

136:0, 136:1, 136:2

Paper 136 — Baptism and the Forty Days

© 2014 Matthew Block

Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Sources for Paper 136, in the order in which they appear

- (1) P. Whitwell **Wilson**, *The Christ We Forget: A Life of Our Lord for Men of To-day* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1917)
- (2) Rev. Alfred **Edersheim**, M.A.Oxon, D.D., Ph.D., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Volume One) (New York: Longman, Green, & Co., Eighth Edition, Revised, 1899)
- (3) “Shekinah,” by C. W. Emmet, in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)

Note: This source is coded **Hastings’ DB**.

- (4) Charles **Fiske** and Burton Scott **Easton**, *The Real Jesus: What He Taught: What He Did: Who He Was* (New York and London, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1929)
- (5) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest Dewitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1904, 1932)
- (6) David Smith, M.A., D.D., *Our Lord’s Earthly Life* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1925)

Note: This source is coded **Smith2**.

- (7) George A. **Barton**, Ph.D., LL.D., *Jesus of Nazareth: A Biography* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1922)
- (8) “Tiberius,” by A. Souter, in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)

Note: This source is coded **Hastings’ DB**.

- (9) “Pilate,” by A. E. Hillard, in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)

Note: This source is coded **Hastings’ DB**

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable. The highlights are tentative.)

Matthew Block
7 January 2014

Work-in-progress Version 7 Jan. 2014
 © 2014 Matthew Block

PAPER 136 — BAPTISM AND THE FORTY DAYS

136:0.1 Jesus began his public work at the height of the popular interest in John's preaching and at a time when the Jewish people of Palestine were eagerly looking for the appearance of the Messiah.

XIV: GREATER THAN THE GREATEST (Wilson 102)

John was humble, courageous, honest, self-less, but the pathos of his career lies in this—that he was **eager**,

not **happy**, in his mission.

[*Contradiction*: Jesus was never in a hurry (171:7.5).]

He did not **enter** the Kingdom of Heaven,

and the **least** in that Kingdom is therefore **greater** than he (W 103).

There was a great contrast between John and Jesus.

John was an **eager** and earnest worker,

but Jesus was a calm and **happy** laborer;

only a few times in his entire life was he ever in a hurry.¹

Jesus was a comforting consolation to the world and somewhat of an example; John was hardly a comfort or an example.

He preached the kingdom of heaven

but hardly **entered** into the happiness thereof.

Though Jesus spoke of John as the greatest of the prophets of the old order, he also said that

the **least** of those who saw the great light of the new way and entered thereby into the kingdom of heaven was indeed **greater** than John.

136:0.2 When John preached the coming kingdom, the burden of his message was: Repent! flee from the wrath to come. When Jesus began to preach, there remained the exhortation to repentance, but such a message was always followed by the gospel, the good tidings of the joy and liberty of the new kingdom.

1. CONCEPTS OF THE EXPECTED MESSIAH

II, V: WHAT MESSIAH DID THE JEWS EXPECT? (Edersheim 160)

136:1.1 The Jews entertained many ideas about the expected deliverer, and each of these different schools of Messianic teaching was able to point to statements in the Hebrew scriptures as proof of their contentions.

In a general way, the Jews regarded their national history as

But, narrowing our survey to where the history of the Kingdom of God begins with that of Abraham, it was indeed as Jesus said: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.'

beginning with Abraham

For, all that followed from Abraham to the Messiah was one, and bore this twofold impress: heavenwards, that of Son; earthwards, that of Servant. Israel was God's Son—His 'first-born'; their history that of the children of God; their predictions those of the household of God. [Etc.] (E1 161)

and culminating in the Messiah

and the new age of the kingdom of God.

In earlier times they had envisaged this deliverer as

The Messiah and His history are not presented in the Old Testament as something separate from, or superadded to, Israel.... He is *the Son of God* and *the Servant of the Lord*; but in that highest and only true sense, which had given its meaning to all the preparatory development (E1 161).

“the servant of the Lord,”

then as “the Son of Man,” while latterly some even went so far as to refer to the Messiah as the “Son of God.”

But no matter whether he was called

His organic connection with Israel is marked by the designations ‘Seed of Abraham’ and ‘Son of David,’ while at the same time He was essentially, what Israel was subordinately and typically: ‘Thou art My Son—this day have I begotten Thee’ (E1 161-62).

the “seed of Abraham” or “the son of David,”

all were agreed that he was to be the Messiah,

As He was ‘anointed’ to be the ‘Servant of the Lord,’ not with the typical oil, but by ‘the Spirit of Jehovah’ ‘upon’ Him, so was He also the ‘Son’ in a unique sense (E1 161).

the “anointed one.”

[Contrast E1 161-62.]

Thus did the concept evolve from the “servant of the Lord” to the “son of David,” “Son of Man,” and “Son of God.”

136:1.2 In the days of John and Jesus the more learned Jews had developed an idea of the coming Messiah as

Moreover, the Messiah, as Representative Israelite,

combined in Himself as 'the Servant of the Lord' the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, and joined together the two ideas of 'Son' and 'Servant' (E1 162).

[In this respect there is deep significance in the Jewish legend ... that all the miracles which God had shown to Israel in the wilderness would be done again to redeemed Zion in the 'latter days' (E1 161, footnote).]

[P]erhaps the most valuable element in Rabbinic commentation on Messianic times is that in which ... it is explained, that all the miracles and deliverances of Israel's past would be re-enacted, only in a much wider manner, in the days of the Messiah (E1 162-63).

[The number of passages in the Old Testament to which the ancient Synagogue referred as Messianic] amounts to upwards of 456 (75 from the Pentateuch, 243 from the Prophets, and 138 from the Hagiographa), and their Messianic application is supported by more than 558 references to the most ancient Rabbinic writings (E1 163).

the perfected and representative Israelite,

combining in himself as the "servant of the Lord" the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.

136:1.3 The Jews devoutly believed that, as Moses had delivered their fathers from Egyptian bondage by miraculous wonders, so would the coming Messiah deliver the Jewish people from Roman domination

by even greater miracles of power and marvels of racial triumph.

The rabbis had gathered together almost five hundred passages from the Scriptures

which, notwithstanding their apparent contradictions, they averred were prophetic of the coming Messiah.

Of course, there was the danger that, amidst these dazzling lights, or in the crowd of figures, each so attractive, or else in the absorbing interest of the general picture,

the grand central Personality should not engage the attention it claimed, and so the meaning of the whole be lost in the contemplation of its details.

This danger was the greater from the absence of any deeper spiritual elements. All that Israel needed: 'study of the Law and good works,' lay within the reach of every one; and all that Israel hoped for, was national restoration and glory. Everything else was but means to these ends; the Messiah Himself only the grand instrument in attaining them.

Thus viewed, the picture presented would be of Israel's exaltation, rather than of the salvation of the world (E1 163-64).

And the more we realise, that Jesus so fundamentally separated Himself from all the ideas of His time, the more evidential is it of the fact, that He was not the Messiah of Jewish conception, but derived His mission from a source unknown to, or at least ignored by, the leaders of His people (E1 164).

And amidst all these details of time, technique, and function,

they almost completely lost sight of the personality of the promised Messiah.

They were looking for a restoration of Jewish national glory—

Israel's temporal exaltation—rather than for the salvation of the world.

It therefore becomes evident that Jesus of Nazareth could never satisfy this materialistic Messianic concept of the Jewish mind.

But still, as the Rabbinic ideas were at least based on the Old Testament, we need not wonder that they also embodied the chief features of the Messianic history.... Thus, such doctrines as the *pre-mundane existence* of the Messiah; His *elevation* above Moses, and even above the Angels; His *representative* character; His cruel *sufferings* and *derision*; His *violent death*, and that *for His people*; His *work* on behalf of the living and of the dead; His *redemption*, and restoration of Israel; the *opposition* of the Gentiles; their *partial judgment* and *conversion*; the *prevalence* of His *Law*; the *universal blessings* of the latter days; and His *Kingdom*—can be clearly deduced from unquestioned passages in ancient Rabbinical writings (E1 164-65).

Many of their reputed Messianic predictions,

had they but viewed these prophetic utterances in a different light, would have very naturally prepared their minds for a recognition of Jesus as the terminator of one age and the inaugurator of a new and better dispensation of mercy and salvation for all nations.

136:1.4 The Jews had been brought up to believe in the doctrine of the

The details of the story of Fall, as told by the Rabbis, need not be here repeated, save to indicate its consequences. The first of these was the withdrawal of the **Shekinah** from earth to the first heaven, while subsequent sins successively led to its further removal to the seventh heaven. This, however, can scarcely be considered a permanent sequel of sin, since the good deeds of seven righteous men, beginning with Abraham, brought it again, in the time of Moses, to earth (E1 165-66).

Shekinah.

[**SHEKINAH**. ... [It] is a stage nearer to God Himself, and, though often used in connexion with the physical manifestation, represents an invisible and universal **presence**... But it was commonly taught it had always been absent from the second Temple, as had been ‘the glory’ (cf. Ezk 11:23, 43:2) ...

It was believed that the Shekinah would return with the Messiah; ‘the glory of the Lord shall be seen and the cloud’ (2 Mac 2:8) (*Hastings DB* 824-25).]

[In short, all the various consequences which Rabbinical writings ascribe to the **sin of Adam** may be designated either as physical, or, if mental, as amounting only to detriment, loss, or imperfectness.

These results had been partially counteracted by Abraham, and would be fully **removed** by the Messiah (E1 52, footnote).]

[But the Talmud expressly teaches, that God originally created man with two propensities, one to **good** and one to **evil** (*Yetser tobh*, and *Yetser hara*) (E1 52).]

Yet, so far from guilt attaching to the *Yetser ha-ra*, its existence is absolutely necessary, if the world is to continue. In fact, as the Talmud expressly teaches, the evil desire or impulse was created by God Himself; while it is also asserted that, on seeing the consequences,

God actually **repented** having done so (E1 167).

[Contrast E1 52-53.]

But this reputed symbol of the Divine **Presence** was not to be seen in the temple.

They believed that the coming of the Messiah would effect its restoration.

They held confusing ideas about racial sin and the supposed evil nature of man.

Some taught that **Adam’s sin** had cursed the human race,

and that the Messiah would **remove** this curse and restore man to divine favor.

Others taught that God, in creating man, had put into his being both **good** and **evil** natures;

that when he observed the outworking of this arrangement,

he was greatly disappointed,

and that “He **repented** that he had thus made man.”

And those who taught this believed that the Messiah was to come in order to redeem man from this inherent evil nature.

Whence these sufferings? From sin—**national sin**; the idolatry of former times; the prevalence of crimes and vices; the dereliction of God’s ordinances; the neglect of instruction, of study, and of proper practice of His Law; and, in later days, the love of money and party strife.

But the seventy years’ captivity had ceased, why not the present dispersion? Because hypocrisy had been added to all other sins; because there **had not been proper repentance**; because of the **halfheartedness of the Jewish proselytes**; because of improper marriages, and other evil customs; and because of the gross dissoluteness of certain cities (E1 167-68).

5. *Why **delayeth the Messiah His coming?*** (E1 169)

What constitutes this **repentance** which yet remains to be made? But the reasoning becomes absolutely self-contradictory when, together with the assertion that, if Israel repented but one day, the Messiah would come, we are told, that Israel will not repent till Elijah comes. [Etc.] (E1 169)

[To the Jews of Palestine the phrase “kingdom of heaven” had but one meaning: an absolutely righteous state in which God (the Messiah) would rule the nations of earth in perfection of power just as he ruled in heaven—“Your will be done on earth as in heaven” (135:5.2).]

136:1.5 The majority of the Jews believed that they continued to languish under Roman rule because of their **national sins**

and because of the **halfheartedness of the gentile proselytes**.

The Jewish nation **had not wholeheartedly repented**;

therefore did the **Messiah delay his coming**.

There was much talk about **repentance**;

wherefore the mighty and immediate appeal of John’s preaching, “Repent and be baptized, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

And the kingdom of heaven could mean only one thing to any devout Jew: The coming of the Messiah.

136:1.6 There was one feature of the bestowal of Michael which was utterly foreign to the Jewish conception of the Messiah,

What was the expectation of the ancient Synagogue, as regarded the Nature, Person, and the qualifications of the Messiah? ... First, the idea of a Divine Personality, and of the union of the two Natures in the Messiah, seems to have been foreign to the Jewish auditory of Jesus of Nazareth, and even at first to His disciples.

and that was the union of the two natures, the human and the divine.

Secondly, they appear to have regarded the Messiah as far above the ordinary human, royal, prophetic, and even Angelic type, to such extent, that the boundary-line separating it from Divine Personality is of the narrowest so that, when the conviction of the reality of the messianic manifestation in Jesus burst on their minds, this boundary-line was easily, almost naturally, overstepped, and those who would have shrunk from framing their belief in such dogmatic form, readily owned and worshipped Him as the Son of God (E1 171).

The Jews had variously conceived of the Messiah as perfected human, super-human,

[*Contradiction:* Ever since his baptism and the wedding at Cana these apostles had variously regarded him as the Messiah, but it was not a part of the Jewish concept of the national deliverer that he should be divine (157:5.1).]

and even as divine.

but they never entertained the concept of the union of the human and the divine.

And this was the great stumbling block of Jesus' early disciples.

They grasped the human concept of the Messiah

[Accordingly, it is during the [prophetic stage of the mission of Israel] that the designation ‘Son of David’ (typical Israel)

as the son of David, as presented by the earlier prophets;

enlarged in the visions of Daniel into that of ‘Son of Man’ (the Head of redeemed humanity) (E1 162).]

as the Son of Man, the superhuman idea of Daniel and some of the later prophets;

[W]e mark that the Messiah is expressly designated in the oldest portion [of the so-called ‘Book of Enoch’] as ‘the Son of God’ (‘I and My Son’). That this implies, not, indeed, essential Sonship, but infinite superiority over all other servants of God, and rule over them, appears from the mystic description of the Messiah as ‘the first of the [now changed] white bulls,’ ‘the great Animal among them, having great and black horns on His head’—Whom ‘all the beasts of the field and all the fowls of heaven dread, and to Whom they cry at all times’ (E1 173-74).

and even as the Son of God, as depicted by the author of the Book of Enoch and by certain of his contemporaries;

but never had they for a single moment entertained the true concept of the union in one earth personality of the two natures, the human and the divine.

The incarnation of the Creator in the form of the creature had not been revealed beforehand. It was revealed only in Jesus; the world knew nothing of such things until the Creator Son was made flesh and dwelt among the mortals of the realm.

2. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

IV: THE CALL OF JESUS (Fiske & Easton 16)

[contd] The immediate effect of the Baptist's preaching was to stir the whole nation with excited expectancy (F&E 16).

All Palestine was soon engaged in serious self-examination (F&E 16).

Now Israel's sense of racial solidarity was extreme;

not only might the sins of a father affect his children,

but the sin of a single unknown individual might defile a whole community.

It did not follow, therefore, that everyone who submitted to John's baptism had committed the sins which John denounced;

he might have been entirely free from such failings, but his membership in the guilty nation

136:2.1 Jesus was baptized at the very height of John's preaching when Palestine was aflame with

the expectancy of his message—

“the kingdom of God is at hand”—

when all Jewry was engaged in serious and solemn self-examination.

The Jewish sense of racial solidarity was very profound.

The Jews not only believed that the sins of the father might afflict his children,

but they firmly believed that the sin of one individual might curse the nation.

Accordingly, not all who submitted to John's baptism regarded themselves as being guilty of the specific sins which John denounced.

Many devout souls were baptized by John for the good of Israel. They feared lest some sin of ignorance on their part might delay the coming of the Messiah.

They felt themselves to belong to a guilty and sin-cursed nation,

and they presented themselves for baptism that they might by so doing manifest fruits of

was enough to demand what we might call a “race penitence” (F&E 16).

race penitence.

It is therefore evident that Jesus in no sense received John’s baptism as a rite of repentance or for the remission of sins. In accepting baptism at the hands of John, Jesus was only following the example of many pious Israelites.

136:2.2 When Jesus of Nazareth went down into the Jordan to be baptized, he was a mortal of the realm who had attained the pinnacle of human evolutionary ascension in all matters related to the conquest of mind and to self-identification with the spirit. He stood in the Jordan that day a perfected mortal of the evolutionary worlds of time and space. Perfect synchrony and full communication had become established between the mortal mind of Jesus and the indwelling spirit Adjuster, the divine gift of his Father in Paradise. And just such an Adjuster indwells all normal beings living on Urantia since the ascension of Michael to the headship of his universe, except that Jesus’ Adjuster had been previously prepared for this special mission by similarly indwelling another superhuman incarnated in the likeness of mortal flesh, Machiventa Melchizedek.

136:2.3 Ordinarily, when a mortal of the realm attains such high levels of personality perfection, there occur those preliminary phenomena of spiritual elevation which terminate in eventual fusion of the matured soul of the mortal with its associated divine Adjuster. And such a change was apparently due to take place in the personality experience of Jesus of Nazareth on that very day when he went down into the Jordan with his two brothers to be baptized by John.

This ceremony was the final act of his purely human life on Urantia, and many superhuman observers expected to witness the fusion of the Adjuster with its indwelt mind, but they were all destined to suffer disappointment. Something new and even greater occurred. As John laid his hands upon Jesus to baptize him, the indwelling Adjuster took final leave of the perfected human soul of Joshua ben Joseph. And in a few moments this divine entity returned from Divinington as a Personalized Adjuster and chief of his kind throughout the entire local universe of Nebadon.

VI: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GOSPEL. (*A History of the Gospels* 30)

§19. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. Matt. 3:13-17. Mark 1:9-11. Luke 3:21, 22, 23a.

Matt. 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him:

17 and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Thus did Jesus observe his own former divine spirit

descending on its return to him in personalized form.

And he heard this same spirit of Paradise origin now speak,

saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

And John, with Jesus' two brothers, also heard these words. John's disciples, standing by the water's edge, did not hear these words, neither did they see the apparition of the Personalized Adjuster. Only the eyes of Jesus beheld the Personalized Adjuster.

136:2.4 When the returned and now exalted Personalized Adjuster had thus spoken, all was silence.

II, XII: THE BAPTISM OF JESUS: ITS HIGHER MEANING (Edersheim 275)

Jesus stepped out of the baptismal waters 'praying.' One prayer, the only one which He taught his disciples, recurs to our minds. We must here individualise and emphasise in their special application its opening sentences: 'Our Father Which art in heaven, hallowed by Thy Name!

Thy Kingdom come!

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven!' (E1 283)

§19. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. Matt. 3:13-17. Mark 1:9-11. Luke 3:21, 22, 23a.

Luke 3:21 Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

And while the four of them tarried in the water, Jesus, looking up to the near-by Adjuster, prayed:

"My Father who reigns in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come!

Your will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven."

When he had prayed, the "heavens were opened,"

and the Son of Man saw the vision, presented by the now Personalized Adjuster, of himself as a Son of God as he was before he came to earth in the likeness of mortal flesh, and as he would be when the incarnated life should be finished. This heavenly vision was seen only by Jesus.

136:2.5 It was the voice of the Personalized Adjuster that John and Jesus heard, speaking in behalf of the Universal Father, for the Adjuster is of, and as, the Paradise Father. Throughout the remainder of Jesus' earth life this Personalized Adjuster was associated with him in all his labors; Jesus was in constant communion with this exalted Adjuster.

HIS CALL (Smith2 31)

His baptism was not a **confession**:

it was a **consecration**—His self-consecration to His Messianic ministry (S2 34).

For John [the heavenly voice] was a certification of the truth of his surmise; and for Jesus it was the summons which He had been so long awaiting—the **call** to enter upon His Messianic ministry (S2 35).

[He felt the necessity of being alone with himself and with God, **to think over** the dazzling and perplexing destiny to which he had been called (Barton 117).]

[Immediately upon the confirmation of Adjuster fusion the new morontia being ... is granted the forty days of spiritual retirement from all routine activities wherein to commune with himself and to choose some one of the optional routes to Havona and to select from the differential techniques of Paradise attainment (47:8.5).]

136:2.6 When Jesus was baptized, he repented of no misdeeds;

he made no **confession** of sin.

His was the baptism of **consecration** to the performance of the will of the heavenly Father.

At his baptism he heard the unmistakable **call** of his Father, the final summons to be about his Father's business,

and he went away into private seclusion for forty days **to think over** these manifold problems.

In thus retiring for a season from active personality contact with his earthly associates, Jesus, as he was and on Urantia, was following

the very procedure that obtains on the morontia worlds whenever an ascending mortal fuses with the inner presence of the Universal Father.

136:2.7 This day of baptism ended the purely human life of Jesus. The divine Son has found his Father, the Universal Father has found his incarnated Son, and they speak the one to the other.

136:2.8 (Jesus was almost thirty-one and one-half years old when he was baptized.

[*Contrast:* Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,

2 in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came into John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness (Luke 3:1-2).]

While **Luke says that Jesus was baptized in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.**

which would be A.D. 29 since Augustus died in A.D. 14,

[**TIBERIUS.** ... The successive deaths of his nominees compelled [Augustus] to fall back upon Tiberius, who in A.D. 11 was made **co-emperor**. Three years later he succeeded to the purple.

it should be recalled that Tiberius was **coemperor** with Augustus for two and one-half years before the death of Augustus,

having had coins struck in his honor in October, A.D. 11.

It is probable that the 'fifteenth year' in Lk 3:1 runs from the first of these dates, and thus means A.D. 25-26 (**Hastings' DB** 934).]

The fifteenth year of his actual rule was, therefore, this very year of **A.D. 26**, that of Jesus' baptism.

[It was, according to St. Luke's exact statement, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar—reckoning, as provincials would do, from his coregency with Augustus (which commenced two years before his sole reign), in the year **26 A.D.** (**Edersheim** 264).]

[**PILATE.**—Pontius Pilatus, a Roman of no known family, succeeded Valerius Gratus as procurator of Judæa in A.D. 26 (**Hastings' DB** 729).]

And this was also the year that Pontius Pilate began his rule as governor of Judea.)

1. Crowded with events as was our Lord's brief life, He was never hurried; not one hasty or ill-considered remark fell from His lips; nor do we once read that He ran, as if late for His duty (W 110).