

## Matthew 3 – Baptism of Jesus (BCP version) (12<sup>th</sup> January 2014)

Great passage – but one of more perplexing chapters, big questions:

- Why is John so angry about what looks like spiritual renewal?
- Why Jesus get baptised at all? (Question JtB asked too.)

Method in madness – Matthew knows what he’s doing. Look today at **what this means for Matthew, what it meant for Jesus and what it means for us today.**

So what’s going on here? **What is Matthew seeing that we’re not?**

RECAP last week – Matthew retelling story of Israel. New Israel is Jesus. Started with spiritual quest from East ending up in Israel, and ended with flight to Egypt, just like Joseph and his brothers, the forefathers of Israel. What happens next? (ASK)

God calls them out – note Matthew 2:15 READ – quote from Hosea – about Israel. God describes Israel as his son in OT.

How? Judgement and journey through water

- Judgement – plagues on Israel’s oppressors / Journey – red sea
- What happens here too? Judgement on oppressors – spiritual – Pharisees and Sadducees. Note contrast between baptism of many (READ v5-6) and judgement of elite (READ v7)

Then water – this time Jesus’ baptism. Here’s new son (get link) finding his identity and beginning his own journey. Jesus again fulfils his calling to be new Israel.

Think that’s what he means by ‘fulfil all righteousness’ – not that needed cleansing for himself (why JtB objected). But he was fulfilling something, his true destiny to be the true people of God: the righteous people who remained true to their calling. In getting baptised he was identifying himself with all God’s righteous people and becoming their standard bearer.

So big stuff going on here for Matthew. **What mean for Jesus?**

**Identity – who is the true Son now?** READ v16-17. To understand Jesus you have to understand who he is. We think a lot about what he says and does – but only 2<sup>nd</sup> most important – the most important thing – who he is. That's why what he says and does matters. Early creed (ASK) – Jesus is Lord. He's God, and here God himself endorses it, and everyone hears it.

And note difference – not a fallen son, or a disobedient one – but one in whom God delights. Jesus is everything true Son should be, a picture of what it means to bear the image of God in its real sense. It's what we were created to be (and failed) – but Jesus is real deal. And with this affirmation he begins his public ministry.

For disciples – understanding of who Jesus was developed through gospels. For Matthew, issue is clear right at start – who Jesus is matters. He's new Israel – means, more importantly, he's true Son, The Son – God himself.

**What mean for us?**

Lots of things you can say about Jesus being Son of God (mention course/fliers)

Focus on topic: baptism. What Jesus went through has become normative for us at start of our journeys in faith too? What does your baptism mean for you?

Link to first part of passage again – why does John challenge Pharisees? Life didn't match up. 'Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.' In other words, walk the talk. Live out your identity to be the people of God.

Start with baptism – what does it mean to live out our baptisms? Great quote this week in article from Brett Younger, puts it better than I could:

*When Jesus stands up, the waters of the Jordan dripping down his face, he sees the Spirit descending like a dove to rest upon his soggy head. The Spirit comes, not as an all-consuming fire of judgment, but with the flutter of hopeful wings. A voice says: "You are my child. I love you. I'm delighted with you."... Jesus gives himself to God's people, takes his place with hurting people. Baptism was Jesus' commissioning to ministry.*

*So Jesus doesn't die of old age. He dies because he takes his baptism seriously. When Jesus cries on the cross, "It is finished," it is his baptism that is complete.*

*Baptisms, like most beginnings, find meaning long after the event. Beginning is often easy, while finishing is often hard. The significance of any decision takes a while to emerge. Moments of initiation are meaningless until we are true to the promise of that beginning. We're handed a map, but then we have to take the trip. It takes our whole lives to finish the journey we begin when we're baptized.*

*So what does it mean to us to live out our baptisms? If we are true to our baptisms, we cannot make ourselves comfortable, cannot do only what will be appreciated, and cannot be satisfied with the way things are. Our baptisms demand that we struggle with what's right and what's wrong, what's important and what's not.*

*The children of God tell the truth in a world that lies, give in a world that takes, love in a world that lusts, make peace in a world that fights, serve in a world that wants to be served, pray in a world that waits to be entertained, and take chances in a world that worships safety. The baptized are citizens of an eccentric community where financial success is not the goal, security is not the highest good, and sacrifice is a daily event.*

*Baptism is our ordination to ministry, our vow to live with more concern for the hurting than for our own comfort, and our promise to take issue with ideas with which everyone else agrees. Baptism is the commitment to share our time with the poor and listen to the lonely.*

*What did it mean when you were baptized? The meaning of your baptism is seen in what you think, feel, and do this day. Have you done anything today that you wouldn't have done if you had not been baptized? We are forever answering the question "Why was I baptized?"*