

02.09.25

Luke

Chapter 3 - A Different Kind of Authority An Unforeseen Phenomenon (vs. 21-22)

Luke 3:21-22: Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 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.”

This chapter starts off with a great proclamation by John the Baptist, “The Lord's coming. You need to get ready.” Now, just imagine if you heard that; if someone told you today, “The Lord is coming.” We're not just talking about this generic word, “lord”, we're talking about the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Creator of all things. He's coming. Get ready.

How would you get ready? Well, I suppose that a lot of people would be confessing a lot of sins on that particular day. I think we would be rushing to make things right and look right. John says, "Repent." You're going to need to think quite differently. The one that is proclaiming this, he himself is a little strange. I mean, really John the Baptist? Where did he come from? He's been so much in hiding that when he sees his relative, Jesus, he doesn't recognize Him. That's how out of it he's been. I mean, let alone eating locusts and wild honey, but this guy's up in the hills, stashed away from the trappings of the world, and he comes out with this message, "I've got a message for you. He's coming." Everything he begins to proclaim doesn't sound anything like the Pharisees or the Sadducees or the scribes. The things that he's been saying are very not only practical, but right; just rings true in the hearts of people. But many are asking, "How does this play out? What does it look like? I mean, get my heart right, stop being inappropriate in my dealings, but how do I do that?" So, tax collectors, soldiers start coming up to him and asking him, "What do we do?" And interestingly enough, he gives them specifics. To the soldiers, "Be

satisfied with your pay, and don't extort. Don't try to use your power and your authority to abuse people or to get more money." You begin to see that the message is so powerful and apparently his conviction is so strong that people actually believe the Lord is coming. So, they get right. The marvelous thing about our message is that it's a message that's so powerful, if in fact you and I proclaim it right, God will begin to touch the hearts of those that are His. We won't have to do a whole lot about telling people what they have to do. They'll come up to us and ask us, "What do we do?"

Peter, as we made mention a while back in Acts 2, proclaims that marvelous message and he begins to convey the fact that the great day of the Lord is coming. He was so convincing that at the end of his message people were going, "What must we do?" So, there's an authority and power of the message itself. If we just get the message right, the Spirit of God will begin to deal with the hearts of those that are His and they will come. How wonderful this message is, but how wonderful the appearance of this person must be.

The passage that we're going to be looking at today is the appearance of Christ on the scene, and we find Him really coming into a realm in which people are being baptized into the baptism of John the Baptist, which is, as John will say, a baptism of water and of repentance. That is to say that people are coming and desiring, as they're telling John, "We want to get right with God. We want to get all this filth out of our lives. How do we do that?" John says, "Come. Let's make a decision today." And baptism, in a way, was a decision today, and the fact that they're going in the water was a desire for complete cleansing; not partial cleansing, but a *whelming over*, "*baptizō*"; a sense of complete cleansing. But of course, we all know that of the people that were coming, probably if you were to interview them a few days afterwards, were still maybe going back to some of their sins, but the desire was there, and the commitment was "I want to do the right thing." What would cause somebody to ultimately stay there, to change to such a degree? And we have on scene now the Savior Himself, the Lord Himself, the Creator of all things.

When we read passages like John 1 or Hebrews 1, or even Colossians 1, they all make reference to the fact that Jesus was the Creator of all things, and I can never just get my mind around the fact that the Creator is walking on the earth at this time.

When we go into the Book of Daniel, we realize that not only is the Creator walking on the earth, but in Daniel 7, this is the One that is sitting on high. He is the Son of Man enthroned above, and you look at Ezekiel 1, and literally He is the One on the chariot of God, that is ruling the universe. What a magnificent picture, and to realize that now He's walking among men. Emmanuel, God with us is now walking among men. It's an extraordinary event that happens.

There are three things that almost immediately take our attention as we look at verses 21 and 22. The first is that heaven opens. I mean that alone would do it for me.

That's a good day for me. Heaven opens, I hope would be a good day for me. It's an amazing event to actually see the heavens open. What are you seeing up there? I don't know exactly what Jacob was seeing, except angels going

up and down a ladder, so to speak, but what are you seeing when that happens? Then, what happens beyond that is that the Holy Spirit descends. Now, Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit descends in bodily form, which is an amazing thing in and of itself, in the sense that you have a Spirit taking on a form of a body. That body, as the text tells us, is that dove that comes upon. There are two main places that you see “dove” actually made mention of. Of course, in Psalm it makes mention of it. But these two main places would be all the way back in Genesis in which you have the dove being used in the sense of one bringing a message of “everything is going to be ok”, a new beginning, and a sense of peace with God. Then, you have in the Song of Songs, which “dove” is repeatedly used as this title of beloved; one that is greatly loved and one that is cherished. So, the word “dove” is used within that particular passage. Both of these aspects will be taken into consideration in the sense that God is declaring to us His beloved is here. “This is My Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The beloved Son of God. It will declare this beginning of peace, this beginning of God's grace to man. God is actually creating something new. If any man be in

Christ, he is a new creation and something new is about to happen. So, the coming down of the dove is that marvelous picture of those things. Then, you hear this voice, the voice of God. I know so many of us go, “Wow. Wouldn't it be great?” I know that in the Gospel of John, later on, God declares a voice, and some people were standing around going, “Was that thunder?” So, we kind of get a picture in the Gospel of John how great this voice was, but to be there at this time, you're dealing with an event that's remarkable; that's unusual of sorts. That's one of the reasons why we give it the title, this “Unforeseen Phenomenon” that takes place; this extraordinary occurrence of events that begins to happen at this particular moment. My question is, what caused this to happen? Of course, obviously Christ is on scene, but it hadn't happened until this point, and there seems to be some direct connection that God is conveying to us. What opens up the heavens? What causes this event to happen?

If you look with me, we'll pick up in verse 21,

(Luke 3:21) “Now when all the people were baptized...”

So, the picture is letting us know the surrounding event is that many people had come to be baptized, and there's kind of an ending of this at this particular moment. However, it's happening. What Scripture is wanting us to do as we bring Jesus on the scene is somehow connect Him to these people or the people that are being baptized. I do want to emphasize again, and once again, I know that we made mention of this, but sometimes we forget that where he makes mention of the people in this particular text, he's not using the word "multitudes" which basically would be a mob, but he's dealing with a group of people. "*Laos*" is the word that he uses within the text. These are a group of people that have something in common. Now, the thing that they have in common is pretty obvious. They want to be cleansed. They want to get right with God, and like Peter says, "You were once not a people, but now you are a people that come, and you have something in common." This is what conjoins us together; this is what brings us together. We long to get right with God, right? There is something inside of us that says, "I want to be cleaned. I want my sins forgiven." And we know that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just

to forgive; He'll cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So, these are people that have come together for this purpose. It is that which unites them to the Savior and that which brings the Savior into their sphere. You think about all the people on the face of the earth, and He decides to present them right here at this point, this group of people. Clearly, there is a desire.

Let me show you something. If you turn all the way back to Luke, and Luke has a way of focusing on this and one of the things that we've said over and over again is these are unlikely people that God seems to be revealing Himself to. One of the things that we're going to see in the Gospel of Luke is that yet there's a pattern. What is the pattern? Well, they all seem to be humble, and they all seem to want to be with God. They all seem to want to get right with God. At that point, God seems to present Himself; go into their presence and reveal Himself.

(Luke 1:8) “Now it happened that while he...”

That is, Zacharias.

“... was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

(Luke 1:9) according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.”

Now, there had been other priests, and they had their time, but now this is Zechariah's time. Something miraculous happens in this at this moment, but the question is why at this moment? The answer really is given within the passage as it begins to describe both Zacharias and Elizabeth, and the description is that they are righteous.

It says,

(Luke 1:6) “They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly...”

It's interesting, we were talking about that with Noah. So, as you come into the text, that's the one thing that changes everything. People go to church. Does God always reveal Himself to people in church? No, I think a lot of times people go back home just as sleepy or probably sleepier than they ever were, but in in some settings, the Spirit of God begins to move. Why is that? It's an interesting question.

So, it goes on and says, well, this was according to custom, and they were doing this.

(Luke 1:10) “And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside...”

Now, what we know is, if you look in Luke 3:15, it describes the feeling of the people at this time. It reads this way,

(Luke 3:15) “Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ.”

Why are things happening now? Well, what's to be noted within the passage that we're looking at is it says,

(Luke 3:21) “Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying...”

Well, that's what the people were doing in Chapter 1. They were praying. Now, we have no inference that He was praying out loud, but that He was communicating with His Father. We oftentimes define the word “*proseuchomai*”, which is the word “prayer” that is used; “*pros*”, the prefix, referring to “towards something” and

“*u*” referring to “good”, and “*chomai*” dealing with “wish”. So, “a good wish towards God” is really what prayer is. It's a desire to have. I have to admit that prayer has oftentimes been kind of enigmatic to me. I mean, I'll read a passage such as there in Matthew and it says God says, “What are you asking for? I already know what you need.” So, I'm going, “What am I asking for? You already know what I need.” And yet, really, throughout the Book of Luke, there is a strong emphasis of this whole thing of prayer. As Dave was singing this great song, “*At the feet of Jesus*”, only in the Gospel of Luke does it mention that wonderful story of Mary and Martha and Mary at the feet of Jesus. Do you know how the very next chapter starts off? The disciples come up to Jesus and they go, “Teach us to pray.” The very next passage. Then, you come into Chapter 18, which, by the way, is only in the Gospel of Luke, and Jesus begins to tell this parable of a widow. He says, “I'm going to tell you this parable so that you would know that you need to pray and not give up.” So, He tells this parable of this widow that comes before an unrighteous judge, and she just bugs him to death, and he's unrighteous. So, he can really care less about people,

but because he's so bugged to death, he's going to give in to her. He caves. So, Jesus says, "So, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith in the earth?" You go, "So, You're telling us to bug You to death?" No, that's not what God's saying. God is saying that this woman actually believed that this was her only hope. So, she wasn't going to let go. She was going to be tenacious and never let go because this is the only hope. Yet, when we pray, we don't either get an answer when we want it, or something happens the way we didn't think it should happen. Something in our life causes us to go, "I don't know if it's really paying off." We start going to other resources, and God goes, "Do you really believe I'm the only resource? If you really believe, you wouldn't stop talking to Me." So, throughout the Gospel of Luke, you're going to see this great emphasis of prayer.

In Luke 22, even Jesus will say to Peter, "Satan has requested permission to sift you." That will only be recorded in Luke, and He'll say, "But I have prayed for you." Very interesting text. He'll go on to talk about them in the midst of sorrow, and as He comes to this place of

prayer, and He cries out to His Father. He tells His disciples, “You need to pray. You need to watch and pray. You need to keep alert and pray.” And then, of course, He finds them asleep. By the way, only Luke will record that they fell asleep, and this is why he tells you they fall asleep, because of sorrow. Now remember, Luke's a physician. So, only Luke will cover the perspective of the physical. When you're depressed, what do you feel like? Yeah. You don't feel like doing anything. So, you have a tendency to fall asleep, but all through the gospel is this great emphasis of prayer. What is that about? Well, Luke is wanting to convey this relationship that you can have with God even though perhaps you see yourself as being insignificant, God will have a relationship with you too. And Luke really wants to emphasize that. Well, how will he do that? He starts off by demonstrating the power of prayer, and in the power of prayer, he'll show heaven's opening as Christ is there, and he begins to talk to His Father. I suppose that one of the things that comes into our minds is, “What is He talking about?” And it is interesting that it doesn't go in any detail about what He's talking about, but we know what He's talking about. He's

talking about cleansing because He's there to be baptized. He's there talking about the desire for these people that came with a desire to be cleansed, His desire to save them. Great things begin to happen, heaven begins to open when our hearts are in tune with His, and what does God want to do more than anything else? It's surprising, He wants to rescue us. Our thought is that maybe that's a side job, but this is His main focus. This is the desire of His heart.

It's no wonder if you were to go all the way back in the Old Testament into Daniel 9, one of the greatest prayers of all the Scripture, I believe. But if you go with me in Daniel 9, you see Daniel in prayer. One of the things that he realizes is as the prophet Jeremiah had said, it was going to be 70 years they were going to be in captivity. He realizes, "We're like at year 70. So, something needs to happen." So, he begins to pray, and he realizes what the problem has been all along. I mean, why did they go into captivity? They had forsaken God. They had gone astray. Anyway, so as you come to Daniel 9, Daniel begins to reflect upon just how much his people need God's

forgiveness, and he goes into this kind of intercessory prayer. What do you think Christ was doing? The people were baptized, and He comes up. What do you think Christ is praying? So, you look at Daniel 9 and the way that Daniel begins to convey to the Lord this wonderful message.

(Daniel 9:3) “So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

(Daniel 9:4) I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed...”

That sounds like repentance, doesn't it?

“... and said, “Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,

(Daniel 9:5) we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

(Daniel 9:6) “Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name...”

(Daniel 9:7) “Righteousness belongs to You...”

“Destruction belongs to us.” What do you think happens when he prays?

Look at your passage,

(Daniel 9:20) “Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people...”

It's interesting. I never thought of Daniel really being a great sinner, but he was identifying himself with the people.

“... and presenting my supplication before the LORD...”

Let me just say this too, when you're praying for other people, you ought to throw yourself in. Confess your sins because you're not anymore worthy to be in front of the throne of God than they are, and if you'll come, God will hear that prayer. That prayer will be so powerful that as he's “...presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God,

(Daniel 9:21) while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously...”

Well, that was the same guy that showed up in Luke 1, while the people were in prayer. You think there's any tie there? You think there's any tie to heaven opening up when somebody's in prayer with a desire to see people saved, to see them cleansed, to see them washed? Do you think there's any tie to heaven being opened? I mean, Gabriel is being sent, and Daniel is being sent. In Luke 3, the heavens are opened as Christ begins to pray.

The passage is telling us and really giving us the power of prayer within the text, and as Jesus begins to pray, things begin to happen. Now, let me just say this about prayer, and like I said, prayers always's been just a little bit strange to me. I mean, we've all prayed for things and okay, is it happening? And it doesn't always work out. Of course, if in fact God's going to do what God's going to do, He's sovereign, right? If He's going to do what He's going to do, okay, I'm good with that. That just kind of shortens my prayer, "Your will be done." That's my prayer. But this passage is showing us that which makes prayer so marvelous, and that is that it opens up the relationship.

I want to give you an example. It's with my mother and in no way do I want you to take this example to the extremities and say, "Well, you know, God is like his mother." I don't want you to go that far, but I want you to see something in relationships. My mother, as most of you know, is now 98, and I have found the older that you get, the communication gets a little bit more difficult. So, she'll oftentimes come into the room. She has a little electric scooter that she buzzes around. I told Connie, I said, "She's pacing" and she goes back and forth. So, she'll oftentimes come in and we'll be sitting down, and she'll kind of park beside us or something like that, and she won't say anything. I know she's there because I can hear her breathing, but she won't say anything. So, I'll say something like, "So, Mom, what are you wanting to do today? Have you read something? A new article?"

Because she likes to read things or something like this. My point is that I begin to initiate a conversation. When I talk to her, I say, "Mom, why don't you ask me this?" She said, "I didn't want to bother you." She'll use that phrase, "I didn't want to bother you." So, I found that if there's a lot of communication, I need to do the initiation because

otherwise, she's probably not going to do a whole lot of talking with me. So, I realized that by my talking to her that I'm opening up the door for her to communicate with me. I'm actually saying, "You're now invited to participate in what I'm doing. You're now invited to have a conversation with me, to be in this moment." Now, without you taking the example too far, what you're doing when you're praying is you're inviting God to be in your moment.

Revelation 3:20 says,

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."

is oftentimes referred to salvation, but it's not actually a salvation text because he's dealing with the church. The point of it is, "I'll have fellowship with you, but you have to open the door." It's not like God doesn't want to have communication, but He's waiting for the invitation, so to speak.

I think back on the text in Isaiah 9 where you have Ahaz and of course the attack and God says, "Whatever you want to ask, ask, but ask." James will even say, "You have not because you didn't ask." Then, of course, in the

Gospel of Luke here in chapter 18, God goes, "Why don't you ask like the widow does?" I think we perceive ourselves as being magnanimous. "Well, we're not going to bother God. We're not going to interrupt His day or anything like that," but really? He asked you to ask. He calls upon you to ask. "Invite Me in your day, and I'll participate with you in this day." So, in many respects, prayer is you bringing God in not only the conversation of that moment, but the event of that moment, and you're saying, "I want You to be a part of this. Help me in this. Direct me in this. Guide me in this." And God says, "I will. I will." Many of the things that might happen might not be the way that you thought they would turn out, but God will be in the moment if you genuinely desire for Him to be. So, it's a marvelous text in the sense that it's beginning to reveal to us this great and magnificent phenomenon in which the heavens begin to open.

Now, we have to tie it in not only with the people, but we have to tie it in with the baptism, and what seems to be even stranger than the fact that heaven opens and the Holy Spirit descends and God speaks, which is pretty great

stuff, but really one of the things that takes us back, probably more than anything else, is the fact that Jesus wants to be baptized. I mean, not in this passage, in verses 21 and 22, which is a very short text; there's no dialogue about what actually goes on between Jesus and John the Baptist, but if you were to look in Matthew in particular, John the Baptist goes, "Wait, wait. You should be baptizing me; not me, baptizing You." And Jesus goes, "We're going to do this to fulfill all righteousness." I'm not sure exactly how that happens. What the passage now begins to reveal to us is that Jesus is doing something to convey the great righteousness of God that goes even beyond what man would do in his confession of sin. Man would confess sins and to him it's probably a big feat. "I at least didn't want to do the wrong thing." But Christ is going to be revealing, as Romans 3 says, the righteousness of God is revealed even beyond the Law, and then he begins to describe the righteousness of God, which is the selfless sacrifice of God to save you and me; that Jesus actually becomes sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. The passage is telling us that Christ is coming to bring

righteousness to us through Himself, and that He, in a very unique way, is identifying Himself with the people. The people being baptized then Jesus follows being baptized with them. It shows a desire. Now, what's the desire? The desire is the same desire that we hear in the prayer of Daniel. "God, you've got to save us. Save us." But Jesus is going to go through the water.

Let me just give you a picture of baptism. If you were to define baptism, it's a symbol of washing, obviously with the water. So, it's that which cleanses. Peter will talk about this in 1 Peter 3:2 as he even uses the example of the baptism of Noah which was a cleansing of the wickedness of the world, right? As He floods the world, there's a cleansing of wickedness. Then, as you go on, you realize that according to Romans 6, it's this marvelous symbol of a death, burial, and resurrection. When you go down, it's like a burial, right? Your hope is somebody brings you back up. That would be resurrection. That's a newness of life. So, it's this wonderful symbol. Then, as 1 Corinthians 10 gives us this picture of the baptism, as it's called, of Moses, which Moses takes the children of Israel

through the waters, and the waters part. It says the cloud is over them and the water is all around them. So, it's a kind of baptism which really is a picture of faith. When you go under the water, I hope that you have some sort of faith or trust that somebody is going to once again bring you up. It's an act of faith that you're displaying. As Jesus is described, He kept entrusting Himself to the righteous God Who does what is right. So, there is a trust that takes place when you walk through the water; when you come to God, and say, "I really believe that You're the answer for all this." Baptism is that wonderful picture in that symbol. Now, in the text what we have is Jesus now associating with these people and actually going in the water "for them." It's not a new picture, but oftentimes we don't connect them.

Let me show you, if you go all the way back to Joshua 3. You probably remember the Book of Joshua. It hasn't been that long, has it? Maybe it has. Joshua 3, if you look with me. If you remember, they were going to cross the Jordan. Remember the crossing of the Jordan? So, as Joshua has a commandment of God, and the

commandment of God is that you march through with the priests and the priests are carrying something. We won't go into all the details, but if you drop on down with me, (Joshua 3:17) “And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant...”

Now, we know that the ark of the covenant was representative of the heart of Christ. We know that the Tabernacle itself was a picture of Christ coming to earth because the Tabernacle was not like the temple that Solomon built, but was something made out of skins, which was to give the marvelous picture that Christ was going to come. He was going to become flesh, and He was going to dwell among us. One of the reasons why it was something that you could carry around because that would be Christ dwelling among you. So, the ark of the covenant had within it the heart of God, which was His desire to be the bread of life, which the manna from heaven was in there which His desire was to fulfill the Law which the Law of Moses was in there. And His desire was the desire to resurrect or to give life, which the staff of Aaron was in there which budded. I mean, how does a

stick bud? But his stick budded and was a symbol of a kind of resurrection. You have the heart of God being carried with them, and where is it being carried?

Well, if you look in the passage, it says,

(Joshua 3:17) “... the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground...”

What caused the parting of the waters? Well, God caused the parting of the waters. What did He do? He went in the waters with them so that they might be saved.

The picture is given as well if you look with me in Isaiah 43. I think one of our all-time favorite verses, right?

(Isaiah 43:1) “But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator,
O Jacob,

And He who formed you, O Israel,

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are Mine!

(Isaiah 43:2) “When you pass through the waters...”

Underline it. You might have missed it.

“... I will be with you...”

That's the love of God, if you think about it. I mean, what does He say in verse 4?

(Isaiah 43:4) “Since you are precious in My sight, Since you are honored and I love you...”

Why would He do that? Why would He go into the water? What righteousness is He fulfilling? He's fulfilling the desire of God which is to save. “God so loved the world,” think about that, “that He gave His Son.” Now, what exactly is happening at this moment?

Let me have you turn to the Book of Hebrews. I know I'm having to go from one end to the next, but let me have you turn to Hebrews 2, as Scripture begins to reveal that we see the One that God was thinking about in the Old Testament, and it starts off this way,

(Hebrews 2:9) “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

(Hebrews 2:10) For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

In other words, to bring to a conclusion. We'll put it another way, to fulfill all righteousness. The only way that those people that are being baptized are going to actually be clean is for Christ to do it for them. He's going to have to do it for them.

So, it says,

(Hebrews 2:12) “... “I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE.””

(Hebrews 2:13) And again,
“I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM.” ...”

That's a picture of baptism, “I'll put my trust in Him.” It's Christ going to the cross and saying, “Not my will, but Yours be done.” (1 Peter 2:23) He kept entrusting himself to faithful Creator, to a righteous judge.

John 10 will give this marvelous picture as once again, one of the foundational texts of all of Scripture, about the Good Shepherd. How do we define the Good Shepherd? Well, the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

It reads this way,

(John 10:14) “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,

(John 10:15) even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father...”

I want to stop there. He’s fundamentally saying in “I know the Father” is, “I know what He thinks. I know what He wants. I know what His greatest desire is.” What is God's greatest desire? Jesus goes, “I know because”, if you drop on down to verse 30, “I and the Father are one.” “So, I know exactly what He's thinking. We think the same.”

Well, what is He thinking?

(John 10:15) “even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”

Now, watch what he states,

(John 10:17) “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.”

“Why are You and the Father so close? ““Because we think the same.” “What is it you think about?” “Dying for man.” It's hard to imagine that the God of the universe, that this is His greatest focus.

The passage goes on and says,

(John 10:18) “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative...”

Now, Christ is wanting us to know that there was a choice in this, even though He's going to make reference to “This commandment I received from My Father”, and I'm going to explain that in just a second, but He says,

“...I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Now, the word that he's using here for “commandment” is *“entolē”*. *“Entolē”* is making a reference to something that is given to you as a decision. It is an injunction, but it's directly tied to your office. So, if in fact you were the

President of the United States, you have certain responsibilities as the President of the United States. If you choose to act presidential, there are certain things that you'll do. There's still a choice, but if you choose to fulfill your office the way that the office should be done, then you will do that. In this context, the office is Shepherd. So, He says, "My Father's given Me the role of Shepherd. If I choose to act in accordance with the office, I will lay down My life." His point is, "And so I choose. I choose to take on the responsibility of this office. The father has given Me this choice. He's given Me this office, but I have now chosen to do this."

So, if you look with me, you can see this in John 14:31 as well.

(John 14:31) "but so that the world may know..."

And within the context, the rule of this world has taken over and I would say the worst time in the world to try to fulfill your offices is when things are the worst. He goes, "Things are the worst. The ruler of this world is now taking over."

But He says this,

“But so that the world may know that I love the Father...”

“And as the Father gave Me this goal...”

“*Telos*” is making reference to “This goal that I'm looking forward to, which is bringing many sons to glory. The salvation of many.”

Even so, “...I do...” It kind of reminds you of Hebrews 10, right? “Behold, I've come to do Thy will.”

“...let us go from here.”

The text is, “I want to do this as bad as He does, and I've got to go do it.” When He comes to be baptized, He is declaring, “I choose to identify with these people, and I choose to go all the way to make sure that their wishes and their desires are fulfilled. I desire it so much that I'll go through it with them, I'll go through it for them.” I was thinking about Noah, and you ask me why I'm thinking about Noah, I've been studying Noah. But if you look at the passage of Noah, I was really touched by the way that one text reads.

If you look with me in Genesis 7, the time that the flood is getting ready to come, and of course we look at it as a

very harsh judgmental time. It tells us in verse 13 that “Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark”, but a very touching passage that maybe sometimes we miss,

(Genesis 7:16) “Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him.”

The picture is not of the Lord going in the ark with them. The picture is of the Lord staying behind and closing the door for them. I can almost hear Him say, “You be safe.” And He closes the door as He stays out with the world of judgment because we know that Christ Himself will go down to the pit of Sheol and be with those that rejected Him. It is a marvelous picture of God's love for us. Why is it that God looks down and the voice from Heaven says, “This is My beloved Son”? “It's because He thinks like Me. He loves the same thing I love, and He loves passion and He's willing to die for it, and He's willing to say to other people, “You be safe. I'll take it from here.” And it is such a marvelous picture; we consider the salvation of God and

the heart of God in all of this, and it's no wonder heaven opens up. I wonder why heaven doesn't open up for us? I wonder when we're praying, what we're thinking? I mean, we're inviting God into the conversation and we're inviting God into the moment of our lives, but are you inviting Him to do the things that He loves to do? Are you opening the door and saying, "Let's save people today, and Lord, if it means that I have to do some sacrificing in order to see that happen, so do it." I could just imagine the heavens are opening, and it's no wonder that Peter will make reference to this, "If in fact you will suffer for doing what is right, the glory of God rests upon you."

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and it's our desire to talk with You, to invite You into not only our conversation, but this moment, this event of our day. If You're not a part of our day, we're not really happy about the day. What worth is the day? It's understandable that Paul would say something like "Pray all the time. Keep Him involved in every area of your life." It makes sense, but

we also realize where the power is and the heart of identifying with You and with those around us that are lost. Somehow, we draw near the Savior to those that we love so much and desire to be saved by virtue of inviting You and working together with You.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What is your prayer life like? Where's the power? I mean, you came to God, and you said you wanted to be clean, but is it that you just want to be clean for yourself, or do you long to see those around you be clean? Are you willing to go through the waters that they might be saved? I mean, there's a reason why Jesus says, "Take up your cross and follow Me."