

Unit 19, Session 3: Jesus was Baptized

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Memory Verse: John 1:29 – The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Christ Connection: Jesus never sinned, but He obeyed God and was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us of Jesus’ death and resurrection. It reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus.

Bible Passage: Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1

Find the passages together in your Bibles and read through them together. You could also read the paraphrase of all these passages below in blue. For younger kids, you may want to just read the bolded portions.

All four Gospels give an account of Jesus’ baptism by his cousin John the Baptist. They depict the Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove as he obediently carries out the Father’s will. The Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—all feature God’s verbal acknowledgement and approval of his Son: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased” (Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22). As Jesus approached the river to be baptized, John recognized his holiness and hesitated. How could he possibly baptize the Son of God? He needed to be baptized by the Son of God; that would only be right. Baptism symbolizes repentance and cleansing, the washing away of sin. Therefore, baptizing Jesus—a sinless man—might suggest to others that he had some fault from which he had repented. People might think he had sinned, but Jesus was not concerned about the opinion of the crowd. This is good for us because cross suggested the same idea (Is 53).

Jesus did not need to be cleansed. He was already the unblemished Lamb of God, the spotless sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). However, we are in great need of cleansing. God is well aware of our sin. His righteous judgment would see us accused and pronounced guilty were it not for his love and compassion toward us. His justice and love meet perfectly in the cross as “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). Jesus announced the beginning of his earthly ministry by pointing to its culmination. His obedience to God in death—foreshadowed in the symbolism of his baptism—paves the way for all those who followed Jesus in baptism after having placed their faith in his sufficient work.

John the Baptist lived in the wilderness. His clothes were made out of camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. **John began telling people, "Repent and be baptized because God's kingdom is almost here."**

Long before John was born, the prophet Isaiah said, "Someone is shouting in the wilderness. He says, 'Prepare the way for the Lord; make His path straight!'" **Isaiah was talking about John. John had a very important job. He was supposed to get people ready for Jesus—God promised Messiah.**

People started to repent; they turned away from their sins and turned to God for forgiveness. Then John baptized them in the Jordan River. Baptism was a picture that the people's sins had been washed away.

John preached, "Someone greater than me is coming. I am not worthy to remove His sandals. **I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."** John was talking about Jesus.

By this time, Jesus was an adult. He went to see John the Baptist at the Jordan River. **When John saw Jesus, he said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

Jesus told John that He wanted to be baptized. But John didn't think he should baptize Jesus. "I need You to baptize me," John said. "Why do You want me to baptize You?" **John was confused. He baptized people who confessed their sins; Jesus never sinned!**

Jesus said, "Allow Me to be baptized. God says this is right." So John agreed and he baptized Jesus.

Jesus immediately came up out of the water. Suddenly, the heavens opened and Jesus saw the Holy Spirit coming down on Him like a dove. **God's voice came from heaven. "This is My Son," the voice said. "I love Him, and I am very pleased with Him!"**

If you or your child have questions about what it looks like to follow Jesus in salvation or baptism, Pastor Sam would love to talk with you! Please feel free to contact him at ssievers@lenexabaptist.com.