

13. Matthew 3:13-17 – The Baptism of Jesus

A Note on Baptism: A Topic Too Vast to Cover Here

Baptism is a **massive theological topic** that could take an **entire semester-long course** to unpack. It has **Old Testament roots, deep theological meaning, and historical development across Christianity**. There are **entire books** written on its sacramental nature, debates over **infant vs. adult baptism**, and its effects on **salvation, original sin, and Christian identity**. While all of that is important, in this class, we are focusing on **what Jesus' baptism tells us about Him, His mission, and how it connects to the Old Testament**.

1. Why Does Jesus Get Baptized? (Matthew 3:13-15)

Key Question: If Jesus is sinless, why does He undergo a baptism of repentance?

- John tries to **stop Him**, saying:
 - *"I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?"*
- Jesus responds:
 - *"Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."*
- **"Fulfill all righteousness"** means:
 - Jesus is **identifying with sinful humanity**.
 - He is **fully obedient** to the Father's plan.
 - His baptism marks the **beginning of His public ministry**.

Instead of **"fulfill all righteousness,"** you could say:

- **"Carry out God's plan fully and rightly"**
- **"Complete what is necessary to align with God's will"**
- **"Do everything that is required to be faithful to God's purpose"**
- **"Follow through with God's mission in the right way"**
- **"Accomplish all that is needed to fulfill God's divine purpose"**

So, in context, Jesus is saying:

"Allow it now, for it is necessary to carry out God's plan fully and rightly."

- **Foreshadowing:**
 - His **death & resurrection** (going under water = burial, rising = new life).
 - Our own **baptism** as a way of joining in His mission.

Discussion Questions:

- If Jesus was sinless, why do you think He insisted on being baptized?
- What does Jesus' baptism teach us about **humility and obedience**?
- How does our **own baptism** reflect Jesus' baptism?

2. The Trinity Revealed: The Heavens Open, the Spirit Descends, and the Father Speaks

Key Question: What does this moment reveal about God?

- This is one of the **clearest moments** where the **Trinity** is revealed in Scripture:
 - **God the Son** (Jesus) is baptized.

- **God the Holy Spirit** descends like a dove.
- **God the Father** speaks from heaven: *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*
- The **dove** symbolizes **peace, purity, and new creation** (Noah’s Ark—Genesis 8:8-12).
- The Father’s words echo:
 - **Psalm 2:7** (Messianic prophecy) – *“You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”*
 - **Isaiah 42:1** (Suffering Servant) – *“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.”*

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important that **all three persons of the Trinity** are present at Jesus' baptism?
- How does this scene help us understand **Jesus' identity and mission**?

3. Baptism as a New Beginning & Connection to Our Own Baptism

How does Jesus’ baptism connect to us today?

- Jesus’ baptism is the **model for Christian baptism**—it marks the **beginning of our new life in Christ**.
- When we are baptized, we are **immersed in His death & resurrection** (Romans 6:3-4).
- Baptism is an **act of obedience, identity, and mission**—just as it was for Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you see **baptism** as a new beginning in your own faith journey?
- What does baptism **mean beyond the physical act of water**?
- How can we live out our baptism daily? (The call to live as God’s beloved children)

4. Jesus' Baptism as an Epiphany & the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12)

- In John's Gospel, **Jesus' first miracle is at a wedding**, not at His baptism.
- Both events **reveal who Jesus is**—but in different ways:
 - The **baptism is a direct revelation from God**.
 - The **wedding feast is a sign performed by Jesus**.
- Cana is **the first of Jesus' “signs”** in John’s Gospel, revealing **His glory**.
- It also connects to **Old Testament marriage imagery**—God is the bridegroom, and His people are the bride.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus’ first miracle was at a wedding, and not in the Temple or a synagogue?
- What do both events (Baptism & Cana) reveal about Jesus?

A Final Note:

If this passage sparks **questions about baptism itself**, keep in mind that **Baptism is a vast theological topic that requires much deeper study**.

For now, our focus is on **what this moment reveals about Jesus** rather than entering the broader theological discussions on Baptism.