

- I. Prologue: The Identity of the Son of God (1:1-18)
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 - 1. Beginning of Jesus' Ministry: John's First Witness, First Disciples, First Sign (1:19-2:11)
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 - B. The Son of God Rejected (5:1-12:36)
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Born of Water and the Spirit

Gospel of John, Part X

John 3:5, 22-26; 4:1-3

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I. You must be born again

- A. The Pharisaic view of the kingdom
- B. The Pharisees and Purification (cf. Mt 21:23-46; Lk 7:30)
- C. The Pharisees and Jesus (cf. Jn 12:31-33)

II. Baptism and the Kingdom

- A. Baptizing in Judea (3:22-4:3)
- B. Born of Water and the Spirit (3:5)

Baptism signifies that every human being is born in sin and needs to be cleansed and renewed by the Holy Spirit through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

- 1. Interpretive Options
 - a. Spirit alone
 - b. Natural and spiritual birth
- 2. The Case for Baptism (cf. 1:26,31,33; 3:22-26; 4:1-3)

"The baptism of John was producing at that time an immense sensation in Israel, so that the thought of Nicodemus, on hearing the words, birth by water, must have turned immediately to that ceremony... Jesus, moreover, at the moment when He thus expressed Himself, was in a sense coming out from the water of baptism [he had recently been baptized]; it was when completing this rite that He had Himself received the Holy Spirit. How, in such circumstances, could this expression: Born of water, have possibly designated on His lips anything else than baptism...?" (Godet, 379)

3. Potential Objection

"In speaking thus to Nicodemus, Jesus did not think of making salvation depend, either in general or in each particular case, on the material act of baptism. The example of the thief on the cross proves that pardon could be granted without the baptism of water. But, when the offer of this sign has been made and the sinner has rejected it, the position is different; and this was the case with Nicodemus." (Godet, 381)

C. Why “water and Spirit”? (cf. Is 44:1-5; Ezek 36:25-27)

Isaiah’s vision of Israel’s renewal included the outpouring of the Spirit. God would pour out His Spirit and renew His people:

“Yet hear me now, O Jacob My servant, And Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you: ‘Fear not, O Jacob My servant; And you, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring; They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.’ One will say, ‘I am the LORD’s’; Another will call himself by the name of Jacob; Another will write with his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ And name himself by the name of Israel.”

D. Distinguish don’t Separate!

Biblically we can _____ water baptism and Spirit baptism but we are never to _____ them. The book of Acts makes clear, on the one hand, that the two do not always happen simultaneously; they can be distinguished (e.g., Acts 8:15f; 10:47). Nevertheless, we dare not separate them for they always point to one another. *Water baptism points to Spirit baptism and Spirit baptism points to water baptism.* So Paul declares that there is one Lord, one faith, *one baptism* (Eph 4:5-6). As Paul writes, *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body* (1 Cor 12:13).

1. Why did Jesus baptize? (3:22 cf. 1:33)

By baptizing, Jesus announced the fulfillment of Isaiah’s promise: God is pouring out water on thirsty ground, He is pouring out His Spirit to give newness of life through His Son. *The _____ was and is visible proof of the spiritual reality.* Water baptism is a sign and seal of Spirit baptism. Baptism signifies that every human being is born in sin and needs to be cleansed and renewed by the Holy Spirit through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Baptism is, as Calvin put it, *a visible _____ – preaching to you of the need for Christ, assuring you that God’s promise is reliable, and summoning you to believe God’s promise.*

2. Why didn’t Jesus baptize? (4:2)

“John calls Christ’s Baptism that which He administered by the hands of others, to teach us that Baptism is not to be valued from the person of the minister, but that its whole force depends on its author, in whose name and by whose command it is administered. Hence we receive a special strengthening when we know that our Baptism has no less efficacy to cleanse and renew us than if it had been given directly by the Son of God. And there is no doubt that He deliberately abstained from the outward administration of the sign while He was in the world so as to bear witness to all ages that nothing is lost from the power of Baptism when it is administered by a mortal man. In short, not only does Christ baptize inwardly by His Spirit, but the very symbol that we receive from a mortal man should be regarded in the same light as if Christ Himself had put forth His hand from heaven and stretched it out to us. Now, if the Baptism administered by man is Christ’s Baptism, it will not cease to be Christ’s whoever the minister may be.” (Calvin, 88)

III. Conclusion