

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

by Victor Maxwell

Jesus Christ's baptism is a defining moment in His life, where He stands alongside us in our need, stands in our place as our substitute, and stands above us as the Son of God.

Scripture: Psalm 2:7

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Holy Trinity"

Description

Victor Maxwell delves into the significance of the Baptism of Jesus Christ as a defining moment in His life, highlighting how it marked the inauguration of His earthly ministry and the divine Trinity's presence. He emphasizes that Jesus did not become the Son of God at His baptism but was eternally the Son of God, and how His baptism symbolized His solidarity with sinners and His role as our Substitute. Maxwell also explores the heavenly events that followed Jesus' baptism, including the tearing of the heavens, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and the voice of God affirming Jesus as the Son of God.

Transcript

Studies in Luke # 9 Luke 3:21-23 The Baptism of Jesus Christ We pick up the threads of our study in Luke's Gospel and come to look at a defining moment in the life of our Lord - His Baptism. We already got the overall picture - Jesus Christ was announced by John the Baptist. Jesus Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was approved by the Father. Jesus Christ was attacked by Satan. I remember as a Bible College student being invited to testify at a Church of Scotland young people's rally in Partick, Scotland.

After we had taken part the minister proceeded to conduct a Bible Study on the Baptism of our Lord. He wasn't picking up the threads, he was picking holes in the life of our Lord. He began by saying exactly what I have just said, "This was a defining moment in the life of our Lord". However, he went on to say, It was at this point that Jesus Christ became the Son of God. Prior to this he had only been the son of Mary, Jesus of Nazareth. It was here that he became aware of His ministry.

Of course he was speaking falsehood and nonsense. Jesus Christ did not become the Son of God. He was eternally the Son of God. You cannot have an everlasting Father without the everlasting Son. Furthermore, as we noticed in Luke 2, Jesus Christ was aware that He was about His Father's business. This was a defining moment in the life of our Lord in that it was the inauguration of His earthly ministry. Verse 23 informs us that Jesus Christ began to be about thirty years old. This was the age at which the priests of Israel began their public ministry.

Prior to that they had been in preparation. Our Blessed Lord had not only been preparing for this ministry not only since He was born, but also this is the moment ordained of God in eternity and prophesied by David in Psalm 2:7 "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." As we come to this significant event in the life of our Lord there are many themes and truths we could look at and perhaps on the way through we will make cursory mention of them.

We see here the divine Trinity. It is interesting that the word trinity is not found in the Bible but the evidence of it is everywhere. You hear the Father speak from heaven. You can see the Spirit in dove like form descending from heaven. And Jesus Christ can be touched in the Jordan's water. These are three distinct persons, each one is divine in nature but there are not three Gods. There is one God. It is what we call tri-unity or the trinity. The Baptism of our Lord is also a clear demonstration of the activity of three divine and distinct persons.

The Son/Servant standing in the water. He is the Saviour. The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending out of heaven. He is the divine Executor. As we shall see, all that Jesus ever did He did by the Holy Spirit. The Father spoke from heaven. He is the planner. As Trinitarians we do not claim to believe in the tri-unity of God because we can understand it. We believe it because the Bible teaches it. There is also teaching here about Jesus' Sonship and God's Identification of Jesus' Messianic status in the quotation of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1; The identification of the Son with sinners.

As we have already said, the public ministry of Jesus began with His immersion in the Jordan by John the Baptist. No meeting between two men ever did more to change history. In His baptism, Christ stands with us in our need, but He stands above us in His uniqueness. There are three truths that flow to us out of the waters of Jordan. (a) In His Baptism, Christ Stands alongside us in Our Need When our Lord was baptized he not only was supporting John, he was identifying with sinners.

The baptism of John the Baptist was one of repentance because of sin. As such, it was a baptism that Jesus did not need. We must ask the question, "Why did He submit Himself to an act designated for sinners" Jesus voluntarily chose to stand in solidarity with His servant John the Baptist. His ministry was outside the Temple and away from the circle of the Pharisees. His baptism was an act of loving communion with us in our misery. The Sinless One chose to put Himself alongside the sinful ones.

He identified Himself with the people He came to save. His baptism was an act of symbolic confession as Nehemiah did of old. He identified with their need. Jesus still stands with us in our need. His example ought to motivate us to stand with other sinners in their need. In His baptism Jesus Christ is an example to All His followers. He not only preached Baptism and sent his disciples to baptise but he himself was baptised. I think it is important to know that Jesus walked some sixty miles to be baptised.

I say that because there are some who count the cost of baptism. Others feel that it is not important. I ask you to consider how much importance Jesus put on this act. In His Baptism, Christ Stands in place of us as Our Substitute The exchange between Jesus and John earlier in the chapter clearly states the sinlessness of Jesus. John the Baptist also stated his own unworthiness in the face of Jesus' character. Jesus did not disagree with John. Jesus never demonstrated a sense of personal sin.

However, in Matthew 3 :14 we read of John's protests of baptising our Lord. "John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". In other words, he came to fulfill the Father's

mission. As the Sinless One, the Lord Jesus stood in the waters of baptism for us. He clearly connected His baptism with His death on the cross: - I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50, KJV).

The shadow of the cross fell over the green banks and flowing the waters of Jordan that day. The same shadow fell over the soul of our blessed Saviour. As he stood in the waters he knew what lay ahead yet he deliberately took the step for us. By an act of His own will He went into the water for us, just as He died for us. When He emerged out of the water, it was a symbol and prophecy of His resurrection. In His Baptism, Christ Stands Above Us as Son of God When Jesus was baptised we read that he was praying.

It is as if His gaze was fixed on high waiting in expectation. Three dramatic events immediately followed the baptism and prayers of our Lord Jesus and these place Him above us as the Son of God. No other baptism ever witnessed such events. i. Jesus' baptism reported the tearing of the heavens. Suddenly the heavens are rent before his gaze. Instead of being a wall, heaven becomes an open door between God and man. The word for open is the word cloven - or torn. It is the same word that is used for the opening of the veil of the Temple - it was torn, ripped from top to bottom.

In both cases, the tearing of the heavens and the tearing of the veil are god's testimony to the work of His Son. In the first tearing it is God coming to earth for us. In the second it is God going to heaven to open the way for us. When he tore open the heavens it was the commencement of the Saviour's work. When he tore the Temple curtain it was the completion of that work. ii. Jesus' baptism reveals the Holy Spirit. This is a most memorable and holy occasion. Just as the oil of holy ointment was poured on the heads of prophets, priests and kings so also the Holy Spirit anointed the Lord Jesus.

This anointing is the fulfilling of Isaiah's prophecy, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach.. "(Is. 61:1) Everything the Father sent the Son to do He did by the Holy Spirit Who is also known as the Spirit of Christ. Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin (Mat. 1:20), He was anointed by the Spirit coming out of the waters inaugurating His earthly ministry, (Acts 10:38) He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. (Mark 1:12) He offered Himself through the Spirit as a spotless sacrifice to God. (Heb. 9:14.)

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4; 8:11) By the same Spirit he taught His disciples. (Acts 1:2). Our Saviour called no disciples nor did He do any ministry until after the Holy Spirit anointed Him for the work. How foolish it is for believers who live without the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Today the Saviour still works in us through the same Holy Spirit whom He has given us. iii. Jesus' baptism resumes the voice of God.

This is the first time the voice of the Father had been heard after centuries of silence. He tells us that the baptism of Jesus is a coronation of a King and the ordination of a Suffering Servant. All of us should echo that voice. Three times in the ministry of our Lord the Father's voice declares the Father's delight in His Son and each time it was in relation to the Cross. First His voice was heard on the banks of the Jordan as the Servant of Jehovah identified his sin-bearing death in the Baptism of Repentance.

This was the Father's testimony to His pleasure in the Saviour. The next time the Father's utterance was heard was atop the Mount of transfiguration where Moses and Elijah had discussed the Saviour's decease. The Father's testimony on the mountain was to the pre-eminence of His Son. (Mat.17:5) Finally, the Father's voice was heard when our Lord, just days before His crucifixion spoke of the death He would die. (John 12:28) This was the Father's testimony to the glory of the Sovereign.

God's final and powerful declaration of approval of Jesus Christ was the resurrection from the dead when He was declared to be the Son of God with power. Jesus Christ and His work on the Cross is the delight of the Father's heart and the theme of His constant refrain. How much more should we also make much of our Lord Jesus and His work on the cross. One final thought. I wish I could hear the Father's well done good and faithful servant. You will if you would be saved. You will if you will be baptized. You will if you strive to serve the Lord and finish that work.

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