

# Baptism - January 26th - My Declaration of Faith - Troy Knight

## TALK IT OVER

### Key Scriptures from the Message:

Romans 6:3-4  
Colossians 2:12  
Matthew 28:18-20  
Matthew 3:13-17  
Mark 10:43-44

### Start reading.

#### Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples, I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

#### Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. I am the one who needs to be baptized by you, he said, so why are you coming to me? But Jesus said, It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires. So John agreed to baptize him. 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. And a voice from heaven said, This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.

#### Matthew 10:32-33

Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

### Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you witnessed a baptism blooper, either in person or video? Share with the group.
- What is your favorite baptism story or memory, whether yours or someone else's?

### Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Discuss the history of baptism. How did an act that was originally used in the conversion from Gentile to Jew become such an important act for Christians?
- Read Matthew 3:13-17. Why was Jesus baptized? What significance does that have for his followers?
- Troy said that baptism needs to be your decision or it's not a valid baptism. Do you agree? Why or why not? Does the mode of baptism (sprinkling, immersion) matter?
- Read Matthew 10:32-33. When, if ever, should baptisms be private? Generations is a very low-pressure, come as you are kind of church. So why do we require you to film your story as part of the baptism?

### Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- How does the decision to be baptized relate to our recent series *Iron*? Share how it can be sharpening from above, around, and below.
- Do you have to be baptized to be a Christian? Why or why not?
- Why is baptism special? What does it accomplish on earth? What does it accomplish spiritually? What does it not accomplish spiritually?
- If you know Jesus as your Savior and you haven't been baptized, do you know what's keeping you from it?

### Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- If you have not been baptized since coming to personal faith in Jesus, commit to speak with your small group leader or one of Generations staff members about any questions or reservations you may have.

### Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Lord, I want to be more like You. Thank you for the power in the testimony of baptism. Help me to be willing to share my story with others, with the hope that they will come to know you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article on the back and discuss.

**Question: "Why was Jesus baptized? Why was Jesus' baptism important?"**

**Answer:** At first glance, it seems that Jesus' baptism has no purpose at all. John's baptism was the baptism of repentance (Matthew 3:11), but Jesus was sinless and had no need of repentance. Even John was taken aback at Jesus' coming to him. John recognized his own sin and was aware that he, a sinful man in need of repentance himself, was unfit to baptize the spotless Lamb of God: "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:14). Jesus replied that it should be done because "it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

There are several reasons why it was fitting for John to baptize Jesus at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus was about to embark on His great work, and it was appropriate that He be recognized publicly by His forerunner. John was the "voice crying in the wilderness" prophesied by Isaiah, calling people to repentance in preparation for their Messiah (Isaiah 40:3). By baptizing Him, John was declaring to all that here was the One they had been waiting for, the Son of God, the One he had predicted would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).

Jesus' baptism by John takes on an added dimension when we consider that John was of the tribe of Levi and a direct descendant of Aaron. Luke specifies that both of John's parents were of the Aaronic priestly line (Luke 1:5). One of the duties of the priests in the Old Testament was to present the sacrifices before the Lord. John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus could be seen as a priestly presentation of the Ultimate Sacrifice. John's words the day after the baptism have a decidedly priestly air: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus' baptism also showed that He identified with sinners. His baptism symbolized the sinners' baptism into the righteousness of Christ, dying with Him and rising free from sin and able to walk in the newness of life. His perfect righteousness would fulfill all the requirements of the Law for sinners who could never hope to do so on their own. When John hesitated to baptize the sinless Son of God, Jesus replied that it was proper to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). By this He alluded to the righteousness that He provides to all who come to Him to exchange their sin for His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

In addition, Jesus' coming to John showed His approval of John's baptism, bearing witness to it, that it was from heaven and approved by God. This would be important in the future when others would begin to doubt John's authority, particularly after his arrest by Herod (Matthew 14:3-11).

Perhaps most importantly, the occasion of the public baptism recorded for all future generations the perfect embodiment of the triune God revealed in glory from heaven. The testimony directly from heaven of the Father's pleasure with the Son and the descending of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus (Matthew 3:16-17) is a beautiful picture of the trinitarian nature of God. It also depicts the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the salvation of those Jesus came to save. The Father loves the elect from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4); He sends His Son to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10); and the Spirit convicts of sin (John 16:8) and draws the believer to the Father through the Son. All the glorious truth of the mercy of God through Jesus Christ is on display at His baptism.