

Jesus Is Baptized

Matthew 3:13-17

Family Ties

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin and was sent by God to "prepare the way for the Lord" (Matthew 3:3). When the Jewish leaders—the Pharisees and Sadducees—came to see John preaching repentance and baptizing people in the Jordan River, John condemned them for their hypocrisy (Matthew 3:7-10). And he told of the one who was coming, Jesus, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (verse 11).

John also said that he wasn't worthy to carry Jesus' sandals—one of the most menial of tasks. Now Jesus approached him at the Jordan River and asked to be baptized. John, a sinner, saw a sinless Jesus standing before him and didn't feel worthy to baptize him. John recognized Jesus' greatness and thought it would be more appropriate if Jesus baptized *him*!

Jesus didn't deny what John was suggesting by his reluctance to baptize him. Instead, he affirmed it, saying in essence, "You're right, but we need to do this anyway."

Baptism 1-2-3

Jesus' baptism accomplished several things. First, it announced the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Second, it affirmed that he was who John thought he was—the Son of God—as confirmed by God's own voice. Third, it allowed Jesus to identify with the sinfulness of human beings though he was without sin. Finally, Jesus' baptism gave all of us an example to follow.

We don't know exactly how the Spirit of God resembled a dove as it descended on Jesus. But we do know that those who were there knew it was God's Spirit. God's pronouncement from heaven certainly didn't announce anything new to Jesus. He knew that the Father loved him and approved of him. God's pronouncement was for the others who were

present and for those of us who would hear the story centuries later.

3-in-1 God

All three persons of the Trinity were present at Jesus' baptism. The Son was baptized, showing his dedication to his mission; the Holy Spirit came upon him; and the Father spoke his love and approval. What a wonderful picture of the God who created us and provided a way for us to have an eternal relationship with him!

The Jesus Connection

In his life on earth, Jesus introduced people to God. After Jesus ascended into heaven, his disciples followed his example and led others to believe in God and in Jesus' sacrifice.

What makes you thankful that Jesus is the Son of God? What impact does that relationship have in your life? We can be thankful every day for the Son of God—for introducing us to God and for revealing the beauty of a life lived for him. Take some time to be thankful in prayer right now. You can write your prayer here.

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Matthew 3:13-17

► Bible Point—Jesus is God's Son.

Key Verse—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

DIGGING
DEEPER

Daily Challenges

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week.

- **Make a point of praying daily this week.** As you do, also make a point of referring to God as the Father and to Jesus as God's Son—and take note of how it affects your spiritual growth.
- **Think of an area of your life that you really want to focus on making more pleasing to God this week—not so you can be "good enough for Jesus," but because of who you are through Jesus.**
- **This week think of at least one person who doesn't know the wonderful reality of who Jesus is and of his love.** Think of something you could do to share God's love with this person. Perhaps you could pray specifically for him or her or extend an invitation to dinner.

Talk Topics

- Talk about your view of Jesus' identity and its impact on your life.
- What has helped shape your view of who Jesus is?
- What's something you know is true of Jesus, but you need to see more clearly?
- Why does it matter that Jesus is God's Son?

Through the Week

Use the following passages to explore additional biblical insights about who Jesus is and the importance of why he came into the world.

Monday—Jeremiah 1:5

- How long has Jesus known you? What does that mean to you?

Tuesday—Ephesians 1:17

- What's a time you can set aside to spend with Jesus each day?

Wednesday—Matthew 28:20

- How does it help you to know that Jesus is with you always?

Thursday—Galatians 3:26-27

- How do you know you're a child of God?

Friday—1 John 5:10-12

- What do you believe about Jesus, the Son of God?

Saturday—Hebrews 4:14-15

- Jesus is the Son of God and he is God. But how is he also like you?