

“The Baptism of Jesus” Matthew 3:13-17 Baptism of Our Lord 2026

Dear Christian brethren,

I had a rough week in terms of preparation for today – I was having a hard time with coming up with a message for the passage in Matthew describing the baptism of Jesus. It was tough because I wanted to make sure I wasn't just trying to throw something together for the sake of having a message, which was sure to be shallow and inapplicable. I think we're ready to dive into this passage, and I think you'll find something you can take home and make a part of your life, okay?

This baptism of Jesus accomplished a couple things, and it also teaches us a couple lessons and even gives us some direction for our lives today. My intention today is to go through these things, and by the time we leave, I'm convinced that most, if not all of us will find something we can make a part of our own individual lives.

Let's take a look at this very important episode of Jesus' life and what we can learn, okay?

Firstly, the baptism validates the ministry of John. When Jesus came to John for baptism, he was basically saying, "John, you have been faithful to the task given you and the message that was given you to preach. "Now I want to show everyone here that I appreciate you and your ministry." And so, even when John tries to reverse the roles, Jesus insisted. I wonder what went through John's mind as he consented to baptize Jesus. I don't know. But my guess is that even John couldn't grasp the significance of what was happening here. And when the Spirit came, and the Father spoke, it must have blown him away. Jesus' baptism served to validate the ministry of John.

Secondly, the baptism validates the ministry of Jesus. Many people were baptized by John. But John knew who Jesus was, and he proclaimed his need

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to be baptized by Jesus. In the other gospels, we see John proclaiming loudly, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" For the people who took John seriously, this might have been enough. But for some reason, the Father thought it would be good if He put His own stamp of approval on Jesus.

Look back at verses 16-17:

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Now how's that for an endorsement? Jesus, the Son of God, had the endorsement of God the Father. And we need to take that seriously. God is well pleased with Jesus. Are you? Do you love Jesus? Do you live a life that reflects a mindset that says, "With Jesus I am well pleased?" Now don't get me wrong. Jesus doesn't need OUR endorsement, okay? He's the Savior, whether we think He is or not. And one day He'll be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords whether we think He should be or not. He will triumph over evil and save His people, whether we agree with Him or not. He doesn't need our endorsement. He had the Father's. And that was good enough for Jesus. It should be good enough for you.

Thirdly, The baptism teaches us some lessons: First, that baptism is important. In our desire to reach contemporary society, the church is oftentimes quick to shy away from anything that might come across as legalistic. For many, baptism is seen in that light. But let me ask you something. If Jesus thought enough about it, doesn't that say something? Obviously, Jesus did not need to be baptized as a sign of repentance,

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because He was sinless. There was nothing for Him to repent of! In His final instructions to His followers in Matthew, he instructs them to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything He commanded. He tells us that baptism is important. What makes it important? Baptism is a way that the Holy Spirit claims us as one of his own. In the moment of your baptism, the sins which would direct you to hell are washed away, and you are clean as mountain snow. When John baptized a person, it was to show the world that this person had repented. When Jesus was baptized it was to testify to the task the Father had given to Jesus. When we are baptized, we are adopted as children of God.

The second lesson we can learn from this is that John the Baptist is not merely a footnote in gospel history. This is also based in idea that Jesus' baptism validated the ministry of John. Jesus could have by-passed John's activity, and still be the Messiah. But I think He was determined to "give John his due," if you will. To support John in his ministry and mission. Later in Matthew says that among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist. Jesus did not want John to just be a footnote in the annals of biblical history. Baptism is a key part of your conversion from sinner to saint, and while it needs to be paired with faith, it is how the Spirit begins its work in you.

I hope now that it's obvious that John's job was more than to just get people wet. And Jesus came to John for a bigger reason than to just get wet. Jesus came to endorse John, and to show everyone else that Jesus had the endorsement of the Father. He came to validate the ministry of John, and to validate His own. Not to the Father, but to those who would listen. It was

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God's way of say, "Take Jesus seriously. He's doing what I want Him to." So let me ask you: are you taking Him seriously? Not just in this issue of baptism, but in general. When you see the words and actions of Jesus, do you ponder them, consider them, look to them for guidance for your own life? Or do you just give them the same importance the rest of the world gives them?

Jesus doesn't give us that option. He insists that His words be taken seriously. And the Father insists the same things. If you are not a follower of Christ, Jesus' words to you are that He is the only way to God. You have to come through Him. You do that by admitting your need for His forgiveness, believing that He paid the penalty for your sins on the cross and rising from the dead, so you can have a home in heaven, and calling on Him. He also said to count the cost before doing that. He doesn't want blind followers. He wants disciples that are willing to follow Him even when it gets tough. But you know what I've found? I've found that I'd rather go through the tough times with Christ than without Him. I've done it both ways, and I prefer to go through life with Christ. Jesus' words to us are to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him. Not at our convenience, but all the time. 24/7/365. Sunday through Saturday, not just Sunday morning. During tax time and outside tax time. Even during the Super Bowl and baseball season. Does Jesus have your all? If not, what's in the way? Are you willing to lay it all out for Him? He deserves it, you know.

As the Gospels state, “Baptism saves”. Thank God the Father for giving us this option and sending us the Holy Spirit to empower baptism, and thank Him for sending His perfect son Jesus Christ to model the perfect baptism. May you bask in the light of Christ and remember your baptism every day. Amen.

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