

Foundations of the Faith 103
Systematic Theology
“Christology”
Christ: Baptism, Temptation, & Transfiguration
Pt. 21

I. The Baptism of Christ, Matt. 3:1-17

Why was Jesus baptized?

1. To identify with sinners, vs. 15.
 - For whom Jesus would provide the redemptive sacrifice in His death.
2. It constituted His induction into His messianic office and ministry.
 - Why? It resulted in His anointing by the Holy Spirit and His approval by God the Father (Matt. 3:16-17).

“Jesus’ anointing was of a more exalted kind, it followed the pattern of Israel’s custom of anointing kings” (I Sam. 10:1).

- Priest (Ex. 28:41)
- Prophets (I Kings 19:16)

II. The Temptation of Christ, Matt. 4:1-11

Note the contrast: J. Oswald Sanders, *“After the dove, the devil, after the reassuring voice of the father, the insinuating hiss of the serpent! After the comforting words, thou are my beloved son the sinister challenge, if thou be the Son of God.”*

Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit (vs. 1).

Why? To be tempted (vs. 1).

It’s not a sin to be tempted.

Why was Jesus tempted?

1. The Relation of Testing to Peccability and Impeccability

- a. To expose Satan’s tactics.
- b. To show us He could not sin.
- c. To give us a pattern for our own victory.
- d. To make Him a sympathetic High Priest.

“When the writer to the Hebrews says that our Lord was tested in all (kata panta), he cannot mean that He experienced every test that people experience (Heb. 4:15). He was, for example, never tested to misuse television. But He did experience tests tailor-made for a God-Man that fell into the same categories into which all tests fall, including ours. And the reason He could be tested at all was that he had human nature, for God is not tempted with evil (James 1:13). He was tested, the writer continues, “according to likeness.” In other words, the fact that He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh allowed Him to be tested. Yet there was a major difference between His humanity and ours. He was “apart from sin.” He had no sin nature and He never committed a single sin. Still that does not mean that His humanity was impeccable. It was peccable, though it never knew sin. But the person of the God-Man was impeccable. Shedd correctly observes; “Consequently, Christ while having a peccable human nature in His constitution, was an impeccable Person. Impeccability characterizes the God-Man as a totality, while peccability is a property of His humanity.” -Charles Ryrie

2. The Results of Christ’s Testings

- a. *Sensitivity.* He became sensitive to the pressure of testing. He experienced it with emotions and powers we cannot understand.
- b. *Example.* He furnishes us an example of victory over the severest kinds of tests.
- c. *Understanding.* He can offer sympathetic understanding to us when we are tested.
- d. *Grace and Power.* He can also provide the grace and power we need in times of testing. People who have experienced the same problems we might have are sensitized and sympathetic, but often they can do little or nothing about our problems. He can do something and offers us grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). Only a God-Man High Priest can do both - sympathize because He was genuinely tested, and empower because He is God.

Study the three temptations (vv. 2-11).

G. Campbell Morgan summarizes Christ temptation, *“The significance of the temptation may be seen by placing the whole of the facts in contrast with the account of the temptation of Adam. The devil challenged the first man. The second Man challenged the devil. The devil ruined the first Adam. The last Adam spoiled the devil. The first Adam involved the race in his defeat. The last Adam included the race in His victory. The first Adam stood as the head of the race and falling, dragged the race down with him. The last Adam stood as the Head of the new race, and being victorious lifted that race with him.”*

See Luke 4:14

III. The Transfiguration of Christ, Matt. 17:1-8

1. The Vision (vv. 1-2).

- a. The men (vs. 1).
- b. The mountain.
- c. The master (vs. 2).

2. The Visitors (vv. 3-4).

- a. They represented the “law” and the prophets (type & verbal).
- b. Both these men had met before with God on mountain tops!
- c. Proof of life after death - no reincarnation.
- e. Two ways believers go to Heaven.

1. Death - Moses
2. Rapture - Elijah

3. The Voice, vv. 5-8

- a. “A bright cloud” (vs. 5).
- b. “A voice” (the three times the Father speaks).
- c. “Hear Him” (vs. 5).
- d. “Jesus only” (vs. 8).

On the mountain we see:

1. The glory of His person
2. The glory of His kingdom.
3. The glory of His submission.