



John Baptizes Jesus

Matthew 3:13–17



LESSON GOAL

The student will rejoice that Jesus is the only way of coming to God.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to:

- Explain why John did not want to baptize Jesus.
- Describe the events after Jesus came out of the water.
- Tell what the Father's statement reveals about His Son.
- Analyze what was symbolized by Jesus' baptism.

KEY VERSE

"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

—*Matthew 3:17*

APPLICATION

- Rely upon Jesus as your only hope for salvation.
- Submit to God's righteous will for your life.
- Be humbled by the Savior's perfection.
- Desire to please the Father.

NEXT WEEK

Satan Tempts Jesus

Matthew 4:1–11

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

John the Baptist was the first prophet in Israel in 400 years. His controversial message, dramatic appearance, and unique authority drew all Israel into the desert to see him. Although John was a popular figure, he never drew attention to himself. John was content to be a “voice of one crying in the wilderness” (Matt. 3:3). When the people asked him who he was, John pointed to how much greater the coming Messiah would be than himself (John 1:19–28). John humbly declared that he was even unworthy to carry his Master’s sandals. Despite his recognition of the greatness of the coming Messiah, John did not know who the Messiah was (John 1:31).

John the Baptist did not understand that his cousin Jesus (John 1:36) was the Messiah until he baptized Jesus. The apostle John records the Baptist’s testimony concerning the identity of the Messiah: “I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit’” (John 1:33). When John baptized Jesus, John saw the “Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him” (John 1:32). Soon after John boldly proclaimed what he now understood: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). The events surrounding Jesus’ baptism singles Jesus out as the promised, perfect Messiah, the only one who could take away the sins of the world.

The Son’s Submission (Matt. 3:13–15)

The first recorded episode of Jesus’ adult life was His coming to be baptized by John the Baptist. For approximately 30 years (Luke 3:23), Jesus lived in total obscurity. The only remarkable event was 12-year-old Jesus’ astounding the teachers in the temple with his understanding and answers (Luke 3:46–47). Although Jesus lived in anonymity, both God and men watched with favor as Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (Luke 3:52). Jesus’ cousin John, only six months older, must have been one of those who watched Jesus grow.

When Jesus made the journey from Galilee where he had grown up to the Jordan where John was baptizing, Jesus came for one purpose: to be baptized by John (Matt. 1:13). Since John’s baptism was a visible sign of repentance, John was shocked to see his cousin Jesus coming to be baptized. Although we do not know how well John and Jesus knew each other, John was no doubt familiar with his cousin’s remarkable birth, His perfect obedience, and His love for God’s Word. Aware of his own sin and Jesus’ righteousness, John protested to Jesus, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” (1:14). John was convinced that if any baptizing was to be done, the perfectly righteous Jesus should baptize the sinful John. John had resisted baptizing the Pharisees and Sadducees because they

did not realize their need for repentance, but John resisted baptizing Jesus because He had no need for repentance.

Jesus responded to John's refusal by saying, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 1:15). Jesus' answer emphasized that although baptism did seem improper it was part of God's plan for both Jesus and John's ministry. Jesus told John to allow Him to be baptized so they could "fulfill all righteousness." The Spirit's anointing and the Fathers' praising of Jesus after His baptism were both the dramatic revelation of the Messiah John had been preaching and the initiation of Jesus' public ministry. Their obedience in this matter was central to God's plan for both their ministries.

The choice of baptism was hardly an arbitrary act of obedience. With His baptism, Jesus was publicly submitting to His Father's will for His life. The Lord had prophesied through Isaiah that the Messiah would be "numbered with the transgressor" (Isa. 53:12). Jesus had not come to proclaim His innocence but to identify with sinful man. In his death, Jesus "who knew no sin" became "sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus' baptism expressed His willingness to be counted as a sinner. Jesus was neither admitting nor repenting of sin with His baptism. Instead, He was revealing His willingness to submit to everything His Father had planned for Him, even the humility of taking the place of sinful man and suffering God's wrath.

The Spirit's Anointing (Matt. 3:16)

After John had baptized Jesus, the "heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him" (3:16). God had told John that the one upon whom he saw the Holy Spirit descend and remain was the Messiah (John 1:33). Although much remains unclear how exactly the Holy Spirit looked and why He came in the form of a dove, the Holy Spirit's descent was clear proof that Jesus was the promised King of the Jews.

The Spirit's anointing of Jesus was also promised in Scripture. In Isaiah 61:1, the Servant of the Lord says, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." Although having all power in His deity, Jesus waited upon the Spirit's anointing to begin His ministry. Jesus' miracles and preaching were accomplished through the Spirit's power (Matt. 12:28; Luke 4:14; Acts 2:22, 10:38). Jesus demonstrated His perfect obedience by submitting to the Father's authority by relying upon the Spirit's power. Having waited for the Spirit's anointing, Jesus was now ready to begin His public ministry.

The Father's Pleasure (Matt. 3:17)

The Holy Spirit's dramatic ascension upon the Messiah was followed by the Father's announcement of His love and pleasure (3:17). The Father's voice from heaven proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (3:17). Those Jews who heard God's voice would have likely thought of two Old Testament prophecies: "I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'" (Ps. 2:7) and "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1). The Father's commendation of Jesus as His beloved Son and the Spirit's coming upon Jesus would have been clear signs that the Messiah had come.

The Father's appraisal of His son is a treasure trove of theological insight. From eternity past, the Father, Son and Spirit had shared a profound and perfect love for

each other. This perfect love continued even when the Son added to His deity humanity. Because the Son of Man never sinned, He was able to stay in a perfect, unbroken relationship with His heavenly Father. For the first time since the Fall, the Father could pronounce to man that He was well-pleased with a man. The Son had not allowed (nor could allow) His perfect relationship with the Father to be marred by the pride that led to the destruction of humanity. He always pleased the Father and remained in unbroken fellowship with Him.

Conclusion

Only in His death was the perfect relationship between Father and Son ruptured. Because Jesus knew no sin, He could become “sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:17). But when He identified Himself with sinful man and bore man’s sin on the cross, Jesus was forsaken by His father. Instead of the Spirit settling, heaven opening, and the Father blessing, the sky darkened and the perfect Messiah yelled out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Instead of being called beloved by His Father, the Son bore the full force of His Father’s rejection, wrath, and curse, not because He had ever done anything displeasing but only because He bore our displeasure. No wonder the next day when John the Baptist saw Jesus, he called out “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World!” (John 1:29). Jesus was well-pleasing to the Father but the time of His sacrifice was coming.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.”
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Who did Isaiah say would come and what would he do?

Isaiah said that a man would call out in the desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord’ (Isa. 40:3).” John was the man who Isaiah was talking about.

How was John dressed and what did he eat?

John’s clothes were made out of camel’s hair and leather. He ate locusts and honey.

Why did the people come to hear John preach in the desert?

The way John looked reminded the people of the prophet Isaiah. John preached that the kingdom of heaven was near.

What were people saying when they were baptized?

Baptism with water is an outward sign of their obedience to God.

What were the Pharisees and Sadducees trusting in to go to heaven?

They were trusting that they would be allowed into heaven because of their father’s faith.

Why wouldn't John baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees?

They did not fear God, or think that their sins were worthy of being judged.

Who was the One that John said would come after him and would be greater than him?

Jesus

What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire?

Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit was His giving eternal life (salvation) to those whom were repentant. To those who were unrepentant, he was going to baptize with fire with punishment in Hell.



Who's My Son?

At Jesus' baptism He is identified as God's Son and His righteous character is affirmed. Bring various photographs to class and have the children try and guess which one is your son. If you do not have children of your own you can ask the class to try to match various children with their respective father in a series of photographs. In today's lesson we will learn about how God identified Jesus as His Son so that everyone would know.



Belonging

Jesus' baptism demonstrates that He identified fully with humankind, and yet was not like any other person. He is both fully God and fully man. This can be illustrated to the children by showing them various objects which are either black or white and then asking them which group it should go with. Finally, bring out an object that is both black and white. Where would such an object belong? In today's lesson we will see how Jesus' humanity and deity are both affirmed at His baptism. This concept can also be taught to the children via a game. Give each child either a red round sticker or a blue square sticker. Give one child, helper or teacher a red square sticker. In what group should he be placed? Today's lesson may help the children answer the question.



Who Am I and What Do I Do?

At Jesus' baptism we learn about who Jesus is and what He will do. Bring various hats or items of a uniform to class e.g. soldier, doctor, nurse, policeman, fireman, teacher, etc. Ask the class to guess: "who am I and what do I do?" Ask the children, "Who is Jesus and what will He do?" Today's lesson will give us the correct answers.



The Characteristics of the Messiah

Jesus' baptism reveals His identification with men, His obedience, His unique relationship to the Father and His anointing with the Spirit. These are essential characteristics which confirm that Jesus truly was the long awaited Messiah who would bear the sins of the world. Pretend to be a variety of animals or select a few children to do so in front of the class e.g. duck, dog, cat, lion, bird, etc. Can the class guess who you are? How did they know, what helped them realized what animal you were? The children were able to know what you were, without you telling them, because certain animals have very distinct characteristics. Only a lion growls like a lion and only a bird chirps and flaps its wings. In today's lesson we will learn about some of the distinguishing characteristics of the Messiah; those things that make Him completely unique.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Passage Outline

The Son’s Submission (Matt. 3:13–15)

The Spirit’s Anointing (Matt. 3:16)

The Father’s Pleasure (Matt. 3:17)

Introduction

Have you every met someone important and not known who they were until someone told you? In today’s lesson Jesus will ask John to baptize Him. Before His baptism most people did not know who Jesus was. This was the beginning of Jesus’ ministry on Earth. When Jesus is baptized some amazing and very important things happen that reveal that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah. Let’s listen to today’s story to find out what incredible things happened at Jesus’ baptism.



Lead-off Questions

LOQ: How long had it been since a prophet had been in Israel?

Answer: 400 years had passed since God had sent a prophet to Israel.

LOQ: What was John doing in the wilderness?

Answer: John was baptizing people in the Jordan.

LOQ: Who came to John to be baptized?

Answer: Jesus

LOQ: How did John respond to Jesus’ request?

Answer: John said that he did not want to baptize Jesus. John knew Jesus and how He lived a spotless life. John thought it would be better for Jesus to baptize him.

LOQ: How did Jesus answer John?

Answer: Jesus asked John to baptize Him so that they could “fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 1:15). Jesus realized that it was important for them to do this because it was part of God’s plan for both of their lives and ministries. By being baptized, Jesus was submitting to God’s instruction and being submissive to the Father’s will.

LOQ: What special thing happened after John baptized Jesus?

Answer: When Jesus came up from the water the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove. This was a promise that was kept from Isaiah 61:1 that says, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”

LOQ: What did God the Father say about His Son?

Answer: The Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). Because Jesus never sinned God the Father was able to say that He was pleased with Him.

LOQ: What did Jesus baptism and the events that followed show to us about who Jesus is and what Jesus is able to do for us because of His sinlessness.

Answer: When Jesus was baptized Jesus identified Himself with men. Although He is God He is also man and lived on earth as a man. Because His life had been free from any kind of sin and because Jesus had been completely submissive to God, God was pleased with Jesus. After Jesus baptism the Holy Spirit and the Father both showed that they were pleased with Jesus. Because of Jesus’ perfect life we are able to trust that He died to pay for the sins of man.

Summary

John the Baptist was given a very important job. He was to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. John proclaimed to the people “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) When Jesus came asking John to baptize Him, John refused but Jesus said that it needed to be done to fulfill all righteousness. John baptized Jesus and then an amazing thing happened. The heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, landing on Jesus. Then God’s voice spoke from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). God the Father’s words and the Holy Spirit’s coming on Him like a dove were signs that Jesus was truly the Messiah.

Application

When Jesus was baptized He submitted to (obeyed) the Father’s will. Jesus’ entire life was completely free from sin and in perfect obedience. Because of His perfection, believers can trust Him to be the perfect, sinless sacrifice for their sins and only hope for salvation. Jesus is an example for the believers. Those who have trusted Jesus as their Savior should also submit to God’s will for them and desire to please Him with their lives.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



New Shoes Don't Need to Be Shined

At Jesus' baptism, John affirms Jesus' righteousness by his reluctance to baptize Jesus. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and Jesus had no sin for which He needed to repent. This can be illustrated to the children by polishing up some old shoes to get them shiny and ready for a special occasion. The ministry of John the Baptist involved very much the same thing—getting people to acknowledge that they needed some cleaning up. At an appropriate point in the lesson you can bring out a pair of brand new shoes, which do not need any polishing at all. Do these shoes need to be polished? This is exactly what John the Baptist realized when Jesus came to be baptized—Jesus was not stained by sin.

Praise and Worship

O Worship The King

Father, I Adore You

Jesus, You Are Lord

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Messiah's Qualifications

John affirmed that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. He could only do this because he met all the necessary qualifications: 1) He fully obeyed God 2) He was anointed by the Spirit 3) He was well-pleasing to God. These qualifications are all affirmed at Jesus' baptism. Have students cut out the squares and rectangles and glue them to the cross in the correct order. The first is a Bible representing that He obeyed God His entire life. The second picture is of a dove and represents the anointing of the Spirit. The third picture is of a smiling face that represents Jesus being well-pleasing to God. Students can decorate the cross and pictures with crayons, glitter, glue, etc. You can end the lesson by explaining how Jesus bore the sins of the whole world on the cross.



Trained, Equipped, and Commissioned

The three major points of the lesson outline: 1) the Son's submission 2) the Spirit's anointing 3) the Father's pleasure, relate closely to the familiar concepts of training, equipping, and commissioning. In almost all careers (teachers, policeman, doctors, mechanics, athletes, soldiers, etc.) a person must first undergo training, then they are given various tools to equip them to do their task and finally they are commissioned or formally recognized. Select one of these careers to be a visual aid to help you teach the main points of the lesson. Have the children run on the spot in preparation for a marathon and then teach them about Jesus' obedience to God, which prepared Him for the public ministry which lay ahead. Bring out a new pair of running shoes and then speak about the anointing of the Spirit through whom Jesus performed his powerful miracles. Finally, bring out a team uniform or a runner's badge which identifies which team he belongs to. Teach the children about God's public identification of His Son.



“Jesus’ Baptism”

Materials: copies of “Jesus’ Baptism” craft pages, brads, glue, scissors, crayons

Directions: Instruct students to cut out Jesus and John figures, John’s arm, clouds, waves, and dove. Students may need help punching holes at the appropriate dots on the page. Two slits should be precut for the dove to descend. The clouds should then be attached along right and left sides and are meant to overlap across the middle top of the page. They are to open outwardly revealing the light from heaven. Attach the dove descending by inserting the two tabs into the slits and connecting the tabs with glue. The dove should slide up and down. Insert brads into the dots on both the waists of John and Jesus and the shoulders of both men. Lastly, the waves should be taped along the sides and bottom edges over John and Jesus’ waists. When completed, John will baptize Jesus, the clouds will open and the dove will descend.



“John Baptizes Jesus”

Use this worksheet to reinforce the key truths of today’s lesson. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.



MEMORY VERSE

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” —*John 1:29*

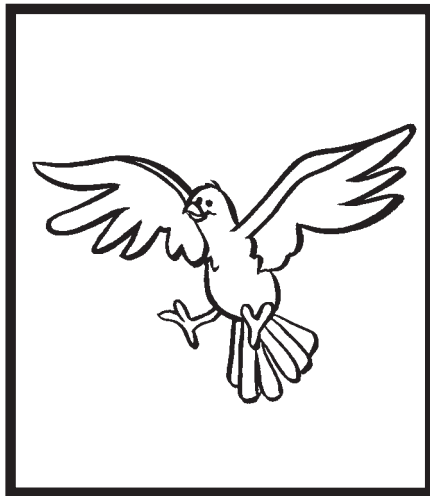
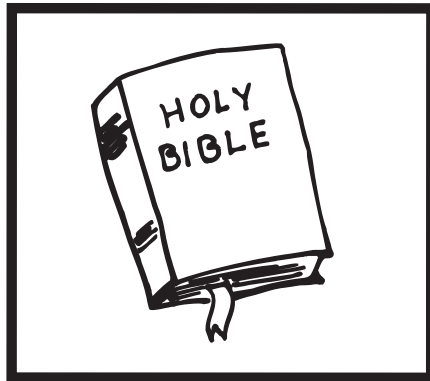
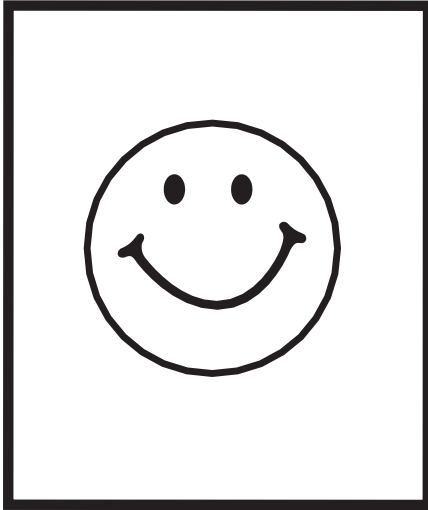
Messiah's Qualifications

1. Fully
obeyed
♦ God's Word
Matthew 3:14–15

2. Anointed
by the
♦ Spirit.
Matthew 3:16

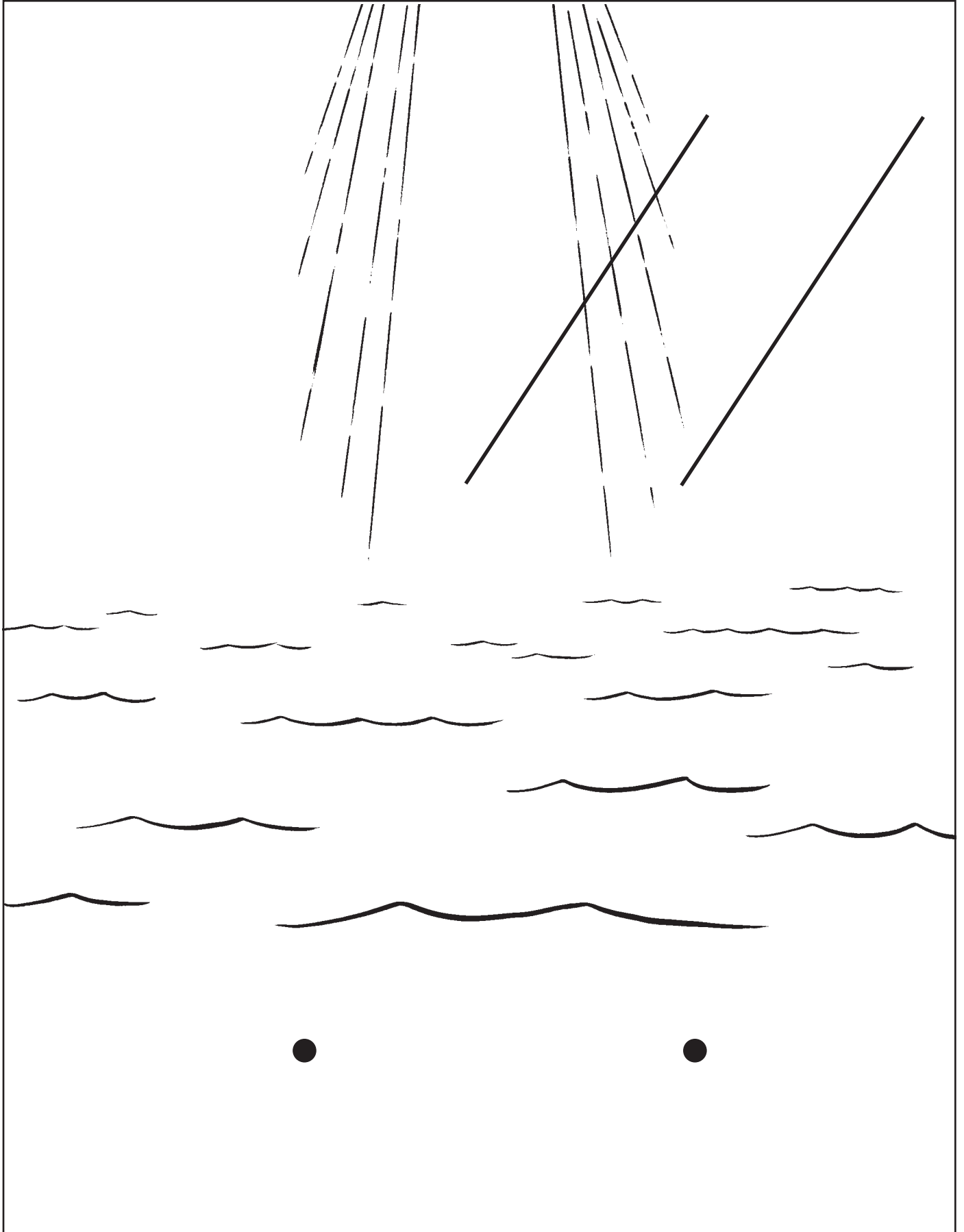
3. Well
pleasing
♦ to God.
Matthew 3:17

Messiah's Qualifications



“Behold! The Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world!”
—John 1:29

Jesus' Baptism

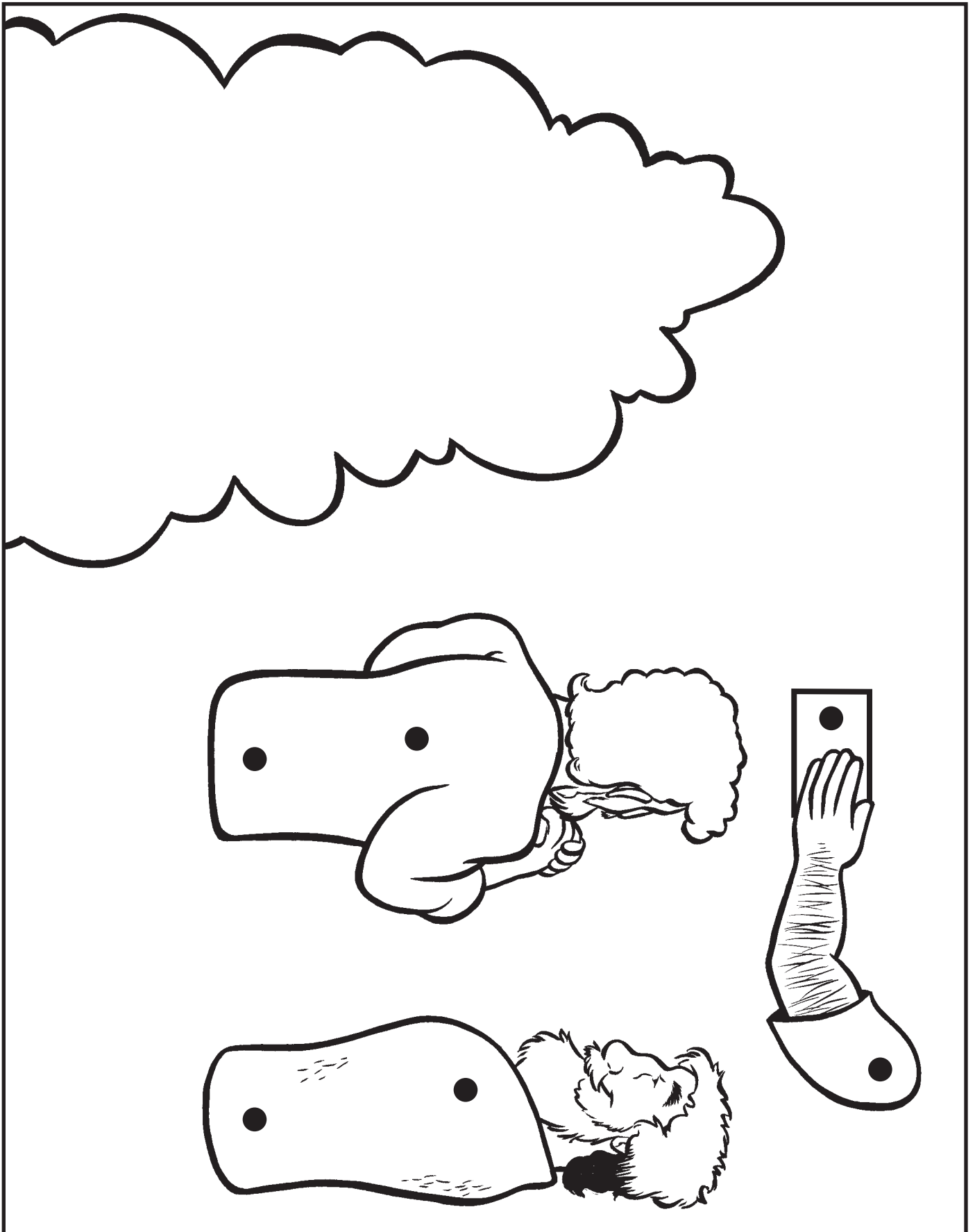


Jesus' Baptism



**“And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son,
in whom I am well pleased.’” —Matthew 3:17**

Jesus' Baptism



John *baptizes* Jesus



Matthew 3:13–17

Name _____

1. Why did Jesus come to John? _____

2. John baptized people who were repenting of their _____.

3. Did Jesus have any sins that he needed to repent of? _____

4. Did John think he should baptize Jesus? _____

5. Jesus told John to baptize Him in order to “fulfill all _____”
(3:15).

6. Fill in the blanks from Matthew 3:16–17.

“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water;
and behold, the heavens were _____ to Him, and He saw the
Spirit of _____ descending like a _____ and alighting upon
Him. And suddenly a _____ came from heaven saying,
‘This is my beloved _____, in whom I am well _____.’”



"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" —Matthew 3:13-14



After Jesus was baptized the heavens were opened, the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove, and God spoke from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16–17).

