

# Matthew 03 - Offer of the Kingdom; The Ministry of John the Baptist; Jesus' Baptism

## I. Presentation of the King (Matt 1:1—10:42)

(2) Forerunner (3:1-12)

(3) Baptism (3:13-17)

### Matthew 3

(2) Forerunner (3:1-12) (Cf. Mark 1:2-8; Luke 3:3-18; John 1:18-28)

**1** Now **in those days** John the Baptist \*came, **preaching** in the wilderness of Judea, saying,

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**1** About this time, John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the Judean wilderness,

**1** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

- "...in those days" - some 30 years after the events of Matt 1-2 (Luke 3:23). John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus (Luke 1:36).

— In John 1:15, the Apostle John quotes John the Baptist as saying, "He who is coming after me has proved to be my superior, because He existed before me."

- "...John the Baptist" - in the ancient world, when a king traveled to a country or to a city, he would send certain men to go before him to announce his coming and prepare for his arrival. Such men were known as forerunners or heralds.

— So when the King of the Jews was about to begin His public ministry, God sent a man before Him to announce His coming and to spiritually prepare the nation for His arrival. This forerunner was John the Baptist.

— John the Baptist's ministry was to ready the people of Israel and prepare them for their Savior. No one is ready for a Savior unless there is an honest recognition of sin. When people were baptized by John they publicly confessed their sins and acknowledged their wrongs (v6).

- "...preaching" - in the NT, this verb does not mean what it means today; it means to proclaim an event

**2** "**Repent**, for the **kingdom of heaven is at hand**."

2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

2 "Repent, because the kingdom from heaven is near!"

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

- The "Offer of the Kingdom"; also offered by Christ (Matt 4:17); the Twelve (Matt 10:5-7); and the Seventy (Luke 10:1,9). After 400+ years of silence, from Malachi to Matthew, now comes a voice announcing God's message and publicly pointing to the Person of Jesus Christ.

- "...Repent" - *metanoeō*, to change one's mind; in the NT, it indicates a complete change of attitude about Jesus Christ

— John's command to the people of Israel was for them to turn from their sins to God in anticipation of their Messiah. It was clear that the Jews needed to change their thinking. Most of them believed that they would enter the kingdom simply because they were children of Abraham (v9). With this command, John was attacking the established religious concepts of that day.

— They needed to change their thinking about God, about themselves, and about their sin. They needed to change their attitude and see themselves as God saw them. No one is ready for a Savior until they recognize how sinful they are (Cf. Is 1:5-6; Jer 17:9).

- "...kingdom of heaven" - this is a distinctively Matthean expression for "kingdom of God"; Matthew, like most pious Jews, used it in order to avoid mentioning the name of God.

— The Jews knew exactly what John meant by the "kingdom of heaven": it was the kingdom which had been promised by all of the OT prophets, and ruled by the Messiah (Cf. Is 2:2-5; 11:1-9; Jer 23:5-8).

— "kingdom" - *basileia*, undefined by John the Baptist, as well as Jesus, the 12 disciples, and the 70 in their other offers when they preached the same message

— This lack of NT definition shows that the notion of the kingdom was to be understood by how the concept had been developed by the OT prophets. We don't get the luxury of attributing any meaning we want to an undefined term, which is what amillennialism, Kingdom Now, and Progressive Dispensationalism does.

— Such an OT understanding of a literal kingdom explains why the bulk of the NT passages referring to the messianic kingdom clearly refer to it as a future reality rather than a present one (Cf. Matt 6:10; 20:20-21; Luke 23:42; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:24,50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1,18; James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Rev 5:10).

- "...at hand" - *engizō*, "to draw near" (does not mean "to be here"); it doesn't mean the kingdom had arrived. It meant that the kingdom was *near* or *imminent* with an immediate expectation since the presence of the King provided the opportunity for Israel to enthrone Him and thus fulfill Deut 17:15 and enter into its covenantal blessings.

— The same verb is used in the parallel passages (Matt 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:1,9) with the exact same parsing. John's message was different than the OT prophets, who said, "the

kingdom is coming." John's message was that the kingdom was no longer a distant event, but rather was a near event if the nation followed his command to "repent". The kingdom was "near" because the King was present.

— The parsing of the Greek is third person singular perfect active indicative. This is the same parsing of the same Greek word used in James 5:8: "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near (*engizō*)."

No one takes James 5:8 to mean that the Lord has come; instead, they take it that the Lord's coming is soon, close by, imminent, in a place of any-moment expectancy. It's not saying that Jesus is *here*, its saying Jesus is *near*.

— Since *engizō* is used in Matt 3:2 and other related passages with the same parsing, Jesus is saying that the kingdom was "near" or imminent. All that was necessary for the kingdom to arrive was Israel's acceptance of her King (Cf. 11:14).

— Had Israel enthroned Christ, this earthly kingdom would have become a reality not only for the nation but also for the entire world. Israel's covenants would have been fulfilled, and the Times of the Gentiles would have terminated.

- If "at hand" means "arrived," there must be some sense in which the kingdom of God had actually arrived and was in effect when he made the proclamation. If that was the case, in what sense can the forerunner of the King be linked with the arrival of the kingdom?

— John did not have the authority to bring in the kingdom himself. If the kingdom had arrived in Matt 3:2, how could one explain the presence of the kingdom before the earthly ministry of Christ, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, and the events of the Day of the Lord?

## **Offer of the Kingdom**

[Offer of the Kingdom](#)

[The Coming Kingdom 08 Post-Exile](#)

[The Kingdom Offer \(Matt 3:2; 10:5-7\)](#)

[The Coming Kingdom 43 The Kingdom is At Hand \(Matt 3:2; 4:17\)](#)

[Theirs is the Kingdom \(Matt 5:3,10\)](#)

It was incumbent upon first-century Israel to enthrone Christ in order to enter into all of her covenantal blessings (Deut 17:15). The opportunity for Israel to enthrone Christ and experience these blessings is known as "the offer of the kingdom." This idea is captured in the expression "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" as proclaimed to the nation by John the Baptist (Matt 3:1-2), Christ (Matt 4:17), the Twelve (Matt 10:5-7), and the Seventy (Luke 10:1,9). What this expression means is that the unchallenged rulership that God experiences in heaven had drawn near to the earth in the person of Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Davidic King.

That this offer was unique, only for first-century Israel, is apparent in Christ's instructions regarding how the offer should be presented in Matt 10:5-7: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather to go the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" It's clear that Jesus restricted the proclamation about the kingdom to Jews. If the kingdom was spiritual, why was this necessary? In addition, if John and Jesus were referring to a "spiritual kingdom," such an announcement would have no special significance to Israel because such a rule of God had always been recognized among the people of God (Cf. Ps 37:31; 103:19).

Israel rejected these "offers" in Matt 12:24 (see note there). This decision was ratified during the Triumphal Entry and the decision to turn Jesus over to the Romans for crucifixion (Matt 21-23; 26-27). It's also confirmed by the Pharisees themselves in John 19:15. After this, Jesus changed His entire ministry (speaks publicly only in parables). Another offer is not made to first-century Israel, but Jesus will offer the kingdom to a future generation of Jews alive during the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:14).

Just as past generations of Jews were disciplined for Mosaic Covenant violations (2 Kings 17; 25), Christ rejecting first-century Israel also experienced divine discipline (Deut 28:49-50) by means of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, resulting in over a million Jewish deaths when Titus of Rome invaded Israel 37 years after the time of Christ in the horrific events of 70 AD (Dan 9:26b; Matt 24:1-2; Luke 19:41-44).

Had the Jews accepted their Messiah when He offered the kingdom to them, He still would have died on the cross and experienced resurrection and ascension. He could not have been the Messiah without doing so, in fulfillment of many OT prophecies (Ps 22; Is 53; Dan 9; Zech 13). Then the prophecies concerning seven years of Jacob's trouble would have been fulfilled (Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1; 9:26-27). Next, Messiah would have returned to set up His kingdom (Is 60:1-3; 66:18; Hab 2:14; Cf. Zech 12:10; 13:6).

### **Various Interpretations of the Offer of the Kingdom**

Concerning the nature of the kingdom, there are three main interpretations:

1. John was proclaiming an earthly, physical kingdom. This view can be seen through the continuity between the OT kingdom expectation and what John the Baptist was expecting and proclaiming. This is the prominent dispensational premillennial interpretation.
2. John's reference to the "kingdom of heaven" was spiritual. He was not proclaiming an earthly kingdom, but instead was announcing a spiritual kingdom of salvation. This view is common among amillennialists and postmillennialists.

3. The kingdom has “already” and “not yet” elements to it. John announced an aspect of the kingdom that had arrived, but there is also a sense in which the full manifestation of the kingdom is still future. A common way to describe God’s reign is to say that it has been inaugurated at Jesus’ first coming and will be consummated when He returns. This is the progressive dispensational interpretation.

Since John provided no explanation of the kingdom he announced, he fully expected his audience to understand its nature as outlined in the OT. If John was proclaiming a spiritual or “already” kingdom, why is there no definition or re-definition of the kingdom provided? When the Jewish hearers of John’s message heard the term “kingdom,” an earthly kingdom would come to mind, not a spiritual kingdom over the hearts of men.

***You do not interpret the OT according to the NT. Rather, you interpret the NT according to the OT.*** If I don’t interpret the NT by the OT, then I’ve just made the entire OT irrelevant, and worse, I’ve made God a liar. The reason why we must interpret the NT according to the OT is because of the doctrine of Progressive Revelation. Progressive Revelation means that God initiated things back in Genesis, and as Scripture progresses, God reveals additional details or clarifies things, but He never outright changes things. If God changed things, He would not be immutable and worse, He would be a liar.

3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, “THE VOICE OF ONE CALLING OUT IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’”

3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!’”

3 He was the one the prophet Isaiah was referring to when he said, “He is a voice calling out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way for the Lord! Make his paths straight!’”

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

- Quoting from Is 40:3-5; (Cf. Mal 3:1; 11:7-10; John 1:23)

— In Is 40:3, “the voice” exhorts the people to prepare for God’s coming while He is bringing Israel back from her dispersion. The prophet then proceeded to describe the blessings that would follow her return.

— Matthew identified *Yahweh* in Is 40:3 with Jesus in Matt 3:3

[Mark 1:3]

4 Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

4 John had clothing made of camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist. His diet consisted of grasshoppers and wild honey.

**4** And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

- In his dress, food, habitat and message, John associated himself with the poor and with the prophets, particularly Elijah (Cf. 2 Kings 1:8; Zech 13:4; Mal 4:5)

5 At that time Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan;

5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;

5 Then the people of Jerusalem, all Judea, and the entire region along the Jordan began flocking to him,

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

- Many people responded to John because they perceived that he was a genuine prophet with a message from God

6 and they were being **baptized** by him in the Jordan River, **as they confessed their sins.**

6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

6 being baptized by him in the Jordan River while they confessed their sins.

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

- Characteristics of John the Baptist...

- He took an unyielding stand against iniquity (Matt 14:4)
- He was chosen as a herald (John 1:29-31; Luke 1:15-17)
- "To open the door of the sheepfold" (John 10:2-3)

- "...baptized" - John's baptism carried the connotation of cleansing, similar to ceremonial washing. His baptism gave public testimony to a Jewish person's repentance and commitment to live a holy life, in preparation for the public arrival of the Messiah.

- "...as they confessed their sins" - John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, different from Christian baptism today after Pentecost. John's baptism was a public proclamation of repentance (a change of mind) regarding sin, self, and the Savior.

— Christian baptism, on the other hand, is a public testimony of a person's faith in the crucified and risen Christ. It pictures the believer's identification with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom 6:1-11).

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of **vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

7 But when John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he told them, "You children of serpents! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

- Notice John's forceful, non-ecumenical statement

- "...vipers" - a word Isaiah used to describe God's enemies (Is 14:29; 30:6)

- "...who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" - could be translated: "who suggested to you that you would escape the coming wrath?"

- The behavior of the Pharisees and Sadducees should have demonstrated the genuineness of their professed repentance, but it did not

- Pretty strong language from John to these Jewish leaders. They would've associated a viper to Gen 3:15, the seed of the serpent. John is essentially calling them "sons of Satan."

8 Therefore **produce fruit consistent** with **repentance**;

8 Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

8 Produce fruit that is consistent with repentance!

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

- Keep in context here that John the Baptist is speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were coming to him to be baptized, but who hadn't repented (changed their mind about sin, self, or the Savior).

- John accused these leaders of wanting to appear anxious for the Messiah but had not truly repented (changed their mind about Christ). Therefore John demanded "fruits consistent with repentance" before he would baptize them.

- These religious leaders came to John to be baptized with the ostentation that characterized their other religious activities. They were showing the world how ready they were for the Messiah, but they had not truly repented (changed their minds) away from their own works, following of the Mosaic Law, and relying on their genealogy as their path to salvation.

- This verse demonstrates that there is a difference between an internal change of mind and an external change of action. The internal change of mind is the root and the external change of action is the fruit.

- The problem with the religious leaders here is not that they didn't have works...it was that they had not truly repented (changed their mind). John commanded them to demonstrate their repentance because he knew they hadn't done so.

- "...produce" - *poieō*, also translated "bear" [NASB95], but is a different Greek word than "bear" in John 15 [*pherō*]. Most often translated as "do"

- "...fruit" - *karpos*, not the change of mind itself, but the actions which result from it. It is the works produced in people that are visible to other people.

— Matthew doesn't tell us what "fruit" John had in mind here, but we get a clue from v6 in that the people who were baptized by John were "confessing their sins." So confession of sin was part of the "fruit of repentance," not the repentance itself.

— In Luke 3:8, John told people (three groups: the crowd, tax collectors, and soldiers) to "produce fruits that are consistent with repentance." They then questioned him saying, "What are we to do?"

— In response, John said the following:

- To the crowd, he told them to be generous toward the poor (Luke 3:11).
- To the tax collectors, he told them to be honest—don't collect more in taxes than is required (Luke 3:13).
- To the soldiers, he told them to be content—do not misuse your authority by intimidation or accusing anyone falsely, and be content with their wages (Luke 3:14).

— The fruit consistent with repentance was absent in the case of these Pharisees and Sadducees. There was no external evidence that they desired to draw near to God in anticipation of the appearance of the Messiah.

- "...consistent" - *axios*, worthy of or corresponding to, equal in weight to, to weigh as much as. The word was used to describe the equal condition when two weights were balanced on a scale.

— John is basically saying: make sure your fruits (what is seen by others) weigh as much as your repentance. Don't just say you have repented and don't just symbolize your repentance by baptism. Show your repentance by fruits that others can see in your life. If you have really repented, prove it!

- "...repentance" - *metanoia*, a change of mind. John the Baptist was urging these Pharisees and Sadducees to change their thinking from trusting their own merit before God to trusting the Messiah for the remissions of their sins.

— Many people today confuse repentance with the fruits of repentance. Repentance involves a change of mind; the fruits of repentance involves a change in life. The two are closely related, but should be differentiated.

— Repentance is an inward transaction that takes place in a person's heart, between God and man. It cannot be seen by others. It is impossible to look into a crowd of people and know who has repented and who has not.

— Fruit, on the other hand, can be clearly seen by others. It grows on the outside of a person, just like fruit grows on the outside of a tree. Fruit is the natural outflow and result of



a person being in a right relationship with the Lord. A healthy tree will bring forth good fruit (Cf. 7:17-18). A healthy believer will do the same.

9 and do not assume that you can say to yourselves, '**We have Abraham as our father**'; for I tell you that God is able, from these **stones**, to raise up children for Abraham.

9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

9 Don't think you can say to yourselves, 'We have father Abraham!' because I tell you that God can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones!

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

- John had strong words for these Pharisees and Sadducees whose fruits would not weigh as much as their (supposed) repentance. He warned them of coming judgment.

- "...We have Abraham as *our* father" - many Jews during the inter-testamental period believed that if one was a descendant of Abraham, he would automatically enter the kingdom. They counted the righteousness of the patriarchs as sufficient for themselves (Cf. Rom 4).

— John the Baptist called them to repentance: to change their mind about trusting their own merit or their nationality to enter the kingdom and instead place their trust in the Messiah

- John the Baptist is rebuking the Pharisees' pride that they are related to Abraham...he says that God could raise up rocks to be sons of Abraham...what really matters is not that you're a Jew, but a believing Jew (Rom 2:28; 9:6b; Rev 2:9; 3:9)

- "...stones" - John's reference to "stones" was a play on words in Aramaic between "stones" (*abnayya*) and "children" (*benayya*). If the "stones" could become God's children, certainly Gentiles could.

— In Joshua 3, when Israelites crossed the Jordan River from Bethel to Canaan, they stacked stones for each of the 12 tribes. John the Baptist may have pointed to these actual stones to illustrate his point that God could raise them up as children for Abraham.

10 And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore, **every** tree that does not bear good fruit is being cut down and thrown into the **fire**.

10 The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

10 The ax already lies against "the roots of the trees. So every tree that isn't producing good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

- This verse tells us that if something is wrong with the fruit, something is wrong with the root
- This verse gives the reason the Jews needed to repent: divine judgment would precede the inauguration of the Messiah's kingdom (Cf. Is 1:27; 4:4; 5:16; 13:6-19; 42:1; Jer 33:14-16; Dan 7:26-27)
- "...every" - *pas*, better translated "any": [Any] tree which brings not forth good fruit" regardless of its roots, will suffer destruction.
- "...fire" - pictures judgment and destruction of those who fail to repent. For individuals, this judgment would involve eternal destruction (v12); for the nation, it would involve postponement of the kingdom and its blessings.

**11** "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will **baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

**11** "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

11 I am baptizing you with water as evidence of repentance, but the one who is coming after me is stronger than I am, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. It is he who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that comes 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:

- "...baptize you with the Holy Spirit" - the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Jews knew that in connection with the coming kingdom, God promised to "put My Spirit within you" (Ezek 36:27; 39:29). When the Jews heard John announce a baptism of the Spirit, they probably thought of these prophecies.

— In the Gospels, it is always mentioned as something still future (Joel 2:28-29; Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33)

— In the Gospels, Spirit baptism is mentioned only by John the Baptist. He distinguished his work, baptism by water, with the work of the Messiah, baptism by the Holy Spirit.

— There is no record of Spirit baptism happening in the Gospels; even as late as Acts 1:5, it was still referred to as future

- "...fire" - refers to purification

**12** His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

12 His winnowing fork is in his hand. He will clean up his threshing floor and gather his grain into the barn, but he will burn the chaff with inextinguishable fire."

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

- John metaphorically described God separating the true and the false, the repentant and unrepentant, in a future judgment

— This will result in the preservation of the believing Israelites and the destruction of the unbelieving

(3) Baptism (3:13-17) (Cf. Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34)

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

**13** Then Jesus \*arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, *coming* to John to be baptized by him.

**13** Then Jesus \*arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him.

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

**13** Then comes Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have *the* need to be baptized by You, and yet **You are coming to me?**"

14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

14 But John tried to stop him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?"

14 But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

- "...You are coming to me?" - John hesitated to baptize Jesus because he believed that Jesus did not need to repent. To John, it was more appropriate for Jesus to baptize John than for John to baptize Jesus.

- John's baptism was a baptism of repentance (Cf. v2,11). It was a baptism (identification) much different than Church baptism today. In fact, those who were baptized by John and later placed their belief in Christ were re-baptized into the baptism (identification) of the Church (Cf. Acts 19:1-7).

15 But Jesus, answering, said to him, "**Allow *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he \*allowed Him.

15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he \*permitted Him.

15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be this way for now, because this is the proper way for us to fulfill all righteousness."

At this, he permitted him to be baptized.

**15** And Jesus answering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness.* Then he suffered him.

- John agreed to baptize Jesus only after He convinced him that by baptizing Him, both of them would fulfill all righteousness. He submitted to baptism by John not because He needed to repent, but to validate/authenticate John's ministry.

- "...fulfill all righteousness" - baptism is identification with what you are being baptized into. In John's case, it was a baptism of (in identification of) repentance.

— Since Jesus did not sin, He had no need to repent and get right with God. He was God.

So why was Jesus baptized by John? There are six reasons:

1. He was identifying Himself with righteousness
2. He was identifying Himself with the preaching of the kingdom
3. To be made known to Israel; He was publicly identified as the Messiah foretold by the OT
4. To be numbered and identified with the believing remnant of Israel
5. To be identified with sinners. Not as a sinner, but with sinners (Cf. 2 Cor 5:21)
6. To receive a special anointing for His ministry, the Holy Spirit (Cf. Acts 10:38)

— Jesus would soon have His righteousness tested right after His baptism in His temptation by Satan (Matt 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1-2)

Jesus understood that it was God's will for John to baptize Him. There is no OT prophecy that states the Messiah would undergo water baptism, but there is prophecy that Messiah would submit Himself to God (Is 42:1; 53; et al). That submissiveness to God's will is primarily what John's baptism identified in those who submitted to it. Consequently it was appropriate for Jesus to undergo John's baptism, and John consented to baptize Him. In doing so, Jesus authenticated John's ministry and identified Himself with the godly remnant within Israel.

What was Christ's purpose for coming into the world (Matt 1:21; Luke 5:30-32; 19:10; John 3:17; 1 Tim 1:15)? Therefore, it was proper and right for the Savior, at the beginning of His public ministry, to identify with those He came to save. He humbled Himself and was willing to associate and identify with sinners, though He Himself knew no sin. He was willing to stand in the same place as sinners and to put Himself alongside of all the sinful ones for whom John's baptism was designed.

The prophet Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be "numbered with the transgressors" (Is 53:12). The NT teaches that "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb 2:17). Though sinless, He was able to sympathize with His brethren in their struggle with sin: He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

16 After He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and settling on Him*,

16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him,

16 When Jesus had been baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Suddenly, the heavens opened up for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.

**16** And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

- "...settling on Him" - the OT predicted that God would put His Spirit on His Servant (Is 42:1)

17 and behold, a **voice from the heavens** said, "This is My beloved Son, **with whom I am well pleased.**"

17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

17 Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with him!"

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

- All three members of the Godhead/Trinity are present here:

- Father: voice from heaven
- Son: present in human form
- Holy Spirit: in the form of a dove

- "...voice from the heavens" - after 400 years without prophetic revelation, God broke the silence, speaking from heaven to humankind again

— Three times during Jesus' earthly ministry, the Father spoke from heaven:

1. The beginning of Jesus' ministry — At His baptism (Jesus & John the Baptist) (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11)
2. The beginning of the last trip to Jerusalem — At the transfiguration (Peter, James & John) (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7)

3. The beginning of the Final Week — At the Temple (a multitude) (John 12:28)  
- "...with whom I am well pleased" - we know very little of Jesus' childhood, teenage years, and His 20s. But we do know that God was "well pleased" with His Son throughout His first 30 years.

The baptism of Jesus was the last act of His private life and the first act of His public life. It was on this occasion that His public ministry was officially anointed by the Holy Spirit, though He did not actually "go public" until a little while later. While His public ministry did not begin at that point, His public life indeed did.