

The Baptism of Jesus Matt 3:13-17 Sermon Prep and Bible Study for Sunday, January 8, 2023

Introduction: We heard the Christmas Story from the Gospel of Luke.

This morning, we return to Mathew's Gospel to read about the Baptism of Jesus. The story of Christmas is about baby Jesus. The baptism of Jesus is his first appearance as an adult.

Let's recap, from Mathew's perspective, some of the events from Jesus' birth leading up to his Baptism by John.

Maggi from the East came to visit the Holy Family. They followed a star and arrived to worship and give gifts to "The king of the Jews". But before they arrived, the report came to King Herod and other authorities in Jerusalem that there were signs in the sky pointing to the birth of divine royalty. Herod wanted to eliminate any future threats to his power. He hoped the Wise Men would lead him to the child. He ordered that all male children, two and under, in and around Bethlehem be killed. The Maggi, after visiting Jesus, Mary and Joseph were warned in a dream to stay clear of Herod, so they went home through an alternate, safer route. Then, an angel gave Joseph needed direction to head to Egypt and evade the local infanticide.

Joseph did just that. Jesus' family remained in Egypt, fulfilling ancient prophecies, until King Herod died. Then Joseph was given instructions by an angel to return to Israel. It turned out that Herod's son was ruling in Jerusalem. Joseph discerned, with the help of an angel, to settle in Nazareth in Galilee, a little under 100 walking miles from Jerusalem. All of these events lined up perfectly with what the Old Testament forecasted in very specific ways.

Thirty years go by from the end of Mathew, Chapter two and the start of chapter three.

Jesus is now about thirty years old when John begins his public ministry, baptizing for the purpose of repentance. John was an unconventional prophet. He confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees for their hypocrisy and insincerity while preaching a message of obedience to God's Holy Law. And he pointed the people to someone else who was coming with a more powerful presence and purpose. That one would be greater than him and baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Now, our passage begins with Jesus' first recorded adult act- and it is a surprising one for John.

13 Then Jesus came (appeared) 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?"

The one coming was supposed to be the baptizer, not the baptizee! Might the humility of Jesus be the first miracle? (Brunner). The baptism is considered more for identification with the human plights than that of repentance for Jesus himself. Only Mathew describes this dissuasion on the part of John. His point was probably to remind readers that Jesus was already righteous (One who does the will of God).

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

John agreed to "let it be so now". Jesus' words have a way of creating their intended result. But how does the Baptism of Jesus "fulfill all righteousness" ? First, It demonstrates Jesus' desire to follow the will of God in every detail in life. And it transforms John's water Baptism in what will be Christian Spirit Baptism through Christ, providing the Holy Spirit as the source for doing righteous works through Christ for God. John's baptism does something for Jesus-It is a way for Jesus to show his submission to God and his humility to God and God's ways. And Jesus' baptism does something to John's- It makes it sacramental-that is a grace, an outward sign and seal of the atoning work of Christ -who is at-one-ment with God and at-one-ment with sinners.

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."

Application:

God rarely speaks directly (see 17:5, the Transfiguration), But when he does, his message is exact and consistent -Jesus is God's cherished, loved Son. See Bruner 112

God's sentiments for Jesus are God's for us through our baptism, which is a sign and seal of our adoption into Jesus' family. In Christ, God's words to Jesus are ours.

And we share with Christ an additional grace: For Christ, his baptism wasn't his adoption. He was always God's Son. But it is his ordination for public ministry.

And likewise, today, we ordain these children of God for service in God's church and world, to the glory of God and the salvation of our broken world.