

Why Jesus was Baptized (Luke 3:21-22)

1. Jesus' baptism reveals His identification with sinners (v.21)

- While Jesus' baptism is recorded in all four gospels, each gospel writer adds their unique "color" to the canvas on which God portrays Jesus of Nazareth.
- Each writer's historical account complements the others with no contradictions.
- Luke has already informed the audience that John's baptism was preparatory and ritualistic, as it points to the future when sins will be forgiven (v.3).
- Matthew's account informs the reader (Matthew 3:13-15) that:
 - Jesus came from Galilee (presumably from Nazareth) to be baptized by John in the Jordan River (v.14).
 - John is in disbelief, as his baptism is a baptism of repentance. Why is Jesus of Nazareth going to be baptized? He has nothing to repent of!
 - If anything, John should be baptized by Jesus. After all, John is unworthy to untie Jesus' sandal (Luke 3:16).
 - The reason for Jesus' baptism is so that John and Jesus (us) can "fulfill all righteousness" (v.15).
 - John consents and presumably baptized Jesus.
- John's account informs the reader (John 1:29-31) that:
 - John's convicting, powerful preaching, and subsequent baptism of repentance was a several-day event (v.29).
 - John notifies the reader of another reason for the baptism of repentance: John the Baptist was baptizing others so that Jesus might be revealed to Israel (v.31).
 - John is the only gospel writer who describes John the Baptist seeing Jesus approaching and saying, "Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!"
- Jesus must "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15) and is identified as the "Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).
- Jesus' baptism in the Jordan river foreshadows His:
 - Active Obedience: Jesus obeyed and fulfilled the Law of Moses in perfect obedience (the way the Law was intended) and submitted to the Father in everything (John 4:34; 17:6, 26).
 - Passive Obedience: Jesus will be numbered among the transgressors (Isa. 53:12) yet without sin (2 Cor. 5:21). He was reckoned and counted as a sinner who never sinned. He took upon Himself the sins of sinners and became the Passover Lamb.
- Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan was His humble association with sinners as the "Lamb of God." His baptism foreshadowed His future baptism, suffering, and death (Luke 12:50) and was preparatory in many ways, although not in the exact manner of the people (v.21).

2. Jesus' baptism reveals His inauguration for public ministry (v.22)

- Luke informs us that as Jesus was being baptized, He was praying:
 - During every major season of public ministry, Jesus prayed (6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1; 22:41).
- The heavens were opened:
 - This is a motif (pattern/theme): Ezekiel to Steven and Peter to John (Ezek. 1:1; John 1:51; Acts 7:56; Rev. 19:11).
 - The "heavens opening up" is a cataclysmic event and intersection of heaven and earth. God is intervening in the course of history in a new and unique manner.

- The Triune God had revealed Himself in the Old Testament in a visible way (cloud by day/fire by night, along with the divine light of the holies), but now, God is pleased to dwell in and through Jesus (Col. 3:19).
- At least John (Matt 3:17; John 1:32) and possibly the multitudes who were baptized saw and/or heard the voice from heaven.
- The metaphor of a dove descending:
 - The Spirit is likened to a dove for the first time in Scripture and should be rendered as a theophany of the Holy Spirit.
 - Whatever John witnessed was not a mystical experience or vision but an empirical reality: physically, something "like a dove" rested on Him.
 - Jesus of Nazareth has always possessed the Spirit, for He is truly God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit always have and will always be one in essence.
 - The Trinity can't be divided into parts. While Jesus of Nazareth was conceived by the Holy Spirit (1:35), the Son was not created, for He has always existed as the Son and God Himself.
 - The descending of the Holy Spirit was to empower Jesus of Nazareth for public ministry in a demonstration that He is not only the Messiah but the Son of God.

3. Jesus' baptism reveals His inter-Trinitarian intimacy (v.22)

- God's complete and final revelation of Himself, as Trinity, is displayed at the baptism of Jesus.
- The voice from heaven (Father) will affirm what the reader has already been informed of by the angel Gabriel (1:30-35), Elizabeth (1:41-43), and the angelic host (2:9-14).

The Father reveals His:

A. Affection towards His Son:

- "You are My beloved Son." The Father has loved the Son from all eternity. The Son did not become the Son at the incarnation but has always been the Son. The Son is "one of a kind." God has one Son (not after the manner of man).
- There is an allusion to the messianic Psalm (Psalm 2). While Saul, David, Solomon, and other kings were anointed with oil, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and will obey the Father as God's Servant-Messiah-Son (Exodus 4:22-23; Isaiah 42:1, 6; 49:3)

B. Adoration towards His Son:

- The Father is "pleased" with His Son. What is pleasing?
 - There is an eternal pleasure that the Father has always possessed in the Son, as well as a temporal pleasure in the Son's willingness and obedience in not only the incarnation but also 30 years of loving obedience as Jesus of Nazareth lived in humble submission to the Father.
 - God the Father is pleased with Jesus of Nazareth as the greater Adam, Who has not sinned.

The Father announces His affection and adoration towards Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy Spirit anoints Him with divine power for public ministry, and Jesus' love toward the Father has already been demonstrated for the past 30 years. His obedience will be tested after His coronation in the Jordan River as God's Servant-Messiah-Son.

Points of Application: