

## The Baptism of Jesus by John – Probably early 29AD

JCV Integrated Text: **Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-23a**

Now it happened during those days when all the people were being baptized Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan.

But John strongly resisted Him, saying, "I have *the* need to be baptized by You, yet You come to me?" But in reply Jesus said to him, "Let it be this way this time, it is appropriate for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he [John] let Him.

And immediately, having been baptized, Jesus rose coming up from the water praying and, get this, He saw the heavens parting! Heaven was opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending in a physical form as a dove and resting on Him. Notice this too, a voice came out of the heavens, saying, "You are my Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased."

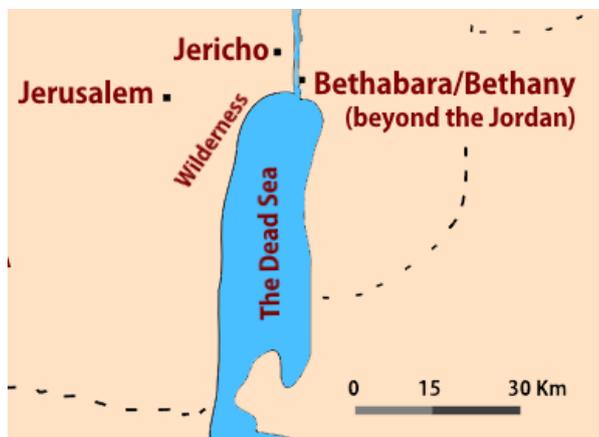
And Jesus began, He was thirty years or so, being legally the son of Joseph, of Heli,...\*

\*The full genealogy will be covered in the Birth Narratives of LTL1.

The Baptism of Jesus is recorded in the three synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel refers back to it, **John 1:29-34** - we will look at that passage a little later.

### Jesus comes to be baptised.

It is on an occasion 'when all the people were being baptised' that Jesus presents himself for Baptism. Growing crowds have been coming to John, probably through the run of feasts in late 28 AD – Tabernacles, Dedication. Luke's phrasing implies a specific occasion, so perhaps this is now as pilgrims arrive in Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover or Pentecost in early 29 AD. If the timing was Passover in 29AD, then there would have been lots of pilgrims staying on for Pentecost who could have seen Jesus rescued by angels if he had jumped from the Temple pinnacle as the adversary suggested in the days that followed.



It is likely that Jesus' Baptism takes place at Bethabara which is where:

**According to Jewish legend...**

- Joshua (who shares the same name as Jesus) led the children of Israel across the Jordan and i
- Joshua took twelve stones from the Jordan – representing the elders of the people!

### According to Acts...

- **Jesus** met twelve apostles and other disciples while with John the Baptist **Acts 1:21-23**
- **Simon** got called **Cephas/Peter**, which means rock, **John 1:42**
- The others became “**Living Stones**” in a new Temple, **1 Peter 2:5**



It is also the place where Elijah (to whom John is linked by Jesus, **Matthew 11:14**) ascended to heaven.

We are given no firm indication how long Jesus had been in John’s crowd before presenting for Baptism, but John’s response to Jesus seems to indicate that John is already aware of Him. We also know that later Jesus is affected by John’s death indicating a level of relationship. When John resists Jesus, he is not saying that Jesus shouldn’t be baptised at all but rather, ‘Who am I to baptise You?’

### To fulfil all righteousness.

When Jesus replies that submitting to baptism is appropriate to ‘fulfil all righteousness’ He is saying that it is a part of the outworking of Him being offered as an appropriate, pure and effective sin offering. We can see this from the words of **Malachi**.

Although **Malachi** means ‘My messenger’, here he is anticipating another messenger:

“Behold, I send **my messenger**, and he will prepare the way before me; and **the Lord**, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and **the messenger** of the **covenant**, whom you desire, behold, he comes!” says YHWH of Hosts...” **Malachi 3:1**

John the Baptist is **the messenger** who prepares the way for **Jesus** who will bring the new **covenant** and we know from **John 2:13-16** early in His ministry **Jesus** suddenly appears as an unknown to clear the Temple courts in Jerusalem.

However, in the following few verses we see John’s role as a Levitical priest.

“...Who can endure the day of **his** coming? Who can keep standing when **he[the messenger]** appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire, like a launderer’s soap. **He** will act like a refiner and purifier of silver and will cleanse the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will offer YHWH a proper **offering[Jesus]**. The **offering** of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to YHWH as in former times and years past.”” **Malachi 3:2-4**

- We saw previously that **John the Baptist** brings a strong message of 're-thinking-it' and changed behaviour and so he himself acts as a 'refiner's fire' etc. It specifically says that he will 'cleanse the Levites'. We saw previously that the Pharisees and Sadducees (part of the Levite tribe) had been coming out to John to hear his message but they did not offer themselves for baptism. However, it does seem that they were stirred up by John the Baptist.
- Even as Jesus approaches His crucifixion, the arguments about John still rage (eg. **Mark 11:27-33**). It is as though something that was stirred up in the priests by John's ministry eventually culminates, as they pass judgement on Him before crucifixion, in the **offering of Jesus** who was a pure sacrifice.
- Also, as a Levitical Priest himself, John is a representative of the Levites and participates prophetically in the **offering of Jesus** by preparing Him through washing in Baptism.

### Jesus is baptised.

As Jesus is baptised, Jesus and John see the dove descending (in physical form) and Jesus experiences the opening of Heaven in a new and constant way, fulfilling **Isaiah 64:1**. **Note** also the prophetic back drop to the declaration:

- 'This is my son' - a Messianic title from **Psalm 2**
- 'the beloved' - hints at David (which means beloved) and is the title of the Bridegroom in Song of Songs
- 'in whom I am well pleased' - used of the Suffering Servant in **Isaiah 42**

### My Son

As Jesus goes through baptism with a public declaration of Sonship over Him, He is modelling the ancient rite of 'son-placement' where a father would formally declare his son as an heir by taking him to a public place, declare for everyone to hear, 'This is my son!'. The father would hand over a token of his authority and thereafter the son acted and spoke with his father's authority and resources.

We see this in **Psalm 2:1-7...**

Why do the nations mob together, and the peoples contemplate vanity? The kings of the earth promote themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against YHWH, and against his Anointed-Messiah, saying, "Let's pull away from their restraints and throw off their ties from us."

He who sits in the heavens will laugh. My Lord will hold them in contempt. Then he will speak to them in his anger, (and disturb them in his hot temper): "But still I have consecrated My King on My holy hill, Zion." "I will tell of the decree, YHWH said to me, 'You are My Son. Today I have confirmed you'.

Here **Jesus, 'my Son' is identified as a Successful King.**

### The Beloved

The Father declares Jesus as 'the Beloved' both here and at the Transfiguration.

There are other references in the Bible to the beloved.

- Israel – **Deuteronomy 33:12, Jeremiah 11:15**
- The Church –
  - **Phil 4:1** (stand firm ... my beloved),
  - **2 Cor 7:1** (Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves...)
  - **Pet 2:11** (Beloved, I urge you...
- The Bridegroom – **Song of Solomon 6:3** I am my beloved ....
  - Wedding at Cana (**John 2:4**) ...'My hour is not come' => Crucifixion
  - John the Baptist's later testimony ... "he who has the bride is the bridegroom... **John 3:29**
  - "Betrothal by a well" scene at Samaria **John 4:6-29**

At the beginning of His ministry (**Matthew 9:9-15**) Jesus appropriates the imagery of the Bridegroom which is drawn from **Jeremiah 7:34, 16:9, 25:10, 33:11**. We will look in more detail at this later but we can note here that this Bridegroom comes, then disappears and then returns to great rejoicing!

So 'the Beloved' and 'the Bridegroom' are closely intertwined. **Jesus, 'The Beloved', is identified as a loving husband.**

In human marriage the man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his wife, and **they will become one flesh. (Gen 2:24)**. In the **Divine-human marriage** Jesus leaves His Father to cleave to His wife and become one flesh with her:-

- "who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped..." **Phil 2:6**
- "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" **John 1:14**
- "He has granted to us...[to] become partakers of the divine nature **2 Peter 1:4**

### In whom I am well pleased

This is a quote from **Isaiah 42** .

"Behold, **my servant**, whom I uphold; my chosen **one in whom my soul delights**.  
**I have put my Spirit on him**. He will bring justice to the nations.

He will not shout, nor or raise his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish...

...He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth...

...I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison. **Isaiah 42:1-7**

Here **Jesus, 'in whom I am well pleased'** (in whom my soul delights), **is identified as a Sacrificial Servant.**

## Conclusion

As Jesus goes through Baptism, the Father confirms His identity as the different threads of prophecy about Him start to come together. The words also prepare Him for the temptations He is soon to face.

**Note:** For detailed notes on the biblical text translation and integration please download the associated text translation file.