

Research: Jesus' baptism with John

[Mark 1:1, 2, 4, 6–8](#)

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

Beginning: en arche: origin; the first thing; in principle (same word as in Gen 1:1)

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

“in the prophets] The citation is from two prophets, (1) [Malachi 3:1](#), (2) [Isaiah 40:3](#)”

4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

“John did baptize in the wilderness,.... Of Judea, [Matthew 3:1](#), where he first appeared as a preacher; and is the same wilderness Isaiah has respect to in the above prophecy, [Isaiah 40:3](#). The words are best rendered in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; "John was in the wilderness, baptizing and preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins": according to which, the account of the Baptist begins with his name, John; describes the place where he was where he made his first appearance, and continued in, the wilderness; which was not a wild uninhabited place and without people, but had many cities, towns, and villages in it; and also declares his work and ministry there, which was preaching and baptizing: for though baptizing is here put before preaching, yet certain it is, that he first came preaching in these parts; and there baptized such, to whom his preaching was made useful. Baptism is here called, the

“baptism of repentance: because John required repentance antecedent to it, and administered it upon profession of repentance, and as an open testification of it;” (Gill's Exposition)

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

“ was clothed] The Evangelist draws our attention to three points in reference to the Baptist:

“ *His appearance*. He recalled the asceticism of the Essene. His raiment was of the coarsest texture, such as was worn by Elijah ([2 Kings 1:8](#)) and the prophets generally ([Zechariah 13:4](#)). His

girdle, an ornament often of the greatest richness in Oriental costume and of the finest linen ([Jeremiah 13:1](#); [Ezekiel 16:10](#)) or cotton or embroidered with silver and gold ([Daniel 10:5](#); [Revelation 1:13](#); [Revelation 15:6](#)), was of untanned leather ([2 Kings 1:8](#)), like that worn by the Bedouin of the present day.

"*His diet* was the plainest and simplest. Locusts were permitted as an article of food ([Leviticus 11:21-22](#)). Sometimes they were ground and pounded, and then mixed with flour and water and made into cakes; sometimes they were salted and then eaten" (Cambridge Bible Commentary).

7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

"Latchet," a word now obsolete, was the "thong" or "lace" with which shoes or sandals were fastened. To stoop down and loosen the sandals was commonly the act of the servant who afterwards carried them, but it expressed more vividly what we should call the menial character of the office, and therefore, we may believe, was chosen by St. Mark" (Ellicott's Commentary).

"The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. This was the menial office of the slave, whose business it was to take off? and put on the shoes of his master, stooping down with all humility and respect for this purpose. Thus John confessed that he was the servant of Christ, and that Christ was his Lord. In a mystical sense the shoes denote the humanity of Christ, which by its union with the Word became of the highest dignity and majesty. St. Bernard says, "The majesty of the Word was shod with the sandal of our humanity." (Pulpit Commentary).

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

"I indeed have baptized you with water,.... This was spoken to the baptized persons, partly to take off their dependence upon him and his baptism; and partly to direct their views to Christ, from whom the gifts and graces of the Spirit are alone to be had:

but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost; See Gill on [Matthew 3:11](#). One copy adds, "and with fire", as there: a Jewish writer says, the holy blessed God baptizeth with fire, and the wise shall understand" (Gill's Exposition)

9And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

“And it came to pass in those days,.... Whilst John was preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, and had large crowds of people flocking to him, to see his person, hear his doctrine, and to be baptized by him; some for one thing, and some another;

“Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee; the place where he had been brought up, and lived, and dwelt in from his infancy, to this time:

“and was baptized of John in Jordan; which was the reason of his coming from Nazareth to him; see Matthew 3:13, where this is observed; and in some verses following, an account is given of what passed between Christ and John, on this occasion” (Gill’s Exposition).

“*in those days*] i. e. towards the close of the year a. u. c. 781, or a. d. 28, when our Lord was thirty years of age (Luke 3:23), the time appointed for the Levite’s entrance on “the service of the ministry” (Numbers 4:3).

“*came from Nazareth*] where He had grown up in peaceful seclusion, “increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52), in a town unknown and unnamed in the Old Testament, situated among the hills which constitute the southern ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the Plain of Esdraelon” (Cambridge Bible).

10And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

“Out of the water - This shows that he had descended to the river. It literally means, "he went up directly from the water."

“The heavens were opened unto him - This was done while he was praying” (Barnes’ Notes).

“lo, the heavens were opened—Mark says, sublimely, "He saw the heavens cleaving" (Mr 1:10).

“and he saw the Spirit of God descending—that is, He only, with the exception of His honored servant, as he tells us himself (Joh 1:32-34); the by-standers apparently seeing nothing.

“like a dove, and lighting upon him—Luke says, "in a bodily shape" (Lu 3:22); that is, the blessed Spirit, assuming the corporeal form of a dove, descended thus upon His head. But why in this form? The Scripture use of this emblem will be our best guide here. "My dove, my undefiled is one," says the Song of Solomon (So 6:9). This is chaste purity. Again, "Be ye harmless as doves," says Christ Himself (Mt 10:16). This is the same thing, in the form of

"inoffensiveness towards men. "A conscience void of offense toward God and toward men" (Ac 24:16) expresses both. . .

"But the fourth Gospel gives us one more piece of information here, on the authority of one who saw and testified of it: "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and IT ABODE UPON Him." And lest we should think that this was an accidental thing, he adds that this last particular was expressly given him as part of the sign by which he was to recognize and identify Him as the Son of God: "And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending AND REMAINING ON Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

"And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God" (Joh 1:32-34). And when with this we compare the predicted descent of the Spirit upon Messiah (Isa 11:2), "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him," we cannot doubt that it was this permanent and perfect resting of the Holy Ghost upon the Son of God—now and henceforward in His official capacity—that was here visibly manifested" (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

SH 584:26-27

DOVE. A symbol of divine Science; purity and peace; hope and faith.

11And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

"A voice from heaven - A voice from God. This was probably heard by all who were present. This voice, or sound, was repeated on the mount of transfiguration, Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35-36; 2 Peter 1:17. It was also heard just before his death, and was then supposed by many to be thunder, John 12:25-30. It was a public declaration that Jesus was the Messiah.

"My beloved Son - This is the title which God himself gave to Jesus. It denotes the nearness of his relation to God, and the love of God for him, Hebrews 1:2. It implies that he was equal with God, Hebrews 1:5-8; John 10:29-33; John 19:7. The term "Son" is expressive of love of the nearness of his relation to God, and of his dignity and equality with God" (Barnes' Notes).