

The Baptism of Jesus

I have come to do your will, O God.—Hebrews 10:7

Jesus presented himself to John to be baptized. This surprised John for he knew Jesus was a perfect man and did not need to repent or be sorry for his sins: he had none. John told him that he had more need for Jesus to baptize him. But Jesus said, “Let it be so for now.”

Jesus’ baptism had a new and special meaning—it symbolized the full consecration of his life to God as a sacrifice, even to death. John did not understand, but he did as Jesus asked and baptized him in the Jordan River. To the others who were there John said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

John saw the holy spirit come upon Jesus in the form of a dove and he heard God speak, saying, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”

As Jesus came up out of the water, the heavenly truths became clearer for he had received the holy spirit and could understand the “deep things” (or truths) of God (1 Corinthians 2:10). From the time Jesus was immersed at thirty years of age until he died on the cross three-and-a-half years later, he was being baptized. In other words, immersion in water is only the beginning of true baptism. It is a symbol of what is in the heart, the desire to do the Father’s will (Luke 12:50). As Jesus was dying on the cross, he cried, “It is finished!” His baptism into death, begun at Jordan, was now completed.

Christians are baptized into Jesus’ death (Romans 6:3). When

a Christian is raised up from the water, it shows the “burial” of his personal desires forever. He now begins a new life completely dedicated to the Lord. This would be impossible to do on one’s own, but Jesus’ sacrifice and resurrection have guaranteed that all the help needed will be there.

Those who are baptized receive the holy spirit to help them understand and “correctly handle the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Baptism into death is the real baptism for the church, as it was for Jesus. Water baptism is only a symbol, or picture of it. Those who have willing, honest, and teachable hearts will try to follow in the footsteps of Jesus the rest of their lives. If they remain faithful in doing this, they will share with him in the first resurrection.



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