

Synopsis 015b The Baptism of Jesus part 2

With our chronological studies that we've been doing, last week, we started studying the baptism of Jesus, and we started looking at how the things in this passage could apply to candidates for baptism, and what their attitudes should be. There are many hymns that we could apply to baptism. The first one that comes to my mind is, "Take My Life and Let It Be", consecrated Lord to thee; it talks about consecration or commitment to the Lord. "I'll Live for Him"; baptism is a starting point for living for the Lord.

[Matthew 3:13-15; bookmark it.] We see Jesus Christ coming to be baptized of John. Jesus was coming for baptism that he might accomplish or complete all righteousness. Tradition today teaches that baptism is associated with salvation; people teach that baptism is an outward expression of the inward reality of your salvation. But the testimony of Jesus Christ being baptized does not give that impression, because obviously, Jesus Christ wasn't saved; he was God manifest in the flesh.

Baptism is not an outward expression of your salvation; it's an outward expression of your commitment to God. It's symbolic of your total commitment to the Lord.

Another thing we notice a little later is that Jesus was about 30 years old when he was baptized. There are no references in the NT of any child being baptized, only adults. I think the Scriptures show us that baptism is a commitment that children really can't make. Children are more interested in their own wants and desires. They're basically selfish little creatures, which is normal. They come into the world and they want something to eat. When do they want it? Now!

That's not the way a person behaves who is living for the Lord. If you are living for the Lord, then you know you're not going to get what you want now. You have to be patient and endure, and Jesus Christ is an example of one who has been enduring and waiting for his coming Kingdom. He's not ruling and reigning today; today, he's our high priest.

[Philippians 3] Jesus Christ came to John to be baptized of him to accomplish or complete all righteousness. In [Philippians 3:9] we see an example of fulfilling all righteousness. To fulfill all righteousness you must live by faith.

There is a righteousness, which is of the law, and it's an acceptable righteousness. You need that righteousness if you expect to live by faith. In Hebrews 10:38 we are told, "Now the **just** shall live by faith: but if ~~any man~~ he draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

"The just shall live by faith." The just are those who are completing the righteousness, which is of the law. This doesn't mean the ceremonial law, this is the commandments of thou shalt not... In other words, there are commandments that God has given us to abide by.

How many commandments are there? John 13:34 says, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.” We need to know what God is expecting of us. If there is a new commandment, we need to know it so we can abide by it.

Last week, we saw that Paul had the righteousness of the law, but he wanted more. He wanted the righteousness that comes when a man walks by faith. When we are walking by faith, what are we doing? We are pleasing God. Without faith, it is impossible to please him.

[Galatians 2:20] We see what “accomplishing righteousness” means. If you’re not being obedient to God’s commandments, it’s impossible to live by faith. Paul was doing that. He said, “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

One thing that we notice about baptism is that John was baptizing only the nation of Israel. In Acts 13:24, it says, “When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.” Baptism was a message only to the Jews, and it wasn’t to lost Jews, but saved Jews who weren’t living for God. When John came preaching, Israel had forgotten God; they weren’t in fellowship with him. One reason was the Roman government. One reason the Roman government was over them was because of their sins. God had put them in bondage to the Romans.

John came preaching the baptism of repentance. To be living a life that is not pleasing to God, you don’t have to be stealing, or cheating on your wife, or anything like that; you simply have to be out of fellowship with God. You’re not reading your Bible; you’re not praying; you’re not going to church to be held accountable. That’s what church is for! Church is for fellowship; it’s for submitting yourself to others to hold yourself accountable for living for the Lord. John was saying, “It’s time **now** to change your life; it’s time to repent of your sins; it’s time to turn back to the Lord”.

[Matthew 3:2] Another message associated with baptism is the Kingdom of the Heavens. What is the Kingdom of the Heavens? It’s the rule of the heavens over the Earth. One day, the Lord is going to return and he will be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and he will rule over the world. Those who have repented; those who have committed their lives to the Lord; those who have pleased the Lord by living by faith, will rule and reign with him. If you have not changed your life, and you continue to be out of fellowship, you will not rule and reign.

There are a lot of people, who believe that if you are saved, then you’re going to rule and reign with Christ, and that simply is not true! Salvation does not guarantee positions of honor. If you don’t honor him now, he won’t honor you with positions of responsibility then. If he can’t count on you now, he’s not going to count on you then.

Baptism is associated with preparation to rule and reign. This is why it says, “Repent ye, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.” For the Jews to be baptized, John required

evidence. [Matthew 3:8] Evidence. I want to see some change in your life; I want some activity to prove you have made those changes.

In Luke 3:10-11, there were some who asked, “What shall we do then? [How do we prove this?] He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” The simple truth is that a child doesn’t behave that way. If a child has two, how many does he want? He wants more. If he has two candy bars, he’s not going to share it with someone else.

The point that I want to bring out is this: The Lord wants us to be selfless. Be generous with what you have. There were examples of evidences given in the lives of those who were coming. If you’re a tax collector, don’t cheat people. The publicans were always trying to get ahead. We’re told to “Render unto Caesar”, and they’re going to seize your all. If you’re a soldier, be just. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus was baptized, and we have a continued reference to that in [Matthew 13-15], then in Luke 3:23, we’re told, “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age...” when he was baptized.

There is the testimony that Jesus had at his baptism, and we should have the same kind of testimony. [Matthew 3:17] Notice that he calls him a son. A son is one who is mature; behaving himself in a mature fashion. A son is one who is “Well pleasing”. One who is doing things that God likes. Jesus had that testimony.

[Luke 2:43] Here is Jesus Christ at 12 years old and when Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem, as they were required to do three times a year, Jesus was referred to as a child. This word “child” was not a very good translation of the Greek word “pais”; “pais” is one who can bear children. So, Jesus was one who was referred to as one who could bear children. A twelve year old may not be in that position, but he was referred to in that position. I think it’s equivalent to our expression, “Young man”.

[Luke 2:48] This is a different word, but it’s still the same level of maturity, just from the perspective of the parent. He’s referred to as a mature young man in this passage. So, we see at twelve years old, Jesus was prepared for ministry. In fact, we’re told in [Luke 2:49]. “Don’t you know that I am to be about my father’s business?” At 12, he was prepared to do what his father had sent him to do.

[Luke 2:51] Jesus subjected himself to his parents. You know what he was doing? He was denying himself. We have to do that if we want to live a dedicated life for the Lord. We’re going to have to deny ourselves the things that we want, in order to do the things that he wants. Jesus was prepared for the ministry, but he delayed his ministry for 18 years. That’s a substantial period of time; from the time he was 12 until he was 30. He subjected himself. Can you imagine a 25-year-old son subjecting himself to his parents? That’s what he did.

I don't think this is saying that you have to be at least 30 years old to be baptized, but I do think that it's telling us that you need to be mature enough to understand the implications of baptism and repentance and commitment to the things of the Lord in order to be baptized.

[John 12:24-26] We are kernels of corn, or grains of wheat. If we expect to multiply ourselves, we have to be willing to die. With a bag of wheat, you can make loaf of bread for yourself, and die, or lose your life, or you can plant that bag of wheat and have a thousand loaves, from the fruits thereof.

God wants us to be willing to sacrifice our life, so we can bear more fruit than just one grain. One grain, or one bag of grain, won't satisfy for very long, but if we die to self, many others will benefit.

The Lord says, "If you love your life, you're not going to fall into the ground and die and you won't bear any fruit; but if you give up your life and do what I want you to do, you're going to bear much fruit, and you're going to glorify the father." What are we here for? We're here to glorify the father. John 15:8 says, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

But, fruit bearing is for the benefit of others. We are to be fruit bearers, and we have to die to self in order to do that.

Matthew 4:17 says, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Jesus was baptized, he began his ministry; he began fruit-bearing; he began blessing those around him by encouraging them in their walks with God. Jesus was walking with his father like he was supposed to, and he was encouraging the saved Jews around him to do the same thing.

[Mark 10, but stop on your way at: Mark 1:4] Jesus preached it and John preached it, and it was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Do you know what "remission" means? Do you know how it's translated elsewhere? It's translated as "deliverance: or "liberty". If you're serving sin, you're bearing fruit that needs to be burned. You need to be delivered from the bondage of a sinful life, if you expect to rule and reign with Christ.

That's what John was preaching, and that's what Jesus was preaching, and it's all for preparation for ruling and reigning with him in his coming Kingdom. The Lord has given us incentives to live for him in this life, and that is the promise of a heavenly inheritance.

We can have an earthly inheritance. The Jews have been guaranteed an earthly inheritance, but he was offering to some of them a heavenly inheritance. Some of them chose that or believed that. Their inheritances will be in heaven and not on Earth where God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob an inheritance. Those who pay the price will have an inheritance in the heavenlies. They're the ones who died to self.

You do bury dead people. You do bury grains of wheat in the ground. Baptism is symbolic of burying a person who has died to self, but the act of baptism doesn't accomplish a thing. You can be baptized and not be dead.

Do you know what a "dead ringer" is? In the past, people found out they had buried people alive. They dug up caskets, for whatever reasons, and they found scratches inside. To prevent that, they started burying people with a bell on the ground, and a string in the casket, and if they rang the bell, the gravedigger could dig them up. There are people who are buried alive in baptism, and they go on their way thinking they've accomplished something. Baptism doesn't mean anything if you're not dead.

Baptism is a burying, but it's also a resurrection. The word "baptizo" actually means, "to dip". It means to put it down and bring it up. To bury it and raise it again to newness of life. You have to change your life and live it for the Lord. That's what baptism is.

A lot of people think that if you baptize a child, then the child is safe. There are people that teach that if you're not baptized, you're going to hell. There are denominations that believe that if you're not baptized by their preacher, you're going to hell. That's not what baptism is for at all.

[Mark 10] One thing that I want us to look at is that there is another baptism that we need to understand. Here, we find James and John, the sons of Zebedee coming up to Jesus, and [Mark 10:37; glory – Kingdom of the Heavens]. John said, "We know you're the president, but we want to be 1st & 2nd VP; we want to be your right and left hand men". [Mark 10:38] Do you know what baptism he's talking about here? He's talking about a baptism of suffering. The Lord told his disciples that in the world, you will have tribulation and suffering.

There are people who tell you, "If you get saved, all your troubles are over". That's not true. That's not what God said. All your troubles for the rest of eternity may be over, but in life, we're promised tribulation and suffering. Why? Jesus received troubles and tribulations, and you think that we, as his servants are going to be greater than our Lord? No! Jesus suffered at the hands of those to whom he ministered, and eventually, they crucified him. Of course, Jesus told them, [Mark 10:39b-40]; those places are prepared for prepared people.

[Philippians 1:29; believe – present, active, infinitive – faithful life; suffer – present, active, infinitive.] Believing is essential! Faithfulness on our part, and suffering on our part is essential for us to rule and reign with Christ. They're essential if we want to have a heavenly inheritance.

[1 Peter 4:1] Do you know what suffering will help us to do? It will help us to refrain from or leave a sin filled life. Discipline in our life from God helps us to mature and change our way of living. We need to cease from living in sin.

That's why the message is "repent ye for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand". If you want to rule and reign, you have to stop living in sin, and once you stop living in sin, you have to start living a life that is pleasing to God.

[1 Peter 4:2] That's the bottom line; living for the will of God. Suffering helps us to live according to the will of God.

[2 Timothy 2:11; I want us to close with this.] To be dead with him means we have lost our life and have been buried and we've become fruitful servants of the Lord. If we die to self, we will rule and reign.

[2 Timothy 2:12; suffer – endure] Let me tell you, you can deny the Lord and escape suffering. Peter is a prime example of that. Peter denied the Lord. Why did he do that? His hide was too precious to him. He denied the Lord so they wouldn't crucify him too. He didn't want to have four crosses at that hill, only three. So, Peter denied him, and by denying him, he didn't have to suffer. He denied him in a way to make sure. He started using expletives, and getting pretty excited, and really gave them what for. He started bringing forth fruit to prove that he wasn't one of them. The Lord wants us to bring forth fruit to prove that we are one of his.

[2 Timothy 2:13; believe not – present, active - faithless]

Paul told the Philippian jailer how to be saved. Why did he do that? Because the jailer asked him. What was the answer? "Believe on the Lord Jesus", and what else? Nothing else. Why is there nothing else given in that passage to be saved? Because salvation is received by believing on the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

Baptism has to do with lifestyle. It has to do with living your life for the Lord. May the Lord help us all to appreciate what baptism is all about. Baptism is not something you do when you get saved. Baptism is something you do when you are committed to the Lord and you're dead to self. Baptism is something you do so you can be buried and brought up again unto a new lifestyle for Christ.