

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

## Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew** 11- The Baptism of the Incarnate God- Part 2

Church May 8, 2022

### **Matthew 3:13-17**

**13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.**

**14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"**

**15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.**

**16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,**

**17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now the Baptism of Jesus is so important that Matthew, John Mark, and Dr. Luke recorded it in great detail in their Gospel Records, while the Apostle John mentions it in passing. So, there is something here- that was going on- that is much more important than Jesus simply being baptized. And so, we need to find out what that was.

Now last time- I told you that beginning with John's Ministry- the Old Covenant, that dominated Jewish Life for centuries, was coming to a climactic End while the New Covenant, that had been promised in the Old Covenant, was beginning to appear. And I believe that is why three out of the four Evangelists took the time to record it for us. So, we really need to pay attention to this.

Now I also told you last time that both John and Jesus were very hostile toward the religious Leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. And those Leaders represent the only group of people that Jesus (and John) never said anything Good about. And we could say that this is simply Jesus condemning religious hypocrites and relegate

Jesus' Condemnation to these people *individually*. But I will tell you that much more than that was happening here as well.

Now if my calculations are correct and Jesus was born around 4BC<sup>1</sup>- and Jesus is now entering His Ministry here with His Baptism- then we are looking at this encounter with John the Baptist to be around the year 26AD. And that means that Jesus died and rose from the Dead around the year 29AD. So, according to Dr. Luke in **Luke 3:23**- Jesus is around 30 years of age here in his encounter with John. And as soon as He is baptized- Jesus will enter into His "*Time of Temptation*" with Satan himself that will prepare Him to launch into His approximate 3-1/2 year long earthly Ministry.

Now what I'm doing here by telling you about all this- is to give you the correct CONTEXT of this moment where Jesus is being baptized. And as I have told you before, there are only three things that matter when buying Real Estate: "*Location; Location; and Location.*" And with Biblical Interpretation- there are also only three things that matter: "*Context; Context; and Context.*" So, getting the right Context of a verse or Passage is vital- if we are to understand exactly what God is doing. And then- everything that everybody said and did- will fall neatly into place. But if you allow people to put their own interpretation on a verse or Passage- ignoring the Context- then it is possible to "prove" whatever they want to. And that's why Context matters.

So, yes, there were religious hypocrites back then and there are religious hypocrites now. And, yes, Jesus and the Apostles rebuked those hypocrites back then and so, we are supposed to rebuke them now. So, from that stand- point not much has changed. But what was completely *unique* during the Ministry of John the Baptist that is NOT happening in our day- is that, beginning with John's Ministry- the First or the Old Covenant was coming to a Conclusion. And with the conclusion of the Old Covenant came a radical Transformation in how saved people worshipped God.

For example, many of the things that were *required* of believers, who lived under the Old Covenant, are no longer in force under the New. In fact, things have so changed- that if a believer, living under the New Covenant, were to participate in some of the Requirements for Worship that Moses received from God the Holy Spirit and infallibly wrote down in the Law- he would actually be sinning.

Now when you speak about this- it is very important that you realize that neither Jesus nor the Apostles were creating a new Religion. Christianity or the New Covenant- is simply the *fulfillment* or the *conclusion* of the Old. So, the Types and Shadows and Symbols that were woven all through the Old Covenant have been forever replaced with the Reality of the New. And one of the main

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<sup>1</sup> The Gregorian calendar was introduced in 1582 and replaced the Julian calendar. But in changing- the new calendar had to adjust what had already happened. So, instead of Jesus being born in 0 AD, he was probably born around 4BC.

things to keep in mind about Christianity or the New Covenant is what the Apostle Paul taught in **2Corinthians 4:18b**

**... we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

So, the tangible; earthly; and visible things that the Old Covenant gave us were simply Signs and Types and Shadows of the heavenly and invisible things of the New.

So, in addition to Jesus being confronted with these religious hypocrites- the Old Covenant (that the Jews had lived under for hundreds of years) is finally coming to an End. And the glorious New Covenant will now completely replace it. But the Pharisees and Sadducees and the Scribes and even the Levitical Priesthood, who had led God's people since the days of Moses- didn't know that the New Covenant (that the Old Covenant predicted) was coming. They didn't pray about it; they didn't talk about it; in fact, they didn't look forward to the New Covenant coming at all. These men were perfectly happy to operate under the Old Covenant. And they were very content to continue with the Signs and Symbols and Types and Shadows forever! And this was NOT them being faithful to Moses- this was them being rebellious to God- because it was God's Will to replace the Old with the New. And that's what we should see in Jesus' Baptism.

Compare that with what Dr. Luke told us about Simeon- an old man, who had lived every moment of his life under the auspices of the First Covenant in **Luke 2:25&26:**

**25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.**

**26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.**

Now look what the good doctor wrote about Anna in **Luke 2:38:**

**At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

Now in verses 25 and 37 Luke wants us to know that both Simeon and Anna were devout believers. They were saved. They loved God. And both of them

were old. And both of these old saints had lived their entire lives under the realm of the Old Covenant. Yet they were diligently looking forward to something that the Old Covenant did NOT provide. Luke says that Simeon was looking for the “**consolation of Israel**”; while Anna was looking for the “**redemption of Jerusalem.**”

But then in verse 26, Luke is careful to tell us that God the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon,

**... that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.**

Now, the word, “Christ” was NOT in the original autographs. What the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon is that he would not die until he had seen the Lord’s “*Messiah*”. And the way Luke writes this tells us that “*Seeing the Lord’s Messiah*” or “*Seeing the Lord’s anointed One*” IS what “*looking for the Consolation of Israel*” and “*Looking for the Redemption of Jerusalem*” looks like.

In other words, Anna and Simeon understood that both “*the Consolation of Israel*” and “*the Redemption of Jerusalem*” would find their *fulfillment* in the Lord’s anointed One. So, both Simeon and Anna knew that it was in the Person of the Messiah and through His Ministry that Israel would see its Consolation and Jerusalem would experience its Redemption.

And that tells us at least two things about these two saints of God:

1. They did NOT buy into the normal thinking of who the Messiah would be and what he would do when he got here
2. They both knew that Israel had not yet been consoled and that Jerusalem had not yet been redeemed under the Old Covenant

In other words, both of these old people understood that the Old Covenant was NOT the final Word from God. And they both knew that the other Covenant- that God had repeatedly promised through the Old Testament Prophets- was. And that explains why they so easily recognized Who Jesus was; and What He was going to do- even though, at the time they saw Him- Jesus was only eight days old!

And so, John began his short-lived Ministry with all of this in mind. And he began baptizing repentant Jews and preaching that they should prepare themselves for a massive Transition as soon as the Messiah appeared. And His Message was succinct and crystal clear:

**Matthew 3:2**  
**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

... and then He talked about the One Who was coming:

**Matthew 3:11b&12**

**11 ... He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

**12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

John did NOT preach about returning Israel to her former glory. He did NOT preach about ethnic or nationalistic Israel. John preached that individual people MUST repent of their own personal Sins and prepare to meet the King of a new Kingdom. John talked about a *new* people; for a *new* Kingdom; that would have a *new* King; Who would operate under a completely *new* Covenant. Dr. Luke said that John preached...

**Luke 3:4b-6**

**4 ... MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.**

**5 'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;**

**6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.'"<sup>2</sup>**

Now this was NOT the kind of Message that would attract those wanting to see nothing but a glorified Israel. This was a Message that would attract only the elect of God, who were chosen for Salvation. And the last Statement that Isaiah had said the Messenger would preach...

**... AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD**

... opened the door for natural Gentiles to be saved as well as Jews.

And this went on until one day as John was preaching and baptizing- Matthew tells us,

**Matthew 3:13-15**

**13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.**

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 40:3-5

**14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"**

**15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.**

Now remember that Matthew wants to show his Jewish brethren three things about Jesus:

1. Jesus is the King of the Jews
2. Jesus is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lawgiver (the new Moses)
3. Jesus is the promised Messiah

... and these were things that devout Jews would be interested in.

So, what is really going on here- is that as the *new* King of this *new* Kingdom- the Ruler over the New Covenant- Jesus is having His Coronation here in the Baptism of John. And all three Persons of the Trinity will be involved in it:

1. God the Father will speak out of Heaven
2. God the Holy Spirit will come inside Jesus and remain
3. God the Son will be baptized

But there are several key aspects that we need to recognize. The first is the great Patience of Jesus. Here at the waters of Baptism- Jesus is about 30 years of age. But ever since He was 12- Jesus began to know Who He was.<sup>3</sup> And yet He waited until He was 30 to be baptized and begin His Ministry. 18 long years of the incarnate God doing the menial tasks of helping his father do woodworking as a carpenter's helper. So, this shows great Patience on Jesus' part to wait until it was time.

Secondly, please look at John's reaction to Jesus as He wanted John to baptize Him in verse 14:

**... John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"**

This tells me that at this moment- John knew Who Jesus was. Now I realize that **John 1:33** begins by John the Baptist saying,

**I did not recognize Him ...**

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 2:42-52

... but this is very curious- because John and Jesus were cousins.

John's mother, Elizabeth was Mary, Jesus' mother's 1<sup>st</sup> cousin. And that made John and Jesus to be 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins. So, there is no doubt in my mind that Jesus and John grew up together and probably played together as children. And that means that John knew Jesus very well. So, why did John say that he didn't recognize Him?

I believe that John DID know Jesus on a *natural* level- I mean they grew up together. So, of course John knew who Jesus was as his 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin. But John was not sure that Jesus was the Messiah. John was still pondering if Jesus was the promised Son, Who would save God's people from their Sins. So, this is Matthew giving us insight into John's own personal struggle to believe.

And later on, in **Matthew 11**, after John is arrested- and things were not working out the way John had thought they would- John began to vacillate in his Faith. And so, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He really was the Messiah. And that tells us that John the Baptist was troubled with nagging Doubt that would periodically rise up. And this should give us great Hope when we doubt because Jesus said that John was the greatest man born of woman and yet he doubted.

Now some might point to the fact that, under the Old Covenant, in **Numbers 4**- it says that it was the age of 30 before a man could take part in Ministering in the holy Things of God. And so, here is Jesus at 30 being baptized and entering into His Ministry. And that very well may be the correct connection. But it leaves off the fact that in **Numbers 8**- the age dropped to 25; and then in **2Chronicles 23**- David lowered the age to 20. But however this works out- this public Baptism is the official Coronation Service for the King of the Jews- the incarnate God- Jesus, the Christ.

Now please notice that the religious Leaders *wanted* John to baptize them. But he refused them because they would not humble themselves and repent. But then here comes Jesus and He wanted John to baptize Him, too. So, John *refused* to baptize the Pharisees and Scribes because they were sinful and unrepentant. But John doesn't want to baptize Jesus either- because Jesus is perfectly sinless! John said,

**I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?**

... and earlier, John had said to the religious rulers,

**Matthew 3:11&12**

**11 "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

**12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

... and these are all Attributes that only God would have.

So, this tells us that John thought Jesus was God. But he was conflicted; and he periodically crawfished.

So, this public Baptism is actually the Coronation of the new King, Jesus, as Omnipotent Ruler over the new Kingdom that He is bringing in to this world. A *new* Kingdom of Salvation by Grace ALONE; through Faith ALONE; in the finished Work of Christ ALONE; to the Glory of God the Father ALONE- to ANYONE who will repent and believe!

So, here is the *new* King, Who comes out of 30 years of seclusion; 30 years of obscurity; 30 years of being hidden, as it were, finally to manifest Himself to the world. And John the Baptist, the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, has made ready the Path. The way for the King to come is now prepared. The Path is straight, and from the quiet seclusion of Nazareth, the Lord Jesus comes to inaugurate His Work, to assume His Office, and so, He is commissioned. He is crowned, as it were, in a very wonderful way right here as we begin in this paragraph.

**Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.**

Now, here we find a passage of Scripture which has confused many people. And in order for us to get a good grip on exactly what is going on here- we need to examine the details of His Baptism, and then discuss its significance.

The third word in this verse is "**arrived**". And this English word was translated from a Greek word (*paraginomai*; Strong's # 3854). And it has to do with: *making a public appearance*. It was a word used sometimes to speak of the arrival of a Teacher or somebody, who was to take a prominent place in the public eye. And this word is also used to denote a public Ministry. And so, in that sense, this text is saying, "*Then Jesus, initiating His public ministry, came from Galilee.*"

So, Jesus comes to meet with John. And He has a very specific Purpose in mind. Look at the end of verse 13.

**... to be baptized by him.**

... and when you see an infinitive with the word, “**to,**” then you know that this is an express Purpose that's being illustrated here. Now **Mark 1:9** says Joseph took his family to Nazareth in Galilee. So, it is possible that Jesus walked from Nazareth to where John was baptizing- which would have been anywhere from 60 to 90 miles! So, Jesus walked the distance from Gulfport to New Orleans to be baptized! That was His Purpose. That was His express Intention. So, Jesus is *laser focused* on being baptized by John.

Now aside from the fact that Jesus being baptized is a real problem for many people even today- it was a *huge* problem for John the Baptist. The problem this creates for most people is the fact that John's Baptism was a Baptism of Repentance and Jesus was sinless. So, Jesus had no need to repent- He hadn't sinned!

So, why did Jesus come to be baptized with a Baptism that really belonged ONLY to sinners? Why did Jesus walk 90 miles for a Baptism He didn't need? Was Jesus admitting that He was a sinner? Did Jesus need Salvation?

Now all through the Centuries- there have been speculations that are all over the map about this seeming Contradiction. The Bible adamantly insists that Jesus was baptized with John's Baptism- which was for Repentance. But the SAME Bible also adamantly insists that Jesus was sinless. So, what gives? Is this a Contradiction?

The Gnostic heretics taught that Jesus was simply a human being, Who BECAME Deity AFTER His Baptism. Others teach that Jesus was a sinner just like everybody else. But what does the Bible teach? I'm so glad you asked.

If Jesus didn't have any Sin; and He didn't need to confess any Sin; and if Jesus was already God; and He had nothing to repent of; and He didn't need a spiritual Transformation; and He had no need for a change in His Life or change in His heart- then what in the world is He doing? Is Jesus just trying to make this more complicated than necessary on purpose?

Well, if it's any consolation to you- John the Baptist had the same Questions. Look again at verse 14.

**But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"**

Matthew tells us that John the Baptist- the greatest Man born of Woman tried to PREVENT Jesus. And then, over in **Matthew 16-** we read that Peter tried to PREVENT Jesus- when He spoke of His Death. And these things are in the

Bible, dear friends, to drive home a very important point that, over the years, God has seared into my soul:

Jesus is NOT going to be merely analyzed; or debated; or studied; or discussed by human beings. Jesus is to be PROCLAIMED! Jesus is to be exalted and marveled at; and adored; and magnified; and enjoyed!

Jesus is the single most amazing and mysterious Being in all of History. Jesus is fully God and fully Man; at the same time; in the same body- without conflict or contradiction. And there isn't a single soul in this Church today or in the entire world that understands that completely. And that is why I say to you that we should NOT merely study Jesus; or analyze Him; or discuss Him. But we MUST marvel at Him; and worship Him; and adore Him; and fear Him; and love Him; and delight ourselves in Him!

And John is beginning to understand this. Now the way that the Greek was written tells us that this was something that was ongoing. So, Jesus was CONTINUALLY trying to get John to baptize Him while John was CONTINUALLY trying not to! And they were going back and forth- right in front of others, who would be baptized later by John and others, who would be refused by John.

Now in the Greek grammar, anytime they took a verb and added a preposition in front of it and compounded it- they *intensified* it. So, John was *earnestly, strongly, intensely* and *continually* trying to prevent Jesus from getting baptized. He just wouldn't hear of it. It made absolutely no sense to him whatever. And he said,

**I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?**

Now I want you to notice that John's insistence of NOT baptizing Jesus is the very opposite of the way he treated the Pharisees and the Sadducees. John categorically condemned them. Yet Jesus wants John to baptize Him as well- and finally he does. But this whole idea of him baptizing Jesus makes no sense to John. The man, who towered above the Pharisees and the Sadducees - finds himself bowed in deepest humility before Jesus. So, what's the Answer? Let's allow Jesus Himself to help us from verse 15:

**But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.**

So, Jesus said, **"Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."** And only then did John stop arguing with Him. Now

keep in mind that Jesus does not deny that He is a *superior* and John is an *inferior*. He does not deny that John needs also to be baptized, because John is a sinner. He does not deny that John needs repentance. He does not deny that He doesn't need it; but in effect, Jesus says,

*“John, there's a special Reason I'm doing this- so, permit it.”*

But what could that special Reason possibly be? Jesus said,

**... for [because] in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**

... in other words, Jesus was saying, *“This is proper for us to do this, John. It's okay. This is right to do- even though I have no Sin; and even though you're a sinner; and even though it is a Baptism for Sinners; a Baptism of Repentance- we've got to do it.”*

But then notice the "us" in this Statement:

**... in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness**

And that tells us that Jesus was telling John, *“We both have a part in this. You must do this to Me, and I must have it done. Why? To fulfill all Righteousness.”*

But what does that mean? Does it mean that Jesus wants to do everything that's Righteous? Yes. That Jesus wants to do all the righteous good Deeds? Yes. That whatever good Work there is, Jesus will do? Yes. So, is Baptism a “good Work?” Yes. Then perhaps Jesus is simply identifying with Baptism as an Act or a Deed of Righteousness. Maybe.

Remember, it was repentant sinners who came to that water. It wasn't righteous men and women who came to that water- it was those who had been made willing to confess their Sins and beg God to rescue them.

So, John looks deeply into Jesus' Face. And at least on some level- he is conscious of the absolute Perfection in Jesus. John is conscious of the Sinlessness of Jesus; His Purity; and His Holiness. He is standing in front of absolute Beauty; absolute Majesty; and absolute Perfection. And he doesn't dare lay a hand on Jesus to baptize Him in the Jordan. How could he? John knows full well how sinful he has been. And now he is looking perfect Purity and perfect Love and perfect Righteousness in the Face- and he is utterly destroyed by what he sees.

And that is *exactly* what God wants in each one of us. He desires

to open our eyes that satan has blinded and God wants us to look full and deep into the very Glory of God that we find in the Face of the Lord Christ. And when we do that- language fails. Efforts fail. We have no response. O Jesus help me now!

We gaze into the eyes of Him, Who is Absolute and Eternal, and we simply melt. No more pretension; no more putting on airs. No more pretending. I am a wicked sinner and Jesus is Perfection! And so, we fix our gaze on Jesus- Who IS the Glory of God- and we love what we see. It is truly love at first sight. And the ONLY reason everybody doesn't love Jesus- is because they have never truly seen Him! Because once you see Jesus- you die; and your Life is absorbed and hidden in Him!<sup>4</sup>

And that Sight- seeing the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- *compels* you then to be changed into what you have seen. It isn't your fault- you can't help it- you WILL change! It is automatic! No arguments; no negotiating; no holding back! It is ALL of Jesus and NONE of you! Why? Because you have looked upon what only angels have seen. And He is truly glorious!

And that's what happened to John that day. And that's why after that- John could say,

### **John 1:29**

**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

Jesus came into the world to do one thing, and that was to identify with sinners. That's the reason He came. And in order for Him to fulfill all of God's Righteousness; in order for Him to purchase Righteousness for anybody- He had to identify with sinners. And in the Incarnation, Jesus saw Himself as "one" with sinful men. And the Pharisees said that was blasphemy- but the sinners Jesus identified with said it was Salvation!

In **Isaiah 53:11b**, it says,

**... He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors**

So, the supreme Element in the Baptism of Jesus was the identification of the sinless Son of God with sinners. The New Covenant is that God is now "*Immanuel*"- He is WITH us- in our Failures; in our Weaknesses; in our Frailties; and in our Sins! We could NOT bridge the gap between us and God. It was too wide and every time we sinned- the Gap got larger and wider. So, in the glorious New Covenant God in Christ did everything for us! We could not go to Him- so He came to us!

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<sup>4</sup> 2Corinthians 4:4&6

So, the first thing Jesus ever did- as His earthly Ministry was just beginning- was to declare the primary Reason why He came: To seek and to save that which is Lost!

People teach that Jesus was baptized simply to give us an Example that we should follow Him into the baptismal waters. And that is true- but it is true ONLY because Jesus identified with sinners!

He who had no Sin- took His place among those who had no Righteousness. He who was without Sin went down into a Baptism that was only for sinners. And in doing so- Jesus was saying as loud and clear as He could, "*I take My place with sinners.*" They CAN'T reach up to Me- so I will reach down to them! And, from that moment until they nailed Him to a tree- Jesus was truly the friend of sinners.

So, let us shout it from the roof tops- Paul was right:

## **2Corinthians 5:21**

**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Make no mistake about it, dear friends- this is THE most radical Doctrine in the History of the world. God took on flesh and became Man- so He could identify with wicked sinners- so, He would save them to the uttermost so He could make them His Righteousness! And the Pharisees hated Him for it. And every single false Religion and human philosophy on earth rejects it. So, nobody teaches this- except the Christian Church; and nobody believes this- except Christians!

So, Jesus didn't come merely to set an example. Jesus wasn't the first Hippie. He didn't come to be a moralist. He didn't come to be a revolutionary. Jesus came to identify with sinners. And so, He was numbered with the transgressors.

And there in His Baptism- Jesus identified with sinners. He was saying to the Self-righteous religious Leaders, "*I'm with John. I am the new King of this new Kingdom and what John is teaching about Repentance is the way people enter into this new Kingdom. And since you will not repent- you are left out!*"

But even in His Birth, Jesus identified with sinners. He was the Child of Mary, who was a sinner. And in His Death, Jesus identified with sinners- because He had two sinners with Him- one on each side – as He died to bear the Sins of every sinner who ever lived.

Listen, in order to bring sinners to Righteousness, Jesus had to go to the Depths of the waters of Death. He had to bear Sin. He had to identify with Sinners. There was no other way to fulfill all Righteousness. And that's why the Prophet said in **Isaiah 53:11b**:

**... By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.**

... and the word, “**justify**” means: *to make Righteous!*

So, Jesus submitted to John's Baptism as a symbolic Act of identifying with the particular sinners, who seek Salvation- God's elect. But His Baptism was also a Symbol of His Death. It was a Symbol of His dying as He went into that water, and a symbol of His rising as He came out.

And that is why I believe in Baptism by immersion. It represents dying to Sin. Jesus was showing His identification with sinners and He was previewing His Death and His Resurrection as well!

Now I have taught on this at great lengths, but now look at the Role that God the Holy Spirit carried out in Jesus' Baptism:

**After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,**

Now as I told you before, God the Holy Spirit HAD to be inside the Old Testament believers, or else nobody would have ever been saved. So, from that standpoint, the Way that God the Spirit works today and the Way that He operated under the Old Covenant were the same.

But it is also true that while the Old Testament clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit fell on those Old Covenant saints- it also teaches that He didn't stay. God the Holy Spirit came- but He left. He fell- but then He went back up into Heaven. He didn't remain in them. He didn't dwell in them- at least NOT in the way He does now- under the New Covenant.

The Holy Spirit dwelling continually inside of every believer is strictly a New Covenant Blessing. It is one of the main Distinctives of the infinitely superior New Covenant. Now how do I know that? Because of what John the Baptist said in **John 1:33**:

**I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'**

The defining Mark of the new people, who will be ruled over by the new King in the new Kingdom- is that the third Person of the Trinity will dwell inside

of them forever! God the Holy Spirit could dwell anywhere in the Universe He wanted to. But the one single Place that God the Father chose for God the Holy Spirit to set up His abode was inside of every soul that has experienced the Miracle of the new Birth.

So, the “Boarding Pass” that allows sinners to enter the *new* Kingdom; to be ruled over by the *new* King- is the Miracle of the *new* Birth- which is a sovereign Act of God the Holy Spirit; and which allows Him to dwell inside that person- forever!

So, when John saw God the Holy Spirit come down on Jesus as a dove and REMAIN, John knew that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah and he was then able to say,

**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

... which is why neither John; nor Jesus; nor any of John’s disciples; nor any of Jesus’ disciples ever sacrificed an animal. They all knew that Jesus WAS the Lamb, Who would be sacrificed once for all!

Yet there is MORE! Now look at what Matthew wrote about God the Father at Jesus’ Baptism:

**and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.**

Here is the literal VOICE of God the Father! And it was unmistakable! Jesus is the BELOVED of the Father! And the reason Jesus is the BELOVED of God the Father is because ONLY Jesus obeys the Father- *perfectly*! ONLY Jesus delights in the Father- *absolutely*! And ONLY Jesus loves the Father- *totally*!

Language fails to illustrate the LOVE that exists now and that has existed from all Eternity between God the Father and God the Son. Before the word was- God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit enjoyed *perfect* Unity; *perfect* Delight; *perfect* Happiness; *perfect* Joy; *perfect* Wisdom; *perfect* Power; wrapped up in *perfect* Love.

There simply is no human example to help illustrate this great Love that makes all others Loves look like Hate. The love that a mother has for her child doesn’t even begin to show us this LOVE. A father with his son; a soldier dying for his country; a twin brother literally knowing when his twin is sick or dead- NOTHING on this earth compares to the LOVE between God the Father and God the Son- empowered by God the Holy Spirit.

And that is why Jesus screamed in Agony on the Cross. Jesus was NOT afraid to die. He had been in Heaven and knew what Heaven was like. Jesus did

NOT fear Death. What Jesus trembled about was being separated from His Father- because God had laid on Jesus the Sins of us all. THAT bothered Jesus to the point- He actually prayed for a way out.

But what God said about Jesus at His Baptism was NOT: “*Yes, this is real nice.*” Instead, it was, “*NOBODY pleases Me like Jesus pleases ME. And therefore, HE ALONE is My BELOVED!*” Neither angel nor Man pleases the Father like Jesus pleases Him- because Jesus pleases God- the Father- PERFECTLY! Nobody else comes close. And so, as Jesus came up out of the waters (He was Immersed), God the Father was announcing to the world- that ONLY Jesus is the BELOVED of God!

Later, on in **Matthew 17**, on the Mount of Transfiguration, God the Father again spoke audibly and said,  
**This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!**

So, it is listening to the Beloved Son and hearing His Words and seeing Him in His Glory that transforms wicked rebels into the new people of God. Or we could say that is those, who “*do the Works of Abraham*” that are the new people of God, who will dwell in the new Kingdom- which is ruled by this new King.

But what are the “*Works of Abraham*”? Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see Him. And the Bible tells us that “Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as Righteousness”. So, the “*Works of Abraham*” are:

1. Rejoicing in Jesus
2. Believing what God has said

... and ALL who are gifted by God to do this- are the “*Seed of Abraham*”.

So, in John’s Baptism, Jesus is now identified with sinners. But not ALL sinners- ONLY the sinners, who have been gifted by God to see Jesus in His Glory; rejoice at what they see; empowered to repent; and equipped to obey Jesus. This is the elect of God. And *some* of the elect will be natural Jews; while *some* will be natural Gentiles.

But ALL of these will experience the Miracle of the New Birth- which will bring about the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit- which will allow them entrance into this new Kingdom- which will NEVER fade away!

The entire Trinity was on display at Jesus’ Baptism and the entire Trinity was with the earthly Ministry of Jesus- including His Death and Resurrection. But first, Jesus will have to be tempted.

So, now, in the Church- the entire Trinity will lead and guide and direct our way- as we go out into a dark and lost world- preaching the Gospel to every creature- so that Jesus will build His Church- one soul at a time. And the entire

Trinity will empower the Church to make ALL of the enemies of God- a Footstool for His Feet- as we await our King to come and rule over His Kingdom- forever!

**Amen. Let's pray.**

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

