



WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Aim

- ✠ Provide knowledge about the baptism of Christ; how and why
- ✠ To explore and understand the reasons for the baptism of Christ
- ✠ To explain the importance and relevance, for us today as Christians, for Christ's baptism

Key verses

Matthew 3: 13-16

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.**" Then he consented. **And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water,** and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." _

Overview

- ✓ Read - as a class Matthew 3: 11-16
- ✓ Definitions - ask students if they know the meaning of 'baptism' (NB. This should link on from last week's lesson, which is hopefully, still fresh in their minds)
- ✓ Talk – clarify that Christ *was not in need of baptism*, and hence the reasons why He was
- ✓ Questions – check they have understood the main points through questions
- ✓ Worksheet – hand out "Salvation _Water_ Spirit " Table; students should work through this using their Bible OR give students ONE verse each to look up and find the answer. (*WS at back of document.*)

What is baptism? (Dictionary.com)

BAPTISM: *Ecclesiastical.* 1. A ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church. 2. Any similar ceremony or action of initiation, dedication, etc. 3. A trying or purifying experience or initiation. 4. *Christian Science.* Purification of thought and character.



WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

The covenant with Abraham was a covenant of grace, and circumcision was a sign and seal of that covenant. It had a spiritual meaning. It signified purification of the heart, inward circumcision effected by the Spirit (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Ezek. 44:7; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:28; Col. 2:11). Circumcision as a symbol of sanctification in the OT became, with the coming of Christ, through the Holy Spirit embodied in the rite of baptism. **The truth embodied in both rites is ever the same, the removal of sin, the sanctifying effects of grace in the heart.**

Baptism as a spiritual rite

(*The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, by Fr Tadros Y. Malaty)

With the sacrament of baptism, the believer attains:

1. Regeneration or rebirth (John 3: 5)
2. Remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Joel 2: 28)
3. Illumination of the mind (Heb. 6:2; 10: 32)
4. Spiritual renewal of the heart, by which we put off our old man and attain the new one. (Col. 3: 9, 10)
5. Spiritual membership of the Church as the Body of Christ.

The important point is that baptism means *our* salvation.

But Christ was/is not in need of ‘salvation’ so why was HE baptized?

Reasons Jesus was baptized:

1. To “fulfill all righteousness”
2. To set us an example that we should follow

Now if Christ-- who was without sin, *insisted* on being baptized, then we, who are His sinful followers-- **and are to follow His example**, need to be baptized as well. For anyone to teach that one does not need to be baptized in light of Christ’s own baptism is missing the fact that following Jesus entails following Him in this action as well.

3. To reveal Himself as to belonging to God and being the Christ

“[This is My Beloved Son in whom I AM well pleased.](#)” Matt 3:16

4. By being baptised Jesus was standing in a long and ancient tradition whereby the prophets confessed sin on behalf of the people - Isaiah, Ezra and Nehemiah for example. **“Jesus’ baptism was part of the Divine Plan.**



WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

5. Jesus' baptism was His way of inaugurating, beginning His public ministry.
6. Jesus was without sin and therefore did not need to be baptised. But by being baptised Jesus was identifying himself with humanity, with us. It is a continuation of the Incarnation - Emmanuel, 'God-with-us'.
7. He was baptized to open the heaven for us. And as heaven was open on the cross, so Christ put all the power of the cross in baptism.
8. He was baptised and received the Holy Spirit, so we also can receive the Holy Spirit.
9. To reveal for us the mystery of the Holy Trinity, this appeared during His baptism.

Glory is to God, forever. Amen.