

Let It Be So Now...

Those of you, who were attending Bible Study when we looked at the book of Matthew, will recall the similarity between the story of Jesus in Matthew and the Story of Moses in the book of Exodus. There were many parallels. Both had humble inauspicious births. Both were in danger because of a harsh ruler that ordered all little boys killed. Moses was raised in Egypt. Jesus and his parents escaped King Herod by traveling to Egypt. Both were called upon to lead a people out of bondage, Moses from slavery in Egypt and Jesus from the slavery of sin and death.

There is another subtler comparison that I would like to show you today. I read of this idea in the book, *THE SOUL OF MINISTRY*, by Ray S. Anderson. He believes and I agree with him that the baptism of Jesus was his burning bush. He supports this idea by

pointing out the similarities between the two events. For Moses, the burning bush was the voice of God calling him to a specific task—leading his people to freedom. This task was the fulfilling of a promise God made to his people Exodus 2:23 - 24. Prior to the burning bush, Moses had been raised in the court of the Pharaoh, but became a murderer fleeing from justice and hiding out in the wilderness disguised as a shepherd. The burning bush was the turning point for Moses. Everything he did after that, with one exception, was for the glory of God.

Anderson points out that prior to the baptism of Jesus, we hear nothing of his work or ministry except for his birth, and a story of Jesus as a youth. It is after his baptism that Jesus hears the words of his father in Matthew 3: 16 – 17, “This is my Son the beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” After baptism Jesus is driven by

the spirit into the wilderness and put on trial by Satan. It is after the baptism that Jesus begins his ministry announcing that because of his presence the Kingdom of God has come near. After the baptism, the future that God promised in the verses we heard read in Isaiah (42: 1 – 9) today was now present in Jesus. After the baptism, Jesus was the Messiah.

Remember in the story John recognizes that Jesus is the Lamb of God with no sin and therefore does not need repentance and baptism. So why does Jesus go ahead with it anyway if John was right? The answer, according to Anderson, is that Jesus recognized his baptism as the affirmation that he was “born from above”. Jesus also did it as a foreshadowing of what he would do for all of us at the cross. He who had no sin stepped into the water and repented of all sin. In the words of Ray Anderson, “He thus laid the foundation

for human faith and repentance in his own gracious act on behalf of all.”

Jesus did that for us? What should we do for him? Pray, fast, study the bible, come to church, and let our lives become his life until he comes again.