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One brother was picking on his younger brother. “You’re not really my brother,” he said. “Mom and Dad picked you up at a flea market and brought you home.” “No, they didn’t.” “Yes, they did.” Crying, the younger brother ran to mom and asked “Am I really your son?” With a sigh, she said “Is your brother picking on you again? Well, let’s take a look at you. You have hair just like your dad’s. It’s curly and brown. You have the same color eyes that I do. Now, let’s look at your dad’s pictures when he was your age.” He did, and noticed that yes, he looked just like dad did when he was younger. The hair, the eyes, the picture - the evidence was overwhelming. He really was their son. No question about it.

Now, some people don’t think that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of all. Or, they’re not sure that Jesus is true God as well as true man. Today we’re going to take a look at the evidence, the testimony of John the Baptist and God Himself. When it comes to Jesus, **“THE EVIDENCE IS OVERWHELMING.”** He is the Savior.

So, let’s take a look at the evidence, shall we? We turn to the book of Mark.

Part One: The testimony of John the Baptist

Mark doesn’t give us as much detail about John the Baptist, does he? Well, that’s the kind of man he was. Short and to the point. Just the facts, people. We have to look at the other gospel accounts to flesh this story out. Jesus had come to the river Jordan to be baptized by John. John at first didn’t feel qualified to baptize Jesus. He knew Jesus was the Messiah. He knew that Jesus was true God. He knew that Jesus was sinless, so why would Jesus need to be baptized? Jesus told him. **“It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”** (Matthew 3:15)

John’s whole life was a testimony to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. John was the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah that a messenger would come to prepare the way for the Lord. His life showed he was different from the other priests and teachers of that time. He lived in the wilderness. He didn’t wear the fancy robes that the other priests did. He didn’t eat fancy food. **“John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.”**

Along with the visual aids, John preached a message that pointed to Jesus. It wasn’t a long, flowery message. It was direct and to the point. **“After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**

John consistently and constantly identified Jesus as the Messiah. Again and again he pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. While John was able, he prepared the way for Jesus. Look at the evidence! Jesus is the Savior!

I wonder how often John rejoiced when he saw Jesus. He knew why Jesus had come. He knew that this individual was both true God and true man. He knew that Jesus had come to give him eternal life with God by His suffering and death. Every time he saw Jesus, he saw his eternity in paradise right there before him! And now, his Savior came to be baptized by him, a sinful human being.

Did you ever wonder why Jesus needed to be baptized? We know that baptism washes away sin and creates a saving faith in a person’s heart. Jesus didn’t need to have His sins washed away. He was sinless. He didn’t need to have faith created in His heart. He knew who He was and why He had come. So, why baptize? How could this act fulfill all righteousness?

Well, remember that Jesus is our Substitute, living a perfect life for us. His baptism was part of that perfect life. It foreshadowed His command to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we see the three persons of the Trinity at Jesus’ baptism, we see the power of God present there and at our baptism.

The second reason is that His baptism was His entrance into His public ministry. Up to this time, Jesus had lived the life of a private citizen. Now, He would proclaim the will of God to others. Now, He would show God’s love by healing the sick, raising the dead and performing miracles to validate His

message. Repent and believe that Jesus would pay for your sins. Now, He would live and die for others.

We can see a parallel in the life of a policeman. Before he joins the force and receives his commission, he protects only himself. After his commission, he protects the lives of others. From this point on, Jesus proclaims the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins.

That's what John was giving evidence for. And, as good a witness as John was, there were even more convincing witnesses at Jesus' baptism. Witnesses who showed that Jesus is the Savior of the world. God.

Part Two: The testimony of God Himself

In Jesus' baptism we have clear and convincing proof that our God is Triune, three persons yet one God. We know that God is indivisible, not dividable. He is One in essence. And yet, there are three distinct persons, three distinct personalities. ¹⁰ ***As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.*** ¹¹ ***And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."***

God is the One who put His stamp of approval on Jesus' work. He tells the world that He's supportive of what Jesus had come to do. And Jesus, at His baptism, accepts the mission. As God and man, He accepts his mission to suffer and die for sin. He accepts the mission to share His perfect life with those who believe. He's fully on board with everything that a Savior would have to do.

Jesus' life after His baptism is evidence of His dedication to saving others. The evidence is overwhelming, isn't it? He always taught people about the will of God and His desire to save. He always called people to repent of their sin and believe in Him. For three years He performed miracles to back up the message He was bringing. He fed thousands with a handful of bread and fish. He raised the dead. He healed the deaf and those who couldn't walk. He walked on water and cast out demons.

And His final act of dedication here on earth? He willingly walked to the cross, took the sin of the world on His shoulders and suffered the full extent of God's anger against sin. He willingly suffered so we would not. It all started with His baptism.

Now, it's only natural for us to look at our own baptisms, isn't it? Perhaps we don't remember our baptism. After all, for most of us it happened when we were just weeks old. But our parents told us we were baptized. We have a certificate somewhere stating when, where and by whom we were baptized. But just what did our baptism accomplish in us?

First and most importantly, in baptism the Holy Spirit created a saving faith in us. That saving faith brought us into the family of God. It washed away our sins and restored our relationship with God. When we were baptized, the Holy Spirit came to live in our hearts and brought along the Father and the Son to live there as well. We became temples of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, our baptism comforts us when we are spiritually down. Ever have a day when you just weren't sure that you were forgiven, that you were a member of God's family? Remember your baptism. It was a fact. It happened. You are still a forgiven child of God.

An older gentleman was often bothered by the thought that he wasn't saved. He knew the devil would come again and again and tempt him to doubt. So, he had a card printed that said on one side "My Eternal Life License." On the other side he printed the date of his baptism and the saying "On this day I became a child of God." His baptism gave him great comfort, even at his lowest hour.

Remember your baptism. Did you know that you were reminded of your baptism at the beginning of our worship service? We often start "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It's not just a neat way to start the worship service. It reminds us why we can approach our God. We have been baptized. We are members of God's family.

"THE EVIDENCE IS OVERWHELMING"

AMEN