



LESSON 2

John baptizes Jesus

MATTHEW 3:13-17



Jesus is the promised Messiah.



“And when Jesus was baptized... behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matt 3:16–17).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus came to save sinners.
2. Jesus was perfectly righteous.
3. Jesus is the one anointed by the Spirit.
4. Jesus is the beloved Son and great King.
5. Jesus is the pleasing Servant of God.

Objectives

1. State that Jesus was baptized to show He would take the place of sinners.
2. Explain why John hesitated and why Jesus chose to be baptized.
3. Compare Matthew 3:16 to Isaiah 11:2; 61:1.
4. Compare Matthew 3:17 to Psalm 2:6–7.
5. Compare Matthew 3:16–17 to Isaiah 42:1; 53:6.

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Lesson Summary

While John was baptizing, Jesus came to be baptized too. But His baptism was different than the others. All others were baptized to repent from sin, but Jesus had no sin. He was baptized to show that He was taking the place of sinners. He showed that He accepted the Father's mission for Him to be the Messiah. When He did, both the Spirit's anointing and the Father's voice confirmed that Jesus truly is the promised Messiah, both Savior and King.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Salvation includes being saved from something, sin and hell, but it also includes being saved for something—to live for and reign with God forever in His coming kingdom. Jesus' baptism confirmed that He would accomplish both aspects of salvation. First, Jesus committed Himself to standing in the place of sinners, living a righteous life and dying a sacrificial death on their behalf. Second, the Spirit anointed Jesus as King and the Father identified Him as the beloved Son whose kingdom will never end.

LAST WEEK



John prepares the way for the Lord
Matthew 3:1–12

THIS WEEK



John baptizes Jesus
Matthew 3:13–17

NEXT WEEK



Jesus overcomes temptation
Luke 4:1–13

THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Lesson Commentary

Jesus is the promised Messiah.

About 60 years before Jesus was born, Rome took control of Judea. This act caused the Jews to expect the Messiah to come at any moment. They longed for a king who would abolish Roman rule and bring power and glory to Israel. Several men attempted to do this, such as Theudas and Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:36–37). However, these men and their followers were easily defeated, and today they are largely forgotten. The good news is that there is a much greater King—Jesus. His baptism shows us that He is the true *Messiah, the promised Savior and King*.

Jesus accepted His mission as the Messiah (3:13–15)

But if Jesus is the Messiah, why did He come to be baptized by John (Matt 3:13)? Why would the King be baptized by His messenger (3:14)? John was Jesus' cousin, so he knew the prophecies and miracles surrounding Jesus' birth. Even though he wasn't yet sure that Jesus was the Messiah (John 1:31, 33), he knew enough to wonder why Jesus needed to be baptized. After all, the purpose of baptism was for repenting from sin. But what sin did Jesus need to confess? He was the spotless "Lamb of God" who came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). John's response shows us that Jesus had no sin (1 Pet 2:22). As the only sinless man, Jesus is the only one qualified to be the Messiah (Isa 53:9). Only a sinless man can satisfy God's righteous law on behalf of mankind (Matt 5:17). Only a sinless man can die as an acceptable sacrifice for sin (Exod 12:5; Lev 1:3; 1 Pet 1:19). Because Jesus had no sin, you can confidently trust Him to be your Savior and King.

Jesus chose to be baptized in order "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15). This phrase reveals Jesus' willingness to submit wholly to God's plan (6:33). God's plan was for the Messiah to be numbered with sinners (Isa 53:12). And that's what Jesus did when He was baptized. However, unlike the others, Jesus was not admitting His own sin. Instead, He was identifying

Himself with those He came to save. That is good news for us! Like the leopard unable to change his spots, we are completely powerless to change our sinful condition (Jer 13:23). Our only hope is for Jesus, our Messiah, to take our sins upon Himself and give us His own righteousness (2 Cor 5:21).

By being baptized, Jesus was visibly showing His commitment to be the Messiah, even though this would require Him to die for sins He never committed (Isa 53:5–6). The rest of Jesus' life shows that His commitment never wavered. He never acted on His own but perfectly obeyed the Father's will (John 5:30; 6:38). He lived entirely for the Father's glory (12:28) and did exactly what the Father commanded (14:31). Even His pleading to be spared from the Father's wrath reveals His perfect submission, for He chose the Father's will instead of His own (Matt 26:39). Instead of pleasing Himself (Rom 15:3), He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross (Phil 2:8). Apart from His unwavering humility and obedience, we would have no hope. But since He never wavered, you can trust Him as your Messiah and follow His example of humble obedience (1 Pet 2:21).

Heaven confirmed His mission as the Messiah (3:16–17)

It is almost as if heaven was holding its breath, watching eagerly for Jesus to appear on the world stage as the Messiah. Then, when the Son appeared in His baptism, heaven burst forth with approval, delighting in the Messiah and His mission. The approval of the Spirit and the Father was added to the Son's own testimony, so that the entire Trinity confirmed that Jesus is indeed the promised Savior and King.

The *trinity* is often described as *one God in three persons*. The triune God is based on three biblical truths. First, there is only one God (Deut 6:4; 1 Tim 2:5). Second, the Father (Eph 4:6), the Son (John 1:1; Rom 9:5; Heb 1:8), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3–4)

THINK ABOUT IT
In His baptism, the sinless Messiah identified Himself with sinful mankind.



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are each God. Third, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct from each other. Since all the members of the trinity interacted together at Jesus' baptism, they cannot just be different roles that God takes on at different times. So Jesus' baptism shows us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons who are at the same time the one God.



THINK ABOUT IT

The Holy Spirit was not a dove, but appeared in a form that resembled a dove (Matt 3:16).

The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus as the Messiah when He came upon Him like a dove (Matt 3:16). The Spirit's coming showed three things. First, it shows that Jesus was the promised Messiah

because the Old Testament prophesied that the Holy Spirit would come upon the chosen descendant of Jesse (Isa 11:1–2a). This is what convinced John the Baptist that Jesus was indeed the Messiah (John 1:33). Second, it shows that Jesus was the promised Messiah by anointing Him as king. Long ago, God selected David as king by anointing him with oil (1 Sam 16:13). But here God identifies Jesus as King by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit (Isa 61:1). Third, it shows Jesus was equipped to be the Messiah. The Spirit filled Jesus with “wisdom and understanding,” “counsel and might,” “knowledge and the fear of the LORD” (Isa 11:2b). By the Spirit Jesus would overcome temptation (Matt 4:1), perform miracles (12:28), give His life (Heb 9:14), and rise from the dead (Rom 8:11).

The Father also confirmed that Jesus is the Messiah. First, when the Father called Jesus His “beloved Son” (Matt 3:17a), He identified Jesus as the promised Son who would reign as King over the earth (Ps 2:7–8). Second, when the Father said He was “well pleased”

with Jesus (Matt 3:17b), He identified Jesus as the righteous Servant (Isa 42:1) who would suffer and die for sinners (53:5–9). Most Jews in Jesus' time expected a triumphant, ruling Messiah, but others thought there would be two Messiahs, one who would suffer and one who would rule. But when the Father spoke from heaven, He showed that Jesus fulfills both roles. He came once as the suffering Messiah to save the world (John 3:17). He will come again as the conquering Messiah to judge the world and reign as King forever (Matt 16:27).

The Father's approval also shows us His deep love for the Son. At His baptism, Jesus publically showed that He shared the same purpose and the same love as the Father. No human father and son have ever been so close, so united in heart as God the Father and God the Son (John 10:30). Jesus is “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,” a perfect reflection of His Father (Heb 1:3). If you commit yourself to Jesus, He will speak on your behalf before the Father (Matt 10:32), and the Father listens to Him, because of His great love for the Son. So trust Jesus as your Savior and King. When you do, the Father will lovingly welcome you into the family.

THINK ABOUT IT

In His first coming, if Jesus had come to reign, He would not have redeemed. In Jesus' second coming, He will come to reign (Rev 19:15).



THINK ABOUT IT

The Father loves His children like He loves His Son (John 17:23)!



Lesson Outline

Jesus is the promised Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



Trust Jesus to save you because . . .

1. He perfectly obeyed God (3:13–15).
2. He takes the place of sinful people (3:15).
3. He is the Anointed One (3:16).
4. He is God's beloved Son (3:17).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus accepted His mission as the Messiah (3:13–15).
 - Jesus came to be baptized (3:13).
 - John didn't think Jesus needed to be baptized (3:14).
 - Jesus was baptized to obey God's mission for His life (3:15).
2. Heaven confirmed His mission as the Messiah (3:16–17).
 - The Spirit anointed Him as the Messiah (3:16).
 - The Father identified Him as the beloved Son and great King (3:17a).
 - The Father delighted in Him as the suffering Savior (3:17b).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **What did Jesus want to do?**
He wanted to be baptized.
2. **Why was John surprised?**
Because Jesus had no sin.
3. **Who came down from heaven onto Jesus?**
The Holy Spirit, like a dove.
4. **What did the Father call Jesus?**
My beloved Son.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **What was John's baptism for?**
It was for repenting of sin.
2. **Did Jesus have sin?**
No. He was sinless, but He was baptized to show that He would take the place of sinners.
3. **Why did Jesus say he wanted to be baptized?**
To fulfill all righteousness (Matt 3:15); to publically accept God's plan for Him to be the Messiah.
4. **When you see Jesus' perfect submission to His mission, how should you respond?**
By confidently trusting Him as your Messiah and following His example.
5. **What does "trinity" mean? How do you see it at Jesus' baptism?**
It means that God is three persons in one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit acted together at Jesus' baptism.
6. **How did the Holy Spirit show that Jesus is the Messiah?**
He fulfilled the prophecy about the Messiah having the Spirit (Isa 11:1–2a). He anointed Him as King (61:1). He equipped Him with power (11:2b).
7. **How did the Father show that Jesus is the Messiah?**
He identified Jesus as the Son and King (Ps 2) and as the Righteous Servant (Isa 42:1).
8. **Why does the Father love the Son so much?**
The Son shares exactly the same purpose and love as the Father. He is the perfect image of the Father (Heb 1:3).

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

WHO IS MY SON?

At Jesus' baptism He is identified as God's Son and His righteous character is affirmed. Bring various photographs to class and have the children try and guess which one is your son. If you do not have children of your own, you can ask the class to try to match various children with their respective father in a series of photographs. In today's lesson we will learn about how God identified Jesus as His Son so that everyone would know.

WHO AM I AND WHAT DO I DO?

At Jesus' baptism we learn about who Jesus is and what He will do. Bring various hats or items of a uniform to class (e.g. soldier, doctor, nurse, policeman, fireman, teacher, etc.). Ask the class to guess: "Who am I and what do I do?" Then ask the children, "Who is Jesus and what will He do?" Today's lesson will give us the correct answers.



ILLUSTRATE

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MESSIAH

The events that occurred at Jesus' baptism revealed that He was the long awaited Messiah (Matt 3:16–17). Pretend to be a variety of animals in front of the class. Can the class guess who you are? How did they know? What helped them realize what animal you were? The children were able to know what you were, without you telling them, because each animal behaves a specific way. In today's lesson we will learn about some of the special characteristics of the Messiah; those things that make Him completely unique.

NEW SHOES DO NOT NEED POLISH

At Jesus' baptism, John affirms Jesus' righteousness by his reluctance to baptize Jesus. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and Jesus had no sin for which He needed to repent. Illustrate this by polishing up some old shoes. The ministry of John the Baptist involved very much the same thing – getting people to admit that they needed some cleaning up. Then bring out a pair of brand new shoes and ask the children if they need to be polished. This is exactly what John realized when Jesus came to be baptized—Jesus was not stained by sin.



APPLY

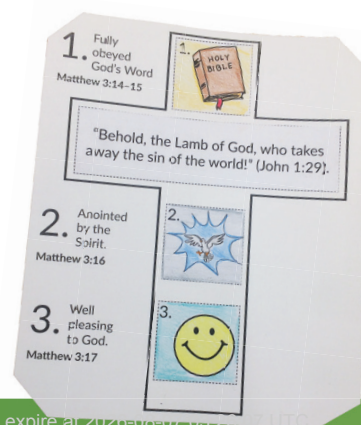
MESSIAH'S QUALIFICATIONS

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: John affirmed that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. He could only do this because he met all the necessary qualifications: 1) He fully obeyed God 2) He was anointed by the Spirit 3) He was well-pleasing to God. These qualifications are all affirmed at Jesus' baptism. Have students cut out the squares and rectangles and glue them to the cross in the correct order. Students can decorate the cross and pictures with crayons, glitter, glue, etc.

Messiah's Qualifications
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



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AGES 6–8



BELONGING

Jesus' baptism demonstrates that He identified fully with mankind, and yet was not like any other person. He is both fully God and fully man. This can be illustrated by showing the children various objects which are either black or white and then asking them which group it should go with. Finally, bring out another object that is both black and white. Where would such an object belong? In today's lesson we will see how Jesus' humanity and deity are both affirmed at His baptism.

ROLE REVERSAL

Ask the children to name their favorite athlete, singer, or actor/actress. Now ask the children to imagine this person coming to their house to ask them for lessons on how to be a better athlete, singer, or actor/actress! How would they respond? They might say something like John the Baptist who, when approached by Jesus to be baptized, exclaimed, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matt 3:14). In today's lesson, we will learn why Jesus, the King, came to be baptized by John, the King's messenger.



EXACT LIKENESS

Jesus "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Bring in two pictures that look similar but, after closer inspection, are not exactly the same. Explain that unlike these examples, Jesus perfectly reflects the Father.

MY BELOVED SON

The Father expressed His deep love for the Son at His baptism (Matt 3:17b). Share a story of a couple who waited many years for a child. Describe their delight in finally holding their newborn son or daughter in their arms for the first time. Explain that this love, as great as it is, cannot compare to the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father. This is because no human father and son or daughter have ever been so close, so united in heart as God the Father and God the Son (John 10:30).



JESUS' BAPTISM

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, paper/plastic cups, craft sticks, tape, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Have students color and cut out pictures on craft sheet. Glue picture of Jesus and John onto the cup. Attach dove and cloud to a craft stick and it to the inside of the cup.

Jesus' Baptism
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

IN THE PRESENCE OF GREATNESS

Have you ever met someone important and not known who they were until someone told you? In today's lesson, Jesus will ask John to baptize Him. Before His baptism most people did not know who Jesus was. This was the beginning of Jesus' ministry on Earth. When Jesus was baptized some amazing and very important things happened that revealed that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah. Let's listen to today's story to find out what incredible things happened at Jesus' baptism.

FOR ALL TO SEE

Ask the children how the champion at each event at the Olympics is identified. The champion stands on the highest platform, receives the gold medal, and the national anthem of his country is played over the loud speakers for all to hear. In today's lesson, the Holy Spirit and God the Father identify Jesus as Messiah, the promised Savior and King through heavenly sights and sounds (Matt 3:16–17).



ILLUSTRATE

STANDING TOGETHER

Often after a national tragedy there will be an image or phrase that comes to represent the horrific events that have just occurred. Those wishing to identify themselves with those affected by the tragedy will wear this image or phrase on their clothing or post it on a social media site. In a similar way, Jesus chose to be baptized in order to identify Himself with those He came to save.

INACCURATE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TRINITY

Some common (but erroneous) ways of depicting the trinity can be helpful in teaching what the trinity is not. First, the trinity is not like man with multiple roles (husband, father, pastor), since each member of the trinity interacted together at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:16–17). Second, the trinity is not like water, which can exist in three forms (liquid, solid, and gas), but only one form at a time. God has eternally existed in three persons (Gen 1:2; John 1:1–3). Third, the trinity is not like an egg. An egg has three parts, but each part has a different nature. The Father (Eph 4:6), Son (John 1:1), and Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3–4) are distinct, but each is fully God.



APPLY

CHOOSE WISELY

Who do you trust to help you with homework? When you have a question about an assignment, who do you ask? Do you ask another student who does not pay attention in class? Do you ask one who is always getting in trouble? Do you ask one who gets bad grades? Or do you ask the best student in the class? Or even better, do you ask the teacher? If you only trust certain people with homework, isn't it even more important to trust the right person with your life? In our story today, we saw that Jesus is the right person. Since He is righteous and anointed by the Spirit, He is qualified to save you. Since the Father delights in Him, you can trust that when Jesus brings you to the Father, the Father will accept you too.