

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On June 18, 2012, we received the following inquiry:

“As you read in Matthew 3 verse 16, Jesus was the first to be born again of the spirit. can you explain what happened when the spirit came upon him?”

To the author, we thank you for posting your question. The scripture you refer to states:

**“After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God’s spirit coming upon him.” –
*Matthew 3:16***

As you can imagine, Jesus’ baptism was not like any other. So we will need to start with some background.

Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptizer, had been preaching in Palestine to all of Jewry to “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.” (*Matthew 3:2*) At this time, the Jews were engaged in serious and solemn self-examination and their sense of racial solidarity was very profound. They not only believed that the sins of the father might afflict his children (*Exodus 20:5*), but they firmly believed that the sin of one individual might curse the nation.

Accordingly, not all who submitted to John’s baptism regarded themselves as being guilty of the specific sins which John denounced. Many devout souls were baptized by John for the good of Israel. They feared that some sin of ignorance on their part might delay the coming of the Messiah. They felt themselves to belong to a guilty and sin-cursed nation, and they presented themselves for baptism that they might by so doing manifest fruits of race penitence. It is therefore evident that Jesus in no sense received John's baptism as a rite of repentance or for the remission of sins. In accepting baptism at the hands of John, Jesus was only following the example of many pious Jews.

When Jesus went down into the Jordan to be baptized, he was a mortal of the realm who had attained the pinnacle of human ascension in all matters related to the conquest of mind and harmony with the indwelling spirit. He stood in the Jordan that day as a perfected son of man.

We understand that if any mortal achieves the level of personality perfection as did Jesus, that person would immediately be transformed “in the twinkling of an eye” (*1 Corinthians 15:52*) and be taken into the heavens. But when Jesus was baptized and the ‘heavens opened up’ to him, he chose not to be thus transformed. It was at that time that the spirit indwelling Jesus of Nazareth left, and the spirit of the Son of God, Creator of our universe (*Colossians 1:15-16*), descended ‘in the likeness of a dove’ upon the man standing in the water. And then:

“Look! Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.” – ***Matthew 3:17***

At that time, Jesus became fully conscious of his pre-human existence as Son of God. He knew he had completed his commission as respects his own training – he was approved. And he knew that when he discarded his fleshly abode, he would return to that position and be given “the name that is above every other name.” (***Philippians 2:9***).

In the meantime, Jesus elected to remain on earth for the purpose of revealing his God to mankind as a loving merciful Father of all, and to begin a ministry that would spread over the entire globe with the goal of uplifting the spiritual state of the entire planet. Thus, immediately thereafter, Jesus went away alone to the Perean Hills to formulate the plans and determine upon the technique of proclaiming the kingdom of God to the men of his day. It was during that 40-day period of isolation that it is recorded that the Devil tried to tempt Jesus from doing that work. (***Matthew 4:1-11***) But Jesus emerged from the mountain with the glory of spiritual victory, moral achievement, and a plan.

We hope this answers your question.

“Elaia Luchnia”
