

The Baptism of Jesus

TEXT Matthew 3:13-17

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:15-17,21,22; John 1:29-34

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe the water baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, and will recognize that this was done as an example for us.

MEMORY VERSE Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. — John 1:29

MEMORY VERSE SONG

Be - hold the Lamb of God, be - hold the Lamb of God, which
ta-keth a-way the sin of the world, Be-hold the Lamb of God.

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

BEHOLD — hands cupped around mouth

THE LAMB OF GOD — right middle finger to left palm,
left middle finger to right palm

WHICH TAKETH AWAY — left palm up, pass right
palm over left palm like brushing off dirt

THE SIN OF THE WORLD — make fists with index fin-
gers pointing to each other and then to self

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Cut apart into sections the picture of a lamb with the words of the memory verse written on the various pieces. (See pattern at end of lesson.) Display the verse a portion at a time, putting together the puzzle as the students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Open your class time by asking your students to name some things they have learned by exam-

ple; for instance, to tie a shoe, fold a paper airplane, etc. You may even wish to teach them some sample things by showing them how to do it!

1. Jesus taught us about water baptism through example.
2. John the Baptist was baptizing men unto repentance.
3. Jesus came to be baptized by him.
4. John felt unworthy but did baptize Jesus by immersion.

Climax: God the Father and the Holy Spirit gave their approval to Jesus' baptism.

Conclusion: Jesus' water baptism was blessed by God. We, too, should be baptized when we have been saved.

Response: Your students will be able to tell how Jesus was baptized and how we are baptized today.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When Jesus was thirty years old (Luke 3:23) it was

time for Him to begin the work God had sent Him to do. According to Jewish law one could not begin his public ministry before the age of thirty (Numbers 4:3). Six months prior to this His cousin, John, began his own ministry. John was a rugged individual who lived a simple life and preached a simple message. The message was, "Repent" (Matthew 3:2). Large crowds went out to hear him, and after accepting his message, were baptized in water. The pious Jews, however, had a difficult time accepting his message. Believing they were God's chosen people, children of Abraham and keepers of the Covenant of Moses, they felt no need of repentance (Matthew 3:9). God, however, was about to move in a fresh new way and unless they were willing to turn from their trust in the old religious practices and accept God's plan they would be in danger of judgment (Matthew 3:1,10,12). John's message was not the culmination of this fresh move of God, but only a preparation for it. He was very aware of this and declared, "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" (Matthew 3:11).

Then Jesus came to John and asked to be baptized. Why would He want to be baptized by John? He certainly did not need to repent. John knew this (Matthew 3:14). There was a spiritual awakening taking place throughout Israel because of John's preaching. He had been telling the people to prepare their hearts for the coming of their Messiah. By being baptized, Jesus demonstrated by action, and not by words only, His full agreement with John's message. He was, in fact, saying, "All that John has said is true. His message is from God."

At this time Jesus received the special anointing of the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34) and the blessed word of His Father that His thirty years in Nazareth had pleased Him. Now He could go forth in confidence and accomplish all of His Father's will.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring a pan or bowl of water and a doll that can get wet and show the children exactly how water baptism is performed. Emphasize that it is more than just sprinkling the top of the head.

How do we hear about special events? Bring a newspaper, portable radio or picture of one, a letter, etc. These are some items which bring us news of things happening in our world. Jesus' ministry was announced all over the country through one man, John the Baptist. He told about Jesus who could take away the sins of the world.

Write out on three separate pieces of paper the words,

"In the Name of the Father," "the Son" and "the Holy Ghost." Explain how each of these was present at the baptism of Jesus, and why those words are used when we are baptized.

Have someone give a personal testimony, focusing first on his salvation and then on his experience of water baptism — where and when it took place and how it felt. This idea could also be used as a review.

QUESTIONS

Why do you suppose Jesus came to John to be baptized of him?

If Jesus wanted this, why do you suppose John objected?

Why would Jesus need water baptism?

What is the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity?

How does our lesson today illustrate this teaching?

What did Jesus begin to do after He was baptized?

What significance is there in the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, coming upon Jesus at this time?

How do people receive the Holy Spirit today and why is this needful?

PRE-SCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Bring small dolls and a tray of water to demonstrate water baptism.

Take your children on a "field trip" to the church baptistry and explain what occurs during a baptismal service.

Prepare a "hands on" paper activity for your children showing the baptism of Jesus by John (see Patterns). By folding the paper, the figure of Jesus can be covered with "water." Draw the dove on the reverse side of the paper so that when the top is folded down the dove will appear over Jesus. This will show the children how Jesus was baptized.

Emphasize to the small children that baptism is not "washing." We must have a clean heart before baptism takes place. Show a sin-spotted heart and tell them that this kind of heart needs to be cleaned before it is ready for baptism. Then show a clean heart.

REVIEW IDEAS

Take two apples. Inject one of them with food coloring. (Syringes are available at drug stores.) Before class get both of them muddy on the outside. Bring to class a washcloth and water. Tell a little story about the apples — how they both look the same, etc. After washing them, cut them both open. Bring out the fact that it takes more than just washing our bodies or even being baptized to make the inside clean. This is a good way to tie in the memory verse.

