

Taking the Way of Righteousness - Baptism

Series:
The Gospel
According to
Matthew

For John came to you in the
way of righteousness

Matthew 21:32a

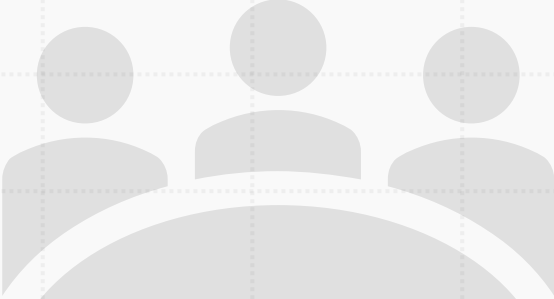
John the Baptist Came in the Way of Righteousness

Romans 10:3 For because they were ignorant of God's righteousness and sought to establish their own righteousness, they were not subject to the righteousness of God.

As one who was in the way of righteousness, [John] charged the people to repent because of the kingdom of the heavens. John was preaching not just to the sinners and to the immoral persons; he was also preaching to the people who were under the law. Those who were under the law thought that they were serving God. But actually, as Paul later said, they were not subject to the righteousness of God and instead wanted to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10:3). For this reason the people needed to repent. No matter whether we were good or bad, moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, before we were saved, we all have to repent, we all have to turn to God. Because we have set our mind on something other than God Himself, we need to repent.

When the people received John's preaching and came to repent to him, he right away baptized them by putting them into the water to bury them, indicating that they were men of the flesh who had nothing good (Rom. 7:18) and were worthy of only death and burial. Here we must deal with something that no one likes but is nonetheless very real—the flesh. Romans 3:20 says, "Because out of the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before Him." No flesh can say, "I am righteous before God." The flesh and righteousness are diametrically opposed to each other. The only way to have righteousness is to bury the flesh. If we stay in the flesh, we will never see righteousness. This is why before we enter into the kingdom, which is the kingdom of righteousness, the first thing we must do is put our flesh aside. We must put it under the water. This is the way that God has ordained. God evaluates the flesh harshly and requires that we put everything according to it into the death water of baptism.

When people came to John to repent, he told them that they were men of flesh and were good for nothing but death and burial. Although repenting is very good, we need to go on to the next step and be baptized. That means that everything we have and are needs to be terminated (*Crystallization Study of Matthew, Message 6, Andrew Yu*).

- 
- Make sure to read the introduction to this Bible study on UUCOC.org.
 - We also recommend you open your Bible and read Luke 1:13-16 and Matthew 3:1-6

The Proper and Righteous Base of Jesus' Baptism

Matthew 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. **14** But John tried to prevent Him, saying, It is I who have need of being baptized by You, and You come to me? **15** But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him.

The Base for Jesus to be Baptized

- He Considered Himself a man "in the flesh".
- He was only "in the likeness of the flesh of sin", "without sin".
- Yet He was still "in the flesh", having nothing worthwhile in His flesh but being worthy only of death and burial.

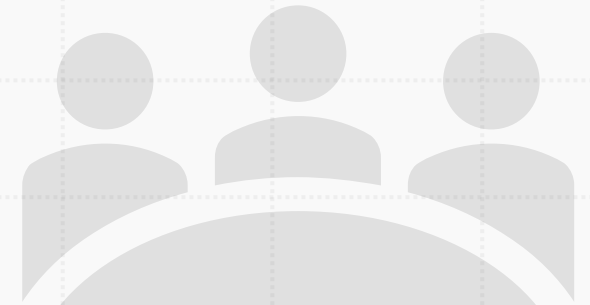
John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

Romans 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The first thing Jesus did when He started His ministry was to be baptized.



- Why did Jesus get baptized?
- Come back later to Romans 8:3 and do a deeper study using the footnotes in the Recovery Version of the Bible.

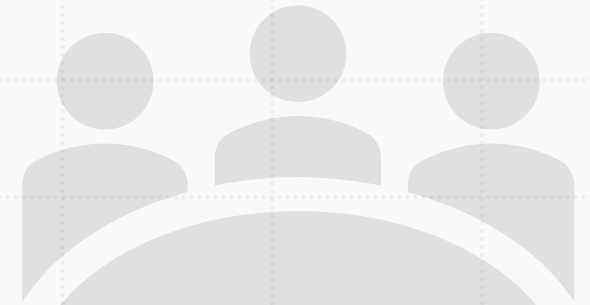
Our Natural Man needs to die

Philippians 3:3 We are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.

Matthew 16:21-24 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. **22** And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, God be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You! **23** But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men. **24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

- We need to realize that as a natural man in the flesh, we are good for nothing except death and burial; we need to have ourselves absolutely terminated in the water of baptism. (*Crystallization Study of Matthew, Message 6*)
- We all should declare in our life and work, "I am a person in the flesh, worthy of nothing in the eyes of God but death and burial; so I want to have myself terminated, crucified, buried." (*Crystallization Study of Matthew, Message 6*)



- How can we now take the way of righteousness, living a life in the reality of our baptism?