

The Baptism of Jesus

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:00] June 2nd, 1953, London, England, Westminster Abbey.

Queen Elizabeth II was crowned. Crowned Queen of England. She had already been the queen by birthright, but on that day, she was inaugurated as Queen of England.

And it came to a climax when the Archbishop of Canterbury brought the four-pound crown of St. Edwards and placed that upon her brow.

And everybody in Westminster Abbey said, God save the queen! Matthew 3, 13-17, the baptism of Jesus is the inauguration of His kingly reign on earth.

Let's read this together. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John. John the Baptist. To be baptized by Him.

[1:10] John would have prevented Him saying, I need to be baptized by you, and you come to Me? But Jesus answered him, Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Then John consented. And 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.

And behold, a voice from heaven said, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. This baptism of Jesus is a big event.

And what we see in this little passage, really the focus is on what happens leading up to the baptism, and then what happens immediately after the baptism. There's really not much ink on the baptism itself.

And so this morning what we're going to do is we're going to focus on what happens beforehand and what immediately follows afterwards. But in both, there's some identifying going on.

[2:17] In the first, verses 3-15, Jesus, the sinless one, identifies with the sinners He came to save. And then in the second section, verses 16-17, Jesus is revealed.

He's identified for who He is. So let's walk through Matthew's account of the baptism of Jesus. Two major sections. What happens before, 13-15.

What happens afterwards, verses 16-17. Let's take a look. Verse 13. The first thing we notice is that Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan.

Now all four Gospels record the baptism of Jesus. And it's actually Mark's Gospel that states specifically that Jesus was coming from Nazareth in Galilee.

And we've looked at that a little bit before a couple weeks ago. Nazareth. He will be called a Nazarene, 223. It's a despised place. A despicable place. You don't want to be known for being from Nazareth.

[3:21] Remember Nathaniel? John chapter 1. Does anything good come out of Nazareth? Jesus came out of Nazareth. So Jesus comes from Galilee, from Nazareth, and He is on a mission to see this John by the Jordan.

Now it was a 60-mile walk as the crow flies. And Jesus was purposed to find John. You see that little phrase in verse 13, then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by Him.

And the original kind of language of the New Testament, it's full of purpose. He is purposefully going to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

So it would be like this. I mean, let's say that you're outside splitting wood in your house and you see Jesus walking by on His way down to be baptized by John. You're like, hey Jesus, you want to split some wood with me?

And Jesus would be like, you know what? I've got a place to be. I'm sorry. I'm on my way down to the Jordan right now. Maybe I'm on the flip trip. I'll stop by. But the point is, Jesus is purposefully heading to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

[4:45] It's very purposeful. He is going to John to be baptized by John in order to fulfill the will of His Father, in order to fulfill all righteousness.

Now, I just want to remind you of something. John the Baptist. The whole point of John's ministry is to prepare the way of the Lord. Look back at Matthew 3, verse 3.

For this is He who is spoken of by the prophet, speaking of John the Baptist, the voice of the one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. And what Matthew is doing for us there is saying, hey, Isaiah 40, verse 3, the voice crying out in the wilderness, that's John the Baptist.

And what he's also saying is, John the Baptist is preparing the way for God, Yahweh. That's Jesus. Emmanuel. God in the flesh. And so, what we see happening here, even this baptism is part of John's preparing the way for the Lord in order to fulfill all righteousness.

So, Jesus arrives on the scene. It's the first time we see the grown Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. I know I've been waiting for this. Jesus arrives.

[6:02] And in verses 14 and 15, we see a little bit of a disagreement between John the Baptist and Jesus, God in the flesh. It's really interesting.

Guess who wins? John objects to something, but Jesus prevails. Now, just a little background. There are four Gospels.

Another one of the Gospels is written by John. Not John the Baptist. Another John. And in the Gospel according to John, in John 1.29, where the baptism of Jesus is recorded, Jesus shows up and when John the Baptist first sees Jesus coming to Him, John the Baptist says, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

That's how He announced Him. So, according to John, the Gospel writer, even at this point, John the Baptist knew that the mission of Jesus was to take away the sins of the world.

And He was going to take away the sins of the world by being a sacrificial Lamb. Behold, the Lamb of God. That plays upon a rich Old Testament ritual tradition of blemishless, spotless lambs being offered for sinful people.

[7:28] And so, in John 1, John the Baptist says, Hey, there's the one who's going to be sacrificed through the sins of the world. Well, and back in chapter 3 of Matthew, verse 11, remember what John the Baptist said of Jesus?

He said, He who's coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I'm not worthy to carry. John knows whose presence he's in.

He might not know it fully, but he knows. He knows that the one who's come to him, the one who's just arrived from Galilee, is the one mightier than he.

This is Emmanuel. God with us. This is the one, the spotless Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world. Now, why I tell you this is to help you understand why John the Baptist has a little bit of issue with baptizing Jesus.

Look at verse 14. John would have prevented him. And the language there is, it wasn't just kind of one like, no, I can't do this, Jesus.

[8:43] It was like multiple. Like, I don't think so. No, I don't think this is right. No, I don't think so, Jesus. And he says, I need to be baptized. I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me.

John is very aware of his own sinfulness, and he's also aware that the one who mightier than him who just came to him is the sinless one. I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me.

In other words, it's like John saying, Jesus, why are you coming to be baptized with my baptism?

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for sin. People confessing their sins going down in the water saying, no, I'm not going to do this.

It's like I'm dead to this and being brought up out of the water saying, I'm living for God now. It's like John is saying, Jesus, you don't have any sin.

You don't need to be baptized with my baptism. It's like John was, did Jesus forget that he was sinless? Throughout the New Testament, we learn that Jesus lived a life without ever sinning.

[9:59] Not once. Ever. He's 30 years old right here at the Jordan. 30 years never sinning. Not once. It's just not not sinning.

It's always pleasing. Everything he did, he was pleasing to God, his Father. He lived a perfect life. A perfect life of obedience to God.

A life we could never live ourselves. It's like Jesus is the gold standard. I'm seriously, think about it this way. Could you imagine being a brother, half-brother, or half-sister of Jesus growing up?

Do you know what you would hear daily from Mary and Joseph? Mike, Mike, why can't you be more like Jesus? Mike, can you just pick up your room like Jesus?

Mike, we do the dishes like Jesus does the dishes. Mike, sinless. Perfect sin. Could you imagine growing up with Jesus as your brother?

[11:05] Man. Jesus is the gold standard. He never sinned once. Let me give you a couple passages that talk about Jesus' sinlessness. 2 Corinthians 5.21, it's one of my favorite.

The Apostle Paul says, for our sake, God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin. Who knew no sin. Why? So that in Him, Jesus, we might become the righteousness of God. You know what's amazing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Let me tell you. It's not just you're forgiven of your sin. When a sinner realizes what God has done for them in Jesus and that God offers them salvation, and that a sinner comes to God by faith repenting of their sin, here's what happens. God takes your sin and puts it on Jesus. He considers it on Christ. His wrath poured out on Jesus. And your sin is forgiven.

[12:08] All of it. All of it in full. It's amazing. But that's not all of it. In the same moment that you believe, not only is your sin imputed on Jesus, Christ's righteousness, His gold standard of living, is imputed to you.

You're made perfect in God's eyes with the righteousness of Jesus. That's stinking awesome. And so not only am I forgiven of all my sin, I'm made pleasing in God's sight with a righteousness not my own.

And I can't shake it. God's declared me righteous in His sight. It's a work of God. And it's because of Him who knew no sin.

But there's another passage. Hebrews 14, 15. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. Jesus knows Jesus knows our weaknesses.

But one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin. Not only does He identify with our weaknesses, He's been tempted as we've been tempted.

[13:21] He knows what it's like to be tempted. Yet He's never sinned. Who knew no sin yet without sin. Our Bibles are clear that Jesus was the sinless one.

And John knew that this 30-year-old man, his cousin, was the sinless Lamb of God. And he didn't need to be baptized. He didn't need to repent.

There was no sin to confess. He didn't need to confess. So you kind of get the question. You kind of get the reason why John the Baptist is like, I think we've got the Rolls chair turned around here.

You should be baptizing me. Why are you coming for me to baptize you? You get John's point? So what is Jesus saying?

Look at verse 15. Jesus answered him, let it be so now for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. righteousness. Then John the Baptist consented.

[14:28] Okay. So John was right. Jesus didn't need to be baptized because of his own sinfulness. That's not why Jesus was being baptized.

Jesus was being baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. So what is that all about? Here's what Jesus is doing in his baptism. Remember, he's the king.

Remember, he came to represent a people whom he would save. So here's what he's doing at the baptism. He is identifying with the sinners he came to save.

He's being numbered with the transgressors. Though he himself never transgressed. He's becoming our representative.

He's becoming our representative. This is why Jesus was baptized. In order to fill all righteousness, Jesus had to represent a people.

[15:32] In order to represent a sinful people, he had to identify with their sinfulness. And so he's baptized with the baptism of John. This is all about the messianic mission to save a people for himself.

To establish his active reign on earth to save sinners. sinners. It's why he came. If baptism symbolized dying to one's sin, Jesus being baptized is him saying, I'm going to die for your sins. This is about his saving work that he came to do. I'm your representative king. The sinless one and I'm identifying you with you, my sinners.

You know what's really ironic about all this? That the supposed leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees and Sadducees in verse 7, they came to the water too.

And they were sinners. Yet they were unwilling to be baptized. And the irony is Jesus, the sinless one, was more than willing to be baptized.

[16:53] In fact, he had to convince the baptizer to baptize him. It points to Jesus being the rightful leader of his people.

So as part of John's role in preparing the way of the Lord, he had to baptize Jesus so that the sinless one could publicly identify with the sinful people he came to save in order to fulfill all righteousness.

And he consented. He baptized him. You know, there's a couple things we can walk away from this section realizing that Jesus is the sinless one.

And his sinlessness did not keep him from identifying with us sinners. Isn't that good news? He's not surprised by your sin. And he's the representative one.

In his sinlessness, he came to identify with us in order to save us. He would eventually identify with our sin to the point of taking our sin onto himself.

[18:01] So this first section, before the baptism, Jesus identifies himself with sinners. sinners, the baptism points to him saying, I'm the sinless one who have come to identify with you, sinners.

So now we move to after his baptism, verses 16 and 17. I mean, I just want to remind you, we're told like next to nothing about the baptism itself.

In verse 16, we read this, and when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water. he was immersed in the water, and he came out of the Jordan. Just on a side note, we practice baptism by immersion here at Christ the King Church.

And what it points to is being placed into Jesus, his death, and being raised with Christ to newness of life. What occupies Matthew's attention, and therefore ours though, is what immediately follows Jesus coming up out of the water.

And there's some really interesting phrases. So Jesus comes up out of the water, he's dripping wet with the water of the Jordan, and then there's some really interesting things happen.

[19:24] The heavens open up, the Spirit of God descends and rests upon him, and then there's this voice from heaven that says the most interesting things. This is my beloved son, with whom I'm well pleased.

And so immediately following his baptism, Jesus is still dripping wet, and something happens on this kind of God scale. We have a triune event going on.

We've got the Son, the second person of the Trinity, we've got the Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit descending upon him, and of course we've got the first person of the Trinity, the Father.

It's him who's speaking. Jesus' baptism in this inauguration of his kingship is a triune event. The heavens open.

This phrase shows up in different spots in your Bible. Ezekiel 1.1, Acts 7.56, that's where Stephen is being stoned, and the heavens open to him, and he sees Jesus at the right hand of God the Father.

[20:28] Revelation 4.1, Revelation 19.11, the heavens open. There's a revelation that takes place. A revealing that happens, initiated by God, revealing something to others.

What is he revealing? What is he showing? He's revealing who this Jesus is. He's going to show us, the triune God's going to show us who this Jesus is.

This is his inauguration day. The day that he publicly begins his ministry, his reign on earth.

This one, just baptized, is the messianic king. And he's going to take the throne of his descendant David.

David. So what we're going to see here is this public announcement that Jesus is the king. His baptism is the inauguration of his reign on earth.

[21:39] It's the start of his ministry. So the heavens open up, and the Spirit of God descends like a dove and rests upon him.

Like I said, the Spirit is the second person of the Trinity. He's described throughout our Bibles, not as an it, but as a who. The Spirit of God is a he. He's a person, and he's fully God.

And he is here shown as a dove coming to rest upon Jesus. Jesus, it was just spoken of him, John the Baptist, as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Same spirit. And so you read this, and you see that the Spirit descends upon Jesus, and you may be thinking, well, this is the empowering of Jesus in his humanity for the work of ministries about to undertake.

And you would be right. Look at 4.1. The Spirit leads him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, to strengthen him. But that's not all that's going on here.

[22:52] Remember, this is Inauguration Day. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Matthew has taken a lot of pains to show us up to this point that he is descendant from David.

He's in the Messianic line. It's his right to be king over the throne of David. And this is his inauguration day. Remember back in 1 Samuel 16, I mentioned this a few weeks ago.

Saul, King Saul, has proven to be a doofus. And God has told him, I'm taking this kingdom away from you and I'm going to give it to another. And so he sends Samuel, the prophet, to Bethlehem, to Jesse's house.

It turns out that Jesse has some stud boys. Samuel walks in. He looks at this one guy and says, surely this is the king. Look at him. He's good looking. Look at his veins popping out of his arms. Surely that's the king. God says, no. And so the other brothers are rolled by Samuel. And God every time is like, no, no, not that one.

[24:02] No, no, no. Nope, not that one. Nope, nope, nope, nope, nope. Eventually there's no more brothers in the house. So Samuel says, are there any other brothers? And Jesse responds by saying, well, there's this one other one out shepherding the sheep right now.

Samuel says, go get them. David walks in. God says to Samuel, this is the one. Anoint him. And he anoints them with oil.

And then in 1633, we read this. And the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. The spirit of God came upon David from that day forward.

What we see happening in Matthew chapter 3 is the spirit of God coming upon the newly inaugurated king. God setting apart Jesus as the messianic king.

The king who's got rightful claim to the throne of David. Whose kingdom will expand through the nations. So this spirit descending is not just an empowering.

[25:15] It is a declaring. It is a setting apart. This is the king. He is the messianic king. The long awaited one. And his rule, act of reign, is starting right now.

The heavens open. The spirit of God descends. Jesus is anointed as king. And then there's a voice from heaven. In verse 17. This is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased.

Those are some really interesting words. You might think that God made those words up on the spot when he spoke those words. But did you know they're actually alluding to two passages in the Old Testament?

That God the Father chose those words very specifically to speak over this one on inauguration day? this is my beloved son.

Would sound familiar to a Jewish mind well acquainted with Psalm 2. Psalm 2 verse 7 says you are my son. Ask of me and I'll make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

[26:25] Psalm 2 is a messianic psalm. It's about the coming Messiah king. And it's about the one that God will entrust the nations to for his rule. what's interesting about this is that God the Father includes the word

beloved.

This is my beloved son. And that word beloved is so rich. It has such depth. It's about affection. God the Father is loving of his son. Brother and sister in Christ, because we're in Christ, do you know that we're beloved the same way?

This is my beloved son. You can't miss the fact that the explicit statement being made here. This one dripping wet with the waters of the Jordan.

This is my son. He's fully God. He's my son. Colossians, for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

[27:35] Hebrews 1, he is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature. This man dripping wet with the waters of the Jordan just come up from being baptized, is being revealed as the psalm to Messiah, God's son.

Fully God, fully man. He's Emmanuel. Emmanuel. But the voice continues, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. It's an allusion to Isaiah 42, 1, speaking of the suffering servant. There are passages in Isaiah about the suffering servant, about the one who would come and suffer for his people to liberate them. Behold, my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom my soul delights.

That's Isaiah 42, 1. In whom my soul delights, with whom I'm well pleased. See the linkage? God delights in the obedience of his son.

God the father delights in this one who's the messianic king, his son. And he's saying this is not just my son. This is not just the king. This is the suffering servant of Isaiah who would come for a people and shed his blood for them.

[29:00] This is inauguration day. This is going public with who this man is. Anointed by the spirit of God.

He's the messianic king. He's the beloved son. He's the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. by his stripes. We are healed. He'll be crushed for our iniquities.

So what we see going on in verses 16 and 17 is that Jesus is revealed for who he is. Not only is he identified with us through his baptism, he's been identified through the baptism of who he is.

He's the king, the anointed one, son of God, fully God, fully man, the suffering servant of Isaiah. And he identifies with us.

Let's try to apply this. All right. Get it in your mind. This one who's just come up from the waters of the Jordan, who didn't need to be baptized for sin.

[30:18] He's the sinless one. He's the anointed king, the son of God, the suffering servant. He's the one in whom God the Father delights. This is like no one else.

And he came to identify with us sinners. He's not ashamed to call you his own. His kingdom is made up of sinners made righteous.

sinners. We have an amazing king. We have a king who chose even holy and sinless to identify with us sinners.

He didn't keep himself separate from us. But he made us righteous so that we can be reconciled to him. You see, this king came to deal with our sin so that we can be welcomed into his kingdom.

He's the suffering servant. He welcomes us in by his blood. Though sinless, he is our representative king and it's all by his grace.

[31:30] We did nothing to earn this. Nothing. Nothing. Would you savor that today?

this week? Would you savor the fact that your king, your sinless king came to identify with you? He came for you.

Could it be that when Jesus went down in the waters, he had you in mind, identifying with you and your sinfulness? the second point I want to make this morning is this.

Back to Queen Elizabeth, 1953. Crown on her head. Westminster Abbey's packed and in unison you hear, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Blah, blah, blah, blah. You don't quite know what they're saying until you kind of dial in. It finally dials in. God save the queen.

[32:33] Right when the crown hit her brow. God save the queen. Everyone in Westminster Abbey's rejoicing. God save the queen. God save the queen.

They are coming under her reign. Could you imagine what was happening in heaven the moment God said, this is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased.

Imagine. Imagine with me. Play with me. Let's say the angels are in heaven and they're playing ping ball in heaven. Bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing.

And they hear on the speaker, this is my beloved son. They're like, oh yeah, today's inauguration day. That's great. Bing, bing, bing, bing, bing, bing. Or just imagine, you know, angels in heaven playing cribbage.

While God the Father is saying, with him I'm well pleased. And they're kind of like, oh that's great, we'll play cribbage. Or they're waiting in line for the heavenly latte and up on the chalkboard is it's inauguration day and they're just getting their lattes and like, oh yeah, that's cool.

[33:51] What was going on with the myriad of angels in heaven on inauguration day? They were rejoicing.

They were on pins and needles. The King, God's chosen one, has begun His salvific reign on earth. A light has dawned this day. They have been waiting for this day.

where King Jesus takes up His reign publicly. And do you know what? What started nearly 2,000 years ago is going on today.

Jesus reigns today. He's the King today. And so the way that we respond is, long live our King. We come under His reign. We gladly submit to who He is and what He's called us to.

We know who He is and we know He has identified with us so that we can be saved. And so this morning, can I just ask you to renew your allegiance to Him, your King?

[34:57] To freshly come under His reign? To say today, oh Jesus, yes, You are my King. I will obey You in everything because You reign over everything.

You have claim over everything. And I gladly submit my everything to You. That's going to mean turning from your own rule, and turning to His.

Here's one question you can be asking yourself. When you're faced with a decision of any sort, what does King Jesus say about this?

What does He say I should do? Long live the King. This morning we've looked at the baptism of Jesus. It's His inauguration day. He's identified to us in our sinfulness and we get to see God identify Him as the King, the beloved Son, the suffering servant.

He is our King. And we gladly submit to His reign. Let's pray. Jesus, You are the King.

[36:08] We ask that God, if today's the day where You have opened eyes to people in this room, maybe it's just one or two or seven, that You are their King, God, would You move in them to bow their knee and give themselves fully to You.

You are worthy because of who You are. You are our King. You are Emmanuel. You're the anointed one. You're the suffering servant and you reign today.

In Jesus' name, Amen.