

Bouquet Caboodle



Highland Lectionary Series

January 11, 2026

“The Baptism of Jesus”

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43;

Matthew 3:13-17

Today's Big Idea

Jesus' baptism is a paradigm for our own baptism. As He identified with us, so we identify with Him. As He was Holy Spirit commissioned, so are we. As He was pronounced beloved, so too we.

Articulating the thread: Baptism of Jesus

In Whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him: Isaiah 42:1

The voice of the Lord is over the waters: Psalm 29:3

God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power: Acts 10:37-38

This is My Son, the Beloved: Matthew 3:17

Identification with Us (Domenico Ghirlandaio, fresco, 1490)

John's baptism as a baptism of repentance: Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3

Sinless Jesus (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15); Identifying with sinful humans: 2 Cor 5:21

Fulfilling all righteousness (Matthew 3:15): the mission to make humans right with God again

Holy Spirit Authorizing, Anointing, Commissioning (Bartolome Murillo, oil on canvas, 1655)

Visible to all or just Jesus and/or John?: John 1:32

Dove or like a dove? See especially Luke 3:22

Not filled but the unlocking of missional authority and power (remember the emptying!)

The pattern of the 30-year-old Levite: Numbers 4:3; 8:7

Declaration of the Father's Love (Giotto, Fresco, 1305)

Audible to all?

This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased: 3rd person (Matthew 3:17); 2nd: (Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22)

Before the official mission

Our Baptism

He identified with us, our opportunity to publicly identify with Him: Acts 2:38

Claiming His death/resurrection as if we had gone through it ourselves: Romans 6:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17

We too have a Holy Spirit-powered commission: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

We too are beloved of our Father in heaven (apart from what we do!): 1 John 3:1

The floods shall not overcome us in the chaotic waters of life: Isaiah 43:2; John 16:33

I have decided to follow Jesus

The Key Excerpts for This Week's Thematic Thread:
"The Baptism of Jesus"

Isaiah 42:1-4	Psalm 29:3-4, 7-8, 10	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
<p>Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry out or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street; 3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his teaching.</p>	<p>3 The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters.</p> <p>4 The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.</p> <p>7 The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.</p> <p>8 The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.</p> <p>10 The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.</p> <p>11 May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!</p>	<p>34 Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. 36 You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. 37 That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem.</p>	<p>13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, 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 it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."</p>

Next Week's Readings: What thread do you discern?

January 18, 2026 - Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1: 29-42

Painting One:

Giotto. Baptism of the Lord. Fresco, 1305.

A pioneer of monumental painting, Giotto realized a suite of frescos for the Scrovegni Chapel between 1300 and 1310. Baptism of the Lord is one of the scenes he chose to depict, and his work is possibly the earliest large-scale painting of the Baptism in the West. Overall, this fresco is still indebted to the Medieval and Byzantine aesthetic with its bright palette and lack of perspective, but anticipation of the Renaissance is also unmistakable. Our Lord is shown as a graceful and beautiful nude, standing in the water up to his waist. Emphasis on the body, painted as if for its own sake, and attempt at figure modelling mark a shift from the flat and purely linear handling by the earlier artists. The shores of Jordan are pictured as bare rock, as much symbolic of ascesis as recalling a realistic geographical setting. Groups of three figures are balanced on each side, divided into angels and men. The angels dressed in white are feminine and youthful in appearance, the men represent different age groups. There is little movement here and perhaps that is another reason why the viewer cannot but linger on the humanity of Our Lord. Burst of light from above shows a figure with an extended right hand – an anthropomorphized voice of God declaring Sonship of Jesus. If examined closely, the image reveals a direct eye contact between Our Lord and St. John the Baptist, a somber mutual understanding. The cruciform halo of Jesus strikes in combination with his voluptuous nudity and is an allusion to the sacrificial significance of the event.

Painting Two:

Domenico Ghirlandaio. Baptism of the Lord, fresco, 1486-1490.

Renaissance Florence contributed several Baptism related works and among these the one painted by Verrocchio with the assistance of Leonardo da Vinci, who was his apprentice for several years, is possibly the most famous one. A Florentine Baptism included here is a different one, painted a few years later and influenced by Verrocchio-Da Vinci work. Here is a fresco by Domenico Ghirlandaio from 1490 A.D. The composition is unique, because it is arranged on a horizontal plane, dominated by a group of figures, several in contemporary dress, against mountainous, rocky background with a city to the far right. Our Lord stands in the center, hands clasped in prayer as St. John lifts his hand over his head to baptize him. There are no fewer than ten figures in the foreground. Angels on the right side of the river, kneel. On the left bank someone is untying their sandals, preparing to receive the baptism. Another nude with their back towards the viewer, looks on and possibly just came out of the water. The group with God the Father blessing the scene happening below is painted closely above Jesus. It is an image in which the eye always comes back to the figure of Jesus who is

a definitive center of visual gravity here. The painted moment is somewhat suspended, as if time stopped for the viewer to take a closer look into what has just happened.

Painting Three:

Bartolome Murillo. Baptism of the Lord, oil on canvas, 1655.

Possibly the most successful of the intimate presentations of the Baptism of Our Lord was painted by Bartolome Esteban Murillo. The painting was completed in 1655 and belongs to the cycle of works depicting life of St John the Baptist. The canvas was originally intended for the refectory of the Augustinian monastery of San Leandro in Seville, Spain; it has since found home in a Berlin Museum. Murillo's work is a wonderfully arranged composition, graceful and harmonious. The verticality is softened by a gentle tilt of all visual lines. The perizoma is noticeably more generous than usual. Perhaps this larger linen is meant to recall both the loincloth usually shown on the crucified Lord and a burial linen. Jesus humbles himself bowing towards St. John who baptizes him. Tree in the center and John's staff allude to the cross – another the reason to suppose that the white linen typifies burial. Holy Spirit is shown at the top against the golden haze, hovering above Jesus. The halos are rendered very tastefully and softly. Figures and faces in this painting are among the most beautiful in the history of religious art.