

## Baptism Of Jesus

Matt. 3:13-17

### Introduction.

1. One of the difficult passages of the Bible is found in Matthew 3:13-17.

MAT 3:13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.

MAT 3:14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

MAT 3:15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

MAT 3:16 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him,

MAT 3:17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

2. This passage has some difficulties associated with it.

### Background

1. John the Baptist, a near kinsmen of Jesus, had been calling on men to repent and be baptized. (Matt. 3:2, 5, 6).
2. The baptism of John was not in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as was the baptism of the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:19,20).
3. John's baptism called on men to believe in the One who was to come. (Acts 19:1-6).
4. It was by immersion.
  - a. The Greek verb "baptizo" [bahp **tid** zoh] means to "dip, plunge, immerse."
  - b. John baptized where there "was much water." (Jn. 3:23).
  - c. John is here baptizing in the Jordan River which is strange if he is only sprinkling people. "Much water" would not be needed for sprinkling or pouring.
  - d. Matthew uses "apo" (from) and Mark "ek" (out of) the water. (Matt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10).
5. John's baptism was:
  - a. "for the remission of sins." (Mk. 1:4).

MAR 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

  - b. From heaven. (Matt. 21:25,32).
  - c. It was a divine requirement. (Lk. 7:29,30).
6. Jesus also was calling upon men to repent and be baptized.

- a. He did not personally baptize. (Jn. 4:2).
  - b. His baptism was for the remission of sins.
  - c. He taught men to repent because the kingdom "was at hand." (Matt. 4:17).
7. John was about 6 months older than Jesus was. (Lk. 1:36).
- a. John had begun His ministry some months before Jesus. (Mk. 1:1-8; Matt. 3:1-12).
  - b. He was the forerunner to Jesus - the one leading the way.
8. Jesus was about to begin His ministry.
- a. He was about 30 years old. (Lk. 3:23).
  - b. He had likely worked as a carpenter in Nazareth up until this time, but this an assumption.
  - c. He now comes to John to be baptized by him.
  - d. Jesus came "from [Nazareth of] Galilee to the Jordan. This was a distance of 65 to 80 miles depending on the exact location of Christ's baptism.
  - e. John refused at first to baptize Jesus likely because of Christ's superiority and sinlessness. (Jn. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:5).
  - f. Jesus insists it is necessary "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:13).
- (1) The Greek "dikaiosune" [dee ki ah soo **nay**] is rendered "righteousness" and has the idea of "doing what is right, God's will."
  - (2) This word can have several ideas.
  - (3) "Righteousness" can point to the commandments of God.
- PSA 119:172 Let my tongue sing of Thy word, For all Thy commandments are righteousness.
- (4) There can be no doubt that Jesus was following the instructions of His Father.

### **This Poses A Serious Problem**

1. Why was the sinless Christ baptized?
2. There have been many answers given to this question.
  - a. A few contend Jesus was a sinner, but the Bible clearly sets forth Jesus was without sin. (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).
  - b. An ancient tradition insisted Jesus did not want to be baptized, but He was baptized to please His mother and family. This is found in the Gospel of Hebrews. This is a second century uninspired book.
3. Some maintain Jesus was identifying Himself with the people of God by submitting to baptism. See Jn. 1:32-34.
4. Some assert His baptism is an example for us.

- a. Keep in mind Jesus was baptized with John's baptism - not Christian baptism.
  - b. Keep in mind John's baptism called upon men to repent and be baptized.
  - c. Jesus had no sin. He did not need repentance.
  - d. It is difficult to see how a sinless man being baptized can be an example for sinful men to be baptized.
    - (1) We are to be baptized. (Jn. 3:5; Mk. 16:16; Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 2:38; Tit. 3:5; Gal. 3:26,27; 1 Pet. 3:21).
    - (2) It is questionable we are to be baptized primarily because Jesus was baptized.
5. Some believe it was to launch His personal ministry. (Lk.4:1-15).
- a. Jesus did begin His ministry after this.
  - b. It is not certain this is why Christ was baptized.
6. John supplies us with a reason why Jesus was baptized.
- a. John the Baptist had been given a sign. (Jn. 1:32-34).

JOH 1:32 And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

JOH 1:33 "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

JOH 1:34 "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

- b. The descension of the Holy Spirit at the baptism of Jesus was a sign, conclusive proof to John the Baptist that Jesus was the One Baptizing in the Holy Spirit and He was the Son of God.

### **Other Problems Associated With This Passage**

1. Are we required to be baptized in rivers today?
  - a. The answer is "no".
  - b. We are to be baptized in water. (Acts 8:35-38; 1 Pet. 3:20,21; Tit. 3:5; Jn. 3:5).
  - c. There is no evidence we must be baptized in rivers though it is scriptural.
  - d. We can be baptized wherever there is enough water for immersion.
2. Did an actual dove descend on Jesus?
  - a. It is the Holy Spirit who descended. (Matt. 3:23; Lk. 3:22).
  - b. He descended "in a bodily form." (Lk. 3:23).
  - c. He descended "like (as) a dove."
3. Who heard the voice of God confirming the Sonship of Jesus and saw the descent of the Holy Spirit?

- a. Did all at the Jordan river hear God's voice?
  - b. It is not known if the multitude saw the vision and heard the voice.
  - c. It may have been visible only to Jesus and John.
  - d. The Bible says "he" (John) "saw the Spirit of God." (Matt. 3:16).
  - e. The words "in a bodily form" may indicate the multitude saw the descent of the Spirit, but the Bible is silent about this.
4. What was Jesus doing after His baptism when the Spirit descended on Him? Luke gives us the answer. (Lk. 3:21).
5. Is Jesus the only Person in the Godhead?
- a. Some say "yes."
  - b. This is incorrect.
  - c. There are three Persons in the Godhead.
    - 1) God the Father
    - 2) Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1-3; 14:9; Col. 1:15-18; 2:9; Phil. 2:5-7).
    - 3) The Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4).
  - d. It is important to note that Jesus was in the water, God spoke from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him.
6. What is the purpose of the Spirit descension upon Jesus?
- a. The idea of the Messiah being anointed with the Holy Spirit is found in the Old Testament. (Isa. 11:2).
  - b. He was anointed with the Spirit. (Acts 10:38).
  - c. Jesus had the Spirit without measure and by the Spirit performed miracles. (Jn. 3:34; Matt. 12:28).
  - d. There is no record of Jesus doing anything miraculous before His baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

## **Conclusion**

1. The baptism of Jesus is a very important event in His life.
2. It was a time when God manifested to John the Baptist that Christ is His Son.
3. It was the time when Jesus launched His personal ministry - the greatest ministry ever known to man.
4. We should be grateful for the ministry of Jesus.
  - a. Jesus showed us how to live.

- b. He taught us how to live.
- c. He climaxed His ministry by dying on the cross for our sins.
- d. He was raised as a pledge of our resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

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