

Small Group Study Guide

The Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3:13-17

March 21, 2010

Leader's Notes

PLEASE NOTE: These “Leader’s Notes” are a resource to the Small Group Leader to help you in preparing for this study. They are meant to be supplemental. You do not need to cover all the information in these notes with your group. They are simply provided as a resource to you.

Welcome and Introduction:

- Encourage group members to bring their study guide with them that they use on Sunday to take notes on the sermon, but also have extra copies available in case they forget.
- Open with prayer.

A Closer Look:

The following notes are to help you better understand the passages you will be looking at in this study.

Notes from ESV Study Bible on Matthew 3:13-17:

Matt. 3:1–17 John the Baptist Prepares for the Appearance of the Messianic Kingdom. John now appears, preaching in the Judean desert. It is more than 25 years since Joseph and his family moved back to Nazareth. The focus of Matthew's Gospel now shifts to Jesus' public ministry.

Matt. 3:13 The precise location of Jesus' baptism is disputed, and today competing venues vie for visitors. The traditional baptism site is Qasr el-Yahud, on the western bank of the Jordan River. However, the scene might instead be identified with “Bethany across [i.e., on the eastern side of] the Jordan” as noted in John 1:28 (though this text may imply that John had baptized Jesus earlier and perhaps in a different locale). It is likely that John baptized people in more than one location (cf. Luke 3:3; John 3:23; 10:40). « Less

Matt. 3:14 Jesus goes to the desert to be baptized by John, but **John would have prevented him**, because he knows Jesus' identity as the mightier one who brings messianic baptism.

Matt. 3:15 for us to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus' baptism inaugurates his ministry and fulfills God's saving activity prophesied throughout the OT, culminating with his death on the cross (cf. John 1:31–34). In so doing, Jesus also endorses John's ministry and message and links his mission to John's. Although he needed no repentance or cleansing, Jesus identifies with the sinful people he came to save through his substitutionary life and death (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). « Less

Matt. 3:16 The **Spirit of God** anoints Jesus as Israel's King and Messiah and commissions him as God's righteous “servant” (cf. Isa. 42:1).

Matt. 3:17 The **voice from heaven** confirms the eternally existing relationship of divine love that the Son and Father share as well as Jesus' identity as the messianic Son of God (Ps. 2:7). This **beloved Son** is the triumphant messianic King, yet he is also the humble “servant” into whose hands the Father is **well pleased** to place the mission to bring salvation to the nations (Isa. 42:1–4).

Notes from ESV Study Bible on Romans 6:3-4:

Rom. 6:3 Christians died to sin when they were **baptized into Christ**. Paul is not arguing that baptism magically destroys the power of sin. Baptism is an outward, physical symbol of the inward, spiritual conversion of Christians.

Rom. 6:4 In the early church, baptism was probably by immersion, at least as a general rule, though Christians dispute whether such a practice must always be followed literally today. Therefore, baptism pictures a person being **buried** with Christ (submersion under water) and being **raised** to new life with Christ (emergence from water). This symbolizes the person's union with, and incorporation into, Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they now have the power to live in **newness** of life.