

# JESUS" BAPTISM

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Matthew 3:13-17

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**SERMON SERIES: MATTHEW: JESUS, THE SOVEREIGN KING**

**SERMON TITLE: "JESUS' BAPTISM: INAUGURATING THE KING"**

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## INTRO.

-- The last time we saw Jesus in chapter 2 of Matthew's Gospel He was an infant and had just been brought by Joseph and Mary to live in Nazareth in the northern part of Israel, the area known as Galilee. Now, here in chapter 3, the next time we encounter Jesus He is 30 years old and ready to begin His earthly ministry. It's a reminder that the Gospels are not intended to be biographies of Jesus but presentations of the "Good News" of the salvation that has been accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth.

-- Matthew presents Jesus as the Sovereign King, the descendant of David who is the promised Messiah, the One who will triumph over sin and evil. Today's passage describes the event that serves as this King's inauguration - Jesus' baptism.

Read Matthew 3:13-17

-- What we find here are all three persons of the Trinity actively participating in the Baptism that inaugurates Jesus' ministry. The Bible teaches us that there is one God who exists eternally in 3 persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are not three separate Gods but three persons who share fully and equally in the one divine essence. And while they are not separate Gods, they are distinct persons. In other words, the Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit. The Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son.

All three persons participate in distinct ways in this passage.

## I. The Son's Baptism (vv. 13-15)

### A. The Exchange Between Jesus & John

1. Last week we saw that John the Baptist is the one who fulfilled the OT prophecies about a forerunner of the Messiah. John is the one who came with a spirit of ministry like the OT prophet Elijah to prepare the way for the arrival of the Messiah. The primary way that John prepared people for the Messiah was through preaching repentance, and then John baptized those who repented as a sign of their confession of their sins.

2. But there's a problem that arises when Jesus comes to John to be baptized. Jesus is not a sinner. Remember when the angel appeared to Joseph back in the first chapter to announce Jesus' birth, the angel said that Jesus would be "Immanuel," which means God with us. Jesus is God who has taken on human flesh. As a human He could be and was tested and tempted. But, as God, He could not sin. All those whom John baptized were repenting and confessing their sins. Jesus, however, had nothing to repent of and no sins to confess.

3. So the question, then, is why would He be baptized? John wonders the same thing. When Jesus wants John to baptize Him, John objects, "This isn't right - You don't need to be baptized by me - I need to be baptized by you."

4. Jesus explains why He wants to be baptized in verse 15.

v. 15, "...it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

a. "Fitting for us"

-- Notice that Jesus says, "It is fitting for us." It's the proper thing for both of them. John's baptizing Jesus is part of John's mission to prepare for and introduce the Messiah.

b. "Fulfill all righteousness"

-- Jesus also explains that His being baptized will "fulfill all righteousness."

There are many ideas about what Jesus means by this, but I think that Jesus has at least two ideas in mind.

(1) His Identification with Sinners

-- Isaiah 53 says this of the coming Messiah:

**Isaiah 53:12b** "...he poured out his soul to death and was

numbered with the transgressors..."

-- Jesus had no sin but came because of His love for us sinners and His desire to redeem us by taking our place, bearing our guilt and enduring the judgment for our sins on the cross. The identification that ended with His death on the cross began with His baptism in the Jordan.

(2) His Dedication to God's Will

-- And that leads to the second thing Jesus means when He says that His baptism will "fulfill all righteousness." The word "righteousness" means whatever conforms to the will of God. So in being baptized Jesus is demonstrating His dedication to carrying out the Father's will.

-- Later on in His ministry, Jesus will use the word "baptism" to refer to His commitment to suffer and die for us. For example, when James and John come to Jesus asking for special places in His Kingdom, Jesus replies:

**Mark 10:38** "... You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

-- Jesus is using His baptism as a sign of His commitment to carrying out the Father's will by suffering and dying for sinners.

## II. The Spirit's Anointing (v. 16)

-- So we see the Son's baptism here in this passage and then we also see the Spirit's anointing.  
v. 16

### A. "Anointing"

-- The Hebrew term "Messiah" and the Greek equivalent "Christ" both mean anointed one. Anointing was a common OT practice, and it usually had two implications.

#### 1. Set Apart

-- Anointing was a sign that God had set someone apart to perform a special task or ministry. Priests, prophets, and kings were all anointed.

#### 2. Empowered

-- The act of anointing usually involved pouring oil on the head of a person, with the oil representing God's Spirit who would empower the person to fulfill their calling.

### B. The Spirit's Descent on Jesus

-- We see both of these ideas in the Spirit's anointing descent on Jesus.

1. The Holy Spirit's descent indicates that Jesus is the one set apart for the task of redeeming fallen sinners.

**John 1:33** he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

-- When Jesus returned to Nazareth He went into the synagogue there and was invited to read the Scriptures. The passage Jesus chose was the Messianic passage from Isaiah 61.

**Isaiah 61:1** The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to those who are bound.

-- So the Spirit's descent on Jesus at His Baptism indicates that Jesus is the "anointed" one, the Messiah who will save us from our sins.

2. And the Spirit's descent also indicates that Jesus will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, of course, is God but He will not employ His divine powers in order to carry out His earthly redemptive ministry. Instead, Jesus will rely on the resources available to all humans. One of those basic resources is the empowering activity of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:38 Peter is preaching the Gospel to the Gentile centurion Cornelius:

**Acts 10:38** "...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

That anointing with the Holy Spirit occurred at Jesus' baptism.

## III. The Father's Declaration (v. 17)

-- Then in verse 17 we see the third person of the Trinity.

v. 17

-- The Father's declaration here is an allusion to two OT passages both of which were commonly understood to point forward to the Messiah.

### A. Psalm 2

-- The first of those passages is Psalm 2, which describes the Messiah as God's Son and as the King who reigns over all the earth.

**Psalm 2:7b-8** The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. **<sup>8 </sup>**Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

B. Isaiah 42

-- The second passage that the Father points to in His declaration is Isaiah 42.

-- **Isaiah 42:1** Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him

-- "Delights" in the Isaiah verse is the same as "well-pleased" in the Father's declaration in Matthew. Notice that the Father delights in and is well-pleased with the Son because of the Son's commitment to being the servant who will carry out the Father's plan for redeeming fallen creation.

## **CONCLUSION**

And so at Jesus' Baptism we see the eternal Trinity acting in concert to inaugurate the ministry that would provide for our salvation.

The Jesus who comes to John to be baptized has been given by the Father to save us from our sins.

The Jesus who emerges from the waters of the Jordan is the Son who was with the Father in the beginning, from eternity past.

He is the One through whom the Father created all things.

He is the One who emptied Himself of the glories of Heaven and of the privileges of deity and took on human flesh.

He is the One who humbled Himself to become the servant who would pray "Not my will but Thine be done" and who would suffer and die for our sins on the Cross.

He is the One in whom the Father is delighted and who fully and perfectly pleases the Father.

The greatest way that you can delight the Father is to love the Son.

The greatest way you can please the Father is to worship the Son.

And that's the great work of the Holy Spirit - to draw you to love and worship Jesus.