's Messiah. Heaven is opened. God speaks. The Spirit descends. The ministry of Jesus has it's official launch, in the eyes and ears of many witnesses.

John's message changed. It changed from He's coming, to He's here.

Behold, the Lamb of God.

If you've ever watched that dopey show about the pawn shop in Las Vegas you understand about provenance and value. What separates an ordinary baseball from a 10,000 dollar baseball. Provenance that the 10000 dollar one has a bunch of signatures from 1923 and that it's real, not a fake.

And it works the same way with messiah's. There's no shortage of ordinary baseballs and there's no shortage of ordinary men. So what is the proof, once and for all time, that a particular person is in fact the messiah of God?

It's an important question, because if there's no way to prove that He is who He is, then He's just another man among millions of men and He has no authority beyond any other man.

But if heaven opens, and the voice of the Almighty Father speaks and says This IS My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; and if the Holy Spirit of God comes down out of those opened heavens and rests on that Son, just as scripture foretold; then that is the provenance that Jesus is God the Son and that He has all authority in this world, and in the world to come.

In Matthew chapter 21, the Rulers of Israel ask Jesus that very question.

23 When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"

That's a great question isn't it. Why should they, or why should we, why should anybody submit to the authority to reign of Jesus Christ? What is the provenance that proves that He is who He says He is and has any authority over anybody?

24 Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?"

The baptism of John. Did John have any authority? Was he the real deal?

And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 26 "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet." 27 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John and the resulting baptism of Jesus when heaven opened and the Almighty God spoke and the Spirit descended in a physical form that all could see and rested on Jesus affirming what the voice said;

This IS my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

If all of that happened, Then Jesus is God and has all authority over every other man, living and dead. The baptism of Jesus by John is the provenance, seen by faithful men and written down for those of us who weren't there in order that we could have faith to understand and believe.

There can be no better provenance, no better proof that Jesus is who He says He is than this. God opened up heaven and told us so.

But there still is one little thing, right. He has to have David's blood flowing in His veins. And Matthew has shown us that Joseph has a direct blood line to David.

But someone could argue, Joseph is His adopted parent. That's not good enough someone might say. And Luke gives us a genealogy that is different from the one Matthew has already given us.

Now, I'm not much good at math, but I can count to two. That's all the possibilities there are in a genealogy. Adopted Dad, and who else? Mary, of course. This genealogy skips dad and goes right to the maternal grandfather and down that tree branch to David.

Mary is never mentioned. But we have a clue in the greek that is unseen in the english translation. We have just enough time to consider the words of vs. 23 and quickly read through the list of names, and then next week we'll begin chapter 4 together.

23 When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,

In Israel, the age of 30 was the number when a full maturity was recognized.

Priests could begin service at 20 but were fully given all of the priestly office and responsibility at 30. David was 30 when he assumed the role of King in Israel.

Luke is the only one who tells us that Jesus was about 30 when His ministry began. He wasn't a kid any more. He was a mature adult man.

Genealogies are something I haven't ever had much interest in. Our culture has gotten sort of kookie about geneology. Ancestry dot com is a gazillion dollar business.

Part of that is the dis-connected emptiness that our culture feels. Perhaps if I knew who my people were it would give my life some kind of meaning? So we spend a few hundred or a few thousand

investigating where we came from as if that changes anything.

I know ahead of time it doesn't, and I'm cheap, so I haven't bothered. Oh! Horse thieves from Texas! Great. I know I descended from Adam so that explains just about all I need to know.

But in the case of kings, royalty, geneology becomes important, and it was always important in Israel because of the tribal nature of their property ownership.

The 12 tribes all got land allotments and it was important to keep records for claims on land. We see that in the story of Ruth. Naomi had a family claim on those fields that her kinsman owned. And Ruth was in line to be married by a kinsman redeemer. It was all about geneology and family for them.

Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to pay their taxes and register, because they were of the household of David. It was carefully recorded in Israel.

And it was important because priests were from the tribe of Levi and king's were from David's blood line. So the jews kept all of these records because their prophets had told them, Messiah comes from David.

Now there's something interesting in David's lineage down through the kings of Judah. Just before the Babylonian captivity there was a king who was in the kingly line who was so wicked that God cursed him and said no more kings would ever reign from his family. Jeconiah or Coniah, either way. In Jeremiah 22 God says;

24 "As I live," declares the LORD, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; 25 and I will give you over into the hand of those

who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 “I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. 27 “But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it.

*28 “Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar?
Or is he an undesirable vessel?
Why have he and his descendants been hurled out
And cast into a land that they had not known?*

*29 “O land, land, land,
Hear the word of the LORD!*

*30 “Thus says the LORD,
‘Write this man down childless,
A man who will not prosper in his days;
For no man of his descendants will prosper
Sitting on the throne of David
Or ruling again in Judah.’”*

After the captivity, there were no more kings in Israel. And in fact Matthews geneology of Joseph goes down through that line of kings through this cursed man, Jeconiah.

How interesting then, that Luke gives us a different lineage to David. At the baptism we learn one of His parents. God Almighty. And then as if to say, and the other blood line, that of Mary, finds it's way back to David, but not through the cursed Jeconiah.

Jesus has Royal blood flowing in His veins. His Father is God, and his mother is in the direct blood line to King David. And that's why we have 2 geneologies in the gospels.

Now then, bear with me as we simply read through the list. Pay attention because there will be a quiz. Jesus, Son of God, Son of David.

23 When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli, 24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, 27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, 29 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, 33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, 34

the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of MethuSelah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

One final point of interest. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70AD, the records were gone. All of the careful record keeping and blood line of the kings, obliterated.

It's a God thing. Their Messiah came, they rejected Him, and God sort of closed the books. Obliterated the books. The purpose was completed.

We still have the jews, He has preserved them but none of them can make a claim to be in the blood line of David. Their records are obliterated.

Still, in Revelation we see 12000 from each of the 12 tribes in Israel who go out and proclaim Him. They don't know which tribe they're from, but God does. His records are intact.