

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS – THE CORONATION OF THE KING (Mk. 1:9-11)

As we have already noticed, Mark began his account of Jesus' ministry with a forthrightly simple, yet profound, statement, 1:1 *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* There then follows two quotations from the Old Testament prophets, - Isaiah and Malachi, - that were fulfilled in John the Baptist. It is when we come to the ninth verse we have the mention of the first public appearance of the Lord Jesus at His baptism when He was about thirty years of age (Lk. 3:23), Mk. 1:9 *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.* ¹⁰ *And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: ¹¹ And there came a voice from heaven, [saying], Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This took place at Bathabara (Jn. 1:28), which means "house of the ford" ... to the east of Jericho at the River Jordan looking across to the land of Gilead.

For about six months or so, - prior to Jesus' baptism, - John the Baptist had been preaching a very direct and hard-hitting message to the Jews to confess their sins before God and repent, in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. ... Many listened to him, and heeded his words, v.5 *there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.* Their baptism *symbolised* their cleansing from sin.

In addition to this number is the Lord Jesus. We are very likely referring to the year 26 AD. The majority of commentators believe Jesus was born in or around 6 BC, so adding on the thirty years would take us to 26 AD. Incidentally, this is the only time Scripture records a meeting of John the Baptist and Jesus. ... And here, down by the River Jordan, in the wilderness, is the introduction of the ministry of Christ to the world ... It is the Coronation of the King!

At this stage John the Baptist is the better-known of the two because he has already been exercising his ministry as the messenger (v.2) proclaiming the coming Messiah.

So, why did Jesus have to be baptized? Why do *all four* Gospels consider it of such significant worth that they record the account of His baptism? Jesus was the only Person who ever walked this earth that did not need to be baptized. ... Baptism is for sinners. It is for people who have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and who go through the waters of baptism to testify to their salvation. ...

Just while we are on this point ... Baptism is one of only two *ordinances* the Bible prescribes, - the other ordinance is the Lord's Supper. (An ordinance is not the same as a sacrament! A sacrament relates to a ceremony where the celebrants believe spiritual grace is imparted (i.e. baptism, eucharist, penance, confirmation, marriage, ordination, last rites/Extreme Unction). An ordinance, on the other hand, symbolically remembers what the Lord Jesus has specifically commanded us to observe, - the Lord's Table and Baptism).

Regarding Baptism, the Scriptures are clear it is for believers only. Baptism is not for everyone! The practice of 'paedo-baptism' (sometimes called 'christening', or infant baptism) is not found anywhere in Scripture, and was sadly carried over by many of the Reformers from apostate pre-Reformation religion using all types of exegetical somersaulting, and trying to make it refer to Old Testament circumcision. To claim, though, to find any baptism in Scripture other than believer's baptism is to read into the Word of God what is not there ('eisegesis'). So baptism, - as far as the Scriptures are concerned, - is for believers only, and is by total immersion.

So, once again, why did Jesus have to be baptized? He had no sin, and He had no need to testify to repentance or cleansing from sin ... Why was He baptized then? ... John wondered this also, *Mt. 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. ¹⁴ But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*

There is a very significant word in v.13 that sets forth what is truly happening on the day Jesus met John the Baptist. The word is παραγίνομαι... *Then cometh Jesus*. The special word is made up of two Greek words that combine to mean 'to come forth', 'to make a public appearance'. It has particular connotations.

For example, let's turn to Acts 23. Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem, and the 'chief captain' (i.e. the 'battalion commander') in Jerusalem (v.19) ordered two of his centurions, *v.23 Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; ²⁴ And provide [them] beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring [him] safe unto Felix the governor. ²⁵ And he wrote a letter after this manner: ²⁶ Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix.*

In Acts 24 Paul is standing in the court in front of no less than this *most excellent governor*. A few days later, Felix came with his wife Drusilla (Acts 24:24).

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The word that is used to describe the entrance of “the most excellent governor Felix” is this word, παραγίνομαι. In English, there is nothing particularly interesting about the word ... but in Greek it is laden with pomp and ceremony and that is how it is used here to describe the entrance of *the most excellent governor Felix*. It indicates the arrival of someone important ... and it is the word that is used to describe the Lord Jesus coming from as far north as Galilee to the River Jordan ... and He came to John to be baptized. ... Remember the word “gospel” (v.1) and how we saw in the Gentile and Jewish world it was associated with the ascent of a king, his accession to his throne. This baptism of Jesus declared the coronation of the King of Kings on earth.

Now did John know about Jesus? Of course, he did, they were relatives, - Elizabeth (John’s mother) and Mary were related (Lk. 1:36 *thy cousin [συγγενής, related by blood] Elisabeth*). John was born first (i.e. six months before Jesus, Lk. 1:36), and both mothers knew the circumstances of each other’s pregnancy. And, - we cannot prove it by Scripture, - but if they met together *once* as they did in Lk. 1:39ff., surely they would have met together again sometimes during the next thirty years! And if they had met, *surely* they would have spoken about the progress of their children. ... And so they would have known about each other ... and Jesus comes to John the Baptist to be baptized.

There’s something else in v.9. Now, of course, Mark was writing primarily to the Gentiles ... and the Gentiles would not have been familiar with the layout of the land of Israel so Mark particularly explains where Jesus had come from, v.9 *that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee*. Galilee was actually a place of derision. For part of its history it had been under Gentile occupation, - during the times of Sennacherib and the Assyrians, and also during Alexander the Great’s ‘hellenization’ policy. The derision other Jews had for this area was palpable when Peter was sitting round the fire in the high priest’s garden and they sneered at him, *Surely thou art [one] of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth [thereto]* (Mk. 14:70). ... And, also, as Nathanael asked disparagingly, Jn. 1:46 *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? ... That was where Jesus came from!*

Yes, indeed, that was where He came from because Isaiah had prophesied, 9:1 Nevertheless the dimness [*shall*] not [*be*] such as [*was*] in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict [*her by*] the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, *in Galilee of the nations. [goyim]* ² The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Isaiah

is speaking *prophetically* ... Who is he referring to? v.6 for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of [his] government and peace [there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. ... That is *Jesus* Who came from Nazareth of Galilee *of the nations*, and was baptized of John in the River Jordan (Mk. 1:9).

But we also need to notice, - ... to get a clearer picture, - that, for whatever reason, John said he did not recognise Jesus at first sight, Jn. 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. ³¹ And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. ³² And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. ³³ And I knew him not ... He knew about Jesus, but he didn't know what He looked like! He did not recognise Him!

Well, how then did John the Baptist come to know this was Jesus? *God* told him, v.33 I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water [*i.e. God*], the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. ³⁴ And I saw, and bare record [*personally witnessed and affirmed*] that this is the Son of God. ³⁵ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; ³⁶ And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! ... Even though John did not at first recognise Jesus, Heaven confirmed Him to be the Son of God! ... His baptism was God's confirmation, Mk. 1:11 Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. His baptism confirms Christ's coronation as the King of Israel belonging to the house of David of whom God promised, II Sam. 7:16 thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

But, once again, why would Jesus want or need to be baptized? He had no sin. He needed to make no confession. He had no need to repent. There was no need for any kind of a transformation ... He is holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners ... Why did He come to the River Jordan to be baptized?!

Let's look again at Mt. 3:14, But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? John was saying to Jesus, "*I'm* the sinner. *I'm* the one who needs to be baptized by You, not the other way round.

You don't need to be baptized by me". In the original language, John was very emphatic in what he said, and most adamant in how he said it. It was altogether different when in Mt. 3:7 John addressed the Pharisees and Sadducees and told them *they* needed to repent and be baptised ... but Jesus was in an altogether different category, - He needed no baptism!

If you came to me after the service and said, "I want to be baptised" ... and I know that you already have been baptised Biblically, I would tell you there is no need for you to be baptised again ... but this was so different with Jesus. There was absolutely no warrant for Him to even consider baptism ... and John knew it! ... Let Jesus Himself tell us why He came to the River Jordan to be baptised, Mt. 3:15 *Suffer [it to be so] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* ... Allow it just now, - baptise Me just now, - for it is appropriate and proper for this particular time and occasion in order *to fulfil all righteousness* so that all the righteousness of the will of God requires is met and achieved. Righteousness? Yes ... all that the righteous and perfect will and law of God requires. That which God requires of the sinner, - the Jews who had come from Jerusalem and throughout Judea, - Jesus Christ identified Himself with when He was baptised. Jesus was saying, "Since this is what God requires of men, then I as a man must and will do what He commands, regardless of the fact I have never sinned ... I *shall* be obedient to His will".

Here at the commencement of His public ministry Jesus was being obedient to the will and purposes of His Heavenly Father. If My Father says this has to be done, I will do it. Already, we see the same obedience of the Son as He would later demonstrate on the cross, Mt. 6:10 *Thy will be done in earth ...* Lk. 22:42 *not my will, but thine, be done.*

And there is also something else here. This perfect obedience the Saviour demonstrated is imputed, - credited, - to everyone who places their trust in Him. In the sight of God, we are righteous because Jesus Who took our place is righteous, II Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

As the Lord Jesus descended into the River Jordan He identified Himself with us. He was doing something He didn't need to do ... but as was required by every sinner whom John the Baptist baptised ... Jesus identified Himself with them and went down into and under the waters of the River Jordan. At the beginning of His earthly ministry and at its conclusion our Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself as the sinner's Saviour, Paul explained, Phil. 3:8 *that I may*

win Christ, ⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Jesus began His work as He would continue it, and also as He would complete it. He was faithful to His Father's will and acted consistently in accordance with the eternal plan for the salvation of His people. ... Everything He did, as a consequence, was for you and me and for all His people.

When Jesus died on the cross, what did He achieve for us? ... He speaks about it here at His baptism, *to fulfil all righteousness*. This was a work that He would eventually complete on the cross, - His work of redemption. The righteousness of God demanded the death of His Son ... the penalty to be paid for our sin was to be paid with the blood of Jesus. For God's law to be satisfied, sin had to be punished ... and nothing less than the righteousness of Christ would satisfy the Law's demands, "Not the labour of my hands Can fulfil Thy law's demands ... All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone." Mt. 3:15 Suffer [*it to be so*] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.

And that was why John the Baptist shouted it across the wilderness, - not once, but twice, - Jn. 1:36 Behold the Lamb of God! We can never emphasise enough the lengths to which our Saviour went to save us! The waters of the River Jordan were pointing forward to the waters that would flood over the Saviour on the cross for remember how the Lord of hosts had comforted His people in the Old Testament, Is. 43:1 Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [*thee*] by thy name; thou [*art*] mine. ² When thou passest through the waters, I [*will be*] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.

And as Jesus stood on the bank of the River Jordan, Mk. 1:10 the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: ¹¹ And there came a voice from heaven, [*saying*], Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ... "The heavens opened", - that's the same word (σχιζω) that is used in Mt. 27:51 and Mk. 15:38 and Lk. 23:45 to describe how the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. That was the power of God that miraculously opened the heavens ... and yet from out of that mighty power God demonstrated there came *the Spirit like a dove descending upon Jesus*.

Mt. 3:16 uses another Greek word (ἀνοίγω) to describe the heavens being opened ... and that is the same word used in the Septuagint to describe an altogether different scene at almost the beginning of Scripture, Gen. 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the

month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. ... What a difference to what took place at the River Jordan, the Spirit like a dove descending upon him ... The Holy Spirit descended visibly. The Holy Spirit is not a dove but He descended upon Jesus *as* a dove, - with gentleness and beauty and peacefulness ... Here is the shekinah glory of the Messiah being presented and declared, with the presence of the Holy Spirit ... and with the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus continues into the wilderness for those forty days of temptation, and [He] was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him (Mk. 1:13). ... John the apostle who was there that day at the River Jordan described this event, and many others, Jn. 1:14 we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father

By the way, what an encouragement it would have been to the believers in Rome, - who would have been reading Mark's Gospel! Those believers in Rome would have been facing the wild beasts, - the lions, - in the Colosseum and in the Circus Maximus ... And Peter, - through Mark's Gospel, - was showing the believers in Rome who were in danger of facing such terrible afflictions how the angels ministered unto Jesus in His time of trial ... and also how the angels would minister unto them during their trials.

If we had the time we would see the Holy Spirit's work with Jesus during His ministry on earth. It was the Holy Spirit by which Mary conceived and bore Jesus (Mt. 1:20). It was the Holy Spirit Who ministered to Him as a young boy so that He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Lk. 2:52).

And it was His Father's voice that majestically bore witness to Him, Mk. 1:11 Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ... From the waters of the river came the voice from Glory. God in Heaven spoke words to His Son that never previously had been spoken to any other. Throughout Scripture there are often *men* of God ... but Jesus only is the eternal *Son* of God. That is how He is referred to over fifty times in the Gospels. And it means He is *one* with God for He *is* God. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him (Is. 42:1), - that's Jesus ... my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!

This is the coronation of the King. This is His inauguration. This is God's sinless and perfect Son ... anointed by the Holy Spirit as He came up out of that water. He came to save sinners and to establish His Kingdom.

It was such an important and such a significant occasion ... When they later questioned him in the temple, He brought them back to His baptism, Mk. 11:27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, ²⁸ And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? ²⁹ And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰ The baptism of John, was [*it*] from heaven, or of men? answer me. ³¹ And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? ³² But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all [*men*] counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. ... That was how important His baptism was!

Here is Jesus! He has come from the indescribable glory of Heaven ... and He walked along the banks of the River Jordan, and down into its waters. And there, in front of all those Jews from Judea and Jerusalem, He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7) ... “He held the highest place above, Adored by all the sons of flame, Yet such His self-denying love, He laid aside His crown and came To seek the lost, And at the cost Of heavenly rank and earthly fame He sought me—Blessed be His name! ... It was a lonely path He trod, From every human soul apart; Known only to Himself and God Was all the grief that filled His heart, Yet from the track He turned not back, Till where I lay in want and shame, He found me — Blessed be His name!” Amen.