

Baptism of Jesus



Romans 6:1-14 Titus 3:4-8 Matthew 3:13-17

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Jesus' Baptism is a Trinitarian event!

All three persons of the Holy Trinity are publicly seen and heard at Jesus' Baptism -- it is the only public appearance of the Holy Trinity recorded in the history of the world!

- **Jesus**, the Son of God, is in the Jordan River, explaining to John the Baptist that this Baptism will “*fulfill all righteousness.*”
- The **Holy Spirit** appears in the form of a dove coming down from heaven and landing on Jesus. Jesus is anointed as the Messiah, filled with the Spirit to do the work of salvation for us and all men.
- And **God the Father**, who rarely speaks in Scripture, declares from Heaven that “*This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased.*”

**It is the only public appearance¹
of the Holy Trinity
recorded in the history of the world.**

¹ This about how significant this is! There was no public appearance of the Holy Trinity recorded at the Creation of the world, the Exodus of the Israelites, the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection of Christ, His Ascension, nor Pentecost. But the Baptism of Jesus is so important that the Holy Trinity makes a public appearance!

Jesus' Baptism is a big deal. He who had no sin to be washed away **gathers up our sins and our guilt** in the water and places it upon Himself. He is the Lamb of God Who is now carrying our sin upon Himself; He will take it into Jerusalem where He will suffer and die in our place. Our sin and our guilt is nailed to the cross. Jesus' Baptism is the official beginning of His work as the Savior of the world²!

The importance of Jesus' Baptism reminds us of the significance of our Baptisms as well. **Your baptism is a big deal!**

Your Baptism unites you to the Savior, you belong to Him through the water of Baptism. Baptism unites you to Jesus' work of salvation: you are crucified with Him, buried, and rise to new life through the water of Holy Baptism. Here's how St. Paul describes it in the book of Romans:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized **into** His death? 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. Romans 6:3-5

Obviously, you have not physically been crucified nor buried, but spiritually you have been. What that means is that your old sinful nature has been crucified with Christ, it is dead and buried as far as God is concerned. In your Baptism, a new man arises and lives before God in righteousness, purity, and holiness. Something brand-new happened to you; the person that went into the water of Baptism is not the same person that came out of the water of Baptism. You were given spiritual life; the Bible describes it as a “*new man*.” The old sinful nature is crucified, drowned, and buried in Baptism. You have spiritually rose from the dead and have new spiritual life; that new spiritual life is faith in Christ, and it changes everything about you now as you live your life on earth. *You belong to Christ; you are a Christian!*

As one baptized into Christ, you are to consider yourself **dead to sin and alive to God!** Being **dead to sin and alive to God** means that you do not respond to sin or

² This is how Jesus' Baptism is portrayed in Scripture. Remember also, that Jesus has already been doing the work of salvation by living a perfect and holy life in complete obedience to God His Father and His commandments since birth. Jesus' Baptism signals the beginning of His public ministry, where He will now begin teaching, working miracles, and making His way to suffer and die in Jerusalem on the cross. Jesus' Baptism is like His commissioning service; His ordination in the office of “Savior.” Jesus' public ministry lasted roughly three years: from His Baptism to His Ascension! It is these three years that are documented in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

temptation --> you are “dead to it”. Rather, you respond to God and hear and obey His Word. You are **alive in Christ!** You have a new life of faith to live! You belong to God and live in His Kingdom! Baptism changed everything for you: *the old has been crucified, the new is here!*

Jesus teaches us to think of Holy Baptism as being “**born again.**”

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” . . .

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:3,5-6

In this image of “**born again,**” your first birth was from your mother, where you were conceived and born into sin and death³. Now, in Holy Baptism, you are **born again** – born a second time --- born from above --- by the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God in the water of Holy Baptism. This is a spiritual birth as opposed to a physical birth. In both “births”, you are complete passive. Your mother did the work in your physical birth; God does the work when you are **born again**. God is at work in your Baptism: He washes you clean from your sins and gives you eternal life. In Holy Baptism, you are redeemed from sin, set free from guilt, cleansed from unrighteousness, rescued from the world, delivered from the devil, and saved from death. Holy Baptism is God at work with a life giving miracle in your life! Without Baptism, there is no life⁴. Because of God's work in Holy Baptism, you will not die in your sin; you will live in Christ and His Resurrection⁵!

³ Being “conceived and born into sin and death” is the doctrine of Original Sin. We confess it like this in the Augsburg Confession: “[Lutherans] teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence (= evil desires); and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.”

⁴ Of course, there are exceptions to this if someone comes to faith and dies before Holy Baptism. There may even be exceptions for someone who is grossly misled about the significance of Holy Baptism and never gets baptized. But these would be extremely rare exceptions. The rule is that “Christians are baptized”. Jesus commanded it. It is how God works in our lives to bring His grace, forgiveness, and life to us. Someone who refuses Holy Baptism, after learning its significance, does so at their own peril. The question is, “why would someone refuse to be baptized?” There is no legitimate biblical reason for that . . . in fact, it would be rebellion against Christ and His Word.

⁵ Martin Luther writes in the Large Catechism: “Baptism is of divine origin . . . What God institutes and commands cannot be useless. It is a most precious thing, even though to all appearances it may not be worth a straw . . . Although it is performed by men's hands, it is nevertheless truly God's own act. . . . Thus you see plainly that Baptism is not a work which we do but is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps.”

Born again is a life image. In Holy Baptism you are given spiritual life, spiritual life is faith in Christ now as you live each day. It includes eternal life, which you already have, which you will experience at the moment of death. At the instant of death, you will immediately be with Christ, for you have already crossed over from death to life in the water of Baptism. This new life you have from being **born again** not only includes spiritual life now, eternal life at the moment of death, but also resurrection life on the Last Day. When Jesus returns He will raise your body from the grave, glorify it, and you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven in both body and soul. Holy Baptism is significant, it is a life image. You will not die in your sin, you will live because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Born again is also a family image. Just as in your first birth you were born into a family and given a name, so too in Holy Baptism you were born into God's family and given His Name. You were baptized “**in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**” You belong in God's family, this is who you are, you are a baptized child of God. This is your identity. You live your life as a member of God's family. God is your Father in Heaven, and He loves you, provides for you, and watches over every detail of your life. Holy Baptism is significant, as it brings you into God's Family, and gives you your identity.

Consider yourself baptized in Christ!
You belong to the Lord!
God is your Father in heaven!
Your sins have been washed away!
You are filled with the Holy Spirit!
You have a new life of holiness to live!

In a world that is lost and confused and has turned everything upside down; you have an identity in your Baptism! You belong to the Lord; you are well pleasing in His sight through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Your Baptism unites you to Jesus your Savior.

All the gifts he has earned for you comes to you through Holy Baptism!

His Baptism – and your Baptism
Are a big deal!

Amen!

God the Father, we thank you for baptizing us into Your Son Jesus Christ, and giving us the Holy Spirit. We thank you for washing us clean from our sins, and giving us new and eternal life. Give us the conviction and the knowledge that Baptism is Your work alone in our lives, a gift of grace and mercy. Help us to remember our Baptisms, and that we belong to You and live in Your Kingdom each day. Help us to remember that we live under the cross of Your Son Jesus because we have been baptized in Your Most Holy Name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Romans 6:1-14

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 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. 5 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. 6 We know that our old self[a] was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free[b] from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Titus 3:4-8

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people

Matthew 3:13-17

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”