

# Life of Christ

## The Baptism and Temptation

### I. The Baptism of Christ - Matt. 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-23

#### A. When?

- John began his ministry in the fourteenth year of Tiberius' reign, approximately A.D. 29. (See discussion on pp. 79-80 in Pentecost regarding this chronology).
- Note that John may have ministered for anywhere from 6 months to 1 year prior to Christ's baptism. John was six months older than Christ.

#### B. Where?

- Not really certain, but we are told in the gospel accounts that it was at the Jordan river.

#### C. What?

- The word "baptize" (*baptizo*) means to immerse or dip into water. It does not mean "to sprinkle."
- Baptism was a common method of identification in those days. For example, the community at Qumran practiced baptism for those who would join their sect. In the early church, baptism was the means whereby a person formally identified with the local church. A person could become a believer without a great deal of animosity from their families, but once they became baptized, they were often ostracized and persecuted.

#### D. Why?

- When Christ came to John, it was with the express purpose of being baptized. The word "baptized" is in the aorist passive infinitive (*baptisthenai*) which indicates purpose.
- John's baptism was for repentance (Matt. 3:2, 6, 11). Why would Christ need to be baptized since He was sinless and hence needed no repentance?
  1. Why Christ was not baptized. (see pp. 77ff. in *MacArthur New Testament Commentary on Matthew 1-7*).
    - a. The apocryphal *Gospel According to the Hebrews* states that Christ was baptized at the request of His family.
    - b. Gnosticism taught that Christ was just a man until baptized, at which time He became anointed by God for His ministry. Just prior to His death, God abandoned Him and He died as a mere man on the cross. A variation of this is also known as adoptionism.

- c. Christ was baptized as an initiation into His high priestly role.
  - d. Christ was baptized to identify with the Gentiles.
2. Why Christ was baptized.
- a. Christ was baptized as an example of obedience.
  - b. Christ was baptized in order to identify with sinners although He was sinless.
  - c. Christ was baptized as a symbol of His death.
  - d. Christ was baptized so that those who observed His baptism would also see His ministry confirmed by God the Father (1 John 5:6).
  - e. Christ was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness.” (Matt. 3:15)

## II. The Temptation - Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

### A. The Issues

Immediately after His baptism, Christ was driven by the Holy Spirit into the Judean wilderness to be tempted. At this point a great theological argument develops regarding Christ’s temptability and impeccability.

*Temptability* - the possibility of being tempted.

*Impeccability* - the quality of character that cannot yield to temptation.

*Peccability* - the possibility of succumbing to temptation.

### B. The positions.

1. *posse non peccarre* - Christ was able to sin, but did not
  - Easily explains that He was tempted just like us but without sin.
  - Implies that God could have sinned.
  - Implies that the plan of God in eternity past could have been not accomplished.
2. *non posse peccarre* - Christ was not able to sin
  - Christ could not sin because He is God, and God cannot sin.
  - Accounts for the sovereignty of God in that God’s plan was inviolable.
  - No real problem with Christ’s endurance of temptation since He endured the undiluted temptations of Satan but was unable to succumb.

### C. The Temptations

#### 1. "Make these stones bread"

- Do not depend on the provision of God, but take care of yourself.
- The temptation of "serving self."
- The temptations which arise out of "the lust of the flesh."

#### 2. "Throw thyself down"

- Test God, after all, He promised to protect you.
- The temptation of pride, "think of what this would do for Your ministry!"
- The temptations which arise out of "the pride of life."

#### 3. "Worship me"

- The temptation of "do it the easy way."
- You can have it all now without the pain.
- The temptations which arise out of "the lust of the eyes."

### D. The Victory

#### 1. Christ responded to each of the temptations with a direct quote from the Old Testament.

- a. "Make these stones bread" - Deuteronomy 8:3
- b. "Throw thyself down" - Deuteronomy 6:16
- c. "Worship me" - Deuteronomy 6:13

#### 2. Our victory over temptation is a use of the sword (machaira) of the Spirit. We need to memorize and meditate on Scripture so that when we are tempted we have God's answer at our disposal.

*"If our Lord could defeat Satan with three verses out of Deuteronomy, what should we be able to do with the whole Bible?" - Vance Havner*

### E. The Aftermath

- God sent angels to minister unto Christ.
- Christ proved that He was the sinless and impeccable Son of God.