

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

As we study the public ministry of Jesus, it is extremely important to note that it basically begins with Him coming to John to be baptized. This is the first event recorded in Scripture about Jesus' life since He was twelve years old. By now, Jesus is about twenty-nine and His path has been made ready by His forerunner, John the Baptizer. The inspired Matthew records, "then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him" (Mat. 3:13). There are several powerful lessons to be understood from this historical event.

First, **Baptism Is Necessary To Please God.** Sadly, many claim that this passage teaches that baptism is not necessary nor for the remission of sins. Their assertion is that since Jesus was without sin, thus not in need of forgiveness, and He was baptized anyway, then baptism is not for the forgiveness of past sins. This claim is false! Nothing regarding the baptism of Jesus contradicts known passages such as Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21, and Acts 2:38 which clearly teach that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins and that baptism is indeed necessary for salvation. Jesus did not need remission of sins since He was, in fact, sinlessly perfect. However, Jesus came to this earth to do His Father's business (Luke 2:49) and baptism is a part of the Father's plan to save man. Mark writes, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Further, Jesus reveals that He would be baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness" (Mat. 3:15). Jesus could only be sinlessly perfect if He obeyed His Father's commands. One such command was baptism. Later in Jesus' ministry, He asks the chief priests and elders, "the baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet" (Mat. 21:25-26). The obvious answer is that the baptism of John was from God and thus a command that Jesus would gladly obey. The inspired writer Luke states that those who were not baptized after hearing John preach "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" (Luke 7:29). Had Jesus not been baptized, He would have rejected the counsel of God against Himself and therefore would not have been sinlessly perfect. Because of Jesus' obedience, God said, "this is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Mat. 3:17). If we are to be pleasing to God, we must follow the example of Jesus, obey the commands of the Father, and be baptized. Otherwise, we reject the counsel of God against ourselves.

Second, **Baptism Is Immersion.** When Jesus was baptized, the inspired accounts state that He came up "out of the water" (Mat. 3:16; Mark 1:10). Jesus had to come up out of the water because He had been plunged beneath it by John. The Greek word translated "baptized" means to dip, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, and to submerge, immerse, or to make overwhelmed (i.e., fully wet) according to Strong's. Unfortunately, many in the denominational world define "baptize" as sprinkling or pouring even though the Greek word means to immerse. From the baptism of Jesus, we learn that the act of obedience which is pleasing to the Father is immersion.

Third, **The Godhead Consists Of Three Distinct Personalities.** After Jesus is immersed by John, and He came up out of the water, the Bible teaches that "the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Mat. 3:16-17). At this very moving and awe-inspiring moment, all three personages of Deity (i.e., the Godhead) are present. Jesus, who was God in the flesh (John 1:14), the Holy Spirit, who descended like a dove and sat upon Jesus, and God, the Father, who spoke from Heaven, "this is My beloved Son,

in Whom I am well pleased.” This fact destroys the proposition held by the Oneness Pentecostals that there is only one person in the Godhead – Jesus. This doctrine is also known as the “Jesus Only” doctrine. The baptism of Jesus, as recorded by inspiration, clearly demonstrates that the One God of the Bible consists of three distinct personalities.

The baptism of Jesus serves as a great and powerful example to us all. If we are to be Christ-like, we must submit to God’s commands and go about doing our Father’s business.

- *Brad Green*