

Why Was Jesus Baptized, Anyway?

“Why?” – A Fair Question

- Fair question? Think re bap does: washes away sins; makes child God; works faith (creates or strengthens). So if that's what bap does, again, why? No sins wash away; already eternal Son God; object of our faith (we put faith in J; he not in himself). Why? Doesn't seem like needs be baptized. Yet, vs. 13. What intended to do! Came from Gal in N to Jordan R where John baptizing, E of Jerusalem in S, for purpose being baptized. But why? Doesn't that surprise you?
- Surprised JB! Vs. 14. John: I need sins washed away; want be child God; want stronger faith. But you, sinless Son God, coming me? Flabbergasted! Maybe bap of J kind of surprises us, too.
- But J's bap very imp event in Scripture. Recorded all 4 gospels. In our ch yr calendar, we celebrate it every yr on 1st Sun after Epiph (when Magi visit Christ child). Today that Sun; J no longer child but 30 yr old man, standing with JB in Jordan R, being baptized. Can't help but ask: why?

Our Substitute

- J helps us understand why: vs. 15. “Let be so now; now right time.” Jesus wanted be baptized right now, at this specific time, bec this marked beg of pub min. Up until now, haven't heard much from J. Heard re birth; then incident when 12 at temple. Other than that, Scripture silent re life of J – until now – vs. 15a – when 30, makes first pub appearance in pub min as Son God when baptized.
- Vs. 15. What mean fulfill all rightsns? Well, in OT, esp Ps, God's rightsns = God's salv. God's rightsns doesn't just describe who God is, but what does. Main thing God does: saves people! So to fulfill all rightsns means J's bap is part of God's plan save us. From eternity God had master plan to rescue us from sin, death, devil's power. That plan incl, of course: J's sinless life, credits to us; innce death on cross, counts for us; res, opens hvn for us. But another part God's plan save us also incl J's bap. In Jordan R, J doing part of what God considered nec to save us, to fulfill God's righteous plan.
- J was also showing he's with us. Name Immanuel = God with us. Doesn't just mean J with us ~in spirit. When J came earth, really came be one of us, among us, with us. Jesus really became human, took on our flesh – suffered/endured what we suf/endr – got sick, sad, scared, lonely, hurt, hungry, happy – he's one of us, with us. Think like this: CEO of huge restaurant chain, McD, getting entry level job at one of restaurants, mopping floors, taking out garbage – doesn't just stay in office; comes to work among reg workers, help them with their job.
- J didn't just stay in hvn; came be among us, to help us. And we see that at his bap. J came do for us what we cannot do. We cannot save ourselves from hell. But J can. And in Jordan R, J says: today I get started. J's bap is official beginning of his pub min. On cross, finished. But at bap, could just as easily: begins. This is where his work begins. And you know how it continues going forward. J carefully avoids all sin/tempt, earns perfect record. Then trades that perf record with us for our disastrously evil record, all our sins. And while he suffers on cross the punishment we deserve, we are given his rightsns, (remem)=salv. At cross, finished; but at bap, begins. J steps into water to begin a mission impossible for us carry out. He is our sub. Notice in hymn just sang: “*Now rise, faint hearts, be resolute; this man is Christ, our substitute*” (CW 89:6). Without J, all is lost; we need him do this for us. And today we see CEO of hvn stepping down into our water (he came to be right here with us) to do what we could not do, as our sub, to save us. That's why J was baptized.

His Inauguration

- And that means that when you see J in Jordan, you're looking at Son God in essence rolling up sleeves: “Time to get to work. I've got a job to do, job my Father gave me. Ready to get started.”
- Whenever someone begins very imp job, often some kind of formal ceremony. Pr/tr ord/instl at church; mayor sworn in; pres inaug – big deal; starting imp work.

- J's bap like his inaug; beginning his imp work. And God makes big deal out of it. **Vs. 16-17.** You hear booming voice of Father: "This is Messiah; my Son. He's come be your Savior; today begins work." Heavens opened; HS descends in form of dove. Here we have each member of Trinity represented, like in 8th window. So when J inaug at bap, God made big deal out of it.

Our Baptism

- I wish I could have been there to see it. Don't you? Don't you wish you could've seen God's power/glory on display that day at river, as God used simple ceremony of water/Word to do a great thing?
- Oh, wait! I do see God's power/glory on display through water/Word every time I witness a bap. May not be quite as dramatic (w/heavens, dove, voice of God). But when I witness a bap, I'm seeing a great thing: God's salva at work.
- And when I think re how God baptized me – how washed sins, worked faith, adopted me into fam (so now I'm child of God; God Father, J brother) – when I realize that God did all that for me in my bap: I want make big deal out of that; I want treasure my bap. We make big deal out of bap in our church, and we cherish it as precious sacrament of God's grace, bec thru it God does a great thing for us. At our bap, it's like God says same thing re us that said re J: "This is my son/daughter, love/pleased."

Jesus' Baptism Saves Us

- So, fellow baptized believers in J, consider it priv today to see J baptized in Jordan. J came, at just right time, to be with/among us, in order to save us – thru, yes, his life/death/res; but also thru his bap. At his bap J began his pub min of doing what we cannot do, serving as our sub, to save us, to fulfill all rightsns. That's why Jesus was baptized! And now his mission is complete. And someday we'll thank him in hvn. But today, look in the river; J is there. "*Now rise, faint hearts, be resolute; this man is Christ, our substitute.*"

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."