

The Life of Christ— The Baptism of Jesus

Introduction:

One of the most important events that occurred in the earthly life of Jesus was His baptism by John the Baptist. Oftentimes, baptism is taught to be a washing away of our sins. This concept is confusing because why would Jesus, then, need to be baptized? The Bible says that Jesus did not sin (**II Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15, I Peter 2:21-22**). If Jesus did not sin, then He had no need of being baptized to wash His sins away! In **Romans 6:3-5**, the Apostle Paul explained that baptism is simply a *picture* of salvation. It is *only* a picture and *not* salvation! Jesus did not get baptized to gain forgiveness of sins. He was baptized to show us a picture of what He was going to do on the cross. This is the whole purpose of baptism in the Bible. God wants us to be unashamed of His plan for our redemption. God had a purpose and a plan for baptism. **Malachi 3:6** tells us that God does not ever change. If God does not change, and baptism was only Jesus painting a picture for us, then baptism must still be the same—a picture of salvation. The Bible teaches that there are several reasons why Jesus was baptized.

I. He was baptized so that John the Baptist would know Who He was

John the Baptist is whom Jesus approached about being baptized. John's response to Jesus' request was that *Jesus* should be baptizing him (**Matthew 3:14**)! Apparently, Jesus was an upright Person. John did not know yet that Jesus was the Messiah—God revealed it to him after Jesus was baptized. In **John 1:29-34**, John saw Jesus and exclaimed that He is the Son of God and told how he knew this to be true. This event was very important. John the Baptist was the “forerunner” or the one who was sent to tell the world that the Messiah was coming. If Jesus had not been baptized by John, then John could never have proclaimed Him to be the Messiah.

II. He was baptized to “fulfil all righteousness”

John, after expressing to Jesus that it was He Who should be baptizing John, received this response from Jesus, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” (**Matthew 3:15**) Jesus claimed that He had to be baptized to “fulfil” or *complete* all “righteousness” or *the condition acceptable by God*. In both **John 4:34** and **John 8:29**, Jesus expressed His goal and purpose in life—to do His Father's will.

III. He had to come up out of the water

Baptism is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus wanted to properly picture what He was going to do to redeem us from our sins He, therefore, went completely under the water to accurately picture His death and burial. He came up out of the water to picture His resurrection. He had to **go down into the water** in order to **come up out of the water**, as the Bible says He did. Some people have decided to change the way that they baptize to make it more palatable to others. Though “sprinkling” may be acceptable in many religions, Jesus, Who lived His life to please God, the Father, went *down into* the water. Jesus is our Example, and so we ought to follow Him and His example as completely as possible!

IV. After His baptism, He received God's Stamp of Approval

The Bible tells us that, after Jesus came up out of the water, God, the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-11, Luke 3:21-22**), descended upon Him in the form of a dove and God, the Father, said, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (**Matthew 3:17**) This was the first time during Jesus' lifetime that the Trinity was presented publicly. What an awesome event this must have been for John the Baptist and those around him! John finally saw the One Whom he had been preaching about and knew that God was truly on Earth, and all the debt for sin would soon be paid!

Conclusion:

John the Baptist's ministry was made valid by Jesus' baptism. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by being baptized. Jesus was immersed or *put under the water* to properly complete the picture of His purpose on Earth. Then God, the Father, placed His stamp of approval on His Son and His ministry. One of the greatest lessons that we can learn from this is that Jesus simply obeyed His Father, and He desires us to, likewise, simply obey. Baptism has often been called the "first step of obedience" for a Christian. Maybe this is why Jesus started off His earthly ministry with baptism. Let's all follow Jesus' example and make sure we are baptized correctly and that all those that we see saved are baptized. In this way, we picture God's redemption plan to the world and we display our willingness to obey His commands.

Questions:

- 1. Who baptized Jesus?**
- 2. What form did the Holy Spirit take after Jesus was baptized?**
- 3. What does baptism picture?**
- 4. What is the right way to be baptized?**
- 5. When should we be baptized?**