

The Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3:13-17

MPS Jesus, God's Son, was anointed by baptism as the Christ so we could identify with Him by faith and be adopted as God's children.

OBJ Every person should believe in Jesus and be baptized in His Name because of Three Reasons.

READ Matthew 3:13-17

*13Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." **Matthew 3:13-17***

INTRO Baptism is one of the most exciting times in the life of the church and for a new follower of Christ. We often think of salvation and baptism as a "sky-splitting moment". And, we can become disappointed if the sky doesn't split, or if it doesn't feel as "thrill" or last as long as we thought it might. But salvation is a sky-splitting four times over! **How?** Because Jesus is our "sky-splitter"; here at his baptism, in His crucifixion, at His ascension, and one day, when He comes again. Here at the first of His four sky-splitting moments of salvation.

TRANS Today we understand WHY baptism is such an important moment for every new believer. It is surely "sky-splitting"!

Matthew jumps from Jesus as a young child to a grown man, not bothering with His childhood. His focuses on Jesus' fulfillment of God's promise as Messiah. What has been introduced in Matthew 1-2 is now unveiled and anointed by God the Father; **Jesus is God's Son, and the Father is pleased with Him!**

Matthew records Jesus coming to John the Baptist at the Jordan River to be baptized by him. John wants nothing to do with this. **Why?** **ILLUS** Imagine how you would feel right now if Jesus walked up to you and asked, "**would you pray for me?**" John knew who Jesus was, the Christ, and acknowledged Him as such. As a matter of fact, John was the first to recognize Jesus in the womb [Luke 1:41](#) as well as in the water. But John was preaching and baptizing for repentance [Mark 1:4](#) and he knew Jesus did not need to repent. But Jesus had a greater purpose for his baptism, so he told John to baptize him.

TRANS Let's consider WHY Jesus was baptized.

Jesus said His baptism was "fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness". (15) **What does He mean, "fulfill all righteousness"? Does baptism make one righteous?** Jesus accomplished a number of things by his baptism. He validated John the Baptist's ministry. He acknowledged John as his prophetic forerunner, the fulfillment of God's promise that a last prophet would announce the Messiah's coming. [Isa 40:3](#) He also validated John's message of calling people to repentance from sin. And, Jesus identified with those who needed to repent. This was the reason John hesitated when he first arrived, because he knew Jesus did not need to repent. But Jesus' baptism brought him in not to repent, but to identify with the people as the Servant who would suffer for them. In a world filled with religious messages and competing ideologies, it can be difficult to know which to listen to. But God never leaves us to wonder. **God clarifies His servant to whom His people are to listen according to His Word.**

The message of John the Baptist was right, but not complete. His call to repent was to point to the Christ who would come. When Jesus appeared, He came as the suffering Servant who would die for God's people. And in his example Jesus also identified baptism as the means through which we identify ourselves with Him as Savior and Lord. [Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4](#)

In baptism, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by obeying the Father. Each of these acts are part of the highest reason Jesus was baptized, righteousness. But righteousness is never just about an act. Righteousness is only found in a



relationship. Jesus was not baptized because he was a sinner in need of repentance but because He lived in complete obedience to the Father.¹ [The righteousness fulfilled in Jesus' baptism was His obedience in relationship with the Father.](#)

Jesus whole life is the fulfilling of this righteousness. Everything He said and every act he performed on earth was only because of what the Father told Him to do. [John 14:10-11](#) Jesus fulfilled all righteousness from the Father to reveal for us what it means to know and live in a relationship with God. Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ brings us into a personal relationship with God. In relationship with God, repentance means that we turn away from sin and turn to Christ; we cease walking in sin and start walking in obedience to God. And all of this is by faith. Until you have obeyed you have not truly believed and followed. This is what Jesus calls us to do in salvation and a life of faith. Righteousness is not a theoretical concept given to us, but an eternal, spiritual truth into which God brings us, that establishes our life in His Kingdom to be lived out in the tangible, physical reality of this world by faith in obedience to His commands. [Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by living in obedience to the commands of God the Father.](#)

TRANS Matthew does not describe the actual baptism but tells what occurred upon its completion.

When Jesus came up from the water, Matthew records a powerful moment of divine visitation. The Heavens were opened, the Spirit of God descended like a dove to rest on him, and a voice from Heaven spoke, *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* After 400 plus years God breaks His own silence with the divine pronouncement identifying Jesus as His Son and anointing Him as the Christ of God. [Here is the confirmation of Jesus fulfilling righteousness; God is pleased.](#)

Jesus could not have accomplished WHAT He did if He had not been WHO He was. This sky-splitting moment is crucial for our salvation because in it we see that the Christ of God has come, and He is God Himself. Jesus came as the Christ to fulfill righteousness in obedience to the Father, and accomplish every act of redemption necessary for sinners to be saved, the lost to be born again. [This news is not just "sky-splitting", its Heaven-opening!](#) In Jesus, the pleasure of God upon Him becomes the satisfaction of God's wrath toward our sin. In Jesus, God pleasure on Him becomes His welcome into His Kingdom for us. In Jesus, sin is atoned so Heaven can be opened and sinners are welcomed. In Jesus, the Spirit of God descends to anoint Jesus so He can inhabit His followers to live within and lead us in His peace. In Jesus, righteousness is not a religious merit badge to earn, but our great reward, our inheritance to receive and relationship into which we live. [Because God was pleased to anoint Jesus, His Son, as the Christ, by faith in Him we become children of the Most High!](#)

[Jesus, God's Son, was anointed as the Christ by baptism so we could identify with Him by faith and be adopted as God's children.](#)

OBJ [Why is baptism such an exciting time and important moment for a new believer?](#) In baptism, by faith we identify with Jesus in His death and resurrection as our own death and new life. Jesus is the one who splits the sky, so He can open Heaven to welcome you! [Three "Heaven-opening moments" make Jesus worthy of your faith.](#)

1. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness from God for us.

There is no righteousness outside of Jesus Christ. He, and He alone, is our righteousness. You can work, strive, pursue and run after all you want with all you have, but you will never earn what only Jesus can give. The best news is, you don't have to. He came as the servant willing to suffer for us so He could die in our place and give His righteousness to you. What you could never earn or achieve on your own you don't have to because Jesus stands ready and willing to give it to you today if you will put your trust in Him. [Jesus fulfilled all righteousness from God so He could become our righteousness with God.](#)

¹ Craig Blomberg, [Matthew](#), vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 81. Blomberg states, "To fulfill all righteousness" means to complete everything that forms part of a relationship of obedience to God. In so doing, Jesus identifies with and endorses John's ministry as divinely ordained and his message as one to be heeded."



2. God's Spirit comes to live in us.

When you put your faith in Jesus, God's Spirit inhabits you to empower you to walk in His righteousness, in obedience to His commands. Jesus teaches that here is nothing from God that we do not have that His Spirit does not provide. [John16:14-15](#) The work Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, the Spirit carries forth in us as long as we live on the earth, all the way to eternity. [The Christ of God who came to save us takes up residence in us to live His life through us.](#)

3. God's pleasure rests on us and His peace in us.

Peace with God only comes through faith in Jesus Christ because He is the one who tore down the dividing wall of hostility between us and God. [Eph2:14](#) God's peace is the salve of the soul's relentless anxiety and striving, and the balm of the heart's deep hurt and wounds from sin. You are not right without Jesus because your sin makes you hostile toward God. [Rom8:7; Col1:21](#) When you place your faith in Jesus, God's wrath toward your sin is satisfied on His cross, so you walk in God's peace in you and His smiling pleasure upon you. You do not have to live in the endless turmoil of heart and soul, but you will only find peace in the One who purchased it for you on the cross. [Jesus brings the smiling pleasure and peace of God on our whole life.](#)

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Do you know Jesus Christ? Have you asked Him to forgive you of your sin? Place your faith in Jesus today and let Him bring you into that right relationship with God! He will save you and wash you clean. You can follow him in the waters of baptism to testify that He is Savior and Lord!

TRANS **WHY Do I need to be baptized?**

Believer's baptism is our identification with Jesus in His death and new life. In baptism we declare that in Jesus Christ I have died to sin and self. By faith in Him, I died IN Jesus more than 2000 years ago. Therefore, the life I live in this body, here and now, is not me but the Christ in me. This is not MY life, but His life in me. I am not my own to do with as I please, because I died. And because of the One IN whom I died, I NOW LIVE. THIS is our confession FIRST to God, then to me and to the world. The ONLY life I have is IN Christ. When I walk by sight instead of faith, I walk in sin and death. When I walk by faith, I walk in the light of His righteousness that is my life. [Jesus is neither an option nor an opinion, but the originating source of all that is life in the believer.](#)

People get baptized for a lot of different reasons, all of them are vain religion and none of them save. Baptism is not a rite of religious passage. Churches practice baptism for a lot of different reasons, all of them are vain religion and none bestow saving grace. Baptism is not a ritual of religious cleansing or starting over, nor a momentum-building strategy. The Bible teaches that water baptism only holds one meaning. [Baptism is the outward, water-immersed identification WITH Christ of our death to life by faith IN His.](#)

Believer's Baptism is the first act of our spiritual obedience (with physical action) and first public testimony of our spiritual regeneration to new life by faith in Jesus Christ. We applaud baptism NOT for the greatness of the one who participates, but the One who initiates, who authorizes and with whom we identify in the waters of baptism for our salvation.

