

Jesus Was Baptized by John the Baptist

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the warning about judgment given to the Pharisees and Sadducees by John the Baptist. In this topic, we will see that John finished that warning by explaining that the One who was coming after him would either baptize people with the Holy Spirit or He would baptize them with fire (which we will see means eternal judgment).

John the Baptist explained the difference between his baptism and the baptism with which Jesus would baptize. Matthew 3:11-12 says, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” John said that his baptism was a baptism of repentance. Repentance is explained in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, where we read, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” The idols of many of the Jews were their works, which they thought would make them acceptable to God. They were baptized by John to show their repentance.

In contrast, John said that the One coming after him was much greater than he was. John said that he did not even feel worthy to carry the sandals of that One. John said that One would actually have two different baptisms. One of those baptisms would be with the Holy Spirit and the other would be with fire. The difference between these two baptisms is then explained in the next verse because one is for those who repent and place their faith in Jesus and the other baptism is for those who do not believe.

First, we see that those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit are compared to wheat. In that day, the people would cut their wheat and bring it to the threshing floor. The threshing floor was usually on the top of a hill where the ground had been made hard and smooth. The wheat would be placed on the smooth threshing floor and then the cattle would walk over the wheat to break the kernels of wheat free from the straw. The straw would then be stacked to the side of the threshing floor. Then, in the evening, when there was a good breeze blowing, the wheat would be thrown into the air so that the tiny pieces of straw called chaff would be blown away and the kernels of wheat would fall back onto the threshing floor and be gathered and taken to the barn. Jesus will gather all believers and take us to heaven.

Jesus promised this baptism with the Holy Spirit to all believers when He told the disciples the night before His crucifixion, in John 14:16-17, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” The original believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts 8, the Samaritans; in Acts 10, the Gentiles; in Acts 19, the Old Testament saints received the Holy Spirit as a group. From the time these groups first received the Holy Spirit, all believers receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. Romans 8:9 says, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” We are baptized with the Holy Spirit at salvation.

Second, those who do not believe are compared to chaff. The chaff was not gathered into the barn. Instead, the chaff was burned with fire. John said here, in Matthew 3:12, that Jesus will “burn up the chaff with

unquenchable fire.” This is the eternal judgment described in Revelation 20:15, where we read, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” As we pray for people who are still like chaff, we want to pray that the Holy Spirit will convict them (John 16:8-11) and the Father will draw them (John 6:44) because the Son came to seek and to save them (Luke 19:10).

One day, while John the Baptist was in the wilderness, Jesus came to the place where he was preaching. Matthew 3:13-15 says, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him.” Here, we see that Jesus asked John to baptize Him. John knew that Jesus was God and told Jesus that he needed to be baptized by Jesus instead. He then asked Jesus why Jesus was coming to him. John had said that he was not even worthy to carry the sandals of Jesus. He realized that Jesus was so much greater, that he was totally unworthy for Jesus to even come to the place where he was baptizing. He had said that his baptism was a baptism of repentance and Jesus certainly did not need to repent.

Then, Jesus explained to John why He asked John to baptize Him. Jesus said, “Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” The key word in this statement is “us”. Jesus chose to identify Himself with all sinners because He came to bear our sins and die for all of us. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the cross. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” At the moment of repentance and faith, we became full partakers of His death and were released from the power of death. That is what now makes it possible for us to live for righteousness.

Once Jesus explained to John the reason why He asked to be baptized, John baptized Him. Mark 1:9 says, “It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” Here, we see that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. Matthew 3:16-17 then goes on to say, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” In these verses, we see that the Father also had another purpose for the baptism of Jesus by John.

Here, we see that both the Father and the Holy Spirit identified themselves with Jesus at the time of His baptism. As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, we see that the heavens were opened to Him. The word translated “opened” is used 77 times in the New Testament. These include times when Jesus opened the eyes of those blind, when He opened His mouth to speak, when the wise men opened their treasures, when prison doors were opened, when people open the door to invite Jesus into their lives (Revelation 3:20) and many other times when something was opened. In Acts 7:56, Stephen spoke, “And said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’” As a result, we see that God did something that was very obvious to Jesus, to John and to anyone else that was there when He opened the heavens.

From this opening in the heavens, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and landed on Jesus. Luke 3:22 says, “And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit had a bodily form that looked like a dove. This made it possible for John the Baptist and the others who were there to see or

hear all three members of the Trinity. Jesus had just walked up out of the water. The Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove and landed on Jesus. Then, the Father spoke from heaven. The Father was not seen, because in Exodus 33:20, the Father said, “But He said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’” Stephen did see the Father in the verse mentioned in the previous paragraph but that was just before his death. Here, the Father spoke from heaven so that John, and the others, heard Him speak and at the same time saw Jesus with the Holy Spirit sitting on Him in the form of a dove.

Then, the Father spoke from heaven and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here, we see that John and the others who were there that day heard the Father publicly identify Jesus as His Son at the very beginning of His public ministry. We also see that the Father publicly responded to Jesus again in the last week before Jesus went to the cross. John 12:27-28 says, “‘Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ‘Father, glorify Your name.’” Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.”” The Father made it clear that Jesus is His Son.

Meanwhile, Luke 4:1 tells us, “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” Here, we see that Jesus showed us how to live for righteousness. At any moment, we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” When we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, we make it possible for His power to work in us and the love of Jesus to flow through us. This is a key lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children to understand. In our own power, we can do nothing. At all times we yield to the Holy Spirit, His power works through us. That is what makes it possible for us to live for righteousness. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to live for righteousness in the power of the Holy Spirit.