

Series: Jesus Among Us
Title: The Heavens Opened - The Trinity Revealed
Luke 3:21-22

What a great job pastor Frank did last week looking at the baptism and temptation of Jesus in the wilderness! As he mentioned, our plan was for him to address that text, then I would circle back and zoom in on the baptism of Jesus and how that event revealed the Triune nature of the Godhead, what we have come to know as “The Trinity”.

Let me recreate the scene in your mind... John the Baptist has been preaching a baptism of repentance in the wilderness ... calling Jews who have embraced a false religious system to national and personal repentance of their sin ... this was in preparation for the coming Messiah... this was the ministry of John the Baptist....

But the moment is about to change... because the One in whom John was preaching about, the One who literally made the very Jordan that baptized people Now steps into the River with John.

You could imagine the silence, the gasp, the questioning, the curiosity... why is John baptizing Jesus...

Matthew records a short conversation between John and Jesus:

Matthew 3:13–15 (ESV)

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.

This was not acknowledgment of sin on the part of Jesus, this is Jesus identifying with the sin of mankind. This is a precursor of what will take place on the cross, when Jesus bears the sin of mankind upon himself... this is substitution in seed form ... and he steps into the river and is baptized by John!

Luke records:

Luke 3:21a (ESV)

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying,

Notice, when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying ... we already see a distinction between Jesus and the Godhead! Jesus is not acting independently, but in perfect harmony and submission to the Father!

And then it happens...

Luke 3:21b

...the heavens were opened,

Luke deliberately uses this language of heaven opening because it is so significant... When heaven opens in Scripture, it is never trivial. It means God is stepping into history in unmistakable clarity.

At the Jordan, heaven opened — and what we saw was not just a baptism. We saw the Triune God revealed, and the mission of redemption publicly beginning.

That’s the title of my message: The Heavens Opened—The Trinity Revealed

That’s what the opening of heaven shows us, God is among His people!
Let’s Continue:

Luke 3:22

22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove;

So it's not that the Holy Spirit turned into a dove, the language is clear that the Spirit descended "like" a dove descends... another word that helps us shape the picture of what's going on here is the word "hover" ... as the Spirit descends upon the Son, there's a point at which He is hovering over the Son to rest upon Him ...

I see this as significant because the imagery is beautiful... let's consider this through the lens of:

Genesis 1:1–3 (ESV)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

I love this... before light broke the darkness... before form emerged from formlessness... the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters...

The Spirit of God hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation... and now, come to the Jordan.

Again, there are waters. Again, there is the Spirit. But this time, The Spirit of God doesn't hover over impersonal creation... He descends upon the Son.

At the beginning of the world, the Spirit moved over the waters to bring life into being.
At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, the Spirit rests upon Him who will bring life to the spiritually dead.

Creation began with the Spirit over the waters. Redemption begins with the Spirit upon the Son... in both cases, we see a distinction between God, The Holy Spirit and God, the Son ... but it doesn't end there...

Luke 3:22 (ESV)

22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

We have the Son standing in the Jordan, we have the Spirit resting upon the Son and now have the voice of the Father, the final affirmation of the One who Stands... this is my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased!

Notice something, the divine approval and love is declared BEFORE Jesus started His public ministry!

The Father declares pleasure before Jesus performs a miracle. Before He preaches. Before He heals. This pleasure is not earned in time. It is rooted in eternity. The Father has always loved the Son. The Son has always delighted in the Father.

The Spirit has eternally shared in that divine communion. Before there was creation, there was love. God did not create because He was lonely. He did not redeem because He lacked fulfillment.

Within the Trinity exists a perfect, eternal, self-sufficient love. That is critical to understand. Because if God were a solitary, isolated being — a single person alone in eternity — then love could not be essential to who He is. Love would require creation. It would require someone else.

But Scripture says, "God is love."

That means love is not something God started doing at some point. It's the very essence of who He is...

It is something He has always been... because the eternal community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has always been!

Because the eternal fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit has always existed — love has always existed.

Now here's where it becomes personal. The Trinity is not merely something to admire, although there is much to admire... It is the very foundation of how you are saved.

When heaven opened at the Jordan, we were not only shown who God is — we were shown how God acts.

Now, to be clear, the word *Trinity* does not appear anywhere in the Bible. But the presence of the Trinity is revealed everywhere in the Bible.

One God.
 Three Persons.
 One in essence.
 Distinct in person.

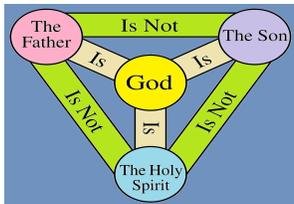
Not three gods... that's polytheism
Not one person wearing three masks — that's modalism.
There is mystery here — and that should not unsettle us. Mystery does not mean contradiction. It means God is infinite and we are not. Scripture tells us what to believe — one God, three Persons — but it does not explain the inner mechanics of the Godhead.

And when we try to reduce it with illustrations, we almost always drift into error.
Water as ice, liquid, and steam? That's modalism.
An egg with shell, yolk, and white? That divides the essence.
A three-looped pretzel? That suggests three parts making up one whole

The Trinity is not a riddle to solve. It is a revelation to receive and delight in!
If we could fully comprehend God, He would not be God.

So we affirm what Scripture reveals — and we worship where our understanding stops... trying to grasp the full nature of God is like trying to wrap your arms fully around the circumference of the earth!

The Shield of the Trinity



When we speak of the Trinity we acknowledge that they are:

- Co-Equal: Equal with one another
- Co-Eternal: Eternally existent
- Co-existent: They have always existed together in a loving unity

The baptism of Jesus — recorded in all four Gospels — gives us one of the clearest windows into this reality. The Son stands in the water. The Spirit descends. The Father speaks.

This is not impersonal theology, this is the living God revealing Himself Personally! And that means the Trinity is not an impersonal doctrine. It is deeply personal!

If heaven opened at the Jordan to reveal the Triune God, then we must ask — what does each Person of the Godhead actively do? Not in theory... but in our lives? Let's take a look at the distinct roles of the God-Head:

1. The Father

1. The Father Chooses and Plans

Ephesians 1:4–5 (ESV)

4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Your salvation was not reactionary. It was intentional.
You are not an afterthought — you were purposed.
That means your life is not random.
Your story is not accidental.

2. The Father Sends and Gives

John 3:16 (ESV)

16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The Father is not distant. He is giving. He sends what is most precious.
That means when you doubt God’s heart, look at the cross.

3. The Father Adopts

Romans 8:15 (ESV)

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

You are not merely forgiven — you are brought into family. You don’t serve a distant deity... You belong to a Father.

4. The Father Disciplines in Love

Hebrews 12:6 (ESV)

6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Correction always comes with a purpose! Motivated by love and perfect in purpose!

5. The Father Secures

John 10:27–30 (ESV)

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

You are not clinging to God by your grip... You are held by His.

2. The Son

1. The Son Reveals the Father

John 14:9 (ESV)

9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

If you want to know what God is like — look at Jesus... He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15) He is not a partial glimpse. He is the exact imprint (Hebrews 1:3).

2. The Son Obeys in Our Place

Philippians 2:8 (ESV)

8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We stand behind obedience, not our own because ours is insufficient!

3. The Son Bears Our Sin

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Our great sin-bearer!

4. The Son Intercedes for You

Romans 8:34 (ESV)

34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Right now — He prays for you.

5. The Son Reigns

Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

The One who stood in the Jordan now rules with all authority... and this is the One who loves you, is for you and one day, we will see face to face!

3. The Holy Spirit

1. The Spirit Regenerates

Titus 3:5 (ESV)

5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

You were not improved — you were made alive.

2. The Spirit Indwells

1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV)

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

The same Spirit who descended on Christ now dwells in you.

3. The Spirit Illuminates

1 Corinthians 2:12 (ESV)

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

He helps you understand truth. The Bible is not just read — it is revealed.

4. The Spirit Produces Fruit

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Holiness is not manufactured effort. It is cultivated fruit by the Holy Spirit

5. The Spirit Empowers

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

He empowers us to witness... to fulfill the Great Commission!

6. The Spirit Sanctifies

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

So lift your eyes back to the Jordan.

The Son stands in the water. The Spirit descends in power. The Father speaks in delight.

Heaven opens — and we see who our God truly is.

Not distant, Not divided, Not impersonal... Father. Son. Holy Spirit.

The Father chose you before the foundation of the world.

The Son stood in your place and bore your sin.

The Spirit made you alive and now dwells within you.

This is not cold theology. This is your security. This is your identity. This is your hope.

The God who has eternally loved within Himself has opened heaven and brought you into that love!

And one day, heaven will open again. And the same Triune God revealed at the Jordan will welcome His redeemed — not as strangers, but as sons and daughters.

The Trinity is not a doctrine to master in our head, its to be treasured in our heart!

And the God revealed at the Jordan is the God who holds you now!