

# THE INAUGURATION OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

## Luke 3:21-22

### INTRODUCTION

The **Inauguration** of the President of the United States is a ceremony to mark the commencement of a new four-year term of the President of the United States. It takes place on January 20, 72 to 78 days after the November presidential election.

The ceremony is held at the west front of the United States Capitol facing the National Mall, with its iconic Washington Monument and distant Lincoln Memorial.

This presidential Inauguration is a day-long event, including parades and multiple social gatherings. The ceremony itself is carried live via the major commercial television and cable news networks with many others streaming it live on their websites.

The term of the incoming president commences at noon when the Chief Justice of the United States administers the oath of office to the president.

In short, there is much pomp and fanfare around this affair.

This is quite the contrast with the Inauguration of the Ministry of **Jesus Christ**, the Messiah.

**Jesus** does not come in pomp and fanfare. **Jesus** comes, from the beginning, in meekness, poor in spirit, to save us. He comes not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

This is **Jesus Christ** stepping onto the stage of human history

30 years of perfect, sinless growth and maturing are over.  
30 years in which **Jesus** has increased in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man

He is stepping out of the carpenter's shop into the public ministry of messianic office. He steps out of obscurity into the spotlight.

This is the tremendous turning point in the history of Redemption.

**16:16** – “The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached,”

From this time forward, the entire focus of Luke's Gospel shifts to **Jesus**. **John** is mentioned here and there a few more times, but henceforth, Jesus increases and John decreases.

**Jesus** is the Suffering Servant.

No servant has ever had so much to do in so little time.

No servant has ever accomplished so much for so many.

He will be pushed to the very outer most limits of His humanity in an incredible display of what it means for Jesus to be Messiah.

The official commencement of the Lord Jesus' public ministry, the inauguration of the fulfillment of God's promise to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is this Man Jesus - being baptized in a river, in a strange place, by a strange man, at a strange time.

**READ Luke 3:21-22**

Beloved, this is a dramatic, defining, decisive moment.

→ Jesus' step into the River Jordan is His first step toward Calvary.

This is the beginning of His three year walk to the cross.

→ This is a **Matter of Life and Death**

Back a few weeks ago, I used the word “Trinitarian” to describe a triune distinction. I had a couple godly brothers come up to me, graciously ... respectfully ... winsomely say something along the lines of – “Well, you could use the word “triune” instead of “trinitarian” 😊😊 Point well taken.

**Proposition:** Well, today, we have a triune outline, a 3 point outline ... and ... we have a Trinitarian outline ☺

- I. The **Identification** of the **Servant**
- II. The **Consecration** of the **Spirit**
- III. The **Approbation** of the **Sovereign**

**1<sup>st</sup> Point** in our Trinitarian Outline, ...

**I. The Identification of the Servant 3:21a**

Point – At the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus identifies Himself with man, with man in his lost and hopeless state.

→ He who is without sin identifies Himself with sinners - like you and me.

Proof – “<sup>21a</sup>**Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized,**”

**Mark** tells us that Jesus – “was baptized by John in the Jordan.” (1:9)

- The Jordan River flows from north to south.
- It starts in the upper part of the Promised Land and empties into the Dead Sea.
- About 105 miles in distance, 200 miles including the meandering → so it is a relatively short river.

Now, it is interesting that Matthew has 4 verses that cover the baptism of Jesus. Luke’s version is much more concise. Given this economy of words that Luke is writing, we can ask the question – What is Luke’s focus here?

**“when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized”**

Luke brings out the singular focus that Jesus is One among many being baptized here → His **identification** with us!

Look → there’s a thief, there’s a drunkard, an adulterer, a liar, a bully, a wife-beater, an idol-worshiper, a murderer,

a blasphemer, a child-abuser . . . and hundreds more, every single one a sinner . . . and there is Jesus standing in line, between the thief and the murderer, outwardly indistinguishable.

John the Apostle records that John the Baptizer didn't recognize Jesus (**John 1:31**). They were relatives. They may have gotten together at some time in their childhood. But they lived in two different places through their adult life. **Jesus** lived in Nazareth and **John the Baptizer** lived down in the wilderness of Judea.

Matthew records (**Matt 3:14-15**) – “But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?’ <sup>15</sup>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.”

This is the first thing Jesus says recorded in Scripture since He was twelve. Eighteen years of silence are now broken.

Now, Jesus' baptism is absolutely unique, never to be repeated. His baptism is different from the baptism of the others because He has not sinned and does not need to repent. Jesus does not confess His sin because He has no sin to confess.

Throughout his entire life, the Lord Jesus never had a defiled conscience. He never had any guilt or shame. He was never sorry for His failings and He never repented.

The Key → **Matt 3:15** – “to fulfill all righteousness”

**Illustration** – Did **Jesus** have to take the Passover meal as a testimony to His need to be delivered from sin? No! But righteous people kept the Passover because God commanded it.

The reason **Jesus** gets baptized is the same reason He was circumcised, and the same reason He was presented at the Temple, and the same reason He submitted to Joseph and Mary . . . to fulfill all righteousness on our behalf, in our place, as our substitute.

→ His Active Obedience

Jesus receives the sign of repentance on behalf of people in need of repentance. → He is our Sinless Substitute **2 Cor 5:21**

**Jesus** identifies Himself at very beginning of His ministry with us in our lost and hopeless state. He who knows no sin identifies Himself with us who are born knowing nothing but sin.

→ This is an act of love – in communion with us – in our misery.

Jesus identifies himself publicly with our central problem. The problem of our sin and our need for cleansing.

He comes to stand where we sinners stand figuratively and literally, to receive what we deserve, and give us life and adoption into the family of God.

This is how Jesus starts his ministry and this is how he will continue his ministry - not by military conquest and nationalism but by serving sinners.

Beloved, there is not a more definite or more clear way for **Jesus** to demonstrate His **dentification** with needy sinners than for Him to take the same sign as needy sinners.

He identifies with us in all our sins ... our ugly sins, our despicable sins, our horrifying sins, our hidden sins.

**Application** – Isn't this what we are supposed to do as children of God? Are we not to identify with and to come along side sinners? Isn't this the fruit of repentance, compassion, that John preached in the previous verses?

We go to the person in the gutter and we don't lecture him on his sin that got him there. We lift him up and get him out! And we feed him. We go to the person with Aids and we don't ask him how he got infected with Aids! We take care of him as a platform for the love of Christ and the gospel message.

Our passage moves from the human level to the Divine level  
→ a glimpse into the face of the Triune God

**2<sup>nd</sup> Point** in our Trinitarian Outline, ...

**II. The Consecration of the Spirit 3:21b-22a**

Point – This is an anointing in fulfillment of God’s promises in the Old Testament.

Proof – “<sup>21b</sup>**and while He was praying, heaven was opened,** <sup>22a</sup>**and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove,**”

First, none of the other gospels tell us, “**He was praying.**” Only Luke tells us. We will see that Luke loves to show Jesus in prayer. Luke records Him praying in all the crucial turning points of His life: here at His baptism, when He selects the twelve apostles (6:12), at Peter’s confession (9:18), at the Transfiguration (9:28), in Gethsemane (22:41), on the cross (23:34).

Luke tells us Jesus went repeatedly to the wilderness to pray (5:16) and that He spent whole nights in prayer (6:12).

**Application – Duncan** – *“Is it true that intentional, regular, disciplined, earnest, Christ-dependent, God-glorifying, joyful prayer is a duty? Is a discipline? You can call it that. It’s a duty in the same way it’s the duty of a scuba diver to put on his air tank before he goes under water. It’s a duty in the same way pilots have to listen to air traffic controllers. It’s a duty in the same way soldiers in combat have to clean their rifles and load their guns. It’s a duty in the same way hungry people have to eat food. It’s a duty in the same way thirsty people have to drink water. It’s a duty in the same way a deaf man has to put in his hearing aid. It’s a duty in the same way Pooh-bear looks for honey.”*

“**heaven was opened**” → Now, in Scripture when **heaven opens**, two things happen:

## Divine Manifestation and Divine Revelation

**Ezek 1:1, 3** – “Now it came about ... while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. the word of the LORD came expressly to **Ezekiel** the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him.

**Peter in Acts 10:11** – “beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,<sup>12</sup> and there were in it all *kinds of* four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.<sup>13</sup> And a voice came to him, ‘Arise, Peter, kill and eat!’”

**John the Apostle – Rev 4:1** – “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me,”

→ Divine Manifestation and Divine Revelation

→ God is going to appear and God is going to speak

**1<sup>st</sup>. Divine Manifestation** – “<sup>22a</sup>and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove,”

**Dove** – gentle, harms nothing. The dove suggests purity, meekness, innocence. This bird is not majestic like the eagle. The dove is simple, common, the kind of bird poor people could offer for a sacrifice → Ministry of the Holy Spirit

**Turn to: John 1:31-33**

The Holy Spirit comes visibly like a dove to be seen by John and others in order to bear witness to the significance of Jesus. Jesus will say, “The Spirit will bear witness of Me.” (**John 15:26**)

This descent of the Spirit upon Jesus is fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

**Isa 42:1** – “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him.”

**Isa 61:1** – “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,”

**Illustration** – If you have ever been in a church where the Elders were seen laying on of hands → Ordination and Commission → sending into ministry

**Application** - In the same way, this marks the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. God is sending Him out.

This is not Jesus without the Holy Spirit getting the Holy Spirit. This is not like an unbeliever getting saved and receiving the Holy Spirit. → This is an anointing for special service.

Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit. He has been full of the Spirit for thirty years. Then, what is the significance of the coming of the Spirit upon him now?’

The Holy Spirit comes to anoint Jesus for his ministry.

**Acts 10:38** – “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.”

As a Man, He is under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. He gives us an example of how we are to walk.

**John 8:29** – “He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

**MacArthur** – “*From His birth...from His conception to His resurrection, everything that goes on in His life, everything, His development, His sinlessness, His triumph over temptation, His perfection, His preaching, teaching, healing, casting out*

*demons, dying on a cross, and rising from the dead is all energized by the Holy Spirit.”*

In His humanity, in His identification with us, Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit, perfectly – **4:1** – “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit”

**Illustration** – Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a picture of water filling a cup. It is a picture of a hand filling a glove whereby the hand grips and now empowers and controls the glove. The glove can do nothing without the hand. It is entirely a useless object without the hand inside.

**Application** – In the same way, when we, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, squelch the Holy Spirit, we are useless.

**Application** – It is not a question of how much of the Spirit you have, but how much of you the Spirit has.

**Illustration** – You can stick your pointer finger in one glove finger and scratch your itch. But the glove is certainly not being utilized the way it ought to its fullest extent.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Point** in our Trinitarian Outline, ...

### **III. The Approbation of the Sovereign 3:22b**

Point – Approbation means approval, praise, acceptance, endorsement, admiration, commendation → in it’s purest form is the act of approving formally or officially

**2<sup>nd</sup>, Divine Revelation** – “<sup>22b</sup>and a voice came out of heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’”

“You” and “beloved” are emphatic

→ literally – “You, Yourself are My beloved Son,”

All of Jesus’ being, all of His occupation, all of His energy is poured into doing the will of the Father.

**John 4:34** – “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”

**“in You I am well-pleased”** – the pleasure of the Father

Main verb, only indicative other than “You are”

It is one thing to hear John the Baptizer say, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

It is an entirely different matter to hear the Sovereign Lord of Heaven declare and make a statement like this.

**Application** - Beloved, in your Christian life... in your singleness ... in your fractured marriage ...in your time of doubt...in your tribulation period of sickness... because the pleasure of the Father rests upon Jesus it rests upon us because we are identified with Christ - because Christ identifies Himself with you.

## CONCLUSION

- ➔ This is the message of the Gospel!
- ➔ This is the kick off to the Ministry of Jesus
- ➔ This is the dawning of redemption.

The life and ministry of Jesus is in between two baptisms. His baptism here foreshadows another baptism, far more bitter, yet necessary for His mission ➔ **Mark 10:33-38**

At the beginning of Luke and at the end of Luke, we have this sign of the power of the Lord to tear open the barrier between sinful man and holy God.

**Luke 23:45** – “...because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.”

**Acts 1:21** – “It is therefore necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us-- <sup>22</sup>beginning with the baptism of John, until the day that He was taken up from us-- one of these should become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

**Rom 1:4** – “the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,”

→ Beloved, Jesus stoops down ... so that we might rise up.

**Rom 8:11** – “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 indwells you.”

### **Illustration – Pilgrim’s Progress**

*“The **Interpreter** took **Christian** by the hand and led him into a pleasant place, where there was built a stately palace, beautiful to behold. At the sight of this, **Christian** was greatly delighted: he saw also upon the top thereof certain persons walking, who were all clothed in gold.*

*Then said **Christian**, “May we in go in there?”*

*The **Interpreter** took him and led him up toward the door of the palace; and behold, at the door stood a great company of men, all desiring to go in, but daring not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a side table, with a book and his ink well before him, to take the name of him that would dare to enter in. **Christian** also saw that in the doorway stood many men in armor to guard it, being resolved to do to those who would dare to enter what harm and injury they could.*

*Now **Christian** was amazed when, at last, every man jumped back for fear of the armed men. But then **Christian** saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat at the table to write. And the man said, “Set down my name, sir!”*

*The man then drew his sword, put a helmet upon his head, and rushed toward the door falling in combat upon the armed men, who fought against him with deadly force. But the man was not at all discouraged. He fought, cutting and hacking most*

*fiercely. And then, after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace.”*

John Bunyan cites **Acts 14:22** as the biblical truth behind this –  
“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

*“And then **Christian** heard a pleasant voice coming from among those dressed in gold within the palace,  
“Come in! Come in! Eternal glory you shall win.”*

Has there ever been a dramatic, defining, decisive moment in your life? Not a moment of baptism. Not a moment of God speaking from heaven. But a dramatic, defining, decisive moment where you identified with the One who humbly identifies, who beautifully identifies with sinners like you?

Is today the day you would say, “Set down my name, sir!”?

→ It is a matter of life and death