

Who is Jesus? Son of the Father, sender of the Spirit

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[0:00] Please turn to Mark's Gospel, Chapter 1, that was read to us. And we are continuing this series, Who is Jesus?

! Such an important question. I produced one text last week. Here's another text in which Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. That's what we were made for, to come to the Father. We're a shell and a shadow if we're not in touch with the living Father.

And Jesus makes this completely exclusive, definite statement. There is no way to the Father except through me.

Which is quite a thing, isn't it? You might say, well, we come near to God when we see a wonderful sunset. And that's true. You might say, I might come near to God when I see beautiful landscapes.

[1:09] And you say, that's true. But there's no way to God through the sunset or through the landscape. It tells you that God's there, but there's no way through. It's a little bit like going to Peacehaven and wanting to get to the beach.

You can see it, but you've got to go all the way around because there are cliffs. You just can't get there. The way to the Father is through Jesus. That's the only way.

Our access to God depends specifically on him. So just to recap, we said in previous weeks, Jesus is a real historical person. There's a sort of obscurity about him, a sort of modesty and a hiddenness.

He was, of course, a wonderful teacher. He was, of course, a miracle worker. He wasn't in a vacuum. He was in a stream, a religious stream of understanding as a Jew.

And he said a lot of very searching and radical things about what you might call Judaism. And not least did he say the thing that the Hebrew Scriptures is all about is me.

[2:19] He was a man of colossal personal authority, to put it mildly. And we looked at him as Lord and we said that the testimony, the sentences, the descriptions, the events, all pile up together to tell us Jesus is Lord in the fullest divine sense, Lord of everything.

There is no other Lord to compare with him. And we looked last week that he is the Christ. And the Christ is not just one little thing.

There's a big picture there. But at the heart of that picture is a powerful, awesome, hands-on king who makes the world right and is prepared to do so by force.

At this moment in time, he is not using force. He is using grace. But he will use force because every knee will bow to him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, either willingly or under compulsion.

And your job and my job is to make sure that we bow to him now, willingly, before it comes to that last day of judgment. Sounds terribly old-fashioned, but it's true.

[3:43] And then we thought about the Christ. People had multiple expectations of different facets of the person who was coming.

But Jesus says, no, it's not many people. It's just me. I'm the Christ who fills all those expectations. And I also put in this little note that to ask the question, who is Jesus, is about his person.

But, of course, what did he do is his work. And you have to think of both of those together. He came living, dying, rising, enthroned, sending the Spirit, ruling, and finally coming into full recognition and making everything new as judge.

So we're going to look this morning at this answer to the question, that Jesus, as regards his Father, he is the Son of the Father, and as regards the Spirit, his role in regard to the Spirit. When Christians say Spirit, they don't mean alcohol. They don't mean just like an atmosphere. The Spirit is a person.

[4:56] And perhaps we'll see a bit more of that later. So we've got this passage in Mark, which we'll look at first quickly and then slowly. Let me just stand well back from this and say, Christian people, having thought about this, not just this one passage, but the whole passages, say this.

There is one God. Christians are monotheists. There is one God. There are not many gods. There is one God. And this one God is the Lord God.

Lord is a translation of his original name in Hebrew, which is probably pronounced Yahweh. It was such a reverent name that the Jewish scribes didn't even try to pronounce it.

But the pronunciation is probably Yahweh, the Lord God. He's the one who made everything. If you want to know who he is, he made heaven and earth. There is one God, and he is the only God.

The oneness means that he is together. He is not bits. So there is one nation under God. Is that part of the American Constitution or something like that? One nation under God?

[6:06] I'm looking at Lindsay because she might know. It doesn't mean there aren't other nations, but it means a unified nation. And one God, a unified God.

He is the one God, the only God. And Christians say all of those things are true. And he is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

He is a triune God. He is a one God with three persons. And we think, you just said he's one. That's true. This is one of the hardest things for anybody to get their heads around.

It's one of the proofs that Christianity isn't a made-up religion. Because you'd be able to understand it if it was a made-up religion. This is one that is given to us, and it just blows our minds.

Because God says, I am one, I am three. And the three aren't three. It's one person disguising himself quickly and changing over like a stage fast change act.

[7:08] The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. Yet the three are one. They are distinct, but they are one. So that will give you something to think about, won't it?

This is so profoundly mind-boggling that the correct response is to say, our God is great. He is greater than the human mind could make up, and greater than the human mind shall ever fully understand.

And this deep mystery of the Trinity is, this is a bread and butter.

When I say bread and butter, Mark, what's the correct English term for that? It's a phrase? Idiom.

It's an idiom. This is the bread and butter of Christianity. Meaning, it's what you have every day.

It's not just for theologians or very clever people. This is everyday Christianity and the Christian life, not just for experts. And if you're a Christian, you live in this mystery every day.

[8:17] Because every day when you say your prayers, you say, Heavenly Father, thank you for today. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

And you have been in the Trinity because you have prayed to the Heavenly Father. You have prayed through Jesus Christ the Son. And the only reason you prayed was the Holy Spirit inside you.

And you've been in the mystery of the Trinity, even praying that simplest sort of prayer. So, what's in the text? Well, the text is fully in line with that.

It's to do with one God. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. It would speak about the coming one. We'll see the Father speaking from heaven.

Or rather, we'll hear the Father speaking from heaven. We'll see the Son being baptized as a human. As if he were a sinner, actually. We'll see the Spirit descending, abiding, and driving Jesus into the desert.

[9:19] And we have the promise of the Spirit being poured out upon people. So, this thing that we're going to look at, this is the baptism of Jesus that was read to us, is a classic picture of the Trinity.

And if you ever go to a Greek Orthodox church, if you look carefully, you might see a picture of the baptism on the wall. They're going for pictures in a big way. And this shows us the Father, yeah? And the Son, and the Spirit, all in one view, as it were. Okay, let's do the text quickly. It's Mark chapter 7, is where I'm going to go.

Mark chapter 1, verse 7, thank you. So, this is John's message. He says, So, doing it quickly. John says, Someone mightier than I is coming. So, I put a big circle for someone mighty. He's coming after me. So, I'm going before him. He's coming after me.

[10:37] He's worthier than I. The thorns of whose sandals I'm not worthy to undo. So, I tried to do some laces. And that makes it rather a funny picture. But he's saying, I'm not worthy to undo the laces of the person coming.

I baptize with water. People get wet and come out of the water. He will baptize in or with the Holy Spirit. Then, the next little bit we're going to look at.

A bit of full color, because we're going to need the sky in a minute. This is 9 to 12. At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

I tried to put the river in there, but it lost its color. But that's supposed to be the Jordan there. It worked in the other slides, but it didn't work in that one.

And I didn't bother trying to do it. Trying to mend it this morning. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open, and the Spirit descending on him like a dove, and a voice from heaven, or the heavens.

[11:54] And the voice says, You are my son. Not this is. You are my son.

Whom I love. With you, I am well pleased. With you, I am well delighted. And then, at once, one of Mark's favorite words, at once, the Spirit sent him into the desert.

The word for send is to, almost literally to kick out. The Spirit drove him, and kicked him out into the desert, where he was for 40 days, being tempted by Satan.

He was with the wild animals, and the angels attended him. So that's doing it quickly. Those are the two little bits that we'll look at, and we'll now look at them slowly. Okay, are you with me so far?

That's the bit we're going to look at. So let's take that to pieces a little bit. So let's go back to verse 7. After me is coming one more powerful than I.

[13:08] That's verse 7. So this is to do with John being the forerunner. And you've got it in verse 2 as well. It is written in Isaiah the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, the voice of one calling in the desert.

Da, da, da. And so John came. So John says, I come first. After me comes someone else. Okay, there is one who is coming.

John is the forerunner. And the one who is coming, he says, is mightier than I am. Is that right? Is that what it says? Mighty? More powerful than I am. And he's more worthy than I am, because I'm not fit to undo his shoelaces.

So let's ponder that for a minute. Now this, we're told, is fulfilment of prophecy. I don't know whether you're interested in prophecy.

If you're a Christian, you ought to be interested, because that's your bread and butter too. What's the prophecy? Well, we've got it there in verse 2. It is written in Isaiah the prophet, the voice of one calling in the desert.

[14:21] Hmm. Prepare the way for whom? What does it say in verse 3? Prepare the way for whom? The Lord. The Lord. No, prepare the way for the Lord.

Meaning, the Lord God. Look at it back in context. It's the Lord God. And there's another similar sort of prophecy.

See, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant who you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty.

And if you look at that carefully, it says, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Me. Me. And that's the Lord speaking.

So those texts tell us the person who's coming is God. It's the Lord God. And there are streams of promises.

[15:33] It's not just these two. There's lots of other ones as well. which say, God sees the mess that the world is in and that his people are in.

And he's going to come and set them free. He's going to come and sort them out. He's going to come and bring them home. And he won't leave them in the mess and mire of sin.

You know the word mess? Mire is mud. Nasty mud. And sin is like nasty mud. And the promises say, God will come and rescue us, the nations, his people and all other people from that.

And we strongly expect then that the Lord God himself will turn up to do this. And it's so surprising that verse 9 says, at that time, who came?

Jesus came. And it makes you stop and think, who is this Jesus? of whom it can be said when he turns up, the Lord God turns up.

[17:02] He is, he is, yeah, he's great. Let's look at this verse 8. John says, I baptize with water that he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

So let's think about this first. So why, I'm going to ask why and how. Why is John baptizing with water? Well, the answer is that when God is coming, he's saying to the people, God is coming, you need to get ready.

You need to get ready to meet God. And if some important person was coming to your house to meet you, just imagine who that might be.

It might be the Queen, or if you're a Republican, might be some favorite politician or, I don't know, think of somebody. If they were coming, what would you do?

I guess you would go around into your bedroom and hide all the things, all the dirty laundry, and you would get the vacuum out and clean up the front room, and you'd go into the kitchen and make sure all the rubbish had been, you'd get everything ready.

[18:22] And he says, you need deliberately to get ready for God. If you're not ready, you need to get ready. And the baptizing in water is like a very graphic way of saying, we need a makeover.

We need a wash. We need a shower. And the people say, we accept that. We do need it. We're not ready for God. And we turn to God.

We trust what you're saying, John, that he's coming. We trust all the promises about his coming.

And we say yes to all that. And we say, we're sinners, so we're going to be baptized to show that.

So the going into the water shows trust in God's historic promises and that they, the human beings, are turning from everything else, from sin to God.

So they're saying, yes, I have sinned and I need to be washed. Yes, I need to turn to God. And that's what they're saying in that baptism. Christian baptism is not entirely different to that.

[19:35] Christian baptism, you say, I need to be washed. And you're saying, I need to turn to God. You say more than that though because you're not, John's baptism only went so far.

And how was it done? How was the baptism? Well, seeing as he went to the River Jordan, we presume he needed a lot of water. I mean, he didn't need an entire river full, but he needed a lot. He needed more than a cup full. So I presume that he's, the obvious implication that he was dipping people wholesale into water.

He was putting them underneath and showering. They were just immersed in water. It wasn't just a, you know, sorry if you're an infant Baptist, but if you're an infant Baptist, at least you ought to drown the child first.

The thing about John's baptism is it only goes so far. Hence, he says, I do this, but he will do that.

[20:40] I will do this, but more is needed. Because the water only touches the outside, doesn't it? It only makes you clean on the outside. It's a sort of a confession.

It's sort of a request. God, I'm turning to you. Will you come to me? So I can stop and ask you if you've been baptized. I cannot stop and ask you whether you would at least go this far and say, I'm a sinner.

I need to be washed. I trust God's promises. If God said that's the way to do it, I'll do it. Have you got as far as that? If not, why not?

would you confess your sin? Would you request to God, I need you in my life? And would you realize that more is needed than just getting wet?

Okay, so that's that John baptizes with water. And then the next bit says, but he will baptize you, verse 8, with the Holy Spirit. let me just pause for a minute and have a little in-house comment here. [21:55] When he says baptize with the Holy Spirit, I think it is inconceivable that he is just talking about an extra add-on for super-Christians who go a second stage or something like that.

That's how, I don't know whether people still talk this way, but it used to be spoken of that way. And I think that is not what Jesus is doing. This is salvation.

He's saying salvation is to receive the Holy Spirit in this way, which I'll try and explain. So why the Holy Spirit? To bring the presence, the personal presence of God into human lives to bring spiritual life, if you like, spiritual irrigation into a spiritual desert.

The idea of pouring water, which is what it is, baptizing, meaning in this case, plunging, flooding, pouring a lot.

The Old Testament speaks about this. In Ezekiel 37, there's a valley of dry bones. He says, look at this, the nation is like a valley of dry bones, he says, in his vision.

[23:23] Can these bones live? And the prophet says, well, you alone, Lord, no. And he says, speak to the bones that they may live. And they begin to sort of clatter together and connect together.

And he says, pray to the Spirit, that the Spirit will come. And the Spirit comes and the bones come alive as a vast army. The Spirit gives life to the dead.

The Spirit gives life to the dead. When Jesus baptizes with the Spirit, he gives life to dead sinners. He wakes them up from the grave.

Or another way of looking at it is this sort of vegetable analogy, like a dead, dry, parched landscape, a little bit like what England was when we had all that heat.

Everything goes brown. And then when the rain comes, it's amazing how things pop up again and the grass all turns green and comes to life.

[24:31] And in Isaiah, that's the vision for the people. In chapter 32, verse 15, he says, till the Spirit is poured on us from on high and the desert becomes a fertile field.

It's a picture of people dried up, dead, and the Spirit comes and they come to life. They pop up and one says, I belong to the Lord and another says, I belong to the Lord.

It's the work of the Spirit. I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants. it's prophesied. And this baptism is not a human duty.

It's not saying, I confess my sin and I turn to you and flood me with water. This is God's gift. He pours out. He does the baptism to bring spiritual life into your spiritual desert.

And as we find later on, to empower for gospel mission, that's not quite in focus here in Mark. Christian person, don't get dried up.

[25:47] Don't be empty of the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit in all the ways that you'll find out if you come along this evening and listen to Ephesians.

Be filled with the Spirit speaking to your souls in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Be filled with the Spirit remembering who Jesus is.

Be filled with the Spirit trusting in the one who loved me and gave himself for me and living by faith in him. Be filled with the Spirit submitting to one another. Be filled with the Spirit walking with the Spirit day by day.

Be filled with the Spirit. Don't dry up. And if you're not a Christian, this is where the water is that will bring you to life.

He will baptize with the gift of his Spirit. Thank God that that's what it is to be a Christian. Thank God that's what it is.

[26:52] not just rigmarole, not just talk, not just theory, not just rules, but the presence of God in the heart and life of Christians sent from on high by the Saviour.

He will baptize in the Spirit. So why and how? How is this? So let me first say that here is a proof of the divinity of Jesus.

Only God pours out God. In the text it says in the days to come I will pour out my Spirit says the Lord.

And I think we'll come to that in a moment. Do you remember, some of you will remember Rodney Howard Brown. Anybody remember Rodney Howard Brown? He was said to be God's bartender because he it was claimed, I think it was American TV preacher, because it was said of him or he said that he could pour out the Spirit on people.

That he had the power to pour out the Spirit on people. And I would say that is blasphemy because the Spirit is not a thing to be manipulated like magic or by personal human power.

[28:27] The Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity and only God can pour out God. For anybody else to say they were doing that is complete disrespect.

He, Jesus, will baptize you with the Spirit. It's the Lord God who says I will pour out my Spirit.

And in the text that we read or that was read to us, we have this profound Trinitarian redemptive interaction which is on the screen there but just let me read it from the text.

About the risen Jesus, God has raised this Jesus to life and Peter and his companions say we've seen it, we're witnesses but we haven't seen this but this is what we're told and this is what we see proved before us.

Exalted to the right hand of God, he, Jesus, has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[29:42] So he, Jesus, in his exaltedness has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and he, Jesus, has now poured out what you now see and hear.

I will baptize with the Spirit. John says, I baptize with water, he will baptize with the Spirit. It will be in the hands of the risen Jesus, the exalted risen Jesus, according to the promises of God to pour out on people the Spirit of God.

And it is almost the ultimate glory ascribed to Jesus that it's in his hands to pour out the Spirit.

I think when he comes again that will be the ultimate glory, but before we get to that point, here is the next thing, that he is in the place where he, according to the promises of the Lord, has it in his hands to pour out the Spirit onto people like us.

That is his supreme privilege, that's his divine privilege, that's his redemptive privilege, to pour out the Spirit, to baptize with the Spirit.

[31:04] And you might say, well, hold on. Actually, that's deeply wrong. You ought to think that, I think we ought to think that. That's deeply wrong.

Because how can the Holy Spirit be poured out on sinners? Because that's what they are, aren't they? These people that Jesus is thinking to pour out the Spirit on people who come to him, they're sinners.

How is it even conceivable that the Holy Spirit could come into the hearts of sinful people? What's going on here? And we're sort of at the edge of mystery here, but I think we can say this, it is not our right to receive the Holy Spirit.

it. Something, some transaction has been done to make that acceptable. And I would say, put it like this, it is a precious gift that Jesus purchased for us by his death on the cross.

His right and authority to pour out the Spirit on us is not something that comes naturally to us and it isn't just a Trinitarian thing, it's a redemptive thing.

[32:26] If there had been no blood and no sacrifice and no death and no resurrection, the Spirit would not be poured out. But because Jesus died, because he paid the price, he has purchased this treasury, this is what John Owen would have said, the Puritan theologian, he is operating from a purchased treasury of riches to pour out on people who don't deserve it to change their lives and it's all down to Jesus that the Spirit should be given.

And we have this wonderfully phrased inter-Trinitarian transaction. We're just allowed to glimpse into the dealings between the Father and the Son.

having died, having been exalted, he received from the Father what he has poured out. Now we're not often told what happens between the Father and the Son, because it's none of our business in many ways.

But we know that the Father has given people to the Son. We know that the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he does. And here we find at this juncture in the Son's achievements, the Father has said, well done.

You have earned the right to give the Spirit. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and you as the Son have earned the right, purchased the right by your blood to give the Spirit, my Spirit, which is now the Spirit of Christ, to believing people.

[34:09] It's a wonderful thing. It's a deep thing. It's an amazing thing. And how great a blessing it is for us. We undervalue, don't we? Forgive us, we grieve the Spirit.

Forgive us, we offend the Spirit. But he never gives up on his people. He gives us the ability to pray. He gives us a new power and a presence of eternal life. He doesn't yet get rid of our indwelling sin. There's a constant battle between the Spirit and our indwelling sin.

But we would be just sitting ducks if the Spirit weren't at work within us. But we fight against sin. If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you will live. If you through the Spirit are putting to death the sin that's within you, you will live.

[35:10] eternal life. That's from Romans chapter 8, I think. And the Spirit is also a down payment on future glory because life in the Spirit is the life of heaven come down to us, if you like, and perhaps in a way that neither completely grasps us nor we completely grasp, but is there.

It's a down payment on what will be when we are in heaven, or if you like, the life of heaven comes down to this earth completely, and there will be no more sin and sorrow and sighing, and the presence of God by His Spirit will be as big as the world in which we live.

A down payment on future total glory. Let's do the next bit, because I got carried away with that bit. Now, where have we got to? Matthew, Mark.

So we did verse 7 and 8, and then I said we would look slowly at verses 9, 10, 11, 12. So let's look at this, the baptism.

Verse 10, as Jesus was coming out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open, and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. Let's wind this back.

[36:34] he saw heaven torn open. It's quite a strong word to tear heaven open. I thought everybody saw this, but as I read it more carefully, it's something that Jesus saw.

They didn't see it at the time. Maybe they heard the voice, not quite clear about that, a voice came from heaven, but as Mark tells us, it's something that Jesus particularly saw. Of course, now we're told about it, we can see it, because it's written for us, but they might not have seen it at the time. I don't know. It says Jesus saw it. And the Spirit descended upon him like a dove.

Anybody like to suggest where the dove idea might come from in regard to the Spirit? Could be Noah's Ark, yeah, there was a dove there.

A gold star for that. There's another one as well. Oh, you know this, Genesis chapter 1?

[37:40] Spirit of God was brooding over the waters at the beginning of creation. There's a sort of bird-like thought of him hovering over the waters, so a bird idea for the Spirit is so it might fit with that.

and the Spirit descends on him like a dove. If I bring in John's Gospel, John says the Spirit descended and abided, so stuck, stayed on Jesus like that.

And if you've got a mind to think about this, this afternoon, have a think. What is this saying? The Trinity is mysterious.

Is this saying, no, let's put it what it isn't saying. It is not saying that the Spirit only then started to be in relationship with Jesus.

Surely the Son had never stopped being in spirit relation with the Father. But this is Jesus incarnate. This is the man Jesus.

[38:53] and at this point, the man, the man who is God in the flesh, the Spirit, as it were, seems to start a new relationship with the Son incarnate.

You have a think about that. I've never found anybody who's got to the bottom of that. But have a think. And if you can't get to the bottom of it, just worship Jesus because God is greater than we understand.

Here at his baptism, the Spirit comes to remain on him. Now, I think I need to say something about baptism. The people who are being baptized were saying, we're sinners, we need to get ready for God.

That's what they were saying. And here's Jesus queuing up with them. sin. And it looks for all the world as though he's a sinner, that he needs to be put right with God, that he needs to wash the same as everybody else.

I think there's something quite specific about that step. Because this step will take him on a road that will lead all the way to the cross.

[40:07] Because when he goes to the cross, it will be, you're a sinner, you're dying a sinner's death, you're the same as everybody else. That's what he seems to be upon the cross.

Now when he was baptized, he had no sin to repent of. And when he was on the cross, he had no sin to repent of. He's beginning to step into the place of other people.

He's beginning to be identified with sinners and take their place. And that step that leads him into the water in Jordan, that path won't be finished until he's raised from the dead.

He'll die on the cross as if he were a sinner, and until the father raises him and says, he was never a sinner. He was totally innocent. And I raise him up.

You crucified him, but I raise him from the dead. And then we see he was never a sinner. He died because we were sinners. sinners. So that's where he starts when he goes into baptism.

[41:15] And that's why as he starts this path, the spirit comes upon him for this crucial path that he's treading. I think that's how we're to understand it.

And at the same time, we have this voice from the father. It's addressed in the second person. I put it wrongly in the third person. I put this, but that's wrong. You are my son, my beloved.

In you, I take pleasure, or we've got here, with you I am well pleased. And here's the voice of the father speaking to the son.

When's graduation for Sussex and Brighton students? Is that June? Something like that? And all down by the pavilion and around there.

It's all clogged up, isn't it, with parents and people wearing these gowns and hats and they've all come on graduation day and the mums and dads are sitting there and they're thinking, that's my son, that's my daughter, well done, I love them, they're brilliant, look what they've done.

[42:38] And they're all like that, selfies and everything like that on graduation day. And here, actually at the beginning of the course, God says, make no mistake, look what he's doing, look where he is, look where he's come from, look at the courage he exhibits, look at the dedication that he has, this is my son, and I love him, and I am just totally delighted with him in every single way.

This, I keep saying this, but it's wrong, he said, you are my son, I love you, I'm delighted with you. We overhear it. And it is the baptized Jesus with this endorsement ringing in his ears that steps on the road that will lead to the cross.

And the voice from heaven acclaims him and endorses him, and the father, what language does God speak? It's an interesting question, isn't it?

Presumably God speaks a language that only he understands, but when he speaks and we're listening to it, I presume he spoke Greek. And in the Old Testament presumably he spoke Hebrew. And he quotes what he has already said.

[44:12] So in Psalm 2, which we looked at the other day, you are my son, today I've become your father. And he quotes that, you are my son. And maybe he is also quoting Abraham and Isaac.

Do you remember when Abraham was told to take Isaac and sacrifice him? Do you remember that God said to him, take your son, the son you love, and offer him as a sacrifice.

Take your son, your beloved. And maybe God has this in mind, that he, like Abraham, loves his son, and he, like Abraham, is set on a road where he will be offered as a sacrifice.

sacrifice. And it's the servant of whom God said in Isaiah, you are my servant, with you I am well pleased.

And God is saying, using those words to his son. You'll remember, I said that before in scripture about the servant, that you.

[45:22] you. And here then is introduced to us the son. And we ask, what sort of son will he be?

What sort of son will he be? A faithful son? A true son? An obedient son? Well, let's put that question on hold for a minute and see what happens next.

It's the same in at least three of the gospels. I haven't checked all of them. Three. What happens next is this. That the one on whom the spirit comes, the one who in future will be exalted to pour out the spirit, at this point, becomes the one who is kicked out into the desert.

Do you notice that? I think it's amazing. And at once, the spirit sent him into the desert. Do you get that?

The spirit, the son who will pour out the spirit, but here, is driven by the spirit, and his job is to obey, to follow where he's pushed.

[46:44] and the one who will pour out the spirit must first learn obedience in submission to the spirit, and where he's going is to be tempted and tested.

And Mark doesn't make a lot of it. The other gospels do. The other gospels, it says, if you are the son of God, do this, do that. And Jesus said, I'm not that sort of son.

And this whole business of what sort of son he is, is going to get tested. But it's not here in Mark, so let's move on. 40 days is like the 40 years that Israel was in the desert being tested, and Israel significantly failed.

killed. But Jesus significantly conquers, and he goes into the desert, and everything that is thrown at him, he conquers.

He comes through. That's the sort of son he is. He emerges as the tried and tested incarnate son.

[47:57] Incarnate means God made flesh. God become human in that sense.

And I want to say, we've spent time just looking at these few verses, but I think they paint for us such a picture of the saviour.

And I would say, Christian, isn't your saviour the most splendid, brave, beautiful saviour? And I would say, Christian, is he not so fully equipped to be saviour?

Such a suitable saviour, so well qualified to save. Could there be any better saviour than him? I think no. And is not his position in the plan of God the most appropriate, the most sufficient?

Doesn't he just fit the bill so wonderfully? Is he not the most excellent saviour? God and I say, would it not be the most excellent thing in the world to see him with your own eyes on that last day? Would it not be the most excellent thing to see him in his glory, the glory that belongs to him when one day he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on his enemies to be exalted in his people?

[49:31] Is it in your heart to say, I would love to see him? I would love to find out, I would love even just two seconds of conversation with him. He's done all this for me so brilliantly.

Well, the rest of the gospel story will fill out these truths. He's the son, we become sons too. He's the beloved, in him we become beloved.

He pours out the spirit of sonship which was upon him, we receive the spirit of sonship too. And it's all because Jesus put his foot into the water of the river Jordan to be baptized on the road that led to the cross.

Let's sing together number 729. Thank you.