

Week 38: The Baptism of Jesus - The Beginning of His Ministry

A Sabbath Family Bible Study

Introduction

Before Jesus preached, healed, or confronted false authorities, He submitted. The baptism of Jesus marks the public beginning of His ministry, not through His own self-promotion, but through His obedience. Though sinless, He still entered the waters of repentance, and though divine, He still submitted to God's order and plan.

This week teaches families that authority always begins with obedience, calling can only begin with submission, and public ministry begins with faithfulness to God's laws. Jesus did not bypass God's established process - He fulfilled it. In doing so, He modeled humility, righteousness, and alignment with the Father's will for us.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:1–6 - The Call to Repentance

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Commentary

God prepared the way for Christ through repentance. John did not soften his message or appeal to the masses, he called people to turn from sin. We should note that before salvation was publicly revealed, hearts were confronted and called to repentance. Families are reminded that repentance is the only thing that prepares the way for obedience and renewal.

Matthew 3:7–12 - Fruit Worthy of Repentance

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Commentary

This shows us that true repentance is proven by fruit only and not by promises or claims. Our heritage, position, or appearance can never substitute for obedience and submission to God's laws. John warned that judgment follows unrepentance and Families must understand that faith must be lived every day, it must live in our hearts, not just be merely spoken.

Matthew 3:13–15 - Jesus Submits to Baptism

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Commentary

Jesus did not need repentance, he was sinless, yet He submitted to baptism to fulfill righteousness and model God's order to set an example for us. Obedience is not always about need or reciprocation, but alignment with God's will. Jesus honored God's order and affirmed the importance of submission even for those in positions of authority and responsibility.

Matthew 3:16–17 - Heaven's Approval

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Commentary

God publicly affirmed His Son after HE demonstrated obedience, not before. The Spirit descended, and the Father spoke His approval. Families are shown in this, that God's pleasure in us ONLY comes after submission and obedience to His laws. Submission always invites affirmation, blessing, and favor.

Luke 3:21–22 - The Spirit Descends

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Commentary

Luke takes this opportunity to emphasize prayer and show us the importance of praying. Jesus prayed as He was baptized. This shows us that God's power is received in submission and communion with Him. We are reminded that prayer always accompanies obedience and helps prepare our hearts for service.

Discussion Questions for All Ages

Young Children

- Who baptized Jesus?
- Why did Jesus obey God?
- What did God say about Jesus?

Older Children & Teens

- Why did Jesus submit to baptism if He was sinless?
- What does repentance look like in daily life?
- Why does God value obedience?

Adults

- How does submission prepare us for responsibility?
- Are there areas where obedience has been delayed?
- How does repentance shape the health of a household?

Psalm Reading

Psalm 2:6–12 (KJV)

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Commentary

This psalm declares that God Himself has installed His King by divine decree. Jesus is *appointed* by heaven and the Father openly identifies His Son and grants Him authority over the nations, affirming that all rule and judgment only belong to Christ.

The warning to kings and judges makes clear that no authority comes before Him. Earthly rulers are commanded to submit, serve, and rejoice with reverent fear. To “kiss the Son” is to yield allegiance, honor His authority, and trust Him fully. Those who resist Him face judgment, while those who trust Him are blessed. We are reminded here that Christ’s baptism did not diminish His kingship, but revealed it. His obedience and humility confirmed His authority.

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

By John Newton (1779)

1.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

2.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

3.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

4.

The Lord hath promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

5.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

6.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.



Family Application Points

1. Begin with Obedience

Jesus began His ministry by submitting to God's order, because obedience is the foundation of every calling God establishes. Families must learn that faithfulness in submission prepares the way for fruitfulness in responsibility.

2. Repent Honestly

True repentance will produce visible changes, and there will be no delay. God calls His people to turn fully from sin, not acknowledge it, not "work on" it, and certainly not make excuses for it.

3. Honor God's Order

Submission always precedes authority in God's design. Jesus honored God's order before exercising power, setting the example. Families that respect structure, roles, and discipline reflect God's wisdom and they will experience greater peace.

4. Seek God's Approval

God's pleasure only follows obedience. Jesus was affirmed by the Father after HE demonstrated submission. In this, families are reminded to seek God's approval above praise, recognition, or success.

5. Pray Consistently

Prayer always accompanies obedience to God's laws and invites His blessings upon you. Jesus prayed as He submitted to baptism, showing that prayer helps align the heart with God's will. Families grow strong when prayer becomes daily and normalized.

A Sabbath Feast Prayer

Father, we thank You for the example of Your Son, who submitted fully to Your will. As we sit at this table, bless this food before us and bless the loving hands that prepared it. Teach our family to walk in obedience, repentance, and humility. Let our lives be pleasing in Your sight, and prepare us for the work You have called us to do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord, teach us to begin every calling with obedience. Remove pride, hesitation, and resistance from our hearts. Help our family to walk humbly before You, to repent quickly, and to seek Your approval above all else. May our home be shaped by submission to Your will and strengthened by Your Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.