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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **Is Jesus' baptism an example for us to follow?**

Today, many people view Jesus' baptism as simply an example which we should follow. If you ask them why they got baptized, they will likely say something like: *"Well, I got baptized because Jesus got baptized. His baptism is an example for us to follow."*

Let's look at the baptism of Jesus and ask the question if people today can get baptized for the same reason Jesus was baptized.

## **JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS**

First notice that the man who baptized Jesus was John the Baptist and John was baptizing people for the remission of their sins. John was not baptizing saved people. He was not baptizing good and righteous people. John was baptizing sinful and ungodly men. When they repented of their sinful past, John would baptize these sinful people for the forgiveness of their sins:

### **Mark 1:4**

4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism** of repentance **for the remission of sins**.

### **Luke 3:2-3**

2 ... the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.  
3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching **a baptism** of repentance **for the remission of sins**,

John was baptizing people to wash away their sins. We would not expect Jesus to come and be baptized in order to wash away sins. After all, Jesus was sinless. But surprisingly, Jesus did come to be baptized by John. Notice carefully what happened when Jesus came and asked John to baptize Him:

### **Matthew 3:13-14**

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?"

Notice: **John tried to forbid Jesus from being baptized.** Why? Because John's baptism was for the remission of sins and Jesus had no sins. John knew Jesus was not a candidate for his baptism. John's baptism was for men who had sins to confess. Notice:

### **Matthew 3:5-6**

5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him

6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, **confessing their sins.**

John's baptism was not for saved people. His baptism was for people who had sins to confess. His baptism helped people to become saved, but it was not for people who were already saved.

Jesus had no sins and John knew it. When Jesus came to be baptized by John, John began refusing baptism. But notice what Jesus told John:

### **Matthew 3:15**

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.

Please notice this very carefully. Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now."* Think carefully. Jesus is saying to him: *"John, I know your baptism is for the remission of sins. I know your baptism is for sinful men who are trying to get saved and I know I don't have any sins, but just this once I want you to make an exception. Just this once I want you to baptize someone who is already saved because I want to fulfill all righteousness."*

When John heard that, the Scriptures say, "He allowed Him." John went ahead and allowed Jesus to be baptized even though Jesus did not have any sins to wash away.

## **JESUS' BAPTISM WAS AN EXCEPTION**

This was the only time in history that God allowed someone who was already saved to be baptized in water. Jesus was the ONLY exception to the rule. Jesus said, "Allow it to be so this ONE time."

The question we are trying to answer is: **Is Jesus' baptism an example for us to follow?** The answer to that question is both yes and no at the same time.

- Jesus is an example in the sense that we should obey God's commands just because God said so.
- But Jesus is not an example of someone being baptized for the remission of sins.
- Remember: John tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized. If baptism was intended for people who were already saved, then Jesus should have been a prime candidate. John should have been eager to baptize someone who never committed a sin if baptism was intended for saved people. But his baptism was for sinners in order that they might have the forgiveness of sins.

The baptism of Jesus was an exception to the rule.

Today, the New Testament teaches that we are to be baptized, not because we are already saved. We are not baptized like Jesus to simply "fulfill all righteousness." Yes ... we do need to obey commands from God just because "He said so." But we must also be baptized for the purpose of having our sins washed away by the blood of Christ. We are like the thousands of sinners who came to John to be baptized -- who needed their sins washed away!

### **Acts 2:38**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; ...

### **Acts 22:16**

16 ... Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

### **Mark 16:16**

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; ...

### **A WARNING**

Many people have been convinced that baptism is for someone who is already saved. Many have been convinced they are saved without baptism or that they are saved before baptism. But the New Testament does not teach such. It makes a difference as to why you are baptized.

- If someone is baptized thinking they are already saved, then they received the wrong baptism.
- If someone is not baptized to wash away sins, they received the wrong baptism.
- If someone is baptized thinking they are already a Christian, they too received the wrong baptism!

Baptism is not for saved Christians. It is not for someone who has already been saved. Baptism is for sinful men who have repented and desire to have their sins washed away.

### **Ephesians 4:4-5**

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, **one baptism**.

This passage teaches there is only one baptism God will accept: **immersion in water "for the remission of sins."** If you yourself have been baptized for any other reason, you need to be baptized for the right reason. We would be glad to baptize you into Jesus Christ "for the remission of your sins," but the decision rests with you.