

Text: Luke 3:21-38

Title: The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus

Truth: Jesus associated Himself with repentant sinners. How about you?

Date/Location: October 1, 2023 at FBC

I. Baptism of Jesus

- A. From earlier in the passage, take note that John preached about three distinct baptisms: the **baptism of repentance** for the remission of sins, a water baptism; Jesus was going to come and will **baptize with the Holy Spirit**; and Jesus will also **baptize with fire**.
1. John's baptism was a purification ritual—not that it purified, but it was a ritual symbolizing purification. Remember Naaman the Syrian washing in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:10)? His cleansing was from a physical ailment. Gentile proselytes did a ritual like this to signify conversion to the God of Israel. John is saying that *every* person needs cleansing—even Jews! Ethnic or religious background did not make one superior to a Gentile who needed to be cleansed. So do you! The was more to being “in” God's people—the saved—than being a member of “God's people” the Jews.
 2. Jesus's baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to those who are saved. They are immediately *united* to Jesus and His body (the church). Jesus does this spiritual work by means of the Holy Spirit of God.
 3. Jesus's baptism by fire refers to judgment. It is for those who are not saved but are lost. They will be judged by fire.
- B. A fourth baptism comes to our view with Jesus. He was baptized, but somehow differently than all the above baptisms, for He did not need to repent or be added to his body. He would be judged by God—but for the sins of others, not of Himself. To understand better about the baptism of Jesus, we must refer to a parallel passage, Matthew 3:13-17 which contains a longer explanation.
- C. Jesus was baptized. This means that he was immersed under the water of the Jordan River. John tried to prevent Jesus from receiving his baptism, because he said that he needed Jesus to baptize him, not the reverse.
- D. Jesus prayed, and it appears that this happened right after the baptism.
- E. During his prayer, the heavens appeared to open, and the Spirit of God came down on him in the likeness of a dove. This does not mean that a dove, a white winged animal known as a *Columba Livia* (or any of the taxonomic family *Columbidae* for that matter) flew out of the sky and

landed on Jesus. What came upon Him was the Spirit of God, *looking like* a dove. This also does not mean that Jesus did not have the Spirit of God before, as if He were a mere human being. Recall that 2:40 explained that Jesus became strong in spirit (like John, 1:80). If John the Baptist were filled with God's Spirit from the womb (1:15) then most certainly Jesus was as well. This was a special anointing of the Spirit and especially visible to onlookers to validate Jesus's ministry and set Him apart as an extra-special messenger from God.

F. And then a voice came as well: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Jesus has lived for 30 years and done so *perfectly*, with zero faults, no sins, no flaws, no uncleanness. And notice how this echoes Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1.

G. Let it sink in for a moment. No one else who was baptized had these things happen to them. Many witnesses saw these events unfold before their very eyes. The opened heavens, the dove, and the voice all combined to mark Jesus as an extremely important person. No one was like Him.

H. The hard question is this: why was Jesus baptized in the first place?

He did not need repentance, did He? We can dismiss that question immediately, because He did not need to repent of anything. He had the right mindset and no behavioral issues to change his mind about or turn away from. He had done no sin!

And remember that getting wet by the water of the Jordan did not produce repentance, nor did it grant forgiveness, to *any* of the people who participated in the baptism. Water baptism was the fruit of a changed heart, not the root of it. Someone would only come to be baptized by John the Baptist if they had made a *prior* determination that they need to turn away from sin and believe in God. Whether it was Jesus or someone else who was baptized, that did not "create" repentance for them.

I. Explaining what Jesus's baptism is *not* does not answer what it *is*. What was it?

1. Part of the answer is given when Jesus told John to permit it because it was fitting for the two of them to do this to "**fulfill all righteousness.**" What does "all righteousness" mean? It seems to have a broad meaning that encompasses the entirety of Jesus's work in providing salvation for the world. For Jesus to do what He did in providing for righteousness in salvation, he had to be associated with the people

who repented. By participating in the same ritual cleansing they did, He made that connection. He was connected to the cleansing symbolism of the ritual because he was the *cleanser*, not the *cleansed*. He was associated with the message of the ritual because He approved John's message and because he was the fount of that message. Again: Jesus was connecting himself to the sinners who needed repentance, and to John and to his message. After all, Jesus came to seek and save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). He came to heal the sick, to call sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17).

2. This baptism is also an official **inauguration** into the ministry that would send Jesus to the cross, both to pay for sins and to secure the ability to share His righteous standing with His people who need both forgiveness from sin and imputation of righteousness.
3. Another part of the answer has to do with what baptism **pictures**. Going down into the water and coming back out looks like death/resurrection and cleansing all at the same time. Jesus did not need cleansing, but he did picture His upcoming death and resurrection which would finally clean all those who repented.
4. Finally the baptism marked a public **authentication** of His ministry from Heaven. The Spirit and the Father both stamped "approved" on the Son of God.

J. We cannot be baptized just like Jesus was; nor are we baptized with John's baptism. We are baptized under Matthew 28:19-20, being associated with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, having been born again by faith in Jesus. Yes, we have repented, but we are saying more. We are saying that in addition to all that John's people meant by being baptized, we also are making clear our connection with Jesus and His people.

II. The Trinity, v. 21-22

- A. In this section, we see Jesus being baptized, the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus, and the voice of God the Father in heaven speaking. There are three persons acting/speaking here.
- B. Modalism is a false doctrine which explains that God appears in three different modes but at different times. This text severely undermines that doctrine because there is not one quick-change artist appearing as three different people in succession one after the other. There are three distinct persons.

- C. The doctrine of the Trinity is this: God is one God and exists in three persons. He is *Tri-une*. Each person is distinct but shares the single nature of God. Each of the three members is equally God, equally worthy of worship, equally infinite, eternal, powerful, wise, knowledgeable, etc. They exist simultaneously as three distinct persons, not one with merely three faces or three manifestations or three roles or three offices.
- D. This doctrine distinguishes Christianity from all other strictly monotheistic “religions,” and I think from *all* other religions, certainly the major ones. In the future described in the book of Revelation, Satan will attempt to counterfeit the Trinity with his unholy trinity of the dragon, the beast (antichrist), and the false prophet. But no one and nothing can duplicate the glory and holiness of the true and living God, existing as He does as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

III. Genealogy of Jesus, v. 23-38

- A. This is notably different than the genealogy presented in Matthew 1. This is because Matthew records Joseph’s genealogy. Luke records Mary’s genealogy. Both ways, Davidic descent is achieved: Mary from David through Nathan; Joseph from David through Solomon.
- B. The genealogies have an interest merge point in Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. There is some kind of adoption or Levirate marriage situation going on with that. Zerubbabel is an interesting character because in Haggai 2:23 God promised to make him like a signet ring. He marks the resumption of the Davidic line after the exile. That royal dynasty ceased with Jeconiah, about whom God had said that if he were the signet ring on His right hand, He would pluck that ring off. Now, the signet ring was back on, so to speak.
- C. If we digest the entire genealogy, we will observe that Luke shows the connection from God to Jesus through a direct line of descendancy. This demonstrates the integral connection of Jesus to all of humanity, which is one aspect of His eminent suitability to be a Savior.

Conclusion

Put yourself back in the 27 AD. Would *you* take John’s baptism? In other words, would you associate yourself with his message of repentance, turning to God, and doing works befitting repentance? Would you humble yourself and participate with a man seen by the leadership of Israel as a strange bird (at best) or a lunatic? Would you repent of your sin, idolatry, covetousness, lust, blasphemy, filthy language, immorality, bad thoughts, etc. and admit your need for Jesus to cleanse you? MAP