

## Baptism – From Lost to Found [Baptism of Our Lord Matthew 3: 13-17]

Jesus appears at the Jordan River for baptism standing with sinners

- God the Father adjudicates the baptism of Jesus [Epiphany]
- The vicarious nature of the baptism of Jesus is explicitly stated by Saint Paul in our Epistle Lesson – *we are joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus in Holy Baptism*
- Saint Paul also identifies baptism as the circumcision of Christ in Colossians 2: 11-12
- Luther and the medieval church call baptism *christening*

Circumcision provides a profound theological insight into the very essence of baptism

- Abram gets a new name Abraham
- He receives a visible sign of God's promise to send a Savior born of woman

We are baptized by God in his name where God stakes his honor, power, and might on baptism

Have you made a decision for Christ? But is this what the Bible teaches? Can the unbeliever make a decision for Christ?

- *You did not choose Me, but I chose and appointed you* [John 15:16]
- We are according to Saint Paul dead in our sins
- A dead person is not capable of choosing or deciding anything

If you wish to choose: is baptism our promise from God or our promise to God?

- When Peter preaches at Pentecost the people are cut to the heart and ask *brothers what shall we do?*
- Peter does not direct them to an altar call
- He says: *repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* <sup>39</sup> *For the promise is for you and for your children*

We speak with admiration about inherited physical traits - thank God such fondness does not extend to our inherited sinful nature

All people regardless of age receive the kingdom of heaven the same way: *born of water and the Spirit*

We close with two familiar sayings; first - show me your friends and I will show you your future

- In baptism - what a friend we have in Jesus

Show me your clothes and I will show you who you are – when *baptized into Christ we put on Christ* as our garment of salvation

- Scripture comes full circle in baptism – we receive the promise given to Abraham
- We are clothed and joined to Christ who is Abraham's singular seed
- We are born as the collective seed of Abraham - heirs of righteousness and citizens of heaven – it truly is *christening*