

2.4

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

TRUTH ABOUT GOD ///

God always has a plan.

SERIES AIM

God had a plan to save the world, and at times it seemed like He moved heaven and earth to make it a reality. Jesus was coming, and there would be one who would prepare the world for His arrival. Nothing can stand in the way of God's perfect will.

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

Luke 3:1-22

LESSON BIG IDEA

I want to be part of God's plan.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN? ///

The first thing we will notice about God's plan is that He wants to save the lost. It is the entire reason He came to be among us. That is why John declared, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We must understand that all of us are sinners. *Sinner* doesn't mean "terrible person." We may not want to do what is wrong, and we may not have ever done something that is really terrible. *Sinner* simply means that we have missed the mark of what God planned for our lives. If we have ever fallen short of God's glory, we are sinners. That certainly includes all of us. Because we are sinners, we need to be saved. God has a very specific plan to save us. (See Acts 2:38.)

God wants us to share His Word with others. Like John the Baptist, we must be willing to declare the truth and call others to follow Jesus. If we really love the people in our lives, and we really believe they will be lost without Jesus, then we must overcome our own fear or nervousness to tell them about Jesus. If you don't, who will?



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? ///

The following questions, devotions, and action points can be used any way that you feel comfortable. We suggest that you use a journal, your notes app on your phone, or even the spaces provided in this daily devotional book to take notes, write answers, and make lists. The purpose of this resource is simply to give you a space to interact with the Word of God and reflect on what you learn from that experience.

/// How do you feel about sharing the message of Jesus (the gospel) with others?

/// What ways can you do that in your world?

/// What is something God has done for you that you can share as a witness to others?

/// Where are some new places that you can share this message?

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE ///

COMMITTED TO HIS PLAN

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Read Luke 3:2-4.

Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

John was an incredible man, wildly misunderstood by the world around him, but totally sold out to his purpose: preparing the way for Jesus. God is calling us to be more like John, doing everything to the best of our abilities, not being confused or having our minds changed just because the world around us is telling us otherwise. Am I saying it's going to be easy? Absolutely not. John died for his faith, but he was fighting for truth and the salvation of the world. John was willing to lay everything on the line. Are you sold out for God? Are you ready to give it everything you have to move the mission forward? Will you lay your own life down for the salvation of another? As Christians, we have to ask ourselves these hard questions and be willing to accept the hard answers.

Jr. High /// Why are some Christians willing to die for Jesus?

Sr. High /// What motivates believers to continue chasing Jesus, even when they are threatened?

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Read Luke 3:16-17.

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

John is prophesying about the coming of Jesus, and if that isn't the most riveting and exciting thing, I don't know what is! The message is this: Jesus is coming, and He brings with Him the power and awesomeness of the Holy Ghost. He is going to reveal the fake believers and gather the true believers together. He is going to rid the world of sin and evil. Wow! Now this information is not anything new; we know that Jesus came, died, and rose again. He fills our hearts when we receive the Holy Ghost. We know that He built the church and united believers across the world. What is so incredible is that the church is still alive today. The Holy Ghost is still flowing. And God is still gathering people to His name. His Word and His church are eternal.

Jr. High /// Think about and write down ten reasons you are thankful for your church and your pastor.

Sr. High /// Take some time to write reasons you are thankful for your church, teachers, pastor, and youth pastor.

COMMITTED TO HIS PLAN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Read Luke 3:21-22.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Jesus was baptized. Think about it! In everything that Jesus said and did, He was our most perfect example of a Christian life. He loved the broken, He taught His friends and followers, and He took a stand against unrighteousness. The beauty of Jesus' ministry is that, unlike prophets and teachers from religions that worship other gods, Jesus lived out and exemplified every part of the Christian lifestyle. If we emulate and follow His example to even a portion of the extent that Jesus lived His life, we will make a lasting impact on the people around us. We will lead our friends, our families, and our cities to salvation.

Jr. High /// Think about what made Jesus such an incredible teacher and leader.

**Sr. High /// Think about the way that Jesus taught and connected with others.
How can we learn from His example and be effective communicators?**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Read Acts 2:37-38.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

While to some this might seem like Peter's big moment on stage, the importance of this passage is seen when you notice that everyone was gathered in one place. No, it's not just talking about the ones gathered in the upper room, but the Jewish people in general that had come to the city for a celebration. Jews from around the world gathered as God orchestrated this incredible outpouring. Historians might tell you this was all by chance, but we know the truth is so much sweeter. If God can piece together one of the greatest moments of the church by drawing together thousands of people from around the world, imagine what He can do to help you and elevate your ability to reach the lost. God is on your side, and He is always working for you.

Jr. High /// Take some time to write down your testimony in your journal. If you don't think you have a testimony, talk to your pastor or youth pastor about what a testimony can look like.

Sr. High /// Record your testimony in your journal or on a note card. Write about some of the things you went through and how those experiences could help you make a connection with others who deal with something similar.

COMMITTED TO HIS PLAN

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Read Acts 2:39-40.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

These verses are a lifeline. The promise of God is not just for you, but also for everyone you know and love, and for your future family. If you're struggling inside, if you're hurting from a bad relationship, or if you're confused at the world around you, know that the promise of God's peace and protection is for you. Now is not the time to be afraid or to doubt His promises, because they are real and true and bigger than life. His plan for you is beautiful and extraordinary, and your identity in Christ is so much more than the world can offer. Chase His promises, and accept the gifts that God has for you. Repent, be baptized, embrace the Holy Ghost, and live the life that God has always intended for you. You are special, and you are loved.

Jr. High /// How does the Holy Ghost affect our lives?

Sr. High /// What is the next step you need to take to have a better relationship with God and to simply live a life that is more fulfilling?

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Read Acts 2:41-47.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

One of the great things that the Day of Pentecost did for the church was create a network of believers. Sure, they were all in one place when it happened, but they had come from all over. When the celebration in the city ended, they returned to their homes and began the work of the Lord where they lived. Not only did God build a church in a day, but He made pastors and evangelists of thousands. In a day, God managed to piece together an incredible unified body of believers. It was no longer just the twelve disciples and a few hundred followers; it was an army. That same system of believers is there for all of us. So no matter what you are struggling with, no matter how lost or confused you might feel, there will always be a family of God's people ready with open arms to help you in your time of need.

Jr. High /// Make a list of three people you feel you can rely on and talk to when you are feeling lost or confused.

Sr. High /// Think about your support system. Who has your back? Who can you talk to when you are feeling lost? Who has God placed in your life that you have yet to connect with that would make a great mentor or support for your spiritual growth?

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