

**Series: Baptism - What Does the Bible Really Teach?**  
**"Why was Jesus Baptized?"**

**Introduction:**

1. Last week we examined two common misconceptions concerning the baptism of Jesus Christ. We learned that Christ was not baptized according to a New Testament ordinance, nor was He baptized as an example for people to follow.
2. So here is the obvious question: Why was Christ baptized by John in the River Jordan?
  - What was the real purpose and meaning behind it?
  - What was the significance of Christ's baptism in water?
3. As we study God's Word, we will learn that there were four positive, significant reasons for His water baptism.

**Christ's baptism was a submission.**

1. John objected to the idea of baptizing Jesus. **Matthew 3:13-14**
  - John knew that Christ wasn't a sinner. He knew that Jesus was worthy and he was unworthy.
2. Jesus responded by saying, "*Suffer (allow) it to be so now.*"
  - Jesus doesn't come repenting and confessing sins like the rest of Israel. Jesus said the purpose was to fulfill all righteousness.
  - Where was the righteousness of God revealed at this time? It was revealed in the law of Moses.
3. Christ is beginning His public ministry to Israel which would end with His sacrifice for sin on the cross. Christ would be the complete fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrifices. **Hebrews 9:11-12, 25-26, 10:11-12**
4. What did the law require that Israel do to the sacrifices before they offered them? They had to wash them in water. **Leviticus 1:1-3, 9; cf. Ephesians 5:2; 2 Chronicles 4:6**
  - One of the preparatory ceremonies before a sacrifice could be offered was that it had to be washed in water.
5. This is why Christ told John to allow it. Jesus is saying, "I have come to be washed." Jesus was the Lamb of God who would die for sin. **John 1:29**
6. When Jesus submitted to the washing of baptism, He was submitting to the righteousness of the law.
  - When Jesus refers to "all righteousness," He can only be referring to the law (**Romans 2:26, 8:4, 10:5; Philippians 3:6**). The law is what Christ came to fulfill. **Matthew 5:17-18**
  - Christ was perfectly fulfilling the requirements of the law when He submitted to baptism.
  - John was washing the offering before it was taken and the blood shed.

**Christ's baptism was an identification.**

1. When Jesus was baptized, He was identifying Himself with believing Israel, those who responded in faith to John's call to prepare for the kingdom.

2. Who was John baptizing? According to **Mark 1:4-5**, he was baptizing the people of Judea and Jerusalem.
3. Jesus did not come to John privately and get baptized. Jesus was right among the common, ordinary people of Judea. Christ numbered Himself publicly with the believing remnant of the nation of Israel. **Luke 3:21**
4. He was demonstrating to Israel that He was, in fact, a part of Israel Himself. What was demanded of Israel, Christ as part of Israel performed. He was one of them and He did what they did. **Hebrews 2:16-17**
5. Water baptism was an essential part of Israel's program at this time. **Luke 7:29-30**
  - If you were a Jew living during this time, how did you justify God? How did you declare that John's message was right and was from God? You were baptized.
  - By being baptized you were admitting that you and your nation were in an apostate, backslidden condition and in need of repentance.
  - How did you reject the counsel of God? By refusing to submit to John's baptism. **Luke 7:30**
6. Christ came and submitted Himself to baptism to identify with that believing remnant of Israel and to separate Himself from apostate and unbelieving Israel.
7. This issue of identification by water baptism is also seen in **Acts 2:36-40**.

#### **Christ's baptism was a manifestation.**

1. **John 1:29-31** clearly reveals that John was baptizing in order that Jesus should be made manifest to Israel.
2. When Christ was baptized, it would be evident that He was Israel's Messiah. John's own testimony confirms this. **John 1:32-33**
3. Christ's baptism is one of three major events used to manifest Jesus as the Christ.
  - His birth - **Luke 2:8-20**
  - His baptism - **John 1:31-33**
  - His entrance into Jerusalem - **Luke 19:28-40**
4. There was no reason for the nation of Israel to miss the fact that He was the long promised Messiah, the servant of God. **Isaiah 42:1**

#### **Christ's baptism was an ordination.**

1. Christ's baptism was His public entrance into ministry. Christ was the nation of Israel's prophet, priest, and king.
  - Prophet - **Luke 7:15-16; John 4:19**
  - Priest - **Hebrews 5:6, 10**
  - King - **Revelation 11:15, 19:16**
2. Each of these offices required an anointing before assuming office. In **Exodus 40:12-13**, the priests had to be washed in water and then anointed.
3. Jesus was washed and anointed at His baptism. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit. **John 1:32-34**
  - Oil in the Bible is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. **Hebrews 1:9; cf. Acts 10:38**
4. Jesus is 30 years old and His baptism was His public inauguration into ministry. He was washed in water and anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit.

**In Conclusion:**

1. We see now why Christ was baptized.
  - It was a submission to the righteousness of the law.
  - It was an identification with the believing remnant of Israel.
  - It was a manifestation to Israel that He was the Christ, their Messiah.
  - It was an ordination of Christ into public ministry.
2. What does Christ's baptism in the Jordan River have to do with a Gentile believer today who has been placed in the body of Christ by God's Holy Spirit? Absolutely nothing.
3. Yet we can see, recognize, and appreciate what it **did** mean for the nation of Israel, just as we can appreciate many facets of Christ's life that are not incumbent on us to imitate. **Luke 2:21; cf. Galatians 5:6**
4. But there is **another** baptism of Christ that we do participate in, and that affects us greatly. Next week we will examine this!