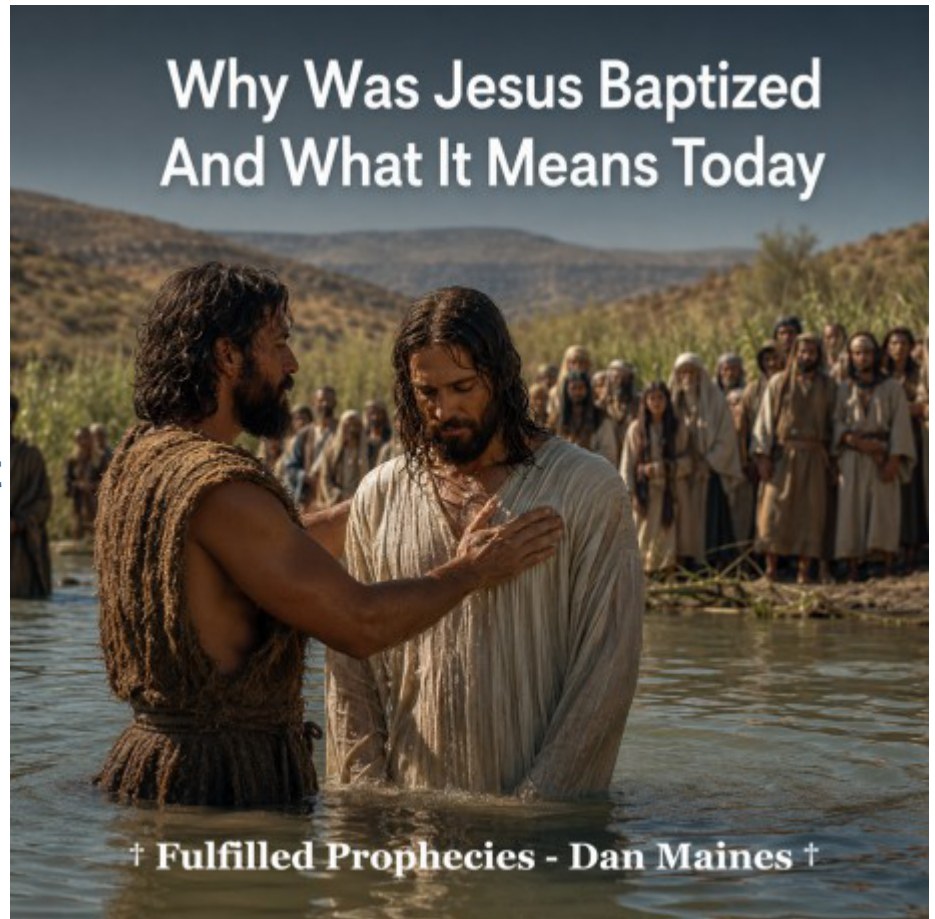


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Why Was Jesus Baptized And What It Means Today



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Many people assume Jesus was baptized because He needed forgiveness of sins. Scripture teaches the opposite. Jesus was without sin and had nothing to repent of (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).

† His baptism was not for the remission of His own sins. It was an act of obedience that fulfilled God's righteous purpose and marked the beginning of His public ministry.

† By understanding why Jesus was baptized, we gain a clearer understanding of His mission, the role of John the Baptist, and the transition that was taking place in Israel.

† Scripture never presents Jesus' baptism as an example of a sinner seeking forgiveness. Instead, it presents Him as the obedient Son carrying out the Father's will.

Matthew 3:13-15

Then Jesus *arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have the need to be baptized by You, and yet You are coming to me?" But Jesus, answering, said to him, "Allow it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he *allowed Him.

† John recognized that Jesus was greater than he was and questioned why Jesus would come to him for baptism.

† Jesus did not say He was being baptized because He needed forgiveness. He said it was necessary to fulfill all righteousness.

† The purpose given by Jesus Himself was the fulfillment of righteousness. Scripture provides no other explanation.

† Jesus came as the faithful Son who perfectly obeyed the Father in every respect (John 8:29).

† His baptism marked the beginning of His public ministry and His identification with the people He came to redeem (Isaiah 53:12).

Luke 3:21-22

Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from heaven: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased."

† Immediately after His baptism, the Father publicly declared His approval of the Son.

† The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, confirming Him as the Anointed One, the Christ.

† This event was not about cleansing Jesus from sin but about publicly identifying Him as God's chosen Messiah.

† The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all revealed in this event as Jesus began His earthly ministry.

John 1:29-34

The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He in behalf of whom I said, 'After me is coming a Man who has proved to be my superior, because He existed before me.' And I did not recognize Him, but so that He would be revealed to Israel, I came baptizing in water." And John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

† John explains why he came baptizing in water, that Jesus should be made manifest to Israel.

† Water baptism was part of John's ministry of preparation for Israel before the coming judgment and kingdom.

† Jesus' baptism served as the public sign by which John identified Him as the Son of God.

† Scripture directly connects Jesus' baptism with His

manifestation to Israel.

Matthew 21:25

The baptism of John was from what source: from heaven or from men?" And they began considering the implications among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?'

† Jesus declared that John's baptism originated from heaven and not from men.

† This confirms that John's ministry was divinely appointed and part of God's redemptive plan for Israel.

† Jesus' participation in John's baptism was therefore participation in a work ordained by God.

Luke 7:29-30

When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

† John's baptism was connected with God's counsel toward Israel.

† Those who received John's baptism acknowledged God's purpose while the religious leaders rejected it.

† This demonstrates the covenant significance of John's ministry in preparing the nation for the Messiah.

John 3:23-30

Now John also was baptizing in Aenon, near Salim, because there was an abundance of water there; and people were coming and being baptized - for John had not yet been thrown into prison.

Then a matter of dispute developed on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified - behold, He is baptizing and all the people are coming to Him." John replied, "A person can receive not even one thing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' He who has the bride is the groom; but the friend of the groom, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly because of the groom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.

† John understood that his ministry was temporary and preparatory.

† His purpose was to point Israel to Christ, not to establish a permanent ministry centered on himself.

† As Christ increased, John's preparatory role diminished.

† This further demonstrates that John's baptism belonged to a specific purpose in redemptive history.

Hebrews 7:26

For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens;

† Jesus was holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

† This verse confirms that His baptism could not have been for the forgiveness of personal sin.

† Everything Jesus did was carried out in perfect obedience and righteousness.

Acts 19:3-5

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

† John's baptism was a preparatory baptism directed toward Israel.

† It pointed people to the One who was coming.

† Once Christ had come and the New Covenant was being established, John's baptism had served its purpose.

† This helps explain why Jesus' baptism must be understood within its first-century covenant setting.

Historical References

† Josephus wrote that John the Baptist called Israel to righteousness and virtue while preparing the people for what was coming. Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18.

† Eusebius recorded that John the Baptist served as the divinely appointed forerunner foretold by the prophets. Ecclesiastical History, Book 1.

† Early Christian writers consistently connected Jesus' baptism with the beginning of His public ministry and the Father's public testimony concerning Him.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Jesus' baptism reminds us that He perfectly fulfilled the Father's will where all others failed.

† Our confidence is not in our own obedience but in the perfect obedience of Christ (Romans 5:19).

† Jesus fulfilled all righteousness on behalf of His people.

† Believers today are identified with Christ through faith and the work of the Holy Spirit, not through John's baptism (Ephesians 1:13).

† The focus of the New Covenant is life in Christ, who fulfilled the Law and brought its promises to completion (Romans 10:4).

† Jesus' baptism points us to His mission, His obedience, and His identity as the Son of God.

Q&A Appendix

Q: Did Jesus need to repent of sin?

A: No. Jesus was without sin and had nothing to repent of. His baptism was to fulfill all righteousness and to carry out the Father's will. (Matthew 3:15; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22)

Q: Why did John baptize Jesus?

A: John baptized Jesus because Jesus instructed him to do so in order to fulfill all righteousness. (Matthew 3:13-15)

Q: What was the purpose of John's baptism?

A: John's baptism prepared Israel for the coming Messiah and called the nation to repentance. (Mark 1:4; Acts 19:4)

Q: Did Jesus' baptism publicly identify Him as the Messiah?

A: Yes. The Holy Spirit descended upon Him and the Father declared Him to be His beloved Son. (Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34)

Q: If Jesus was sinless, why did He receive a baptism of repentance?

A: Jesus was not repenting of sin. He was fulfilling all righteousness and submitting to the Father's will. (Matthew 3:15; Hebrews 4:15)

Q: Did Jesus' baptism make Him the Son of God?

A: No. The baptism publicly revealed and identified who He already was. The Father declared, Thou art my beloved Son. (Luke 3:22; John 1:34)

Q: Why did John say Jesus should baptize him instead?

A: John recognized Jesus' superiority and holiness and understood that he himself was the one in need. (Matthew 3:14)

Q: Was Jesus baptized as an example that all believers in every age must be water baptized?

A: Scripture says Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. The stated purpose of His baptism was unique to His mission and ministry. (Matthew 3:15)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 3:13-15; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34; Matthew 21:25; Luke 7:29-30; John 3:23-30; Hebrews 7:26; Acts 19:3-5

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 1

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