

A DEEPER WAY: BEGOTTEN, BEWILDERED, BEHOLDING

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Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly (*behold!*) the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And (*behold!*) a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

**The word “behold” has been inserted where it was passed over in the NRSV translation.*

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Behold means not only to see, but to see in such a way as to be changed. How might “beholding” Christ in this heaven-opening moment—baptized, beloved, and

empowered by God’s Spirit—be different than just observing him?

3. Share or reflect on an experience of doing more than just seeing something, but beholding someone or something (seeing such that you were changed by what you saw).
4. The unique life of Jesus was still shaped by those who came before him: the stories of God in the scriptures, the convictions of the prophets, the practices of a tradition (like baptism), and the love God has for all God has made. We are shaped by the people, cultures, ideas, and aspirations of what has come before us, too.
 - a. Who are some of the people who have had an influence on you, and why?
 - b. What help has someone given you that has made a real and lasting impact on you?
 - c. What are some ideas or practices you are now un-learning because they don’t serve you?
5. The wilderness setting of Jesus’ baptism symbolizes transition and transformation. Has your faith gone through any “bewildering” (transitional and transformational) moments or seasons? Reflect and share more about those experiences and what you learned.

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