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**Study #1 for the week of January 2, 2012**

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**Baptism of Jesus**

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*Luke 3:21-23*

**Introduction**

Out at the Jordan, “the voice of one calling in the wilderness” summoned the people of Israel to get ready for the coming of the Lord himself. John cried out. And people responded, among them tax-collectors and soldiers, going down into the waters of baptism in repentance of their sins.

Then came the one for whom baptism had prepared them – Jesus himself – the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He, too, went down into the waters of baptism, identifying himself with the ones he had come to save. And as he did, another voice cried out in the wilderness, a voice from heaven itself, publicly embracing Jesus in the Father’s love – sure footing for the ministry that was to follow.

⇒ **The aim of this study is to understand the deep, loving relationship of Father and Son, and to be drawn into that relationship ourselves**

## Group Study

### Community Building

- (1) Tell stories of your own baptism. What were the circumstances? Was the decision hard or natural? What impact did it have in your life?

### *Read Luke 3:21-23*

- (2) To get the background to Jesus' baptism, read **Luke 3:1-20**. Review what John's ministry was all about. Why was baptism an important part of his ministry? What did it symbolize? How easy or hard would it have been for people to choose to embrace it?
- (3) Given the nature of John's baptism (**3:3**), why did Jesus get baptized? The simple statement comes in **3:21** – but what is the rationale behind it?
- (4) Although the event is "Jesus' baptism", the main focus of the passage is actually on what comes next. What does come next in **verses 21-22**?
- (5) What is the significance of the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus (**v. 22**)? Wasn't Jesus already one with the Spirit as he was with the Father?

Compare with the statement in **Acts 10:37-38**. See also **Luke 4:18-19** and **5:17**. What do you learn from these passages about the importance of the Spirit to Jesus' ministry?

In what ways is this "anointing" unique and in what ways is it a model for us?

- (6) For anyone present who had "ears to hear", what would have been the significance of the voice from heaven? In what way would it have prepared them for Jesus' ministry?
  
- (7) What significance would the voice from heaven have had for Jesus himself? **Verse 23** tells us that Jesus began his ministry at this time. In what way would the voice from heaven have prepared Jesus for ministry?

Listen in to Jesus' statements *about* the Father (or his conversations *with* the Father) in the following scriptures. What truths, spoken by the voice at his baptism, are reflected in these verses? How was Jesus sustained by these truths during his ministry?

**Matthew 11:27**

**John 5:19-20**

**John 8:54-56**

**John 10:14-15**

**John 14:9-11**

**John 15:9-10**

**John 17:1-5**

- (8) The voice at the baptism has implications for us personally, too.

Jesus invites us to ***abide*** or ***remain*** in him (**John 15:4**). The Apostle Paul continually speaks of the wonder that we are ***in Christ*** (here's a mere smattering of references – look at a couple: **Romans 8:1, 12:5, 16:7, 2 Cor 5:17, Gal 1:22, Eph 1:3, 1:13, 2:13, Phil 1:1, 3:14, 4:7, Col 1:28, 2:10**).

If we are truly ***in Christ***, what are the implications of the Father's baptismal words for us? Do you regularly live in this awareness or not? If not, how could you nurture this awareness?

The Apostle Paul later says that the Father ***“has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us”*** (**Romans 5:5**). How can we open our lives to receive more of this awareness from the Spirit?

## Prayer