

THE COMMISSIONING OF JESUS THE MESSIAH-KING

Matthew 3:13-17

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; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:16-17

INTRODUCTION

A. In **Matthew 3**, Matthew speeds-up the clock to bring us from Jesus’ childhood to His adulthood.

1. In **Matthew 2**, Jesus was a *child*.

2. HERE – In **Matthew 3**, Jesus appears as a *young man*.

In **Luke 3:23**, Luke, the Gospel-writer, informs us that Jesus was “about thirty years of age” at this time.

B. In **Matthew 3:13-17**, Matthew narrates the Baptism of Jesus the Messiah-King.

This moment is significant in three ways:

a. FIRST – It is recorded in all 4 Gospels.

Each of the *Gospel-writers* considered this event as a “must-include” in their *Gospel-narratives*.

b. SECOND – Each Person of the Trinity participates in this event.

i. Jesus, *God the Son* incarnate, is baptized.

ii. *God the Spirit* descends upon Jesus.

iii. *God the Father* affirms Jesus.

J.C. Ryle – It was the whole Trinity, which at the beginning of creation said, “Let us make man.” It was the whole Trinity again, which at the beginning of the Gospel seemed to say, “Let us save man.” ¹

c. THIRD – This event is the commissioning of Jesus the Messiah-King.

i. It is the *official start* of the public ministry of Jesus in Israel.

ii. The Baptism of Jesus launches Him into three+ years of *preaching, teaching, and healing* in Israel, and climaxing with His *sacrificial death* on the cross, *victorious resurrection* from the dead, and *glorious ascension* to Heaven.

¹ Ryle, J. C. *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860. Print.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Matthew 3:13-16

3:13 ¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

A. “Then”

1. This connects this event to the preaching-and-baptism-ministry of John the Baptist.
2. This also marks the beginning of a new era with the public appearance of Jesus of Nazareth.

B. “Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.”

1. **Mark 1:9** – In those days Jesus came *from Nazareth of Galilee* and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
2. **Matthew 3:1** – In those days John the Baptist came preaching *in the wilderness of Judea...*
3. “*Galilee*” is the northern region of Israel, and “*the wilderness of Judea*” is the southern region of Israel.
4. Jesus came to the Jordan with the set-intention to be water-baptized by John the Baptist.

3:14-15 ¹⁴ 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. THE *REACTION* OF JOHN.

John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

a. Earlier, John testified, “[He] is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. Matthew 3:11, NLT

b. Here, Jesus is wanting John to baptize Him, and John objects.

c. **C.H. Spurgeon** – This was very natural. John knew Jesus to be eminently more holy than himself, and therefore he protested against appearing to be his purifier. John was strong in this protest: he “*forbad him*”: it seemed to him to be out of order for him to baptize one so supremely good. ... He knew him to be a very special favorite of heaven, superior to himself...

John never shirked a duty, but he declined an honor. He would not even seem to be of any consequence as compared with his Lord. Blessed Jesus, teach us like humility! ²

² Spurgeon, C. H. *The Gospel of the Kingdom: A Commentary on the Book of Matthew*. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1893. Print.

B. THE *RESPONSE* OF JESUS.

But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

a. Everyone who entered John’s baptism of repentance came as sinners in need of God’s righteousness.

b. Jesus, however, came with no sins to confess and completely righteous in the sight of God and His Law.

c. Repentant sinners brought their sins into the waters of John’s baptism; Jesus brought God’s righteousness into the waters of John’s baptism.

d. Jesus wanted to be baptized by John “to fulfill all righteousness.”

i. “Fulfill” – “to bring to completion” or “fill to the full.”

ii. By entering the baptism where repentant sinners brought their sins, Jesus began His mission to bring God’s righteousness to them – and by His sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, *He fulfilled all righteousness.*

iii. THEREFORE – By faith in Jesus the Messiah-King, all repentant sinners are declared righteous by God.

3:16 ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water...

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS:

1. FIRST – By entering John’s water-baptism, Jesus endorsed the message and ministry of John the Baptist.

2. SECOND – Jesus identified with the people He came to save.

John MacArthur – “Jesus came into the world to identify with men; and to identify with men is to identify with sin. He could not purchase righteousness for mankind if He did not identify with mankind’s sin ... Jesus’ baptism ... represented the willing identification of the sinless Son of God with the sinful people He came to save.”

“That was the first act of His ministry, the first step in the redemptive plan that He came to fulfill. He who had no sin took His place among those who had no righteousness. He who was without sin submitted to a baptism for sinners. In this act the Savior of the world took His place among the sinners of the world. The sinless Friend of sinners was sent by the Father “in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh”; and He “made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” ³

3. THIRD – Jesus’ Baptism was a symbol of His death, burial, and resurrection.

a. Jesus spoke about His death as His *baptism*.

³ MacArthur, John F. *Matthew 1-7*. The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1985. p.78.

i. Luke 12:50 – I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!

ii. Mark 10:38 – Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

b. Jesus' baptism prefigured Christian Baptism.

i. Christian Baptism symbolizes the Christian's identification with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection.

ii. Romans 6:3-4 – ... have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. ^{NLT}

4. FOURTH – Jesus set an example for all His disciples to follow.

a. Though water-baptism is not essential for salvation BUT all disciples of King Jesus should identify with Him in water-baptism.

i. This is an important part of following Jesus as His disciple.

ii. Water-baptism is where disciples publicly testify of his or her faith in and allegiance to King Jesus.

b. King Jesus commanded us:

i. Matthew 28:19 – Go ... and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

ii. Alongside the Lord's Supper, water-baptism is an ordinance of King Jesus for the Church.

aa. Every disciple should follow the example of King Jesus in water-baptism.

Stephen Wellum stated: "The New Testament does not know of a Christian who is also not baptized. Evidence for this is found in the book of Acts. From Pentecost on, everyone who believed the gospel was baptized, thus publicly testifying of their faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:12-13, 36-39; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 31-33; 18:8; 19:5). The church fails in her calling when she does not make disciples, by baptizing them and instructing them in the truth of the gospel." ⁴

bb. For disciples of King Jesus, water-baptism is a Gospel-allegiance ceremony.

"Baptism reminds us that faith and bodily activity cannot be separated. Gospel allegiance helps us better understand why. ... Baptism is ordinarily the first movement of bodily submission to Jesus' lordship, the first step in what must

⁴ Wellum, Stephen. *Water Baptism*. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/water-baptism/>

become a habit of embodied discipleship. ... Faith in Jesus includes bodily loyalty to him in baptism and thereafter.”⁵

c. APPLICATION – If you are a Christian and never been water-baptized, then you should be.

THE ANOINTING OF GOD THE SPIRIT

Matthew 3:16

3:16¹⁶ ... 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 ...

A. “*Messiah*” and “*Christ*” mean, “*Anointed One*.” It points to Jesus being *anointed* by the *Holy Spirit*.

Isaiah 61:1-3 – The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for *the LORD has anointed me* to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD’s favor has come, and with it, the day of God’s anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for his own glory. ^{NLT}

B. The Spirit came upon Jesus in the water signaling the start of the New Creation.

⁵ Bates, Matthew W. *Gospel Allegiance*. pp. 149-150. Brazos Press, 2019.

1. In **Genesis 1:2-3**, we see “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

2. Then in **2 Corinthians 4:6**, “...God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

3. This moment in the baptism of Jesus announced *the dawning of a New Day*.

Matthew tells us, “Behold, the heavens were opened to him” – “the heavens being *torn open*” (**Mark 1:10**).

i. This was a common Jewish expression used to introduce a divine revelation.

ii. This scene reminds us of the Prophet’s prayer in **Isaiah 64:1** – “Oh that you would *rend the heavens* and come down...”

iii. The inauguration of the Messiah-King culminates in a significant moment in the Temple – “Behold, *the curtain of the temple was torn* in two, from top to bottom” (**Matthew 27:51**).

iv. Jesus the Messiah from Heaven to bring us to God.

C. This Spirit-anointing testifies that Jesus is the Messiah.

John 1:29-34 – The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I told you about: ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.’ I didn’t know him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.” And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. I didn’t know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” ^{CSB}

D. The Spirit anointed Jesus as the Messiah and empowered Him to teach, preach, and heal as the Messiah.

1. Acts 10:38 – God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

2. Jesus the Messiah did everything He did under the personal influence of the Holy Spirit.

- The Spirit *came upon* Him – **Luke 3:22.**
- The Spirit *anointed* Him – **Luke 4:18.**
- The Spirit *filled* Him – **Luke 4:1.**
- The Spirit *led* Him – **Luke 4:1.**
- The Spirit *empowered* Him – **Luke 4:14.**

3. This is the way of Jesus the Messiah.

- a. If God's Son depended on God's Spirit to do and complete God's mission, so should we.
- b. The disciples of Jesus should follow the example of Jesus.

THE AFFIRMATION OF GOD THE FATHER

Matthew 3:17

3:17¹⁷ ... and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

A. This "voice from heaven" is God the Father speaking.

B. NOTE four things from God's declaration about Jesus:

1. FIRST – Jesus is God's Son – "This is my beloved Son."

This affirms Jesus is equal with God.

i. **John 5:18** – ... he (Jesus) was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

ii. **John 10:30-33** – [Jesus said] "I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

2. SECOND – Jesus is God’s Messiah – “[This is my beloved Son.](#)”

This declaration was foretold about the Messiah by the Prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 42:1** – “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him...”

3. THIRD – Jesus is well-loved by God the Father – “[This is my beloved Son.](#)”

a. John 3:35 – *The Father loves the Son* and has given all things into his hand.

b. John 5:20 – *The Father loves the Son* and shows him all that he himself is doing.

4. FOURTH – Jesus is well-pleasing to God the Father – “[... with whom I am well pleased.](#)”

a. In Luke 2:52, Luke tells us, “Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.” ^{NLT}

b. In John 8:29, Jesus said, “I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”

c. In other words, Jesus makes God smile with pleasure.

d. Up until this point, Jesus had not yet preached a sermon, healed a broken body, or fed a starving multitude; yet God said, “[This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.](#)”

i. The reason for this affirmation was more about *who Jesus was* than *what Jesus did*.

ii. God and Jesus share a deeply personal relationship with each other, and God loves Jesus because of who He is.

5. APPLICATION:

a. In Christ, we are *well-loved* by God.

1 John 3:1 – See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! ^{NLT}

b. In Christ, we are *well-pleasing* to God.

Psalms 149:4 – The LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation.

c. *What a joy and privilege to be so-loved by God.*

J.C. Ryle – How striking and deeply instructive are the Father’s words! “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” He declares, in these words, that Jesus is the divine Savior sealed and appointed from all eternity to carry out the work of redemption. He proclaims, that He accepts Him as the Mediator between God and man. He seems to publish to the world, that He is satisfied with Him as the propitiation, the substitute, the ransom-payer for the lost family of Adam, and the Head of a redeemed people. In Him He sees His holy “law magnified and

made honorable.” Through Him He can “be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly.” (Rom. 3:26.)

May we ponder these words well! They are full of rich food for thought. They are full of peace, joy, comfort and consolation, for all who have fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus Christ, and committed their souls to Him for salvation. Such may rejoice in the thought, that though in themselves sinful, yet in God’s sight they are counted righteous. The Father regards them as members of His beloved Son. He sees in them no spot, and for His son’s sake is “well pleased.” (Ephes. 1:6.) ⁶

THE LORD’S SUPPER

COME WORSHIP THE LORD AT HIS TABLE.

⁶ Ryle, J. C. *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860. Print.