

“Jesus Was Baptized, Too”

01-10-16

John the Baptist was a different character! He never seemed to care what anyone said about him. He wasn't someone who was ever at a loss for words, except when Jesus came to be baptized. When Jesus came to him, John didn't understand, and tried to stop Him. Matthew 3:14 says John said, *“I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”*

Open to Luke 3. From what John knew about Jesus, Baptism didn't seem to fit him. Jesus was the sinless Son of God, and Baptism was for sinners. John also knew that he himself was a sinner in need of God's love and forgiveness. What right did he have to baptize Jesus? It made much more sense for Jesus to baptize him.

On this “Baptism of Our Lord” Sunday, look what happened in verse 21, *“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened.”* **Jesus was Baptized!**

Many stories often “flash ahead” in time. Perhaps you've seen a movie that began with a powerful scene of some kind. Then in the very next frame of film you read a subtitle that said, “30 years later.” If we were watching the life of Jesus like a movie, our Gospel lesson would be just such a jump ahead in time.

Just over two weeks ago we celebrated Jesus' birth. Today we hear about Him when He's around 30. Other than one report about something that happened in Jesus' life when he was 12 years old, we simply aren't told what happened from His birth to the time of His Baptism.

Baptism was the Turning Point in the History of Jesus' Life. Look at verses 21 and 22 together, *“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”*

Why was Jesus baptized? The logical answer would be that He needed it. **For Forgiveness? For Sin? NO! He did not sin!** Hebrews 4:15 tells us, *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”* 1 Peter 1:19 tells us that Jesus is the Lamb of God, *“without blemish or spot.”*

So if Jesus wasn't a sinner, and didn't need Baptism, then why was He baptized? If you looked in a mirror this morning, you saw the reason. And as you look at me, and I look at you, we see why Jesus was baptized. It was to join us in our sinful, helpless, pitiful condition!

2 Corinthians 5:21 explains the reason for Jesus' Baptism in this way, *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* This is the great exchange where God swaps the holiness of His Son for the sinfulness of our fallen race that's pictured at Jesus' Baptism. **Jesus was Baptized Like a Sinner to Serve as our Savior!**

“Jesus was baptized.” That short phrase penned by Luke says so much. At the Jordan River 2,000 years ago, the Son of God received the same Baptism as the

prostitutes and tax collectors. The same water that was used to baptize those separated from God because of their sins, was used to baptize the One who brought sinners back to God. The baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins that soldiers and farmers, husbands and wives, young and old received was also given to Jesus.

We can see ourselves in the crowd that came out to John. Like them, we've broken God's Commandments, we haven't always been content with what we receive in life, and we've grumbled about our job and other people, and complained about our pay. In many ways, we've been just like the tax collectors, prostitutes, and Pharisees who rejected John's baptism. Yes, friends in Christ, we too stand at the Jordan River with the stream of sinners called humanity!

Thankfully Jesus stepped into that water! When Jesus was baptized, it marked the beginning of His public work as Savior. **Jesus is Our Substitute**. He takes all the punishment that should be ours because of our sin, and puts it on Himself and suffers and dies in our place. All the pain He endures should have been ours. God told us clearly, "*The wages of sin is death*", but Jesus paid that price for us!

Jesus began living as our substitute when He was conceived in the Virgin Mary. It was the reason God sent His Son to earth. It was to take our place! It was **At His Baptism that He openly Showed His Willingness to Go to the Cross**.

Look at verse 16, "*John answered them all, saying, 'I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'*" You can't talk about Baptism without talking about the Holy Spirit. In fact, we baptize, "*in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"

When Jesus was baptized, John told how their two baptisms were different. He said that he baptized with water, but someone far greater, that being, **Jesus, Baptizes us With the Holy Spirit and Fire**.

When Jesus was baptized, "*the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.*" In Baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit and it descends on us and we're filled with His grace, love and power. The fire of the Holy Spirit cleanses us and makes us new. Fire shows the need for reconciliation and salvation. The good news is that Jesus Christ takes the fire for us, calls us His own, and gives us the greatest hope in the world!

As you believe, please know Jesus washed you clean from sin and took your place. His Baptism saves you from sin now, and saves you for eternity!