

John the Baptist

The Baptism of Christ

Introduction

- Our focus in today's lesson will be on the events of John baptizing Christ and immediately afterward.

John and Christ

- Jesus, then “about thirty years of age” (Luke 3:23), leaves Galilee and travels to the Jordan River to be baptized by John – Matthew 3:13, Mark 1:9
- This appears to be the first time the two have met since their encounter “*in utero*” in Luke 1:39-41 – John 1:31
 - From Matthew's account, it is evident that John did recognize Christ before He was baptized.
- John refuses at first to baptize Christ – Matthew 3:14
 - In this, John acknowledges the superiority of Christ and His ministry.
- John confesses a need to be baptized of Christ – Matthew 3:14
 - “not with water baptism, which Christ never administered, but with the baptism of the Spirit, which was His peculiar office. Hence we learn, that though John was so holy a man, was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, had such large measures of grace, and lived such an exemplary life and conversation; yet was far from thinking, that he was perfect and righteous in himself, but stood in need of Christ, and of more grace from him. He seems surprised that Christ should come to him, and make such a motion to him; when it was his duty and privilege to come to Him daily for fresh supplies of grace, and always to trust in Him for life and salvation;” - John Gill
 - See also John 1:31.
- Christ responds that He must be baptized – Matthew 3:15
 - The language used by Christ is humble and submissive, not commanding – Philippians 2:5-8
 - The reason given by Christ is that it was proper, even necessary, that He submit to John's baptism.

The Baptism of Christ

- John baptizes (immerses) Christ in the Jordan River – Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:9-10, Luke 3:21.
- Christ prays after His baptism – Luke 3:21
 - “This deeply interesting touch is peculiar to St Luke, who similarly on eight other occasions calls attention to the Prayers of Jesus—after severe labours (Luke 5:16); before the choosing of the Apostles (Luke 6:12); before Peter's great Confession (Luke

9:18); at His transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29); for Peter (Luke 22:32); in Gethsemane (Luke 22:41); for His murderers (Luke 23:34); and at the moment of death (Luke 23:46).” – Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.

- The “heavens were opened” – Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:21
 - “The expression means that he was permitted to see far into the heavens beyond what the natural vision would allow.” – Barnes
- The Spirit descends upon Christ in the form of a dove – Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32
 - “The gift of the Holy Spirit, in this manner, was the public approbation of Jesus John 1:33, and a sign of his being set apart to the office of the Messiah. We are not to suppose that there was any change done in the moral character of Jesus, but only that he was publicly set apart to his work, and solemnly approved by God in the office to which he was appointed.” – Barnes
- God the Father speaks – Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22.
 - Note the clear appearance of the Trinity!
 - Also happens at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5, Luke 9:35) and in John 12:28.
- NOTE – It seems that directly after His baptism Christ goes into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan.

Why Was Christ Baptized by John?

- IT WAS NOT FOR SIN OR REPENTANCE – II Corinthians 5:21
- It is the anointing or inauguration of His work as Messiah (anointed one).
 - He is anointed as a prophet – Isaiah 11:1-5, Luke 4:16-21
 - He is anointed as a king
 - He is anointed as a priest
 - He is sealed for sacrifice – John 6:27
- It sets the symbol of the truths of His gospel – Colossians 2:12
- It shows His identification with us – Hebrews 4:15
- It shows His approval of John’s ministry and message.
- It is an example for His followers to follow – Matthew 28:19-20