

Book of Matthew

Chapter 3:13-17

¹³ *Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him.*

MacArthur > We do not know the precise length of John's ministry, but according to Luke he began preaching "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee ... in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (**Luke 3:1–2**). The best assumption is that it occurred in the year A.D. 29, quite a few months, perhaps nearly a year, before Jesus' baptism. John also continued to preach for a while afterward, causing his ministry to be ending as Jesus' ministry was beginning. We know that John was about six months older than Jesus and that Jesus began His ministry when He "was about thirty years of age" (**Luke 3:23**).

Luke 3:1-3 > ¹ Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, ² in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. ³ And he came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

Luke 3:23 > ²³ When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years old, being, as was commonly held, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,

Utley > The Gospels differ in their early chronologies of Jesus' ministries in Galilee and Judea. It seems that there was an early Judean ministry and a later one

Then Jesus arrived ... > Swindoll > But John? He couldn't believe his eyes. Remember, John had been preaching that with the coming of the Messiah, the kingdom of heaven was coming. Judgment was near. John's baptism of water was only a sign of repentance to prepare the way of the long-expected One, who would arrive with refining fire to separate the wicked and the righteous. John didn't seem to have room in his end-times expectations for a Messiah standing in line for baptism!

Coming ... to be baptized by him > MacArthur > Jesus came to John specifically to be baptized by him, as indicated by the aorist passive infinitive (*baptisthnai*), which emphasizes purpose.

Barnes > Baptism was not, in his case, a symbol of personal reformation and repentance, for he was sinless; but it was a solemn rite by which he was set apart to his great office.

Wuest Translation > *Then comes Jesus from Galilee up to the Jordan to John for the purpose of being immersed by him.*

¹⁴ ***But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have the need to be baptized by You, and yet You are coming to me?"***

Tried to prevent Him > Broadus > But John forbade—literally, *was hindering Him*. The imperfect tense is occasionally thus used to denote an attempted action. The verb rendered 'hinder' is compounded with a preposition, which increases its force, 'was completely hindering,' 'earnestly sought to hinder.'

MacArthur > It was because John the Baptist was fully aware of Jesus' deity and sinlessness that he tried to prevent Him. The Greek verb is in the imperfect tense (*diekluen*) and suggests a continued effort by John > *"he kept trying to prevent Him."*

Vincent throws an entirely different light on the translation > The A. V., following Wyc. and Tynd., misses the meaning of the verb. As in so many instances, it overlooks the force of the imperfect tense, which expresses past action, either in progress or in process of conception, in the agent's mind. John did not forbid Jesus but had it in mind to prevent him: *was for hindering him*. Hence Rev., properly, *would have hindered him*. Again, the preposition (*διά*) intensifies the verb, and represents strong feeling on John's part. He was moved to strenuous protest against Jesus' baptism by him.

I have the need to be baptized by You, and yet You are coming to me? > Carson > Earlier John had difficulty baptizing the Pharisees and Sadducees because they were not worthy of his baptism. Now he has trouble baptizing Jesus because his baptism is not worthy of Jesus.

Broadus > In the next clause, all the pronouns are emphatic: *'I have need to be baptized by thee, and thou comest to me!' or, 'and comest thou to me?'* an expression of surprise, whether it be understood as an exclamation (Euthym.), or as a question.

¹⁵ ***But Jesus, answering, said to him, "Allow it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.***

Carson > By his baptism, Jesus affirms his determination to do his assigned work. Thus the "now" may be significant. Jesus is saying that John's objection (v.14) is in principle valid. Yet he must "now," at this point in salvation history, baptize Jesus, for at this point Jesus must demonstrate his willingness to take on his servant role, entailing his identification with the people.

Righteousness > Precept Austin > Righteousness is a major topic in Matthew - Righteous (*dikaios*), righteousness (*dikaiosune*), and to be righteous (*dikaioo*) occur more than two dozen times in Matthew, far more than in Mark (twice) or Luke (seventeen times).

Benno Przybylski > Matthew's use of this word is different from Paul's. Paul used it mainly to describe a right standing before God: positional righteousness. Matthew used it to describe conformity to God's will: ethical righteousness.

Constable > Ethical righteousness is the display of conduct in one's actions that is right in God's eyes. It does not deal with getting saved but responding to God's grace. In Matthew, a righteous person is one who lives in harmony with the will of God (cf. 1:19).

¹⁶ *After He was baptized, Jesus **came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and settling on Him,***

Came up > Precept Austin > *anabaino* indicates movement towards a destination. The first use of *anabaino* describes Jesus coming up out of the water after baptism (Mt 3:16, Mk 1:10) and later Jesus "went up to the mountain" (**Mt 5:1**) in preparation for one of the greatest sermons in history (Sermon on the Mount).

Matthew 5:1-2 > *Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,*

Came up immediately from the water > Barnes > It literally means, "*he went up directly from the water.*"

The heavens were opened > MacArthur > Mark, in his vivid way has, literally, '*he saw the heavens splitting,*' in the act of parting asunder.

He saw the Spirit of God descending ... > Wiersbe > The coming of the Holy Spirit like a dove identified Jesus to John (**John 1:31-34**), and also assured Jesus as He began His ministry that the Spirit's ministry would always be His (**John 3:34**).

John 1:31-34 > ³¹ *And I did not recognize Him, but so that He would be revealed to Israel, I came baptizing in water.* ³² *And John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.* ³³ *And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'* ³⁴ *And I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

John 3:34 > ⁴For He whom God sent speaks the words of God; for He does not give the Spirit *sparingly* > *without measure*

MacArthur > The Spirit anointed Him for His kingly service, as Isaiah had predicted (**Isaiah 61:1**) ¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD anointed me to bring good news to the humble; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to captives and freedom to prisoners;

¹⁷ and behold, a voice from the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am *well pleased*.”

Swindoll > These two verses (vss. 16-17) and their parallels (Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:22) feature all three persons of the Trinity at Jesus’ baptism. God the Father spoke from heaven; God the Holy Spirit descended like a dove; and God the Son received the approval of the Father and the sign of the Holy Spirit.

Wiersbe > On three special occasions, the Father spoke from heaven: at Christ’s baptism, at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3), and as Christ approached the cross (John 12:27–30). In the past, God spoke to His Son; today He is speaking through His Son (Heb. 1:1–2).

Well pleased > Precept Austin > *eudokeo* from *eu* = well, good + *dokeo* = to think) means literally to think well of and so to be well pleased, to take pleasure or delight in.