

# Baptism of Jesus in the Four Gospels

Matthew 3:13–17	Matthew 3:40–46 JST	Mark 1:9–11	Luke 3:21–22	John 1:28–34
From Galilee to the Jordan		From Nazareth in the Jordan		In Bethabara beyond Jordan
	John bearing record			Behold the lamb of God, This is he
John forbade him	John forbade him			
Suffer it now	Suffer me to be baptized of thee			
Jesus being immersed		Jesus was immersed	Jesus having been immersed	
Straightway coming up out of the water	Went up straightway out of the water	Straightway coming up from the water		
Heavens opened (to him)	And John saw, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him	Heavens split open	Jesus was praying Heaven was opened	From heaven
He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him	And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Jesus	He (John) saw the Spirit descending like a dove into (or unto) him	Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him	I (John) saw the Spirit descending like a dove and it abode upon him
Voice from the heavens	And lo, he heard a voice from heaven,	Voice came from the heavens	Voice came from heaven	
This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased	This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him	Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased	Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased	
				God had said to John: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost
				I saw and bear record: This is the Son of God

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## Explanation

Each of the four Gospels gives an account of the baptism of Jesus, and further information is added by the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew. Most of the details are consistent among these accounts concerning where and how Jesus was baptized. Because of minor differences, however, major questions have arisen. Was the Spirit that descended that of God himself (Matthew) or the Holy Ghost (Luke) or just “the Spirit” (Mark, John)? Did the Spirit perhaps descend only once, or perhaps twice: once before the baptism (John) and again right after? Did the voice from heaven come right after the baptism, or apparently afterward as Jesus was praying (Luke)? Did the voice say to John, “*This is my beloved Son*” (Matthew), with the added words “Hear ye him” (Matthew JST), or did the voice say to Jesus, “*Thou art my beloved Son*” (Mark, Luke), or did only the Baptist testify, “This is the Son of God” (John)?

The purpose of this chart is not to create confusion but to display the source of considerable scholarly inquiry. The solution to these problems may rest in the fact that concurrent recipients of a spiritual experience may each receive a version of that divine manifestation suited to their own vantage point. Thus, John the Baptist could have heard “This is my beloved Son,” at precisely the same time that Jesus heard “Thou art my beloved Son.” Jesus could have been offering up a prayer while John was baptizing him. If God can listen simultaneously to prayers from multiple people, he can also respond to them both simultaneously and individually.

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## Reference

S. Brent Farley, “The Baptism and Temptations of Jesus,” in *Studies in Scripture Vol. 5: The Gospels*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 175–87.