



QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?



QUESTION

**WHY WAS JESUS
BAPTISED?**



The baptism of Jesus is a profound event recorded in the Gospels, raising questions for many believers and scholars alike. Why would Jesus, the sinless Son of God, need to be baptised? Understanding this event sheds light on Jesus' ministry and mission, as well as His relationship with humanity and the Father.

The Baptism Account in the Gospels

The event of Jesus' baptism is recorded in all four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—though it is described in varying detail. The most comprehensive account is found in the Gospel of Matthew:

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptised by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.’ Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptised, 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 3:13-17, ESV)

This passage highlights several key aspects of Jesus' baptism: His intentionality, the response of John the Baptist, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the Father's declaration of pleasure.

The Purpose of Jesus' Baptism

1. To Fulfil All Righteousness

The phrase "to fulfil all righteousness" in Matthew 3:15 is central to understanding why Jesus was baptised. Jesus, though sinless (Hebrews 4:15), identified with humanity's sinful condition. By submitting to baptism, He fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law and demonstrated His obedience to the Father's will. Baptism, in this context, was an act of identifying with sinners, a theme that would culminate in His ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

This act of fulfilling righteousness also connects to the broader narrative of Jesus as the Messiah. In being baptised, Jesus was aligning Himself with God's redemptive plan, setting the stage for His public ministry and affirming His role as the Suffering Servant described in Isaiah 53.

2. To Identify with Humanity

Another crucial aspect of Jesus' baptism is His identification with humanity. Jesus was not baptised because He needed repentance, but to fully identify with those He came to save. In the Gospel of Luke, we read, "When all the people were

being baptised, Jesus was baptised too" (Luke 3:21, NIV). This indicates that Jesus stood among the people, embracing the human condition fully.

The writer of Hebrews emphasises this aspect of Jesus' mission: "For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God" (Hebrews 2:17, NIV). Jesus' baptism was a part of His complete identification with humanity, showing that He was one with the people He came to redeem.

3. To Inaugurate His Public Ministry

Jesus' baptism also marks the beginning of His public ministry. It was at this moment that Jesus was publicly affirmed by the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit for the work He was about to undertake. The Gospel of Mark, known for its brevity, emphasises this aspect by stating, "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove" (Mark 1:9-10, NIV).

This divine affirmation and the anointing of the Holy Spirit are crucial. The voice from heaven declared, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you, I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11, NIV). This proclamation confirms Jesus' divine sonship and sets Him apart for the mission ahead. The descent of the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, symbolises the beginning of Jesus' role as the anointed one, the Messiah (Luke 4:18-19).

4. To Validate John's Ministry

Jesus' baptism also served to validate the ministry of John the Baptist. John was the forerunner, the one who prepared the way for the Messiah, as prophesied in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1. By being baptised by John, Jesus was endorsing John's call to repentance and acknowledging the legitimacy of his prophetic ministry.

John himself was aware of the profound nature of Jesus' request for baptism, as he said, "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:14, ESV). Jesus' submission to John's baptism underlined the divine order and purpose behind John's mission, which was to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

5. To Set an Example for Believers

Jesus' baptism also set a pattern for believers to follow. Though He had no sin to repent of, His act of being baptised underscored the importance of baptism for His followers. In His Great Commission, Jesus instructed His disciples to baptise new believers in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Through His own baptism, Jesus affirmed the significance of this sacrament as an outward expression of faith and commitment to God.

Baptism symbolises death to sin and new life in Christ, as Paul explains in Romans 6:3-4: "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Conclusion

The baptism of Jesus is a moment of profound theological significance. It was not a sign of repentance for Jesus, who was without sin, but an act of obedience to the Father, a fulfilment of righteousness, and a public identification with humanity. Through His baptism, Jesus validated John's ministry, inaugurated His own public ministry, and set an example for all believers to follow.

Jesus' baptism invites us to reflect on our own need for identification with Him in His death and resurrection. If Jesus, the sinless Son of God, saw baptism as essential, how much more should we, as His followers, embrace this sacrament as a public declaration of our faith and commitment to His Kingdom?

Notes

A blank sheet of white paper with horizontal gray lines for writing. A vertical gray line runs down the left side, creating a margin. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

Study questions

These questions can be used for personal reflection, group discussion, or theological study to deepen your understanding of the nature of Christ and the purpose of baptism.

Why is it significant that all four Gospels record the baptism of Jesus, and how does this impact our understanding of its importance?

What does Jesus mean when He says, “It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” in Matthew 3:15, and how does this reveal His mission?

How does Jesus' baptism demonstrate His identification with sinful humanity despite His sinlessness?

In what ways does Jesus' baptism foreshadow His death and resurrection?

Why was it important for Jesus to be publicly affirmed by the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism?

How does Jesus' baptism serve to validate the ministry of John the Baptist?

What does Jesus' willingness to be baptised reveal about His humility and obedience to the Father's will?

In what ways does Jesus' baptism set a pattern or example for Christians to follow today?

How can understanding the theological meaning of Jesus' baptism deepen our appreciation for our own baptism?

If Jesus, being without sin, saw baptism as necessary, what does that say about its role in the life of a believer?



**SHARING AND DEFENDING
THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY**

WWW.CONFIDENTFAITH.COM.AU

 **confidentfaithaustralia@gmail.com**



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



 **confidentfaithaustralia**