

Jesus' Baptism

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[0 : 00] We focus on the section of Jesus' baptism, verse 13 to 17. Three simple points to follow in relation to Jesus. Identify Jesus and his identity, son of God.

He's being anointed for the work that God had given him to do. And the father confirming Jesus as son and the work that the son was taken.

It was Jesus' baptism. Well, last Lord's Day, I think most of you were here in this evening service. And remember, we were focusing on the identity of Jesus.

Jesus and his identity as the word of God. The word that was in the beginning, in the beginning in his eternal being. The word who was with God.

The word who was face to face with God. And the word who was God. The word who was always God, always divine. As we said, there was never a time in the son of God when the word of God was not God.

[1 : 08] It's the word through whom creation came into being. The word through whom creation was spoken to fulfill the will of God. This is Jesus, the word, the word who's eternal.

The word who came from heaven to earth to speak forth the message of salvation through him alone. And it's that great identity that John tells us of Jesus being.

The apostle John tells us of Jesus being the word of God. But Jesus is the word of God. That doesn't exhaust Jesus' identity. Because the Bible reveals more of who Jesus is and who he is. And his character. And his love and his grace. And his mercy and his steadfast love towards sinners. And it's as we progress through scripture. Then we see more of the revelation of who Jesus is.

As we seek to know him. As we seek to live for him. As we seek to understand him. As we seek to derive wisdom as to how we are to love God and our neighbour as ourselves.

[2 : 21] As we seek to understand him. As we seek to understand him. And so as we come here to this, if you like, this second of the revealed identities of Jesus as we find in scripture. Then we see here particularly the identity of Jesus as the Son of God.

The revealed Son of God. The eternal Son of God. And it's that revealing of Jesus as a Son, as the Son of God, that was very much revealed here in Jesus' baptism.

If you like, this is the second major event in Jesus' life that identifies him for who he is. And so again, we're going to look at this revelation of Jesus.

And as we do so, as you do so, let's bow in reverence before our Lord and Saviour. Yes, give thanks to God for the love of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus coming, as we said, from heaven to earth and obeying his Father's will. Jesus coming to save sinners such as ourselves. Jesus coming to reveal who he is in his redeeming sinners.

[3 : 34] Redeeming sinners by his obedience. Even his obedience unto death. And so again, as we turn to God's word, to consider who Jesus is.

This is time well spent in the word. This is time well spent as you seek to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. So that's what we are to do.

So to grow as believers. To grow as Christians. And in that growing, that growth. To know the Lord Jesus. And in knowing him, serve him.

So three things that we saw in our opening slide there. In the slide regarding the sermon for this evening. Three things to ponder, to reflect on and to give thanks for. As we look on the Saviour who came for us.

And as we look to the Saviour who, as we saw in the slides there, was identified with sinners. And as anointed as Saviour of sinners.

[4 : 37] And confirmed as the Saviour of sinners. Let's look first of all, before we specifically go to these points. Let's look at the background to what we read in Matthew 3 of Jesus' baptism.

As we read there at the start of chapter 3, Matthew's Gospel. Jesus, John the Baptist, he's been baptising in the River Jordan. And we're not told, but certainly by the reference to the number of people for those who are coming from Jerusalem and all Judea.

It's certainly thousands of people are coming to the River Jordan to be baptised. Obviously something very wonderful is happening in that region.

For over 400 years there have been no prophets in Israel. The voice of the prophets has been silent for that great number of centuries.

400 years no prophet has emerged in that area. But now John the Baptist has come. John's come to tell people to repent.

[5 : 44] To repent for the kingdom of God is near. And he's able to say these words and utter these words. Because Jesus is near. Jesus has come.

Jesus, the one whom the prophets have all foretold of his coming. Jesus has now fulfilled the words of these prophecies. He's come to bring in his kingdom.

He's come to bring in his rule. This is John the Baptist who's this herald, the herald proclaiming the coming of the Lord Jesus. He's prepared the way, prepared the way for Jesus to come.

He's done so by preaching repentance to the people of Israel. He's calling on people to repent. Otherwise God will visit them in judgment.

And that preaching of repentance, that preaching has been given the greater urgency. Because Jesus has now come. He's come as the one through whom freedom from God's judgment is now possible.

[6 : 49] When we put, when we exercise faith in him. When we repent of our sins. And as we do so in following the one who came and lived that perfect life of obedience.

Even unto death on a cross. For 30 years, Jesus has been living in Nazareth. He's been working as a carpenter in that time of preparation before his public ministry begins.

That time of preparation. That time of preparation. Certainly in this human nature. That time has come to an end.

Jesus is going to leave the carpenter's business for a higher business. The business, of course, of proclaiming the good news. The good news of salvation through him.

And Jesus will set forth in that business of salvation. That finds its ultimate fulfillment in his death and resurrection for us.

[7 : 51] But before Jesus even utters one word of proclamation. Before he even performs one sign that points to who he is and his identity as the Savior, as Son of God.

Before he even utters a word or performs an action that points to who he is. He must be baptized. And he must be baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

And you might well ask, why? Why does Jesus need to go through this act of baptism? Why doesn't he simply down the tools of a carpenter and take up the spiritual tools of proclamation?

Well, the answer has to be found in the three headings that we saw earlier. The headings that connect with who Jesus is and his identity. In his anointing.

And in the confirmation of who he is. So let's begin then with identity. Who Jesus is and his identity with sinners. As we read there in verses 13 to 15.

[8 : 56] Let's read these verses again. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him 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 for us to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus has come from the north of the country.

He's come from Galilee. He's come deliberately from that area that he's been living. And he's come to the Jordan River to be baptized. And he's come to be baptized by the very person who's been proclaiming his coming.

He's come to be baptized by the one who's called on people to repent for the kingdom of heaven is near. And it's this baptizer, John the Baptist.

John the Baptist who's been baptizing people in that symbolic act pointing to repentance of sins. When Jesus comes to John, John the Baptist asks for baptism.

[10 : 03] Well, John's very reluctant to baptize Jesus. Because John recognizes who Jesus is. He recognizes Jesus as the Messiah. And he knows that Jesus doesn't need to repent of any sins in

himself.

So how can Jesus want to be baptized along with those who do need to repent of their sins? How can Jesus align with those who are facing the judgment of God unless they repent? It just didn't seem to make sense to John. But it made perfect sense to Jesus. Because Jesus came to John for his baptism.

That baptism that pointed to repentance. Repentance. Repentance to be saved from the judgment of God. God's judgment against sin.

And Jesus knows that his mission of salvation that he's prepared an eternity for. Certainly in his divine nature. And 30 years he's been preparing for in his human nature.

[11:04] Jesus knows that his mission must be accomplished. By his becoming sin for us. By his facing the judgment of God for us.

Jesus knows that he must be that curse of God. So that those for whom he dies will not be cursed of God because of sin. Jesus must face the judgment of God against sin.

And Jesus knows that he's come to represent those for whom he'll win salvation. And Jesus knows then he must identify with sinners in order to become sin.

In order to take the place of sinners before a holy God. Jesus knows that he's come to fulfill all that was written off him in scripture in the Old Testament.

Jesus has come to make many righteous by bearing our iniquities on the cross. That's what Isaiah prophesied in that well-known chapter in chapter 53 and in verse 11.

[12:13] When Isaiah prophesied, said that by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous. In other words, Jesus will pay the debt for your sin, my sin, our sin.

He'll pay that debt before God. He'll pay that debt in full. So that we are accounted righteous. That his righteousness will be credited to us.

Our sins born by the Lord Jesus Christ. He will take and who took our place. When he took that place and facing the justice of God.

When he faced, yes, the judgment of God. Jesus will be identified with sin. He'll be identified with sinners. And that's the only way.

It was the only way by which we could be saved. The substitutionary death of Jesus for us. And so Jesus must identify with sinners. And he'll publicly proclaim that right at the outset of his ministry.

[13:23] He'll identify with sinners. And therefore he'll identify with John's baptism of repentance. Jesus, he'll be counted with sinners.

And he'll do so to face the judgment of God and become that curse of sin. And so just as he's come to John and come willingly for that baptism of repentance.

He comes willingly. And he comes willingly to the point of no return. Because baptism, his baptism there in the Jordan. Will lead to crucifixion at Jerusalem.

And Jesus, as he went willingly for baptism, will go willingly to the cross. And let's just pause for a moment. Let's just pause and take in this wonder.

This wonder of the grace of Jesus. This grace of Jesus, the Savior for sinners. That Jesus was willing. The sinless Savior was willing to identify with you and with me.

[14:26] He was willing to identify with sinners. Sinners deserving of God's judgment. He was willing to make that identification clear. Make it clear by his being baptized there in the Jordan.

And baptized by John in that baptism that pointed to repentance. And the amazing, the wonderful, the mind-blowing truth of all this is this, surely.

Jesus was not ashamed to identify with sinners. He wasn't ashamed to identify with you and me. He wasn't ashamed to identify with sinners, even though Jesus knew no sin.

This is love. This is the love of God for sinners. This is the love of the Savior for sinners. This is the great love of Jesus that we see even in that act of baptism.

That willingness to be baptized by John in the Jordan. But as we've seen already, there's more to the baptism of Jesus by John than here as we find in the passage.

[15:36] There's the fact of Jesus being anointed. As we read here in verse 16, anointed as the Savior for sinners, Savior of sinners.

And when Jesus was baptized, he immediately 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.

So Jesus has just been baptized by John. Jesus is now identified with sinners. He will bear the judgment of God against sin and his work of saving sinners.

He'll face that judgment when he goes to the cross and when he dies, the sinner's death. When he bears the full wrath of God against sin.

But before Jesus faces that judgment, Jesus must preach good news. He must preach the good news of the kingdom. He must point others to the way of salvation through faith in him.

[16:39] He's going to preach the good news of salvation found in him alone. And so he's going to preach. He's going to teach. He's going to perform miracles.

He's going to do all that he must do. In showing that he is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the Savior.

He's come to give his people that grace upon grace. He's come to bring salvation for his own. But in preaching and teaching and healing in his ministry, his three-year ministry, he's going to suffer.

He's going to suffer for his obedience to his father. He's going to be assaulted by Satan and his being tempted, as will, Luke God willing, in a few weeks' time.

He's going to face the enmity of man. He's going to face even the enmity of religious man. And at one point, he's going to face death, even in fear and great fear.

[17:42] But he'll go to the cross. And he'll go there having fulfilled all righteousness. And there in his human nature, yes, in his human nature, he'll be afraid of the wrath to come because he's going to face that wrath as our substitute.

And so he's going to face the assaults of Satan. He's going to face the hatred of man. And he's going to face death itself as our substitute.

He'll be empowered. He'll be empowered and he'll be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in that work that the Father had given him to do. You see, again, the way that Matthew here shows us this particular moment, that wonderful moment when Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit, anointed for the task that Jesus has been given to save sinners.

Look at the details in the passage. What do we notice, first of all? Well, we notice that, first of all, he gets up from the water. He's been baptized. He arises from the water. His baptism, in other words, is now completed.

In other words, that's the signal, if you like, that he's now firmly set on that path towards Calvary.

Immediately after he gets up out of the water, immediately we're told that the heavens are open.

[19:04] In other words, something of supreme importance is happening. The heavens have been, I think the word is, they've been ripped open. And in other words, telling us that something new is happening.

This is the new day, a new day of God's power. This new day that's dawned regarding the history of salvation. Because God has come. God's now come to intervene, to deliver his people from the oppression of sin and the oppression of Satan.

That deliverance will come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, who's come from heaven to earth.

Jesus, who's come to free his people from sin and bring us into his kingdom.

So that we might know that true freedom, that true liberty from sin and from Satan. He's come to bring in and to make his people into that new creation.

And Jesus will do that work through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit who's come from heaven in the form of a dove.

[20:12] The form of a dove that's alighted in Jesus there as Jesus has risen from the River Jordan. It's that act of anointing for the work that Jesus is about to undertake.

But because Jesus is about to enter into enemy territory. As we said, that's going to mean suffering. It's going to mean spiritual warfare.

It's going to mean that Jesus will live that life of perfect obedience to his Father. He's going to do that in the face of so much opposition to him. But he'll accomplish all that his Father has given him to do.

And he'll do it as a representative, as a substitute. He must be like us. Sin accepted, of course. He must be like us in order to represent us.

In order to take the full punishment that sin deserves. So Jesus must face what God has given him to do for sinners. And he's going to do that as our perfect substitute before the wrath of God.

[21:23] So Jesus is strengthened to do that work. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit of power. This is the Spirit who will help Jesus. This is the Spirit who anoints Jesus for that

work.

And again, we can gauge the importance of that anointing by looking back on Old Testament practice. In Old Testament times, priests were anointed with oil.

They were anointed in that indication that they were set apart for the work that they were to do.

Particularly the work of offering up sacrifices before God. Of course, Jesus, our high priest.

Jesus has been anointed by the Holy Spirit. He's been set apart for that great work of his offering up himself. It's that once for all sacrifice for sins.

Then also we can look back at the Old Testament practice of kings being anointed. Kings that have been set apart to indicate their rule, their power over a people.

[22 : 28] And in Jesus' anointing. He's been anointed as king. King to lead his children, to lead all those who are his into his kingdom.

And for Jesus to have his rule over us, his reign over all his people. Jesus has been anointed by the Holy Spirit. Anointed by the Spirit.

In order that Jesus is sustained, empowered in his three-year ministry. In his work of preaching and teaching. In his miracle making.

In all his wisdom, all his power. And in his giving of himself for us. Jesus is fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah.

When Isaiah proclaimed that the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives.

[23 : 29] And recovery of sight to the blind. He sent at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. So in what we've read in Matthew 3.

Of the Holy Spirit coming down in that form of a dove. And anointing Jesus. Then we're seeing that Jesus is empowered for that work. And empowered for every stage of his work.

Equipped with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. But I think again we can see something really wonderful here. Even in the work of God. And in our salvation.

Because surely we're seeing here in these verses. The work of the Trinity. God the Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. The work of God.

In accomplishing your salvation. We're seeing here the Father who sent the Son. The Son who's obeyed the Father. And the Spirit empowering the Son.

[24 : 30] In order that the Son fulfills all righteousness. That the Son be our substitute. Taking our place and facing the judgment of God against sin. You see.

Your salvation. Meant so much to God. It means so much to God. It means so much to God. The Father. The Son. The Holy Spirit. One God. The persons.

One God. Even when we think of Jesus' ministry and winning salvation. Jesus strengthened by the Holy Spirit. For your sake. None of us can fully comprehend that great truth.

Let's be assured that God's love for you was such. For all for whom Jesus came to win salvation. That in that love. It was the love of God.

The love of the Godhead. Love that was involved in Jesus' ministry. Each member. Each person. The Godhead. Involved in your salvation. When you think again of your salvation.

[25 : 32] You who were called by the Father. And drawn to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. And saved by the obedience of Jesus. Even on today. What.

Finally what. One of this third aspect of the reason for Jesus being baptized. Before his ministry begins. The third reason. As we noticed confirmation.

Jesus being confirmed. A son. A saviour for sinners. As we read there in verse 17. And behold a voice from heaven saying. This is my beloved son.

With whom. I am well pleased. So the son Jesus. Has been baptized. The spirit. Has descended in Jesus. The spirit has anointed.

Jesus. The son of God. For. For Jesus' ministry. Now the father speaks. God the father speaks. And God the father confirms. Who Jesus is.

[26 : 30] And he confirms his. Eternal relationship. With. His son. That relationship. Of eternal love. You notice the words there.

This is my beloved son. With whom I'm well pleased. This is my beloved son. Beloved from all eternity. Beloved of the father. Father. And the father saying. I'm well pleased with the son.

With my son. In other words. I approve. All that the son is to do. For the sake of. The salvation of sinners. I'm approving of all that.

My son is to do. To save his people. And that voice. That confirms there before others. That Jesus truly is. Who he is.

He's the son of God. He's the son. Who'll. Who'll serve his father. And he'll do so. In full obedience. To his father. Well.

[27 : 26] We've looked. This evening. Or what we've looked at. This evening. And considering. The baptism of Jesus. A few words. A few words. Of. Of.

Of consideration. But I pray. That these words. From God's word. That will. Will cause. Responses. From you. That you will.

Continue. To worship God. Even. As you consider. His love. His steadfast love. Towards you. Because you. Because I. We are. Utterly undeserved.

Of that love. And that God. Should be. Holy involved. In your salvation. Again. That should elicit. A response. Of worship. And praise. Before him.

And of course. We give eternal. Gratitude. To the Lord Jesus. That Jesus. Should be willing. To identify. With sinners. And that he should.

[28 : 19] Publicly. Publicly. Reveal. That willingness. His voluntary. Willingness. To face. The judgment. Of God. Against sin. And he's doing this.

He's showing this. This willingness. To face that judgment. Even. Three years. Before he. He faces that judgment. On the cross. And so. He has that awareness.

Even in his baptism. That he will. Face. The judgment. Of God. That that. What baptism. Will point to. He'll fulfill.

In his giving. Of his life. He'll give his life. He. Is the author. Of life. And in that baptism. He's confirming.

That he's not going to. Be diverted. In that task. He's not going to. Stop there. But he's going to. Continue in that work. He's going to. Journey towards Calvary.

[29 : 14] Because of his love. For you. So pray then. You'll know that. The blessing. That's yours. Because. Because Jesus. Persevered. In that mission. And that you'll live.

For him. And that you'll live. For him. With all your heart. And mind. And soul. And strength. And that you'll do so. In thanksgiving. To the one. Who came for you. The one who was.

Baptized for you. The one who. Was baptized. In that water. So that you might be cleansed. From all your sin. And cleansed.

To come before your heavenly father. And be right. With God. Our Lord. And so may God. Bless to us. These few words. Of.

Of. Waiting on him. Of seeing the Lord Jesus. And seeing his love. For sinners. Such as ourselves. Amen. And let us pray.

[30 : 12] Our Lord. Our God. Our Heavenly Father. As again. We. We are reminded. Of the. The great work. Of our Lord Jesus. And that work. Of salvation. We pray Lord.

That we will never. Tire. Or cease. To. To. Remember. That great work. That we will never. Lose sight. Of the. Of the work.

Of the Lord Jesus. Even in his willingness. To identify. With sinners. Such as ourselves. And die for us. In that great. Act. Of obedience.

And so Lord. Continue with us. We pray. Continue with us. As again. We sing from your word. As we rejoice. To call upon you. In praise. Hear us Lord. As we continue.

Before you now. We pray these things. In Jesus name. Amen.