

The Purpose of John's Baptism

Matthew 3:1-17

- I. **Introduction**
 - A. The Purpose of John's Baptism (Mt. 3:1-17)
 - 1. Prepare Jews (Israel) for the Christ (Mt. 3:3)
 - 2. Reveal Jesus to Jews (Israel) (Mt. 3:17)

- II. **Luke 16:16 "The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom is preached."**
 - A. Note: "Until" – adverb of time, meaning that with the coming of John something additional, something new, would be preached
 - B. Comment on the law and the prophets
 - C. Malachi, the last of the prophets until John – 400 years of silence between the two

- III. **Mark 1:1 "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."**
 - A. Note: When John came he began preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gospel of the kingdom
 - B. To preach the kingdom is to preach the gospel of the King
 - C. Jesus to Pilate (Jn. 18:37)

- IV. **Mark 1:4 "John the Baptist appeared...preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."**
 - A. Here, Baptism for the remission of sins was first preached
 - B. John preached a baptism growing out of, or based upon, repentance and for the remission of sins
 - C. Without baptism based upon repentance one could not have the forgiveness of sins
 - D. When John preached baptism for the remission of sins, he was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the kingdom, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ

- V. **Origin of baptism for the remission of sins.**
 - A. Not with members of the church of Christ
 - B. Not in the mind of Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, et.al. of the Restoration Movement era
 - C. Not in Roman Catholicism
 - D. Not even with John the Baptist
 - E. It originated in the mind of God, Heaven sanctioned, Divinely authoritative (Lk. 3:2-3; Jn. 1:33)

VI. The purpose of Johns Baptism – To prepare Israel for the Lord (Mt. 3:3).

- A. Foretold of John that he (John) would turn back the children of Israel to the Lord their God and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Lk. 1:16-17)
- B. In so doing, he would give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins (Lk. 1:76-77)
- C. How did John Prepare Israel for Jesus and give them the knowledge of salvation?
 - 1. By preaching that they believe in Jesus (Jn. 3:36; Acts 19:4)
 - 2. By preaching that the necessity of repentance (Matthew 3:2, 8)
 - 3. By preaching that the people were sinners who needed to confess their sins (Mt. 3:6)
 - 4. By preaching a baptism for the remission of sins (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3)
- D. Those who obtained the knowledge of salvation, accepted its terms by obeying it, received the forgiveness of sins (when Christ died), and became the prepared people who formed the beginning of the kingdom which began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
- E. Note: the word “until” again in Luke 16:16, that with the coming of John something new, or additional, would be preached.
 - 1. The ‘something new’ was not belief – they understood the concept of faith (Heb. 11:1ff)
 - 2. The ‘something new’ was not repentance – they understood the concept of repentance, or turning back to God – this was the purpose of the prophets.
 - 3. The ‘something new’ was not confessing sins – they understood the concept of confessing sins – Achan, Saul, David
 - 4. The ‘something new’ WAS the preaching of baptism for the remission of sins – never before had such a thing been preached, heard, or obeyed.
- F. Note the reason why John was called ‘John the Baptist’ – a baptizing man, John the immerser.

VII. The purpose of Johns Baptism – To reveal Jesus to all of Israel (Matthew 3:17)

- A. A question was once presented to John: Why are you baptizing? (John 1:25)
- B. Read John 1:31, note the word “manifest” in the KJV is “revealed” in the NIV
- C. John’s baptizing had a direct connection with the revealing of Jesus to Israel
- D. John 1:33 – When did the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus? (Mt. 3:16)
- E. This is when Jesus was revealed to Israel – at John’s baptism (Mt. 3:17; Jn. 1:18)
- F. This marks the beginning of Christ’s ministry. God chose the time and place for the revealing of His Son to Israel at the time of John’s baptism in Matthew 3
- G. Note: Matthew 3:15 “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.”
 - 1. Suffer – allow.
 - 2. Now – at this moment.
 - 3. Becometh – to stand out, to be conspicuous, fit.
 - 4. Us – pronoun, including both Jesus and John.
 - 5. Fulfill – to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize.

- 6. Righteousness – the condition acceptable to God.
- H. The fulfilling of all righteousness has reference to the announcement of Heaven, i.e. the revealing of Jesus to Israel. Building upon the preparatory work of John, Christ now revealed to Israel, Jesus begins his personal ministry.
- I. John's work was ending. He fulfilled his purpose. Christ's work was beginning. (Jn. 3:30).

VIII. Other verses to consider in this study that enhance one's understanding of the above points regarding the purpose of John's baptism

- A. Matthew 21:23-27
- B. John 17:1-12 in contrast to Luke 7:24-30 (some obeyed, some did not). To suppose that the Lord would select his apostles from among men that rejected the baptism of John, when John's mission was to make ready and prepare the people for the Lord, is to go against the divine will and purpose of God
- C. Acts 1:12-26, the selecting of one who would take Judas place "bishopric" had to meet the stipulations set forth; among which he had to 'company' with the disciples and the Lord "beginning with the baptism of John" until the ascension of Christ (vs. 21-22)
- D. John 1:35-51 – John's disciples became Christ's disciples
- E. John 3: 22-24; 4:1-3 - John and Jesus (i.e. his disciples) baptized simultaneously
- F. John 3:1-36, emphasizing verses 1-7
 - 1. Note: the prerequisites to entering the Kingdom is being born of the water and the Spirit
 - 2. If Nicodemus would have obeyed the Lord what would he have done, in light of the context between John chapters 1 and 4? He would have been baptized of John's baptism
 - 3. Note also that the Kingdom had not come yet, even John wasn't in the Kingdom (Mk. 9:1; Mt. 11:11) and therefore upon obeying John's baptism Nicodemus would not have immediately been in the kingdom. However, he along with everyone else who would have been baptized of John's baptism, including the apostles and the 120 of Acts 1, became the prepared people who marked the beginning of the Church (Kingdom) on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2
 - 4. To become the sons of God in the days of John and Jesus people had to believe in Christ and be born, not of the flesh, but of God (Jn. 1:12-13)
- G. John 1:6-18, John 3:10-21 – note: the similar usages of the terms, 'light', 'believe on his name', etc.
 - 1. One would not have been baptized of John's baptism if he didn't first believe the message about Christ being the Son of God (Mt. 21:23-37; Jn. 3:1-21)
- H. Acts 18:24-28 and Acts 19:1-5
- I. Note the words "violence" and "presseth" in Matthew 11:12 and Luke 16:16 respectively
- J. Matthew 10:1ff the apostles sent out by Jesus with Matthew 11:1ff

K. John 10:40-42

L. Acts 10:34-38

M. Acts 13:24-25

N. Notice the differences between John's Baptism and the Baptism of the Great Commission

1. Matthew 28:19-20 – Baptize into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
2. Confess one's belief that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32), not that one confesses his sins (Mt. 3:6)
3. By implication and inference, and the accumulation of other verses studied above, if baptized of John's baptism before the death of Christ one needed not to be baptized again after the death of Christ (Apollos, Acts 18:24ff); however, if baptized of John's baptism after the death of Christ one needed to be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (the twelve of Acts 19:1-5) because in the great commission Jesus required it. Furthermore, when one was baptized under the great commission he received the 'gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38) which those in acts 19:1-5 had not known about.

IX. Conclusion

- A. John's baptism had a purpose for which was very important in the preparation and revelation of Jesus Christ the Son of God to all of Israel, thus giving them the knowledge of salvation and how to enter into the kingdom that would begin in Acts 2.