But why is it so important for Jesus’ baptism to signify the start of his ministry?

**Supporting Thought | Reveals The Truth Of Scripture.**

We looked at Ezekiel 36 last week and how it was Jewish custom for gentiles (non-jews) to be baptized in water whenever they wanted to change their citizenship and join the nation of Israel.

* They would not only have to deny their former nation, but any other gods that they used to worship and proclaim their faith in Yahweh, the Lord of Israel.
* So, one of the things that Jesus’ baptism fulfills is the promise in Ezekiel that all nations will be saved, not just Israel.
	+ And as we know, Jesus didn’t come just to save the Jews, but all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved!

But Jesus’ baptism also fulfills the scripture found in Leviticus 16. This is where we will see just how Jesus came, not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law.

* The book of Leviticus is literally called ‘The Book of Law’. And in Leviticus, there are all types of laws and regulations Israel had to follow when it came to worshiping God, consecrating themselves and the Temple, and offering sacrifices to God.
* And in Leviticus 16 we see the laws regarding the Day of Atonement.

God gave these laws concerning the Day of Atonement after Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu, disobeyed God and burned unconsecrated fire in the tabernacle. God knew that he could not count on the priests to always remain pure and holy, so he needed a different way for all of Israel to be cleansed. This is what he tells Moses concerning the Day of Atonement:

*The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons, who died after they entered the Lord’s presence and burned the wrong kind of fire before him.**The Lord said to Moses, “Warn your brother, Aaron, not to enter the Most Holy Place behind the inner curtain whenever he chooses; if he does, he will die. For the Ark’s cover—the place of atonement—is there, and I myself am present in the cloud above the atonement cover.**“When Aaron enters the sanctuary area, he must follow these instructions fully. He must bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He must put on his linen tunic and the linen undergarments worn next to his body. He must tie the linen sash around his waist and put the linen turban on his head. These are sacred garments, so he must bathe himself in water before he puts them on. -* ***Leviticus 16:1-4 NLT***

What we just read is the rituals that Aaron had to do before he could offer a sin offering to God on behalf of all of Israel. This type of sin offering would be offered one time a year to cleanse all of Israel from their previous sins. But notice what is happening here. There are two events of Jesus’ life that parallel what is supposed to happen during the day of atonement.

1. The first event occurs on the day of fulfillment, or the day Jesus fulfilled what He came to earth to do, on the day of his death.
	1. Just like Aaron was supposed to bring a young bull for a sin offering, Jesus became our sin offering when died on the cross. *For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.* ***-2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT***
	2. We also see that Aaron was to put on linens (undergarments, tunic, sash, and turban). Likewise, when Jesus was placed in the tomb, he wore linens. *Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth.* ***-Matthew 27:59 NLT***

Aaron had to wrap himself in linen in order to prepare himself to bring the sacrifice. Jesus had to wrap himself in linen to show that he had become the sacrifice!

* But this is only the first event that connects Jesus’ ministry to the Day of Atonement.
* Before Aaron could put on the linen garments and bring the sacrifice on behalf of Israel, he had to bath himself in water! Likewise, before Jesus could put on the linens and become our sacrifice, He had to be baptized in water! To fulfill this Scripture that the true Day of Atonement is the day that He dies on the cross for the sins of the world!

And not only that, but look at this; **Leviticus 16:2** says, *For the Ark’s cover—the place of atonement—is there, and I myself am present in the cloud above the atonement cover.*

* *After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him.* ***-Matthew 3:16 NLT***

Jesus is our atonement! He is our reparations, our reconciliation to God, who is present in the heavens (cloud) above Jesus saying, “This is my plan for salvation! This is the Messiah! The savior of the world who has come to take away your sins!”

Jesus’ baptism fulfills the scriptures in a powerful way! Not just symbolizing the start of his earthly ministry, but revealing to us that He came to bring all nations into a relationship with God and to be the ultimate sacrifice for our sins so we could be reconciled back to God!

**Supporting Thought | Reveals The Fullness Of God.**

**Read | Matthew 3:16-17 NLT**

At Jesus’ baptism we get a glimpse of the Trinity all together in one physical and geographical place.

* We will be going more in depth into why God is a triune God during our Wednesday Family Grow Night here in a few weeks.

But, what we believe Scripture teaches is that we worship one God, one essence or being, who manifests himself in three distinct persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

* While God is the all-encompassing essence or being, we believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have unique characteristics and qualities that are used to relate to us on a personal level.

And right here, at Jesus’ baptism, we see all three of them come together to give divine testimony that Jesus is the son of God and his life and ministry is going to offer a fresh start spiritually to all who call on His name!

**Supporting Thought | Reveals Who Jesus Is To Others.**

**Illustration |** Moving truck/wedding rings reveal you’re moving/married.

As I said earlier, all four gospels share the story of Jesus’ baptism. And John 1:29-31 says this, *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.” -* ***John 1:29-31 NLT***

Water baptism wasn’t only important for the people who John was baptizing. And water baptism wasn’t only important for Jesus so he could reveal himself to those who were there.

* But your water baptism is also important. Because when you are baptized in water, you are revealing who Jesus is to others.
* You are publicly acknowledging that Jesus has revealed himself to you. He has made himself known and forgiven you of your sins. You are declaring that you have a fresh start in Christ Jesus because of the transformational work he has done in your heart. And now, you want to reveal who that Jesus is to your friends, to your family, to your community, and to your church.

Water baptism reveals who Jesus is to others.

* Jesus’ baptism revealed to John and those who were there that He was the Messiah. And when you get baptized, you relate with them in revealing Jesus to your world!

This is what Jesus is saying during the great commission when he says, *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”*

* What he is telling us to do is to go and make other followers of Jesus by revealing who is to all the nations, just like his baptism did.

Jesus’ baptism revealed the start of his ministry. His baptism revealed the truth of scripture that he came to save all nations through his death and resurrection, reconciling those who repent back to God. And our baptism points us back to Jesus and shows others who He is and what he has done in our lives.

**Call/Challenge | If you are here today, and you have not made a public declaration of your faith through water baptism, you can make that decision today. What better way to spiritually start fresh than by declaring Jesus as your lord and savior and pointing other people towards Him.**

**Series:** Fresh Start | **Title:** A Fresh Baptism

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:13-17 NLT **| Date:** September 11, 2022

**Read | Matthew 3:13-17 NLT**

**Opening Line | Jesus’ life and ministry shows us how to spiritually reset and ‘start fresh’ in our relationship with God.**

**Introduction |** And this passage of Scripture about Jesus’ baptism is no different; albeit confusing.

* I would be lying if I didn’t say that this passage of Scripture has always confused me. While I understood that Jesus’ baptism somehow related to my own water baptism, I never really understood more than that.
* For example: I’ve always thought John’s comment about needing to be baptized by Jesus was always valid. And Jesus’ response to John was always confusing, saying, “*It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.”* What a vague answer Jesus!

I hope to clear up these misunderstandings as well as any misunderstandings you may have about Jesus’ baptism. But the main thought that I want you to capture is this…water baptism declares our fresh start in Christ because…

**Main Thought | Water Baptism Always Points To Jesus!**

Water baptism is more than a religious ritual, and it is more than just a symbolic milestone in your spiritual journey. Water baptism points you to Jesus!

**Illustration |** A moving truck in your driveway points to a fresh start. It points to the fact that you’re moving!

* Your wedding ring points to your spouse. That you are taken off the market. It is a physical sign that you have made a commitment/covenant to someone who matters to you in your life.
* Likewise, water baptism points us to Jesus!

And there’s a few ways that water baptism points us to Jesus. In fact, there are four things that Jesus’ baptism reveals.

**Supporting Thought | Reveals The Start Of Jesus’ Ministry.**

If you remember back to last week’s message, we talked about how John the Baptist’s ministry was to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. And John’s entire message was summed up by this phrase, *‘Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.’*

* And when someone confessed their sins, John would baptize them in the Jordan river to show that they have repented and are awaiting the coming Messiah.

So, John baptizing Jesus was in-part to signify that Jesus was the Messiah, and John’s job was done because the ministry of Jesus was about to start.

* In fact, in all four gospels, Jesus’ baptism is recorded, and his baptism takes place before he ever performs a miracle, teaches to the crowds, or calls his first disciples.