

Matthew 3:13-17 ESV

Jesus Stepped Forward to Save Us!

Services: Sunday, 1/8 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 1/9 at 7 PM

Church Year: The Baptism of Our Lord – 2017

I AM baptized, so I am STILL united to Jesus and the benefits of His work!

Introduction: Dear friends: When we follow the church year, Jesus grows up very quickly; let me explain:

- ✦ **During Advent** we ✓ remembered our sins and ✓ prepared for Jesus' first and second comings; He came once *to do His saving work*, He will come again *for the final judgment!*
- ✦ **During Christmas** we celebrated Jesus' birth and remembered ✓ His circumcision – *the blood He shed which pointed to the cross*, and ✓ some of His names!
- ✦ **During the first three days of Epiphany**, Jesus grew from 3 months old to 30 years old:
 - ◆ When He was about 3 months old, He was visited by the wise men; then, *with Joseph and Mary*, He fled to Egypt to escape Herod's soldiers.
 - ◆ When He was about 1 year old, *along with Joseph and Mary*, He returned to live in Nazareth.
 - ◆ When He was 12 years old Joseph and Mary thought He was lost, *but He told them He was busy with the affairs of His heavenly Father.*

Now, *on this third day of the season of Epiphany*, Jesus is 30 years old and about to step forward to begin His ministry, *which will include the removal of our sins*. During Epiphany we focus on ➡ who He is; during Lent on ➡ what He did!

1. **Jesus Did Not Shrink Back:** [Earlier in Matthew 3, John had been talking to the many people about Jesus' greatness and work.] ¹³ **Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.**

- a. He stepped up to the starting line: He came from heaven as the Son of God to become the God-Man, *thus God in human flesh!* Then He went through all that I shared earlier and even more. All things were leading to His ministry, *which included His suffering and death for us!*
- b. He did not let all the negatives detour Him: **Jesus** knew all that was coming:
 - i. Many ultimately rejecting what He taught.
 - ii. Abandonment by His closest followers.
 - iii. Being arrested, falsely tried, beaten, and crucified.
 - iv. Receiving all sins and all punishment.
 - v. Laying down His holy life.

Nevertheless, *He still stepped forward to save us!*

2. **Jesus Came to Redeem All Sinners:** ¹⁴ [But] John ~~would have~~ prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

- a. John felt completely inadequate: As recorded in Matthew 3:11, John said this about Jesus, "he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry" (ESV). Since

John was unworthy to carry Jesus' sandals, *he was certainly unworthy to baptize Him!*

- b. **"it is fitting"**: For **others**:
- i. They were moved by the Spirit to repent.
 - ii. They confessed their sins.
 - iii. John baptized them for the forgiveness of their sins.

So the words, **"it is fitting,"** point to a *different purpose* for Jesus' baptism.

- c. **"to fulfill all righteousness"**: **Jesus' coming** was voluntary – *He was willing to save us*; also, **Jesus' baptism** united Him to all who are baptized – *thus to the benefits of His finished work, the forgiveness of sins!*
- d. **"Then he [John] consented"**: Those three words record Jesus' baptism. The Bible identifies the essentials of baptism as water and God's Word; God is at work *through those means* to forgive sins and give the gift of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**). **We all need such blessings**; then, *having received*, let us – *by God's grace*:
- i. Continue to be clothed in Christ (**Gal. 3:27**)!
 - ii. Continue to be saved by Christ (**Titus 3:5**)!
 - iii. Continue to live for Christ (**Rom. 6:4**)!

3. **Jesus Was Confirmed by the Spirit and the Father:**

[Since belief in a false savior is currently sad and will be eternally horrible, it is essential that we are absolutely sure about Jesus' identity! Now, with what follows, we are given the confirmation that we need.] ¹⁶ **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; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

- a. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit: Last week we talked about Jesus’ titles – “Messiah” *from the Hebrew* and “Christ” *from the Greek*; both titles mean “the Anointed One.” Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our Savior; *He did for us what we could never do for ourselves!* ***But let us also remember OUR RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT when we were baptized***; then, let us be bold and faithful in following Jesus!
- b. The Father spoke from heaven about Jesus: What an awesome scene: ♦Jesus by the Jordan, ♦the Spirit upon Him, and ♦the Father speaking from heaven! *Now we know that Jesus is definitely the Promised One!* Therefore, since Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), we can be certain that *He successfully opened the way to heaven for all who repent and believe!*

Conclusion: Let us pray: Dear Father, since You have promised us heaven through Jesus, *fill us with gratitude, so that our lives are one long thank you note to You!*

In Jesus’ name, we pray...