

DID YOU KNOW Why Jesus Was Baptized???

If I asked you, "why was Jesus baptized," a seemingly logical and common answer would be something like "He did it as an example for us." In the church, today, we hear many interpretations of the reason for His baptism. In reality we can find many **lessons** for the church in the baptism of Jesus. However, I feel it is incorrect to call these "**lessons**" for the church the "**reason**" for Jesus' baptism. Like many Bible truths, Jesus' baptism is cloaked in indoctrination and attempts to explain the event without reference to Jewish law leads us amiss.

I think the problem starts with the Gospels being included in the New Testament. Because they are in the New Testament, people automatically assume the Gospels are all about the church. This is a mistake that leads to indoctrination errors. I feel the Gospels should have been the conclusion of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is all about prophesies of a Messiah who would come as the High Priest to fulfill the plan of salvation (Law) as foretold in the Tabernacle. The Gospels are all about Jesus completing the rituals of the Tabernacle, culminating in the presentation of His blood in the Holy of Holies. When this act was completed, the Old Testament (Law) was complete and the New Testament era began. With this in mind, if we pay attention to why Jesus said He came, our minds will be properly calibrated to understand His baptism.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17-18)

Jesus was referring to fulfilling the **plan of salvation** as foretold in the **Tabernacle** and given by God to Israel in the wilderness. In the Tabernacle, it was necessary for the **High Priest** to perform a **sin offering** and a **burnt offering** in order for God to forgive Israel's sins for one year. The book of Hebrews tells us in several places that Jesus came to fulfill the role of **High Priest** and make one atonement for sins sufficient for all time. Therefore, during Jesus' earthly ministry as High Priest, it was necessary for Him to parallel and fulfill every ritual in the Tabernacle (Temple).

¹¹*But Christ being come an **high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* (Hebrews 9:11-12)

In the May 17, 2009 DID YOU KNOW, I spoke of how Jesus, as the High Priest, fulfilled the law of the Burnt Offering at His crucifixion. For this week's lesson, I would like to focus on how Jesus started His ministry as High Priest. I think you will find this both enlightening and rewarding.

In the wilderness, God gave Moses the Law and the instructions for building the Tabernacle. After the Tabernacle and all its furnishings were completed, God selected the man to be High

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Priest (Aaron) and gave Moses instructions for his ordination and sanctification to this holy office. This ritual had to be completed before the Tabernacle could be used and rituals for atonement could begin.

⁶ And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and **washed them with water.** ¹⁰ And Moses took the anointing oil (**TYPE OF HOLY SPIRIT**), and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. ¹² And he **poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him.**

(Lev 8:6, 10, 12)

Aaron, the first High Priest, could begin his ministry only after being sanctified by the ordination of being washed with water and anointed with oil.

¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying: ² Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their father's house. ³ from 30 years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work of the Tabernacle of meeting. (Numbers 4:1-3)

Have you ever wondered why there is so little in the gospels about Jesus' early years? The answer is rather simple. In Jewish Law, a man could not enter the priesthood until he reached the age of 30. As Jesus was to be the High Priest, the first 30 years of His life was a time of preparation and instruction and had nothing to do with fulfillment of the Law. However, as soon as He turned 30 years old, His time to fulfill His role as High Priest arrived:

⁹ It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized (**WASHED**) by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit (**ANOINTING OIL**) descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹ Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(Mark 1: 9-10)

To begin His earthly ministry as High Priest, Jesus had to fulfill the law of ordination and sanctification of the High Priest. Remember, only the man selected by God could be High Priest. And that man had to be ordained and sanctified into the priesthood. So, when Jesus turned 30 years old, He came to John in the Jordan to be ordained and sanctified. He was washed from head-to-foot (baptized) and the oil (spirit) was poured on Him in the form of a Dove. God Himself confirmed with a voice from heaven His candidate for High Priest. From that day forward, Jesus began His ministry as High priest, fulfilling every law and ritual in the Tabernacle. The journey through the Tabernacle lasted 3.5 years and ended when He, as the High Priest, presented His blood on the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle of God's dwelling place in Heaven. So, while we can find many good lessons in Jesus' baptism as it relates to the church, we must remember what He said in Matthew 5:17 & 18: He came to fulfill every jot and tittle of the Law. If we study the Law and understand the Plan of Salvation as revealed in the Tabernacle, we must conclude that Jesus' **primary** reason for baptism was ordination and sanctification to His priestly duties as the High Priest.

So, **DID YOU KNOW???** If you learned something new, today, why not attend Sunday School where dedicated, knowledgeable teachers will assist in your understanding of the Bible. Today's DID YOU KNOW (July 12, 2009) was presented by Bob Epperson, Sunday School Superintendent.