

## **THE FATAL FLAWS OF CHARISMANIA – Fatal Flaw #7: Failing to Distinguish the Critical Differences Between Water Baptism and Spirit Baptism (Part 3 of 8)**

The emphasis of John the Baptist's ministry was two-fold. It brought people to a personal point of repentance in their individual lives. But it also prepared the people for the receiving of their Messiah. Thus, the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 is clarified for us by the apostle Paul in Acts 19:4 – **“Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’”**

John's ministry was for the ultimate purpose of preparing the way for both the appearance and acceptance of Israel's promised Messiah. Jesus' submission to John's baptism confirmed to John that He was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29-34). But could there also be a more profound purpose for Christ's baptism by John, other than giving the baptizer this necessary confirmation? The answer is found in Jesus' response to John's resistance, which persuaded the prophet to baptize his Savior, recorded for us in Matthew 3:15 – **“But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him.”**

What Jesus meant by “fulfilling all righteousness” is revealed for us in Isaiah 53:11 –

**“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.”**

The baptism of Jesus by John was an act of symbolic identification on the part of our Lord with the sinners which He came to save. Initially, this consisted of those who went to John for the water baptism of repentance. They formed the first group of the earliest disciples. Yet, how would Jesus save them? How would He bear their iniquities? It would be at the Cross! This is why the symbolism of Christ's baptism by John extends to His crucifixion as well, where the penalty of sin was paid for us all, by means of His death on the Cross. With that in mind, we can now understand why Jesus twice describes His sin atoning death as a “baptism,” in Mark 10:38 and Luke 12:50.

This would also set the stage for the New Testament ordinance of baptism, as a symbolic identification of the convert with Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection on their behalf. On the other hand, the Spirit's descent as a dove went beyond mere symbolism and was for the express purpose of empowering the three-year ministry of Jesus Christ. What was true for our Savior, would also be realized in the lives and ministries of His early disciples; as the Holy Spirit's enablement of Christ's ministry would be extended to His followers at Pentecost, in order to successfully equip and energize them as His witnesses (Acts 1:8).

But there was a difference between what happened at Pentecost and what took place when John baptized Jesus. At the risk of sounding irreverent, consider this in the overall context of our study. Jesus did not speak with other tongues when the Holy Spirit came upon Him, while the apostles did. Why? The nation of Israel had not yet rejected their Messiah when Jesus was baptized by John. But that rejection had already taken place prior to Pentecost. This serves as confirmation for a critically important truth, in our examination of Charismania. As we learned from our study of 1 Corinthians 14:20-22, speaking in other tongues at Pentecost was a sign of God's judgment upon the nation of Israel for rejecting their Messiah, *AND NOTHING MORE*. The empowerment for service on behalf of our Lord's earthly ministry, as well as that of His apostles, occurred when the Holy Spirit began to INDWELL them, promised by Jesus Himself in John 14:16-17 and 15:26-27; **AND NOT AS A RESULT OF SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES!**