

All Done

Scripture Reading — Matthew 5:17-20

“Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” — Matthew 3:15

Baptism was common in Jesus’ day as a form of “ritual cleansing” with water. We can imagine in the Middle East—a place where water is rare and dust is everywhere—people might associate “cleansing” with meeting God. In those days many folks were “washed” in ritual cleansing. Everyone, it seemed, knew about baptism.

But John the Baptizer introduced a radical emphasis: baptism wasn’t merely a ritual but required a change of heart. Baptism, he said, was for repentance, and everyone needed it. Everyone needed to leave past regrets and sins behind. Some had to turn away from doing whatever they liked. Others needed to turn from self-righteous rule-following. John offered specific repentance-action steps for everyone.

But on the day Jesus came to him, John, whose fierce style often puzzled people, was taken aback. “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” John wondered (Matthew 3:14). And we might too: *How could the sinless one be baptized with a baptism of repentance?* Jesus said it was right to do this “to fulfill all righteousness.” In all he said and did, Jesus revealed God’s righteousness.

Jesus didn’t need to repent; he was baptized to identify with us as our brother and Savior. His baptism anticipated his death and resurrection, and it symbolized our release from sin and misery. It began our liberation.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for doing everything needed to save us. We stand amazed that you would consider yourself our brother and Savior. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Baptism](#), [God](#), [God's Kingdom](#)

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