

Matthew 3:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Analysis

The act of baptism signified repentance and cleansing, but confession of sins was equally crucial. True repentance involves specific acknowledgment of sin, not merely general admission of human imperfection. John's baptism was preparatory, pointing to Christ's superior baptism with the Holy Spirit. The public confession demonstrated the social dimension of repentance—sin is not merely private but affects the covenant community.

Historical Context

Jewish proselyte baptism was known, but John's baptism of Jews was revolutionary, implying ethnic Israel needed the same repentance as Gentile converts. Public confession in the Jordan River was a humbling act, renouncing self-righteousness before the covenant community.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why is specific confession of particular sins important rather than vague acknowledgment of general sinfulness?

2. What does the public nature of confession teach about accountability within the Christian community?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ὑπ' αὐτῶν
And were baptized in Jordan of him
G2532 G907 G3588 G2446 G5259 G846

ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν
confessing sins him
G1843 G3588 G266 G846

Additional Cross-References

Acts 19:18 (Parallel theme): And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

Hebrews 9:10 (Parallel theme): Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

1 John 1:9 (Sin): If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matthew 3:11 (Baptism): I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: