# Lesson 3/4 Matthew 3 Jesus’ Baptism

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

The Gospel of Matthew contains many intertwining themes. On such set of themes is the presentation of Christ as a new Moses, a new David, and a new Solomon. These three will be evident in today’s lesson.

1. A. What similarities do you see between the story of the infancy of Moses and Jesus?

Exodus 1:22

22 Pharaoh then commanded all his people, “Throw into the Nile every boy that is born, but you may let all the girls live.”

B Note that it was not Moses who led God’s people into the Promised Land, it was Joshua. Last week we looked at the meaning of Jesus’ name in Hebrew. How does the understanding of Jesus’ name help us see Him as a new Moses saving His People and leading them to the True Promised Land and a new Joshua leading God’s people into the True Promised Land?

1. The story of the Magi permits us to see Jesus, even as an infant, as a new Solomon. What are some of the parallels between the story of the Magi and the story of the Queen of Sheba’s encounter with Solomon?

1 Kings 10:4-10

4 When the queen of Sheba witnessed Solomon’s great wisdom, the house he had built,

5 the food at his table, the seating of his ministers, the attendance and dress of his waiters, his servers, and the burnt offerings he offered in the house of the LORD, it took her breath away.

6 “The report I heard in my country about your deeds and your wisdom is true,” she told the king.

7 “I did not believe the report until I came and saw with my own eyes that not even the half had been told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report I heard.

8 Happy are your servants, happy these ministers of yours, who stand before you always and listen to your wisdom.

9 Blessed be the LORD, your God, who has been pleased to place you on the throne of Israel. In his enduring love for Israel, the LORD has made you king to carry out judgment and justice.”

10 Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty gold talents, a very large quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never again did anyone bring such an abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

1. Later in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus explicitly compares himself to Solomon. How would you compare the wisdom of Jesus to the wisdom of Solomon?

Matthew 12:42

42 At the judgment the queen of the south will arise with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than Solomon here. ()

1. A. Why do you think John the Baptist’s criticism of the religious leaders was so harsh?

Matthew 3:7-10

7 When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees\* coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

8 Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.

9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

10 Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

B How does John 19:15 demonstrate the correctness of his assessment?

John 19:15

They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

1. Read Matthew 3:13-17 and John 1:29-34. A theophany is a manifestation of God in the Bible that is tangible to the human senses. In the Baptism of Jesus we see a theophany of the Holy Trinity. In what ways does this event reveal the three persons of the Trinity? How is this meaningful to you?

Matthew 3:13-17

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”

15 Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him.

16 After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him.

17 And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son,\* with whom I am well pleased.”

John 1:29-34

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

30 He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'

31 I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel."

32 John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him.

33 I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.'

34 Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

1. Challenge Question: Many have asked (including John the Baptist) why Jesus, who was without sin, came to be baptized? Jesus answered the question in verse 15. What do you think Jesus meant by “to fulfill all righteousness”? Consider Matthew 22:37-40.

Matthew 22:37-40

37 He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and the first commandment. 39 The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

1. The Catechism refers to pronouncements by the Father and by Jesus Himself that Jesus is the beloved Son, the only Son of God. What does this fact tell you about the love of the Father and the Son for you individually and personally?

Catechism 444

444 The Gospels report that at two solemn moments, the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of the Father designates Jesus his "beloved Son." Jesus calls himself the "only Son of God", and by this title affirms his eternal pre-existence. He asks for faith in "the name of the only Son of God". In the centurion's exclamation before the crucified Christ, "Truly this man was the Son of God", that Christian confession is already heard. Only in the Paschal mystery can the believer give the title "Son of God" its full meaning.

1. In the story of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac (not completed) God refers to Isaac’s relationship to Abraham as “only son” and “whom you love.” How does that terminology show us the enormity of Jesus sacrifice and God’s love for us.

Genesis 22:2

Then God said: Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you