

MATTHEW 3

THE MINISTRY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (3:1-12)

St. Cyril of Alexandria on the kingdom of heaven:

“The kingdom of heaven? This refers to justification by faith and sanctification by the Spirit. This is why it says elsewhere, ‘The kingdom is within you.’”

St. John Chrysostom on the baptism proclaimed by St. John the Baptist (see vv. 11-12):

“See how great is the wisdom of the Baptist in his preaching? Note how he states his case without compromise, unafraid of alarming his hearers and filling them with anxiety...John witnessed to the abundance of grace. He did not say, ‘He will give you the Holy Spirit,’ but ‘He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’ Then to specify the volatile and uncontrollable quality of divine grace he adds, ‘And with fire.’”

CHRIST’S BAPTISM BY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (3:13-17)

Blessed Jerome on why Jesus was baptized by St. John:

“For three reasons the Savior accepted baptism from John. First, because He was born a man, that He might fulfill all justice and humility of the law. Second, that by His baptism He might confirm John’s baptism. And third, that by sanctifying the waters of the Jordan through the descent of the dove, He might show the Holy Spirit’s advent in the baptism of believers.”

St. Hilary of Poitiers on what was heard and seen at Christ’s baptism:

“God’s Son is manifested both by hearing and by sight. Both the witnesses of contemplation and the spoken word are sent from the Lord to an unfaithful people who disregard the prophets. At the same time, we knew from those who were immersed in Christ that after baptism with water the Holy Spirit would descend to us from the heavenly gates. Then we would be filled with the anointing of heavenly glory and become God’s children through the adoption the Father’s voice announced. Truth prefigured the image of the sacrament through these very happenings.”

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Quote Sources: Manlio Simonetti, editor. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Matthew 1a and 1b* (IVP)
Blessed Theophylact. *The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Chrysostom Press)

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