

# JESUS CHRIST AND HIS BAPTISM: A DECISION FOR GOD MARK 01: 09–11

## *Introduction*

Jesus' baptism pictures what happens when a person makes a decision for God.

- I. There is a decision for God and a submission to God (v. 9).
- II. There is a beginning and an identification with God and His people (v.9).
- III. There is a commissioning and an empowering (v. 10).
- IV. There is the approval and encouragement of God (v. 11).

## **I. *Mark 01:09 The Momentous Decision of Jesus Christ***

Jesus' baptism involved a decision and a surrender, a momentous decision and a total surrender. Note the words "Jesus came from Nazareth...and was baptized in Jordan by John." In Nazareth, Jesus had all that most people dream about: a happy home, a close-knit family, a profitable occupation (carpenter), friends and all the fond memories that accumulate through the years of childhood and youth. Yet, He left it all; He left Nazareth to be baptized by John in the Jordan. Why?

Within Jesus' mind was the call of God to launch the mission to save the world, a mission that demanded the sacrifice of everything:

- => the sacrifice of all that He had in Nazareth.
- => the sacrifice of a long earthly life. By choosing the mission of God, He was to be killed in only thirty-six months.
- => the sacrifice of His Godly righteousness. He was to become the sin-bearer for the world (See *Justification* Rom. 5:1).
- => the sacrifice of God's presence. In death, God was to forsake Him (Mt. 27:46-49).

It was a *momentous decision* for Jesus to leave Nazareth to be baptized.

- => By being baptized, Jesus was *surrendering totally* to God's will and mission to save the world.
- => By being baptized, Jesus was showing what is involved in paying the ultimate price: the price of sacrificing oneself totally for the will of God.
- => By being baptized, Jesus was showing the world what is involved in making a momentous decision and a total surrender to God.

**Thought 1.** The decision to follow Jesus is a momentous decision. It involves the total surrender of all we are and have. If we genuinely decide for Jesus, we pay the price of

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sacrificing self completely. However, we must remember: a decision not to follow Christ will lead to discontent and drifting, a wasted and tragic life.

***Luke 9:23** Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

***Luke 14:33** "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

***Rom 8:13** For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

***Gal 5:24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

***Phil 3:8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

### ROMANS 05: 01 : JUSTIFICATION AND PEACE

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 05:01***

Justification (*diakioun*) means to count someone righteous. It means to reckon, to credit, to account, to judge, to treat, to look upon as righteous. It does not mean to make a person righteous. It does not mean to make someone something, but merely to count, to judge, to treat someone as something.

The first result of justification is peace with God.

1. The meaning of peace with God is striking. Peace with God does not mean escapism, a quiet atmosphere, the absence of trouble, the control of situations by positive thinking, the denial of problems, the ability to keep from facing reality. Peace *with* God means the *sense and knowledge...*

- that one has restored his relationship with God.
- that one is no longer alienated and separated from God.
- that one is now reconciled with God.
- that one is now accepted by God.
- that one is freed from the wrath and judgment of God.
- that one is freed from fearing God's wrath and judgment.
- that one is now pleasing to God.
- that one is at peace with God.

2. The source of peace is Jesus Christ. Men can have peace with God only because of Jesus Christ. It is He who reconciles men to God. He has made peace by the blood of His cross.

*Eph 2:14-15* For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.

*Col 1:20* And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

*Isa 53:5* But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

3. The reason we have peace is the glorious truth of justification. □

## **II. Mark 01:09 The Baptism of Jesus Christ**

Jesus' baptism involved a beginning and an identification. His baptism was a *beginning* in that it was the beginning of a new life, a new direction in His life. His baptism was launching the mission of God to save the world. It was an *identification* in that He was identifying with John's ministry. John was proclaiming the coming of the Messiah, the Lamb of God. Through baptism Jesus was identifying Himself as the Messiah, the Lamb of God.

Note the words "to be baptized by John." Jesus came specifically to John to be baptized. Jesus was compelled to be baptized, but not just to be baptized - to be baptized by John. He was to identify Himself with John's ministry. He was the Messiah, the Lamb of God, being proclaimed by John.

Note why Jesus would seek to be baptized. The very fact that the Son of God would be baptized is startling. He was the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Founder of the movement of Christianity. He was the One who was making baptism *possible and effectual* (working) for man. John's baptism was a call for men to take a stand and to become identified with a life of repentance and righteousness. Jesus needed no repentance; He was already perfectly righteous. He was the Purchaser of righteousness, the Ideal Man. His righteousness was the pattern, the very righteousness that could stand for and cover every man. Why then would Jesus be baptized? Very simply, in His own words, "to fulfill all righteousness."

**Thought 1.** The decision to follow Jesus involves both baptism and the identifying of ourselves with Jesus the Messiah, the Lamb of God. If Jesus had not been baptized, He would not have identified Himself as the Messiah, nor would He have been known

as the Messiah. Likewise, if we are not baptized, we do not identify ourselves with Jesus, nor are we known to be identified with Jesus.

**Mark 16:16** *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

**Acts 2:38** *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

**Acts 10:48** *So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

**Acts 22:16** *‘And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’*

### **III. Mark 01:10 The Commissioning and Empowering**

Jesus’ baptism involved a commissioning and an empowering. This is seen in the heavens’ opening and the Spirit’s descending upon Him.

Jesus’ commissioning was a dramatic moment. The word *open* (*schizamenous*) really means to rend asunder or to tear apart. This could mean two things.

1. It could mean a moment like the rays of sunlight breaking through the clouds ever so brilliantly after a thunderstorm.
2. It could mean a moment when God miraculously tore apart the barrier between heaven and earth, allowing Jesus to see into the glory of heaven from where He had come.

Whatever the meaning, Jesus was being commissioned and set apart by heaven itself. God was giving His Son an experience that would make the commissioning unquestionable and unforgettable.

The empowering of Jesus was also a very dramatic moment. The Spirit of God descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. This event was not only identifying Jesus as the Messiah, it was declaring that the Spirit of God and His power were upon Jesus. This man, Jesus of Nazareth, was being empowered by God’s very own Spirit to do the work of God.

The dove was a sacred bird to the Jews. It was a symbol of peace and gentleness, of purity and innocence; but even more significant, the dove was often identified with the Spirit of God. When the dove descended upon Christ, it symbolized the Spirit of God Himself descending upon Christ. The dove identified Jesus as the Messiah and imparted to Him the power of God.

The Holy Spirit entered the life of Christ once-for-all, permanently and powerfully, in His full manifestation and unlimited power.

**Thought 1.** When a person is baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, the Holy Spirit enters the life of the believer and becomes a permanent experience of the believer.

**John 16:7** “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

**Rom 8:9-10** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

There was also something else symbolized in the dove. The work which Jesus was to do would be the work of peace and purity. Luke 3:21 points out that the Spirit came to Jesus while He was praying *after having been baptized*. The Spirit’s descending upon Him, not in Him, was definitely an empowering experience as well as an identifying experience.

**Thought 1.** Every true believer is commissioned and empowered by God to do the work of God. Some commissioning experiences are dramatic (the heavens are torn apart); other experiences are not so dramatic (the still small voice of God’s Spirit tugs at the heart with an awareness that one is called). Nevertheless, every true believer is commissioned and empowered by God’s Spirit.

The *awareness* of the commission and power, however, is a different matter. Too many are not aware of God’s commission and of the Spirit’s presence within. What makes the difference? The first two points: one’s decision and submission, one’s beginning and identification. Too many of us lack a consistent commitment in both steps. As a result, we wander through life unaware of God’s commission and the presence of the Spirit of God empowering us to do the task.

- => Too many of us do not make a decision to follow Christ totally; we do not surrender all we are and have to Christ. Therefore, we are not aware of the great call and commission of Christ.
- => Too many of us do not begin with Christ; we just never identify with Him. We may be baptized, but we never follow through with Christ. The world never knows that we are a follower of Christ, not a committed, genuine follower.

**John 15:16** “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

**Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

**Acts 26:16** ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.’

*2 Cor 5:20* We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

*Isa 6:8* Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

#### **IV. Mark 01:11 God's Approval and Encouragement**

Jesus' baptism involved God's approval and encouragement. As Man, Jesus Christ needed the perfect assurance of God. So much was being required of Him, and He was to pay such an enormous price to serve God. He needed some clear indication, some special strength, some encouragement from God. What God did was profound: "And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'" Three significant things are said here.

- *My Son*: this points to the deity of Christ (Mt. 14:33; 27:43; 27:54; Mk. 1:1; Jn. 1:34; 3:18; 10:36; 11:4; 20:31; Acts 8:37; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 4:14; 1 Jn. 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 13, 20).
- *Whom I love*: this points to the love within the Godhead (Trinity) (Jn. 3:35; 10:17; Co1. 1:13; see Isa. 42:1).
- *Well pleased*: this points to the perfect life Jesus lived. He was "yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15; 7:26; see 2 Cor. 5:21).

**Thought 1.** The one thing that a believer should want to hear is what Jesus heard: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- 1) Believers are adopted as children of God (Rom. 8:15; Ga1. 4:4-6).
- 2) Believers can have their lives and service approved by God.

*Mat 25:21* "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"

**Thought 2.** God saw the life and behaviour of Christ, and He judged Christ as well pleasing. God sees every man and shall judge the life and works of every man. Nothing is hidden from His eyes.

*Luke 12:2* "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known."

*1 Cor 4:5* Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

**Thought 3.** God meets the needs of His servants for assurance. He sees to it that we know His will and gives *assurance* that we are doing His will. He speaks to our hearts and gives signs of approval and *encouragement*.

**1 Cor 1:30** *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

**Mat 28:19-20** *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

**Psa 28:7** *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*

**Isa 41:10** *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

**Isa 43:2** *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ■*