

16] JESUS ALSO WAS BAPTIZED

(Sunday, February 6, 2022)

Scripture: 10 Commandments; Luke 3:21-22

INTRODUCTION

I am so blessed that we are going through the gospel of Luke.

There are many important truths in Scripture, but to focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ is vital for the Christian.

Do any of us spend the time we should delighting in our Lord and rejoicing in His love and grace?

You will find people who say, I keep going because I love my family or I want to leave a legacy.

The Christian should not simply live for family or nation as important as these things are.

Phil. 1:21 For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

I know that we are all familiar with these things, but the challenge is in living according to what we confess.

Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Our text is just two verses today from Luke's gospel - the baptism of our Lord.

How often do we really consider how important it was that Jesus was baptized by John?

We have heard many sermons on the subject, I am sure.

It is not like we are going to relive the drama, the excitement, or the importance of this even, but today we give attention to this essential part of our Lord's ministry.

There is something amazing to consider that Jesus was baptized when we think of John's bold preaching and call to repentance.

Jesus had no sin to confess as He was baptized. In much like manner, Jesus had no reason to be put on a cross. **He submitted to baptism. He submitted to death on the cross - all for us!**

As we approach our text today from Luke 3:21-22, we will first consider the presentation of Jesus' baptism in the other gospels and then focus on these two verses.

1] LUKE AND MATTHEW, MARK, AND JOHN

Not surprisingly all four gospels record the baptism of Jesus.

Matthew 3:13-17

Mark 1:9-11

Luke 3:21-22

John 1:29-34

None of the accounts is very long. They are all in perfect agreement even though they are not just copy and paste.

Matthew alone provides Jesus' response to John about why John should baptize Him.

Matt. 3:15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is **fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he allowed Him.

We will consider this question and answer more.

What about some of the other details found in the gospels?

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak of the heaven or heavens opening.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the powerful words of the Father: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

All four gospels refer to the **Spirit descending upon Jesus demonstrated in a physical fashion.**

Matthew - and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

Mark - He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.

Luke - And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him,

John - And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him."

Again, in light of John the Baptist calling Israel to repentance, it does seem strange to us that Jesus had to be baptized.

Some perverse interpreters have said, well maybe Jesus did have something to confess.

It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

This is a very deep answer.

To us it is not completely clear what is meant, but it is not a riddle or mystery either.

We can understand why Jesus had to be baptized as we look at the entire flow of the different gospels leading to the cross.

The most important part of Israel's history as a nation began during the time of John the Baptist.

I shared this from my sermon on Matthew 3 in 2008.

As God continued to fulfill His great work of salvation, it was important that **Jesus, as the representative of His people, be identified with Israel.** Later in Matthew 8:17, Matthew quotes from Isaiah, "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." In Matthew 20:28, Jesus speaks of giving His life as a ransom for many. And in Matthew 26:28, Jesus speaks of his blood being shed for many for the remission of sins.

Thus, both John and Jesus had a role in fulfilling all righteousness. John called people to repentance to prepare the way of the LORD, baptizing with water, announcing that the kingdom of heaven had come. Jesus was baptized by John, as the representative of His people, as this new and important stage in salvation-history unfolded, showing that He was the fulfillment of the hope of God's people and the only way to eternal salvation.¹

¹ Hagner, 60.

R. C. Sproul writes that the baptism of Jesus was truly a matter of life and death for us!
His submitting to John's baptism is part of His active obedience.

We can be so half-hearted in our attempts to obey and serve.

We should be so grateful that our Lord Jesus Christ did nothing casually or just for appearance.

Everything He did was perfect!

There was never a wasted effort.

There was no wasted time.

His baptism as we know represents the start of His public ministry which would shake heaven and earth.

The devil and all his hosts did everything in their limited power to try to stop or subvert our Lord using the power of the religious leaders and even Jesus' own disciples.

Our Lord, fully empowered, through the Holy Spirit overcame everything in order then to submit to the baptism of the cross.

Let's focus now on Luke 3:21-22.

2] LUKE 3:21-22 - JESUS ALSO WAS BAPTIZED

This is the second recorded time that John and Jesus met together.

We go back to Luke 1:39-45 when both John and Jesus were in their mother's wombs.

Jesus would have traveled about 70 miles from Nazareth in the region of Galilee to the place where John ministered at the Jordan River.

Verse 21 states that Jesus came to be baptized at the time when John was baptizing many others.

There is debate today about whether baptism means immersion or dipping or sprinkling.

This is not the place for an extended argument.

I will say that the verb **baptized** is used in two other places in Luke where it does not mean immersed.

Luke 11:38 When the Pharisee saw *it*, he marveled that He had not first washed [baptized] before dinner.

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!

We commonly speak of the baptism of Jesus as the beginning of His public ministry.

This is true! It is very important and special.

We also recognize that this baptism of Jesus is closely connected with his suffering and death about 3 years after this.

His ministry began with a baptism and climaxed in the baptism of the cross and of course the resurrection.

Luke's account is the shortest of the four gospels, but Luke adds something not found in the other gospels.

What is that?

It is reference to Jesus praying.

MacArthur points out that prayer is one of Luke's themes.²

It is not surprising that Jesus would be praying in the course of this momentous, heaven-and-earth shaking event.

We have three powerful signs that followed the baptism of our Lord.

1] Heaven was opened.

If you do a search on this phrase in the Bible you will see it used a number of times to show either that someone is given a vision or called to see something taking place in heaven.

Ezek. 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

John 1:51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Accordance electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), paragraph 19402.

Acts 10:11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.

Rev. 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Rev. 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

How do all these passages relate to what we have here in Luke 3?

I don't think it is improper to see several things taking place.

First, Jesus is our Prophet, Priest, and King. Heaven is opened as part of His great calling.

Second, heaven is opened and what follows is the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice of the Father.

So, part of the opening of the heavens is **for us to see the true and great reality of who Jesus Christ is.**

He is the one fully empowered by the Holy Spirit.

He is the beloved and well pleased Son of the Father.

As we think of the significance of heaven being opened, we are not looking for new information, something secret, but rather a true understanding of what has already been revealed!

Is. 64:1 Oh, that You would rend the heavens!

That You would come down!

That the mountains might shake at Your presence—

2] The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him.

Doesn't this description really stand out?

All four gospels speak of the descent of the Spirit.

Luke uses two words, **bodily form**, to emphasize that what we cannot see was made somehow visible to human sense.

We cannot see God unless God manifests Himself in some special way to our senses.

In this case, the Holy Spirit descended and the physical manifestation took the form of something like a dove.

Why a dove?

There are different things we see in Scripture.

Gen. 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was **hovering**³ over the face of the waters.

³ A verb used for an eagle in Deut. 32:11.

R. T. France simply says: "The dove is simply a familiar bird, whose swooping flight formed an appropriate way of visualizing the descent of the Spirit."⁴

John Calvin suggested that the dove which we often interpret as a symbol of peace shows that our Lord is indeed full of grace calling sinners to not fear to come for salvation.

3] And a voice came from heaven which said, "You are my beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

We have here one of the greatest examples of the Triune Nature of God – Father, Son, and Spirit?

The idea of modalism that God can act like the Father or the Son or the Spirit is shown to be completely false.

There are no contradictions with God like there are with people.

There are sometimes very tough people but they can be very unpleasant to be around.

Or you might know someone who is very kind, but you would never want that person to help you with anything difficult or challenging.

In God there is the fullness of love and justice, wrath and mercy, without any tension or contradiction.

And so, we see in the words of the Father a powerful description of our Lord.

⁴ R. T. France, 122.

He is the beloved Son who is granted all authority over heaven and earth.

Psalm 2:7 is part of the background that we have here.

We can also see that Isaiah 42:1 is connected with the words of the Father.

Is. 42:1 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,

My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights!

I have put My Spirit upon Him;

He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

The mission of our Lord Jesus Christ includes suffering and reigning!⁵

Indeed that is part of the call of Scripture given to us as God’s people.

We are not to be pushovers, doormats, but we also do not fight or use strength simply in fleshly ways.

We have no strength of our own truly.

We are called to suffer as witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ and we are all given the calling to be kings and priests!

Above all we are those who bow the knee before the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and repentance!

⁵ Craig Keener, 135.

CONCLUSION

He submitted to baptism. He submitted to death on the cross - all for us!

We have been given two sacraments which both are connected with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The baptism that Jesus received is not identical to the baptism we receive, but certainly there is a connection.

Jesus was baptized at the beginning of His ministry. The cross is described as a baptism.

And appropriately Jesus at the end of his earthly ministry commanded that His followers then baptize and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And so in considering the baptism of our Lord and Savior we see how precious a gift has been given to all those who have been rightfully baptized.

1] Have you been baptized if you are confessing the Lord Jesus Christ?

2] How we must appreciate our baptism and seek to live in terms of what baptism represents.

A second application that I will only introduce here is the beautiful words of the Father spoken to our Lord - beloved and well pleased.

John Calvin wrote:

for in ourselves we are hateful to God, and his fatherly love must flow to us by Christ.

Let us prepare to come to the Lord's table rejoicing in the perfection and obedience of our Lord and that we claim a right to also be called the sons of God through Him!

Prayer

Hymn 121

BENEDICTION - HEBREWS 12:1-3

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.