Research on: The Baptism of Jesus

Matt 3:1-3, 13, 16, 17

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

“After Malachi there was no prophet until John the Baptist came. He appeared first in the wilderness of Judea. This was not an uninhabited desert, but a part of the country not thickly peopled, nor much enclosed. No place is so remote as to shut us out from the visits of Divine grace. The doctrine he preached was repentance; [Repent](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/3-3.htm) ye. The word here used, implies a total alteration in the mind, a [change](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/3-3.htm) in the judgment, disposition, and affections, another and a better bias of the soul. Consider your ways, change your minds: you have thought amiss; think again, and think aright” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“[John the Baptist] came forward in the twofold capacity of a prophet and the forerunner of the

Messiah. As prophecy had been silent for 400 years, and all patriotic Jews were longing for the coming of the Messiah to deliver them from the Roman yoke, it is not surprising that he was welcomed with enthusiasm . . .” (Dummelow 629).

“Matthew specifies that John launched his work in the wilderness of Judea, the barren territory between the low mountain ridge on which Jerusalem and the cities of Judah lie and the deep cleft where the Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea” (ICB 612).

“John’s activity is described as fulfilling what was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah: a voice of one crying in the wilderness (see on Mark 1:2-3)” (ICB 612).

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Repent** is *metanoeo* in Greek and means “to change one’s mind, i.e. to repent; to change one’s mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins. Repentance involves a turning with contrition from sin to God; the repentant sinner is in the proper condition to accept the divine forgiveness” (Thayer 3340).

“Repent ye. Repentance is not mere sorrow for sin, but a real change of life” (Dummelow 629).

“John’s preaching had two elements. The first was a call to repent. Though the verb *metanoeo* is often explained etymologically as ‘to change one’s mind,’ or popularly as ‘to be sorry for something,’ neither rendering is adequate . . . What is meant is not a merely intellectual change of mind or mere grief, still less doing penance, but a radical transformation of the entire person, a fundamental turnaround involving mind and action and including overtones of grief, which results in ‘fruit in keeping with repentance’” (EBC 8.99).

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight—This prediction is quoted in all the four Gospels, showing that it was regarded as a great outstanding one, and the predicted forerunner as the connecting link between the old and the new economies” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

13 ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

“The Baptism of Jesus has more than one aspect and significance. To John it was with its miraculous accompaniments a sign that Jesus was the promised Messiah and the Son of God (John 1:32-34)” (Dummelow 631).

“Yet we may venture to say this, that the vision at the Baptism was intended primarily for Jesus

himself, and neither for John nor for the multitudes who were present. It was Jesus to whom

the heavens were opened, Jesus who saw the Spirit descending as a dove, and Jesus to whom the

momentous words were spoken, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (Dummelow 631).

“If we take the most natural and obvious interpretation of the incident, we shall hold that our Lord’s baptism marked the point in his career when there first awoke in him the complete consciousness of his divine sonship, and of all the tremendous consequences which this unique relationship to God and man involved” (Dummelow 631).

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

S&H 584:26

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

“The dove in the OT tradition as interpreted in first-century Judaism was the symbol of God’s

Spirit, hovering over the creation (Gen. 1:2) and caring for his people in the days of their wilderness wanderings (Deut 32:11)” (ICB 613).

“The dove, among the Jews, was the symbol of purity or harmlessness (Matt X. 16) and of softness, (Ps lv.7). The form chosen here was doubtless an emblem of the innocence, meekness, and tenderness of the Saviour. The gift of the Holy Spirit, in this manner, was the public approbation of Jesus, (John 1:33,) and a sign of his being set apart to the office of the Messiah. We are not to suppose that there was any change wrought in the moral character of Jesus, but only that he was publicly set apart to his work, and solemnly approved by God in the office to which he was appointed” (Barnes 15).

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

“In the middle of this great event, ‘A voice is heard that says, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.’ That message has a certain significance . . . The voice is coming to Jesus in prophetic terms. So that the Jewish hearer, if he thought about it sufficiently, if he knew the Scriptures well enough, would have seen that the voice was really pinpointing a prophetic reference.

“In Psalm 2, which was one of the foremost psalms known to the Jews that predicted the Messiah, verse 7, ’I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.’ That relationship of the Messiah to sonship with God, becomes more important to Jesus than any human relationship as the son of David” (Crisler, Gospels Vol. 1, 18).

“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 . . . Am well pleased. Am ever delighted” (Barnes 15).