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Baptism of Jesus

Jesus Is All That We Need

Matthew 3:13-17 ¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. ¹⁶ When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Have you ever been jealous of someone who got a chance to experience something that you did not? I'm not talking about in a sinful way, but simply the recognition that it would be neat to see what that other guy saw.

Last year I did a bible classes on my journeys to India and Africa, perhaps some of you wished that you also had the chance to see elephants ten feet away, or a herd of Zebra running alongside the road you were driving down.

For my part I wish that I could go fishing in the rivers of Alaska and catch fresh salmon. Or on a cruise in the pacific to see whales. Or even better yet to swim alongside the whales, how amazing would that be?

However all of these things would pale in comparison to being there with the disciples. Seeing Lazarus raise from the tomb, looking in on the empty tomb, watching the storm calm and the feeding of the five thousands. Or standing there with John the baptist in the Jordan river and seeing the heavens open above you.

We might think that if I could just see heaven, if I could just see God, then I would know. I would know that I am going to heaven. I would know what heaven is like. I would know that I don't have to fear death.

Sounds like seeing into heaven would solve all our problems and make us better believers, and yet the Lord has not give us that view or has He?

When Jesus tells us the heavens were opened he doesn't simply mean it was clear sky, the clouds parted and a bit of sun shone down. What he means is that there was a "Dimensional rip," a portal, a hole opened between this universe and the home of God.

A bridge was opened between this sinful world and the throne of God. This was not the first or last time such a thing happened. Jacob saw the throne of God and the ladder between. Stephen saw the throne of God with Christ sitting in it. John the apostle saw in visions the heavens open.

It was not the first or the last however the view was very short lived. The view did not last long and is not there now. It happened a few times but not often. It is certainly not something that anyone here has seen.

The Fahter has not give us that view into heaven but what He has given to us is His only Son. Concerning whom He said:

"This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased"

The view must have been amazing and glorious but now it is gone. What was left behind when the view was gone was seemingly just a man. But of this man scripture tells us:

Hebrews 2:9 ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

In some ways maybe it doesn't seem fair, they got to see into heaven, we only see Jesus.

Yet Jesus himself says:

John 14:8-9 ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the glory of the Father, God in human form made manifest. "The heavens were open" is a parlor trick compared to Jesus in whom "dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily."

As I keep telling my confirmation students, God is a spirit, therefore the image of God is not a physical image but the image of a spirit. We see God when we see the righteousness and holiness of Christ. The opening of the heavens is a vision. It's a light show. Christ is the real image of God.

We do not need the heaven's open. All we need is to see Jesus

Another experience we might wish for is to touch Christ.

The woman who had a wound that wouldn't heal, Thomas who put his fingers in his hands and his hand in His side, Mary who held the baby Jesus in her arms, all of these got the chance to touch Christ.

If we can't see heaven, if all that is left for us is Jesus, than at least let us touch Him. Let us stand in His presence. Let us feel His power, then we will know that He is the Christ

And yet once again Christ is not here, not in a physical form that we can touch, but what we have instead is baptism.

We cannot touch Christ. We cannot stand in His presence and feel His power. But we can feel the waters of baptism, and in that baptism we can indeed touch the power of Christ.

In our new testament reading Paul reminds us:

Romans 6:3 ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Christ's baptism is what gives Baptism its power. Without Christ baptism is empty and worthless but because Christ was baptized as we were, therefore we were joined, or tied together with Him. And being tied together we also died with Him and we also live with Him.

When two people get married it is necessary that a third person officiates and unites the two that are getting married. It is not possible for the man or the woman who wants to get married to say I will officiate and tie us together. No, it must be another who officiates over both. Just so Jesus says it was necessary for John to baptize Jesus, so that in baptism Jesus could be tied through the waters and the promise to everyone else who, past or present, was likewise washed in those same waters of baptism.

Jesus entered the waters of baptism, the same waters that we entered. When we entered the water with Christ our sin was taken by the waters and put on Christ. His righteousness was taken by those same waters and put on us. Like the waves of the sea going in and out, the waters of baptism washes over us removing our sin and leaving Christ's righteousness.

Baptism without Christ is empty, But because Christ also was baptized, therefore in baptism we have the power of God, we can touch Christ.

God himself made this clear when the heavens were opened and the spirit descended and the dove spoke. How many baptisms had John done? And yet never before were the heavens open. This is what baptism was always promising, access to the Father. Yet never before had it actually happened, nor ever again. This is because baptism was fulfilled in Christ.

He is the missing piece, once he was put in suddenly Baptism accomplished what it had always promised, the heavens were open. And so it still does to this day.

Jesus is all that we need and that is what we get in baptism.

Another thing we might wish for is the ability to understand, to know what to do and why. There are some people who seem to always know the right thing to do. But many of go through life wondering if we are really making the right decisions. We often wonder what would have happened if I had . . .

But we don't need to understand as long as we have God's word to guide us.

When Jesus came to be baptized by John, John thought this was backwards. Imagine if Harrison Ford came up to you and asked for your autograph. That would be backwards. We can understand why John thought that but Jesus said, "permit it to be so for now to fulfill all righteousness." What does that mean? It doesn't really help to explain anything. All that Jesus is really saying is, "This is what the Father wants."

And yet that is enough for John and for Jesus. If this is what the Father wants, than this is what I will do even though I can't understand it.

Let's face it, if God was going to try and get us to a level of understanding where we could always understand what to do and not do and why, we would spend the rest of our life here in church and still not get to that point.

We do not need to understand why, as long as we have God's word. It is enough that He says this what I want you to do. We know that what He says will turn out good.

Jesus came to the Jordan to be baptized and in His baptism the Father declared him the fullness of all that is needed. He is before the Father complete, all that is needed as the payment for our sins. He is also for us all that we need. In Him we see the Father and the heavens are open to us. In baptism we touch and receive the power of God. By His word we have all that we need to know. He is the way. We have Jesus and He is sufficient for all things.

Amen