

Mark 1:9-11 The Baptism of Jesus

Baptism by John

The mission of Jesus' 6 month older cousin was to be the forerunner of Jesus who prepared the hearts of many in Israel for the coming of their Messiah by preaching **"repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"**. John followed up this prophetic call to repentance with telling those who had decided to follow God's plan for their lives to be baptized in the Jordan river for the remission of sins. John was calling them to repentance, not religion; to examine their lives and consider where they had fallen short, turn back to God, and make a new start, just as the Israelites did when they crossed the Jordan river the first time into the promised land.

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee

So, the 30 year-old Jesus came to John to be baptized in order to formally start the ministry that God had given him. We know that this is important, because it is recorded in all 4 gospels (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:26-30 **26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. 27 It is He who comes after me, of whom I am not worthy even to untie the strap of His sandal."** **28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing people. 29 The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He in behalf of whom I said, 'After me is coming a Man who has proved to be my superior, because He existed before me.'** It's kind of strange that John the Baptist says of Jesus that Jesus is his superior, because He existed before John, since John was actually older than Jesus, by about 6 months. But John knew that Jesus was the Word made Flesh, the Son of God, who existed in eternity past, before anything was made, long before John was born. He didn't know it before this point of the beginning of Jesus' ministry, so he says **31 And I did not recognize Him, but so that He would be revealed to Israel, I came baptizing in water."** So, one of the purposes of John's baptism is so that Jesus' true nature as the Son of God would be revealed.

Our baptism is a witness outwardly of our intent to follow Jesus, the Son of God, and Jesus' baptism was as a witness to us of Jesus' divinity by John the Baptist. Unlike everyone else who came to John for the baptism of repentance (Matthew 3:11 **11 "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** But Jesus was sinless and had no need of repentance, so we have to ask ourselves what were the reasons? Even John was taken aback at Jesus' coming to him. John recognized his own sin and was aware that he, a sinful man in need of repentance himself, was unfit to baptize the spotless Lamb of God in Matthew 3:13-15 **13 Then Jesus *arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have the need to be baptized by You, and yet You are coming to me?" 15 But Jesus, answering, said to him, "Allow it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."** Then he allowed Him. This term, "to fulfill all righteousness." indicates Jesus' deliberate intention to align fully with His Father's divine plan. In keeping with His nature as both fully God and fully man, He willingly participated in a rite commonly reserved for those repenting of sin-yet He Himself was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

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9b and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came from the heavens: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Mark's witness of Jesus' baptism includes most of the same details of the other gospel accounts. Luke 3:21-22 says **21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from heaven: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased."** Luke's emphasis on Jesus as the Son of Man includes him being baptized along with a great many other people during John's Ministry. But Jesus' baptism was unique in terms of who witnessed it! Matthew 3:16-17 states **16 After He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and settling on Him, 17 and behold, a voice from the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."**

Jesus' baptism is also important, because it is one of the clearest revelations in scripture of the Trinity. We see Jesus, God the Son, being baptized, the voice of God the Father from the heavens saying **"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"**, and we see the Holy Spirit coming from Heaven to Earth to abide with Jesus. In the voice from heaven God addresses Jesus as his unique Son, the object of His love, and who is pleased with Jesus. In this expression of divine approval there is recognition of Jesus' readiness to fulfill the messianic mission for which he has been set apart. Ps. 2:7 God says something similar, **"I will announce the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have fathered You. and Isa. 42:1, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.** These verses describe the delight that God had in Jesus, His Spirit abiding on Him, and His dedication to His mission.

Lastly, God fulfilled his promise to John. God made sure that John notices the dove of the Holy Spirit, as a witness of Jesus' divinity. In fact, God had promised John the Baptist that when he baptized the Messiah, that this is exactly what he would experience. John 1:32-34 **32 And John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 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.' 34 And I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." 35 Again the next day John was standing [ah]with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"** So, we see that Jesus' baptism revealed a lot about Jesus and His mission. Many see Jesus' baptism as a foreshadowing of His death and resurrection. Just as one going under the water represents death and emerging from it signifies new life (cf. Romans 6:3-4 **3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.** Jesus' submission to baptism anticipates the ultimate immersion into suffering at the cross and His triumphant resurrection from the grave. So, Jesus' baptism is important for the central message of the gospel: through His death and resurrection, salvation is made possible to all who believe. And so, Christian baptism follows the same model that Jesus set up, and commanded us to follow, saying in Matthew 28: **19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to follow all that I commanded you;** Though Christian believers' baptism we identify with Christ's death and resurrection-Jesus' baptism. Just as He demonstrated humble obedience to the Father, publicly declaring His commitment and

inaugurating His ministry, we demonstrate obedience to Him, publicly declaring our allegiance to Christ. The earliest Christian documents and writings of the Apostolic Fathers likewise reflect that those baptized into Christ continue what Jesus demonstrated, though their baptism includes a confession of faith in the risen Savior.