

Who does John baptise?

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[0 : 00] The question to guide our service this morning is not who baptized Jesus.

! The question is not about who John the Baptist is.! The focus in Matthew 3 isn't really upon John, but upon the one whom John baptized.

The key question is, who is the Messiah? Who is it John baptizes? I'm not sure if I've told Michael yet, but there are two key things I tell candidates who come in training for ministry about baptizing infants.

The first one is don't drop the baby. The second one is get the name right. Who is it who is being baptized?

It's important that we know the person being baptized. And that's the focus in this part of Matthew 3.

[1 : 12] On the one hand, it might appear the answer is easy. Jesus came to John and Jesus was baptized by John.

So John baptized Jesus. But we want to push into that. Who is Jesus? What does Jesus have to do with our question about the Messiah?

And why was Jesus baptized by John? Notice the exchange between John and Jesus. John would have prevented Jesus from being baptized, saying, I need to be baptized by you.

And do you come to me? But Jesus answered him, let it be so now. For thus it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness.

And then John consented. John recognizes something in Jesus which gives him a pause.

[2 : 24] We can imagine from what we read in Matthew 3 and other passages that John was pretty busy with baptisms. Pretty constantly.

By the record of the crowds who were coming out. He maybe only had time to say, what's your name? And then he would baptize someone. But when Jesus came, John recognized something in him that made him pause.

Jesus is greater than John. John recognizes that he, John, needs to be baptized by Jesus who is asking him for baptism.

John has testified to the crowds that someone is coming who is greater than he is. And that greater one is now here.

He's turned up. We're not told how it is that John recognized him. We don't know. Most likely, almost certainly, it has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in John's life.

[3 : 41] Because after all, the only way that we recognize Jesus as Messiah and Savior is by the work of the Holy Spirit in us. But we're just not told how that worked out.

Jesus doesn't need John's baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins. He has no sin to repent of.

And no sin to be washed clean of. Jesus doesn't need John's baptism for himself.

Jesus submits to the baptism which we all receive. The baptism which we all need.

A baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins. Jesus. In this, as in so many other ways, Jesus identifies himself with us.

[4 : 46] He unites himself to us. In our lives. In our experiences. Jesus. Jesus being baptized by John does not confess his own sin.

I think he confesses my sin. And your sin. This is who it is that John baptizes.

Jesus who unites himself with you and with me. Jesus who joins himself together with us in our sin.

That he might lift our sin away from us. Bear it from us. That we might be set free from it. In our baptism.

Just as in our sharing this feast of bread and wine. Jesus the Lamb of God. Takes away our sin. And sets us free.

[5 : 49] This is who it is. Whom John baptizes. And then we read. When Jesus was baptized. Immediately he went up from the water. And behold the heavens were torn open to him. He saw the Spirit of God. Descending like a dove. And coming to remain upon him. A voice came from heaven. And said. This is my beloved son. I am well pleased with him. Jesus is the one upon whom. The Spirit of God comes. And remains. Before this. Through the pages of the Old Testament. When we read of the Old. The Holy Spirit. He comes upon people. For specific tasks. And for a specific time. But now the Holy Spirit comes.

[6 : 50] And remains upon Jesus. Is with him. Always. This Jesus. This Jesus. Is always filled. With the Holy Spirit. Of the Lord. This Jesus. Is the one. Whom the voice from heaven declares. To be God's son. This Jesus. Is the one who. Always pleases. The father. The one who is. Always beloved. The one of a kind. The one of a kind. The one of a kind. Son. Of God. Somehow. John recognizes. Something of this. He probably couldn't have said it. In the words that we find. In our Bibles. Jesus. But he. He recognized. Something of Jesus. The descent of the spirit.

[7 : 49] And remaining upon Jesus. And the work of the spirit. Within John. No doubt. Correspond to one another. And as the Holy Spirit. Works within us. So. We are. Drawn. Towards. The Messiah. Upon whom. The spirit. Always remains. Jesus. Jesus. Is the son of God. Who doesn't need. Baptized in water. Jesus. Is the one. Who will baptize us. In that same. Holy spirit. Which remained. Upon him. Quite simply. Jesus. Is God. The. However we define. The word God. We now include. Jesus. As part of that. Definition. Of who God is. God with us.

[8 : 44] God for us. God uniting himself. To us. In baptism. That he might take. From us. Our sin. And reconcile us. To himself. The Messiah. Is Jesus. The anointed. One of the Lord. Is baptized. In a river. Not for himself. But for you. And me. The Messiah. Has come down. To share. Our life. To unite. Himself. With us. To make us. One. With him. This is the one. Whom John baptized. All this. And more. Is displayed. For us. In this. Baptism. In the same way. These gifts. Of bread. And wine. Which we will share. Later. Display.

[9 : 40] The same. Thing. The Messiah. Who is baptized. For you. Is the same. Messiah. Who is crucified. For you. There is only. One Messiah. There is only. One Jesus. There is only. One. Savior. One. The one. The one. Who died. And rose. Again. Is the one. Who descended. Into the waters. Of baptism. And came up. Out from them. For you. And for me. If you don't know. Jesus. Like this. Today. Is a good day. To begin. To know him. Like this. This is the only. Jesus. There is. And it is. Our hope. Our joy. Our peace. To know. That God.

[10 : 33] Himself. Came down. In Jesus. To unite. Himself. To us. To set us free. And wash us clean. From our sin. Many of you. Have known this. For many years. But I wonder. How often. We forget it. I wonder. How often. We live. As though. It were not true. We get so used. To the stories. Of Jesus. We think. Oh. It's another story. Of Jesus. Somehow. We need to let. These stories. Hammer upon us. The truth. Of God's gift. Of grace. Which is. Jesus. For us. For us. Not just once. When we first. Came to know him. Not just a long time. Ago. When we were baptized. The impact. Of our baptism. Is every moment. Of every day. Jesus united. To us. For the forgiveness.

[11 : 30] Of our sins. Today. Is a good day. For us. To know this. All over again. To give thanks. To God our father. All over again. To cling hard.

To Jesus. All over again. To depend upon the work. Of the Holy Spirit. Within us. All over again. We never stop.

Trusting Jesus. Hoping in Jesus. Belonging to Jesus. Come to Jesus. Come for the first time. Or the hundredth time. Come to thee. Jesus. The one baptized for John. Is our Messiah. And our Savior. Let's pray together.