

“The Coronation of the King”

August 21, 2022

Matthew 3:13-17

I. Introduction

From the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew has pointed to the royalty of Jesus. It began with the record of Jesus’ ancestry going back to Abraham and King David. Like any other king, the royal birth of Him “**who will save his people from their sins**” (Matt. 1:21) was preceded and followed by announcements made by heavenly messengers, i.e., angels. Jesus’ royalty was emphasized by the magi who came seeking “**the one who has been born king of the Jews**” with the intent of worshipping Him (Matt. 2:2). Herod the Great also affirmed the kingship of Jesus through his attempt to destroy the Messiah by killing “**all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under**” (Matt. 2:16). Finally, came the royal herald, John the Baptist—“**the voice of one calling in the desert**” (Matt. 3:3)—who said, “**I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire**” (Matt. 3:11). In today’s Scripture, Matthew recorded Jesus’ anointing—“The Coronation of the King.” Here Jesus’ ministry and work truly began.

There weren’t many events in Jesus’ life that were recorded in all 4 Gospels, but Jesus’ baptism was one of them. Jesus’ baptism wasn’t just something He did because everyone else was doing it; “*It was the in thing to do.*” After 30 years of obscurity, this was the beginning of His ministry. Later, you can read the accounts in Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-23 but **turn to John 1:29-34.** Jesus’ baptism was His coronation as servant-Messiah and as King of kings. He wasn’t chosen by man; all 4 Gospels show that He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by God the Father. So, using Matthew’s account, let’s look at Jesus’ baptism, the anointing of the Spirit and the confirmation of the Father.

II. Jesus' Baptism

Matthew didn't tell us how old Jesus was when He made the trip from Galilee to the Jordan River, but the physician and historian, Luke, wrote in [Luke 1:23](#) that He “[was about 30-years-old when He began His ministry.](#)” We also know that John the Baptist, who was 6 months older than Jesus ([Luke 1:26](#)), had been preparing the people for the coming Messiah. John had been preaching long enough that he was known and respected as a prophet throughout all Judea—even the Pharisees and Sadducees had taken notice of him.

Luke's account adds that when Jesus came, He didn't come for a private ceremony. In [Luke 3:21](#) we read, “[When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized, too.](#)” Jesus humbled Himself and was one with everyone else. No family members or friends accompanied Him, and He hadn't yet started to call His disciples.

Jesus came specifically to be baptized by John. But because he recognized Jesus as the “[Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,](#)” John's first reaction to Jesus' request for baptism was, “No.” “[I need to be baptized by you.](#)” John's baptism was for confession of sin and repentance. Like everyone, John needed this baptism—he needed to confess his sins and be forgiven. But Jesus had no sins to confess or be forgiven. Later, Peter would write in [1 Peter 2:22](#), “[He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.](#)” Jesus didn't need John's baptism of repentance from sin. So, even in his reluctance to baptize Jesus, John was still acting as a herald and a prophet by proclaiming the perfection of the Savior—Jesus was indeed the sinless Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice.

Jesus didn't deny that He was sinless. He just said that it was the right thing to do and that it was important for both of their ministries. For God's plan to be perfectly fulfilled, it was necessary for Jesus to be baptized and to be baptized specifically by John. There are several reasons why Jesus' baptism was important.

A. First, by being baptized by John, Jesus was giving His approval to John's ministry; that John was a prophet sent by God. In [Luke 7:27-28](#), Jesus said, “[This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I](#)

SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.' 'I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.'" John wasn't a crazy man who ate crazy food and wore crazy clothes, he was sent by God.

B. Second, by being baptized with the very people He came to save; Jesus was identifying with them. The prophet Isaiah wrote in [Isaiah 53:12](#) that He **"was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."** In this act, the sinless Son of God, the **Savior of the world** took His place among the **sinner of the world**—the ones He came to save.

C. Third, as well as being a symbol of His identity with sinners, being baptized by John was also a symbol Jesus' death and resurrection. During His 3-year ministry, Jesus made 2 references to personal baptism. Not long before His last trip to Jerusalem, Jesus told His disciples in [Luke 12:50](#), **"But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!"** Later, on that final trip in [Mark 10:38](#), when James and John asked to sit at Jesus' right and left, Jesus said, **"You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"**—each reference was related to His death. Jesus knew why He had come to earth—in [John 3:14](#) He told Nicodemus, **"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up."** In [Mark 8:31](#) Jesus taught His disciples **"that he must be killed and after three days rise again."** Jesus' ultimate identification with sinners was to pay the penalty for their sins by dying on the cross and rising again 3 days later. As [Romans 6](#) says, Christian baptism represents being buried and rising again just as Jesus did.

D. A fourth reason for Jesus' baptism was to show that He was approved by the Godhead. This approval was made obvious to Jesus and those gathered there when they saw the Holy Spirit come down and heard the voice from God the Father. This approval was so important that all 4 Gospels recorded it.

III. Anointing of the Holy Spirit

John had been declaring openly and firmly his expectations that the arrival of the Messiah, His judgment, and the kingdom of heaven were imminent. The people had believed him and had put their hope for the future on the coming of the kingdom of God. And now the One recognized by John as being THE ONE simply goes into the waters of the Jordan River to be baptized like any of the people.

We don't know how much the people heard or understood when Jesus and John were talking. But John accepted the word of His Lord and obeyed Him. John baptized, i.e., immersed, Jesus in the Jordan River. And when Jesus came up out of the water, all those gathered there knew that this was not a normal baptism! Matthew wrote that **"heaven was opened."** When God is about to reveal something important to His people, heaven opens—for example **Ezekiel 1:1** says, **"In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God."** Here, as well, God was going to reveal something very important. As one commentator put it, *"Just as the veil of the temple was rent in two to symbolize the perfect access of all men to God, so here the heavens are opened to show how near God is to Jesus, and Jesus to God."*

When heaven opened, **John 1:32** said that John the Baptist (and probably all those gathered there) **"saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him."** The coming of the Holy Spirit like a dove identified Jesus to John and to everyone watching. It also assured Jesus as He began His ministry that the Holy Spirit was with Him. As **John 3:34** says, **"For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit."** In His humanity, like others being appointed to a special task, Jesus was being anointed for service, as **Isaiah 61:1** predicted, **"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners."** Jesus was also given strength for His ministry. Like every human being, Jesus would become tired and hungry. His humanness needed strength and, as we see in **Luke 4:14** and other places, that strength came from the Holy Spirit. (As **Acts 1:8** tells us, we have the same power since we have the same Holy Spirit within us.)

IV. Confirmation by the Father

All 3 persons of the Trinity are seen in this event. There is Jesus, the Son of God, confirming His mission to sinful mankind by being baptized with them. There is the Holy Spirit confirming Jesus' messiahship by resting on Him. Finally, there is God the Father confirming Jesus' task through His words from heaven, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

The fact that Jesus is the Son of God is central to the gospel. Turn to Hebrews 1:1-3. Jesus Christ is the complete representation of God. Turn to Colossians 1:15-17. Jesus is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Purifier. He is superior to and exalted above everything and everyone else. Jesus is God.

Turn to Isaiah 42:1-4—verses that echo God's words at Jesus baptism. Now turn to Philippians 2:5-8. Jesus was divine but He was also human. His sacrifice was the only acceptable substitutionary sacrifice. In these passages, the Messiah is called a servant who is humble, rejected, made to suffer and die but is also seen as coming forth in victory. From the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, we see the foretelling of His death, burial, and resurrection

Jesus is the Son of God and because of His love of God and mankind, He pleased God by obeying Him and entered human form. Jesus, the Son of God, was the servant and Messiah in whom God was well-pleased. God was pleased because Jesus became the "lamb without blemish or defect." (1 Pet. 1:19) He was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. No imperfection could be found in Him, and God was delighted. Because of Jesus sacrifice, the ones God called and loved, including us, would have the opportunity to become His children—as 1 Timothy 1:15 says, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

V. Conclusion

So why was this event so important that it was included in all 4 Gospels? Jesus' humanity was obvious to all that saw Him. That He was special could be seen in His pedigree, His miraculous birth, His adoration by the Magi and His protection from King Herod. He was obviously favored by God. But with the confirmation at the beginning of His ministry by the Holy Spirit and God the Father following His

baptism, Jesus was proclaimed as divine—He was God. Somehow Jesus Christ was both God and man. C.S. Lewis put it this way in his book *Mere Christianity*: “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open for us. He did not intend to.”

As God incarnate, Jesus’ willingness to lay aside His divine attributes, demonstrates the love of God for us. As 1 John 4:9 puts it, “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.” As both man and God, Jesus was the only sacrifice—the only substitute—that could be offered and accepted to pay the price of the sins of the world. Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But God had a plan, Romans 5:8 adds, “But God demonstrated his own love for us in this; While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Or as Romans 6:23 says: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Finally, Romans 10:9 sums it up this way: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

This is the Gospel message that we, like John the Baptist, all the Apostles, and all the Christians before us have shared with the world. Now it is our time to “Go into the world and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19). But before you do, make sure that you believe it yourself—as Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Then don’t hesitate to share the Gospel with others; time is short Jesus said in Revelation 22:20, “Yes, I am coming soon.”