

Baptism and Temptations

Luke 3: 22.



“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”
Luke 3: 22.



I. Introduction

The baptism of Jesus is an event inaugurating the victorious ministry of God among His people. Through the baptism, Jesus, with the power of the Holy Spirit, and the approval of His Father, fulfilled all righteousness and set the road for Christians, allowing them to be transformed in His own image.



"In the birth by water and the Spirit, Jesus himself led the way in this birth, drawing down upon the water, by his own baptism, the Holy Spirit; so that in all things he became the firstborn of those who are spiritually born again, and gave the name of brethren to those who partook in a birth like to his own by water and the Spirit"

Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius 2:8
[A.D. 382].



“We pray and fast with the candidates for baptism. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father . . . and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit [Matt. 28:19], they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, ‘Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:3]”
Justin Martyr, First Apology, p. 61 [A.D. 151].



Christ is the object of baptism

"Christ dedicated and sanctified baptism in his own body in order that he might have it in common with us as the firmest bond of the union and fellowship which he has deigned to form with us. Hence, Paul proves that we are children of God from the fact that we put on Christ in baptism. Thus we see the fulfillment of baptism is in Christ, whom also for this reason we call the proper object of baptism For all the gifts of God proffered in baptism are found in Christ alone."
John Calvin, Institutes 4.15.6.



As Moses started his ministry by hearing the voice of God, while facing the burning bush, Jesus also started his ministry by hearing the voice of God. He came out of water (the meaning of the name 'Moses' is 'out of water'), and hence became the second Moses, the victorious Messiah, sent by the Father to deliver his children. Right after the baptism, he entered into the desert, (as it was the case for Moses, after the baptism, 1 Cor. 10: 1 – 4), accomplishing the victory where the people of Israel showed weakness and infirmity. (1 Cor. 10: 5.)



“Jesus put Himself
into the place of
baptism as a
sinner, though not
a sinner.”

Art Katz



“God’s claiming of Jesus in this story summarizes the essence of the gospel: the astonishing claim that God does not will to remain hidden in the heights of heaven but descends to the depths of earthly life in order to be seen and heard by us finite creatures.”

Lee Barrett



“At Christ’s baptism, John the Baptist learned something, not that Christ is God, not that he baptized with the Holy Spirit, but that the effectiveness of baptism rests in Christ, not in good or bad ministers.”

Augustine, in Gabriel Mendy,
Augustine’s Spirit-Soul Analogy: and
its Implications for Communion
Ecclesiology, p. 79.

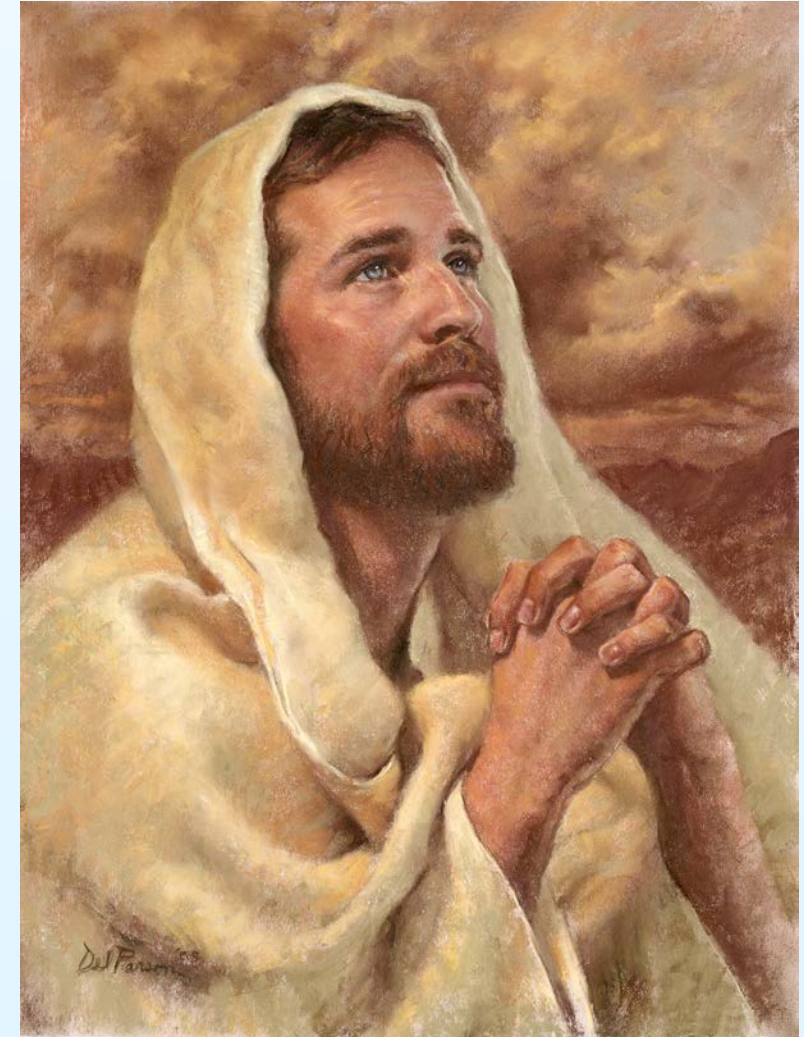


The healing of Naaman as a picture of cleansing during the baptism

“And dipped himself,” says the Scripture, “seven times in Jordan.” (2 Kings 5:14) It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but it served as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: “Unless a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (John 3:5)

Irenaeus of Lyons, 2nd century, Fragments, 34.

“Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us.”
Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 111.



"It is the fact that never in all history before this had any Jew submitted to being baptized. The Jews knew and used baptism, but only for proselytes who came into Judaism from some other faith. It was natural that the sin-stained, polluted proselyte should be baptized, but no Jew had ever conceived that he, a member of the chosen people, a son of Abraham, assured of God's salvation, could ever need baptism. Baptism was for sinners, and no Jew ever conceived of himself as a sinner shut out from God. Now for the first time in their national history the Jews realized their own sin and their own claimant need of God. Never before had there been such a unique national movement of penitence and of search for God."

William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000, p. 59.

II. Context



After the texts related to Jesus' birth and his childhood, Luke presents the life and ministry of Jesus in Nazareth until his rejection. No prophet is accepted in his own country.



The ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus are portrayed in parallel, underlining the quality of preparation for the ministry of Messiah achieved by John, according to the prophet Isaiah (chapter 40).

At the same time the text emphasizes the importance for Jesus to pass through the wilderness, to be in an environment where he can connect with His Father, while detaching himself from the surrounding noise.



Jesus' Baptism, Temptations, and Ministry in Nazareth

A	2: 51 – 52	Jesus in Nazareth. Incomprehension of Parents
B	3: 1 – 6	John the Baptist in the Desert (Wilderness)
C	3: 7 – 20	Children of Abraham (Sermon of John the Baptist)
D	3: 21 - 22	Baptism of Jesus
C'	3: 23 – 38	Genealogy of Jesus. Child of Abraham and Son of God
B'	4: 1 – 13	Temptation of Jesus in the Desert (Wilderness)
A'	4: 14 – 30	Jesus in Nazareth. Incomprehension of Populace

III. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit inaugurating the Ministry of Jesus

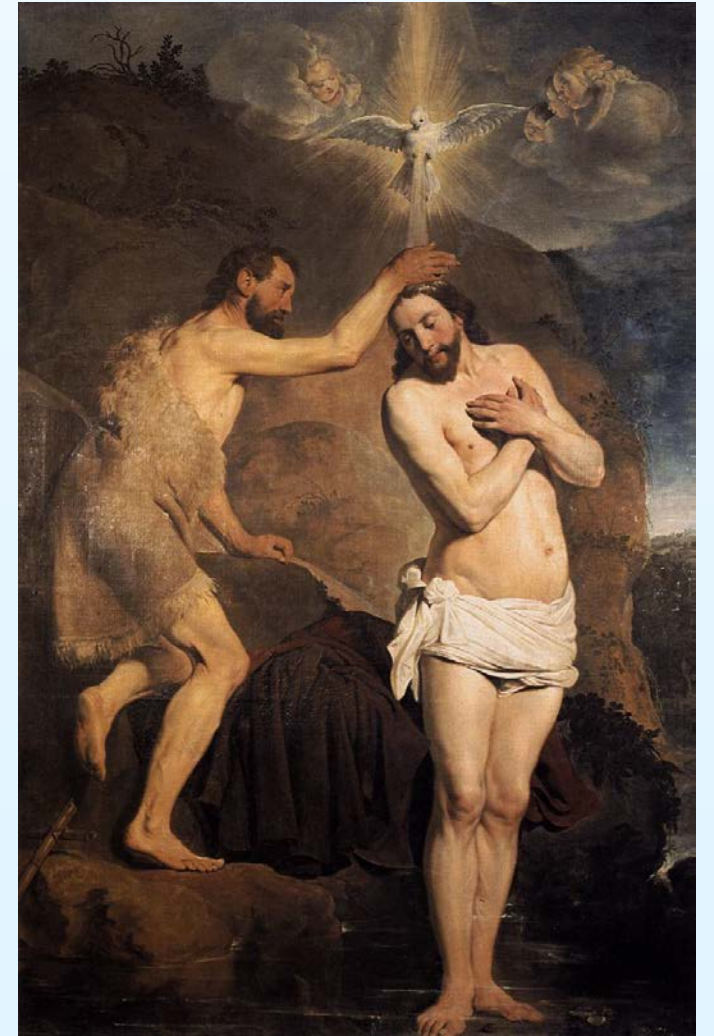


1. The Presence of the Holy Spirit

“And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him”



“The baptism of Jesus Christ is one of the best examples that shows the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are different. For example, during Jesus' baptism we discover that God the Father was speaking from heaven as the Holy Spirit was descending upon Jesus while Jesus was being immersed into the Jordan river.”
John Calahan



Jesus was not without Spirit before the baptism. At the baptism He was enveloped by the Spirit for an effective ministry
“We must ascribe to the Spirit all the progress in Christ's mental and spiritual development, all His advancement and knowledge and holiness the Spirit was given to Him in consequence of the personal union in a measure which no man could possess, constituting the link between deity and humanity, perpetually imparting the full consciousness of His personality and making Him inwardly aware of His divine Sonship at all times.”

George Smeeten, 19th century, Scotland



We also need the presence of the Holy Spirit

“The Holy Spirit doesn't need to equip you for what you're not going to do, so if you're in rebellion against Jesus and refusing His right to be Lord, He doesn't need to send the Holy Spirit to equip you for service. And, tragically, you miss out on the joy that He brings.

So let the Holy Spirit deal with anything that's keeping you from obeying Christ.”

Henry T. Blackaby



2. The Voice of God the Father

“And a voice came from heaven”



"If this inner and critical voice has kept you safe for many years as your inner voice of authority, you may end up not being able to hear the real voice of God."

Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*



To hear the whisper of God you must turn down the volume of the world. Find time to disconnect from everything around you and be still in His presence today. He is waiting for you to draw near.



"I encourage you to reflect upon Jesus' baptism and your own. See where they are related and interconnected. Seek ways to continue to splash that water, name that presence of the Holy Spirit and lean in close to hear that voice of God inviting you into a beloved relationship. For that is why we are here: to recognize that water, Holy Spirit and the voice of God are not simply things of ancient history but are part of our story. They call us to a reality grounded in God's grace and God's love all beginning at Jesus' baptism and our own." John Stephens



3. Pleasing God

“In you I’m well pleased”

“If we displease God, does it matter whom we please? If we please Him does it matter whom we displease?”

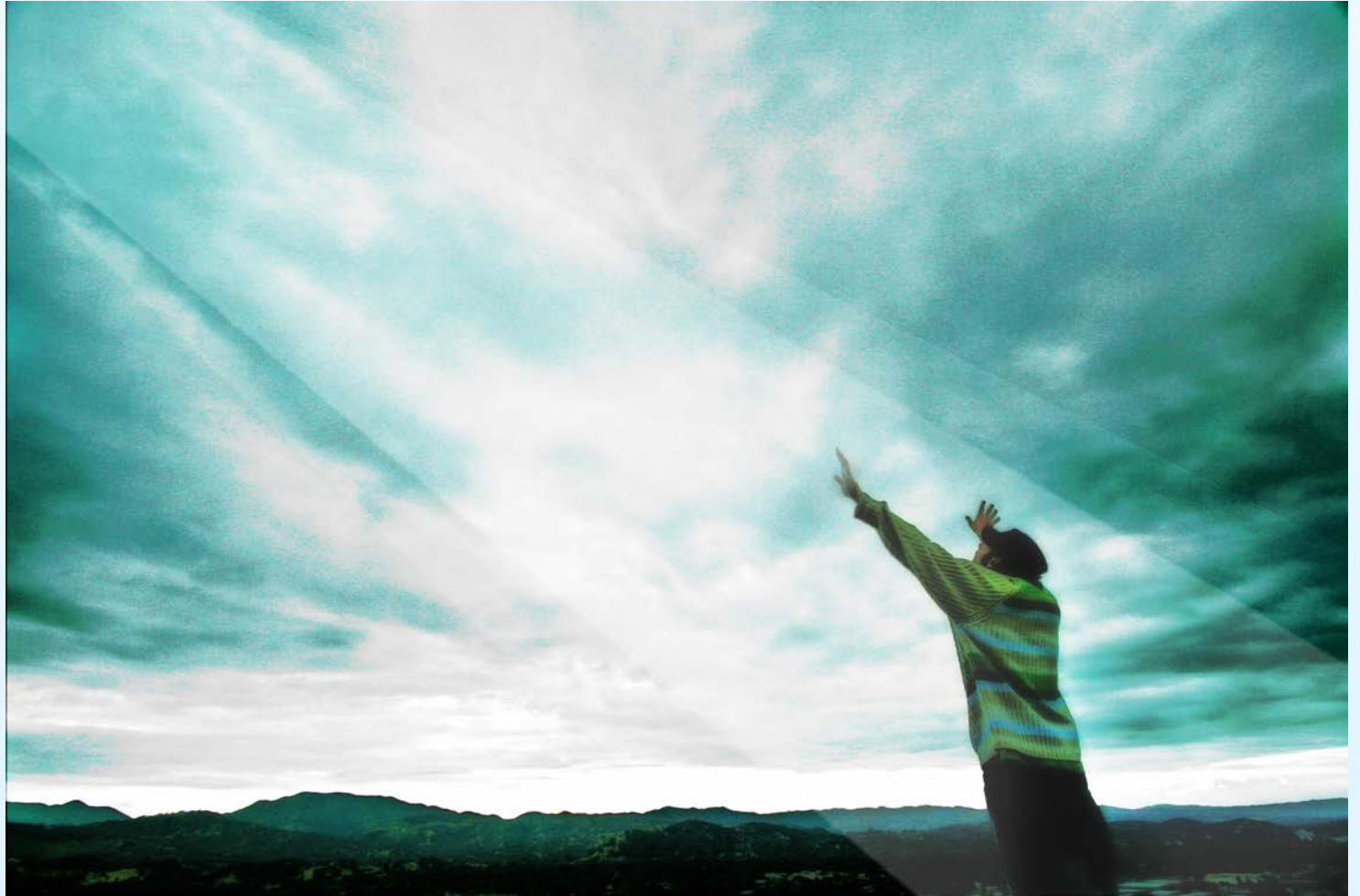
Leonard Ravenhill, Why Revival Tarries: A Classic on Revival



“Pleasing God is walking with God – which means you are going in a Divine direction. The term “walk” carries the meaning of conduct in the Bible. This presupposes that one is saved and as a result of his salvation, he lives his life in harmony with this grand truth. The Scriptures give specific examples of what the believer is to walk. For example, we are told to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), “walk by faith” (2 Cor. 5:7), “walk by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16), “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2), “walk in light” (Eph. 5:8; 1 John 1:7) and to “walk” wisely (Eph. 5:15). All of this “walking” is a reference to obedient Christian living that is pleasing to the Lord. Such conduct ought to be a response of gratitude to the Lord for all that He has done for us in Christ.”

Andrew Curtis

“It’s amazing how much stress you can relieve and how much better you’ll feel when you stop pleasing people and start pleasing God.”



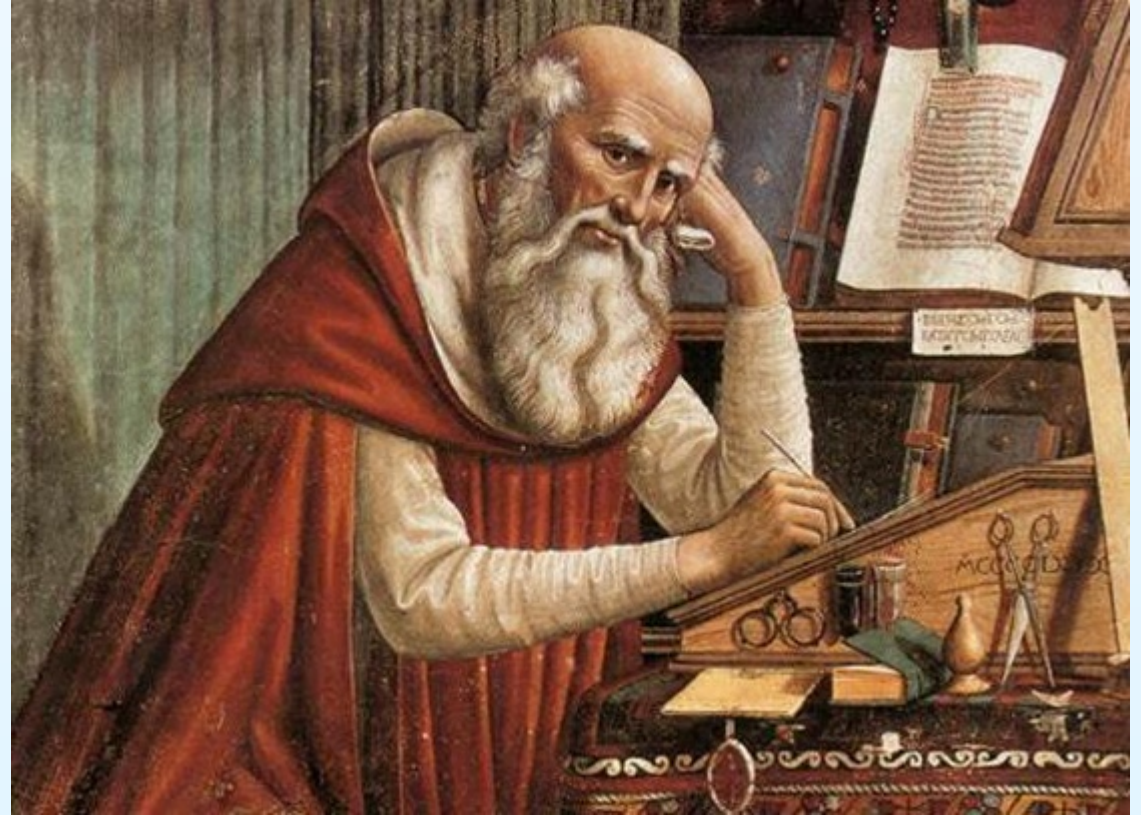
“The Church is the community of those who have been ‘immersed’ in Jesus’ life, overwhelmed by it. Those who are baptized have disappeared under the surface of Christ’s love and reappeared as different people. The waters close over their heads, and then, like the old world rising out of watery chaos in the first chapter of the Bible, out comes a new world.” Rowan Williams, *Token of Trust*, p. 112.



V. Conclusion



“No one can begin a new life,
unless he repent of the old.”
St. Augustine



“The mission of Christ was soon to begin. But He must first withdraw from the busy scenes of life to a desolate wilderness for the express purpose of bearing the threefold test of temptation in behalf of those He had come to redeem.”
Ellen G. White,
Confrontation, p. 9.



“Christianity is never merely a matter of rules and regulations, of public liturgy and private morality. Biblical Christianity results in transformed men and women—men and women who, because of the power of the Spirit of God, enjoy regenerated natures. We want to please God, we want to be holy, we want to confess Jesus is Lord. In short, because of the grace secured by Christ’s cross, we ourselves experience something of a transforming moral imperative: the sins we once loved we learn to fear and hate, the obedience and holiness we once despised we now hunger for. God help us, we are woefully inconsistent in all this, but we have already tasted enough of the powers of the age to come that we know what a transforming moral imperative feels like in our lives, and we long for its perfection at the final triumph of Christ.”

D. A. Carson

“Baptism and death are interchangeable terms in Scripture... In accordance with this meaning, the Red Sea is truly a baptism, that is, death and the wrath of God, as is manifest in the case of Pharaoh. Nevertheless, Israel, which is baptized with such a baptism, passes through unharmed. Similarly, the Flood is truly death and the wrath of God; nevertheless, the believers are saved in the midst of the Flood...The Flood that Noah experienced was not different from the one that the world experienced. The Red Sea, which both Pharaoh and Israel entered, was not different. Later on, however, the difference becomes apparent in this: those who believe are preserved in the very death to which they are subjected together with the ungodly, but the ungodly perish. This difference the Holy Spirit wanted to point out in order that the godly might be instructed by this example to believe and hope for salvation through the mercy of god, even in the midst of death. For they have Baptism joined with the promise of life, just as Noah had the ark.”

Martin Luther, Lectures on Genesis, AE 2: p. 153.

“Christ was continually receiving from the Father, that He might communicate to us. “The word which ye hear,” He said, “is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me.” “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others.”

Ellen G. White, The Review and Herald, August 11, 1910.



“Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

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