

## The Baptism of Jesus / January 12, 2025

Romans 6:4

*“We were buried therefore with Him by baptism in His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”*

### Baptized into His death

The baptism of Jesus was His first manifestation as the Messiah and Son of God, marking the beginning of His public ministry. When Jesus was baptized the Spirit in the form of a dove, anointed Him the Christ, the king of Israel. This in fulfillment of the words of Isaiah 61:1 *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn in Zion...”* The divine voice declared Jesus His Son whom He loved, with whom He was well pleased. This in keeping with Psalm 2 an enthronement psalm in which the Lord says, *“As for me I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill...The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’”* In His baptism Jesus was shown to be the Christ and declared the true heir to the eternal kingdom promised David.

Jesus’ baptism was the beginning of His ministry of seeking and saving the lost, which would culminate in His sacrificial death by which He atoned for the sin of the world, so that in Him, the Holy Spirit through the church, would call all people to Him. One of the last things Jesus did before He completed His earthly ministry was to commission the church to preach the gospel, make disciples of all nations and administer baptism in His place in the divine name. He said, *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”* Baptism is the beginning of our life in Christ, our adoption as children of God and incorporation into the church, the body of Christ. Baptism is the beginning of faith for the very young, the seal of the Holy Spirit on the faith of those who come to believe at an older age. Baptized into His death we have life with God through Him. Baptized into His death we receive the Holy Spirit within our hearts as a seal of faith, the power to walk in newness of life and the testimony of the life to come.

The baptism of Jesus showed Him to be our substitute, who as God and a human being, would take our place in fulfilling all righteousness and substitute Himself on the cross to atone for our sin, human sin, the sin of the world. John wondered why Jesus wanted to be baptized by him, saying, *"I need to be baptized by you,"* knowing in his heart Jesus had no sin for which to repent. Jesus was baptized not for His sin. He was baptized John's sin, for our sin, for the world's sin. In second Corinthians Paul wrote, *"God made Him who knew no sin to be sin that in Him we would become the righteousness of God."* Jesus' baptism showed that He shared fully in our humanity in all things, save for His own sin, which He did not have as the sinless Son of God from eternity. It prepared Him for His ministry and for the sacrifice of His body on the cross for us all.

Jesus shared fully in our humanity so that through His sinless life and sacrificial death, we would receive forgiveness of our sin, experience the renewal of the Holy Spirit and finally share in His divine life with the Father in eternity through our baptism into Him. Baptism is not something we do, it is something God does to us, for our benefit and blessing in time and eternity. In baptism God adopts us as children for the sake of Jesus and gives us His promise of forgiveness and life in time and for eternity. As Paul wrote in Romans, *"We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."* Jesus was baptized into our sin and death, so we would be baptized into His righteousness and have eternal life.

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul addresses both his apostleship and the unique nature of Jesus, as God from eternity and a human being in time. He introduces himself as *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, set apart for the gospel of God."* The gospel is the good news of God's grace in Christ Jesus, offered for all to receive, given to all who believe. The gospel is not the property of Paul or any select group of people. It is the gospel of God. God appointed people like Paul to share the gospel, but the gospel is God's word of forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Jesus is God's Son, *"who was descended from David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness by His resurrection from the dead."* In Jesus Christ our Lord we receive the grace of forgiveness. The gospel is the good news of the grace of forgiveness, which God offers all to receive and gives abundantly to all who believe, through the hearing of the word and the washing of the Spirit and the word in holy baptism.

We need to receive the grace of forgiveness, which God offers us in Christ Jesus, because we are by nature sinful, separated from God by our sins, hostile to His will in our actions and attitude. The signs of our sinfulness and the fruits of our separation from God are manifested in the sinful actions that we and all people express day in and day out, in our thoughts, words and actions, by the evil we do and the good we do not do. God expresses His wrath in giving the world up to its sins and over to the rule of the devil. But with God there is always mercy. In His kindness He has given Jesus to heal the wound of our souls and repair the breach between us and Himself through His sinless life and sacrificial death. Paul writes, *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* We receive the redemption that is in Christ Jesus through the word and through the word and washing of holy baptism.

John baptized with water in repentance for the forgiveness of sin. In Jesus we are baptized into death for the death of sin, so that we may walk in newness of life by the glory of the Father. John’s baptism pointed towards the baptism of Christ. John baptized with water, but as he said, Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John’s baptism gave forgiveness to those who received it in faith. Jesus’ baptism also gives forgiveness. But because the power of His baptism is His death for our sins and resurrection for our justification, His baptism gives greater and more lasting gifts. Forgiveness in time and for eternity. A share in His resurrection to everlasting life.

The baptism we receive in Christ is an ever-flowing promise of forgiveness, a cleansing from sin which we receive each time we turn to God in repentance. In Christian baptism we receive healing from the wound of sin and reconciliation in our relationship with the heavenly Father. We receive the Holy Spirit who makes His dwelling within us and our bodies temples of His holiness. Christian baptism is much more than the intention to live a new life, it is the power of God by which we live in the newness of life, in accordance with Christ’s righteousness.

Jesus was baptized into our sin and death. He who had no sin bore the burden of our sin on the cross. He who knew no sin felt the burden of living in a world in bondage to sin, under the control the devil and the condemnation of death. Jesus carried our burden and overthrew the power of the devil, so that all who believe and are baptized into His death, may die to sin and its condemnation and rise to newness of life in time and to the fullness of life in eternity. Paul writes, *“For if we*

*have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.*" Baptized into His death we share in His victory over death. Baptized into His resurrection we share in His victory over the power of sin. Baptized into His Name most holy, we are promised a share in His resurrection to eternal life. Baptism is the gospel of God in action. It is the power of God to eternal life to those who receive it in faith and believe! God grant this to us all. In Jesus' Name.