

“The Baptism of Jesus: A Humble Beginning”
Matthew 3:13-17
The Preparation of the King

Introduction:

We know very little about the first thirty years of Jesus’ life on this earth, often called “The Silent Years.” All this time growing up He waited patiently for His Heavenly Father to call Him forth from obscurity and present Him to the world as the Promised Messiah. When the time of His public ministry finally arrived, what did Jesus do? He got baptized (cf. Matt. 3:13-17 Mk. 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22 Jn 1:29-34)

Matthew 3:13-17 “Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” (cf. Matthew 3:11-12)

The moment Jesus had been quietly waiting for, in the obscurity of his Nazareth home, had arrived. The timing was perfect.

I. Jesus’ Intentions

Matthew 3:13-17 “Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.”

Old Testament Law included no requirements about baptism, so Jesus could not have had in view anything pertaining to Levitical righteousness. John the Baptist’s message was a message of repentance, and those experiencing it were looking forward to a coming Messiah who would not only BE righteous but who would usher in a call to righteousness for all of us.

II. John the Baptist’s Reaction

Matthew 3:14 “But John tried to prevent Him...”

John the Baptist recognized Jesus did not fit the requirements for John’s kind of baptism, since his baptism was for repentance from sin. Jesus was without sin (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 John 3:5).

Matthew 3:15 “...I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?”

III. Jesus’ Reasons

Matthew 3:15 “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

Reason #1 - Jesus had come to be baptized in order to validate John the Baptist’s ministry immediately.

Reason #2 - Jesus had come to be baptized in order to obey His Heavenly Father perfectly.

Matthew 3:15 “...in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” (Matthew 26:39)

Reason #3 - Jesus had come to be baptized in order to identify with us completely.

Matthew 3:15 “...it is fitting for US to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matt. 3:15)

The sinless Son of God took on Himself the obligation to fulfill all righteousness, so that He might be a perfect Savior and a perfect substitute for our sin.

“In my opinion the best way to understand Jesus’ words is by what I see as the primary significance of baptism, which is not immersion or sprinkling (that has only to do with the mode or form of baptism) but the idea of identification, which is what I think the word *baptizo* primarily means.” (James Montgomery Boice) cf. Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 1:23)

“Jesus might well have been up there in front standing with John and calling on sinners to repent. Instead he was down there with the sinners, affirming his solidarity with them, making himself one with them in the process of the salvation that he would in due course accomplish.” (Leon Morris)

Matthew 3:15 “Then [John the Baptist] permitted Him.”

IV. The Heavenly Response

Matthew 3:16-17 “After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” cf. John 12:28-30

1. These words provide evidence for the Trinity

Here we have God, the Father, God the Son and God, the Holy Spirit in the same place at the same time. Three persons in One. “The mystery of the Trinity is revealed in the baptism.” (Jerome)

2. These words provide endorsement of Jesus’ public ministry.

God, the Father and God, the Holy Spirit were presenting their heavenly stamp of approval on Jesus the Messiah.

3. These words provide evidence for John the Baptist.

John 1:32-34 – “John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

4. These words provide encouragement for our souls.

How God the Father feels about His Son, Jesus is how He feels about us who are “in Christ.” (We are partakers of the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4 **“You are My beloved Son. In You I am well-pleased.” (Luke 3:22)**)

V. Our Response

Jesus had come to be baptized in order to provide us an example in perpetuity.

Matthew 28:18-20 - “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

“In Christian baptism we are identified with Jesus in his death and resurrection so that his death becomes our death and his resurrection our resurrection.” (James Montgomery Boice)

God commands all believers in Jesus Christ to be baptized as a sign of their faith. If Jesus saw baptism as evidence of His obedience to His Heavenly Father and to identify with others who are willing to make their own public testimony, so should we. He is our Ultimate Example and pleasing Him is our Ultimate Motivation

“We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation...” (The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1833)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTION ITEMS:

1. What do you think it would have been like to grow up with Jesus?
2. What do you think the crowds thought when Jesus came forward for baptism?
3. Why did the sinless Son of God get baptized?
4. What does it mean to you, as a believer, to be considered “beloved”?
5. Have you been baptized? If not, what is keeping you from being baptized?
6. What did you get most out of this message?