



JOHN THE BAPTIST PART II NOT A NICE GUY.



WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN
FOCUS

Welcome to this second issue about John the Baptist.

Our first edition was done just over two years ago, and you can request a free copy by asking for Issue #33 from us at wcf@nym.hush.com

I remember we had some great feedback on that.

The story of John the Baptist is primarily found in Matthew 3 and Mark 1 and John 1.

I have included a few verses at the end that show the story. First, a few basic facts before we move on to what I feel God has put in my heart.



Wilderness a district or region suitable for pasturing sheep and cattle

Isaiah, although not by name. John was foretold as the 'Voice of one (person) crying in the wilderness' Isaiah 40:3-5

- John was the extended cousin of Jesus. His mother Elisabeth, and Mary the mother of Jesus were first cousins, apparently.
- **Mary had travelled all the way from Galilee to visit Elisabeth, a much older woman. This was all done by Angelic communication. All**

Baptist, had been especially called, and chosen and birthed by the plan of God for a specific purpose.

That one job God had for him, to be a voice, a loud, powerful and straightforward messenger for God to prepare people's hearts to do something before Jesus Christ could come on the scene.

And who remembers how the hearts of the people were prepared? What was John's message?

Luke 1: 76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

and even more specifically John's message was this, from his own mouth: Matthew 3:2, 4-14
"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the

this is recorded in great detail in Luke chapter one.

So we see that this highly important man, John the

- The birth of John the Baptist, was predicted well over 2,500 years ago by the prophet

Jordan River.

*(John's powerful message was primarily of repentance and then renewing of a pure relationship with God. **Only in this way**, the hearts of the Jewish people could be then 'made ready' for the coming of Jesus).*

powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"

13 "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.

14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay." (NIV translation)



Repentance: the action of repenting; sincere regret or remorse.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more

Dear John the Baptist, as far as we can see, was an obedient and humble messenger of God. Yet the message that was spoken through his mouth to the people was terrifying and frightening to many. (That's good by the way!) It seems that the majority of the people, the common people heard the message with gladness and many began to follow John, or at least come to him for teaching and advice. John even gave people specific and practical advice about what 'Repentance' should surely mean to them.

Luke 3: 10 "What should we do then?" the crowd asked.

11 John answered, "Anyone

John was a very powerful, possibly heavy-set man with the power and anointing of God on his words. So much so that he was able by the Spirit to provoke or bring forth an enormous positive reaction among the Jews as they waited for their Messiah.

Later, as most of us are familiar, John was arrested by Herod, and beheaded at the behest of Herod's illegitimate wife, Herodias. John had done his job. The wicked earthly unsaved and unreceptive people had killed him, as they always do or try to do to all of God's people throughout thousands of years!

Jesus Himself honoured John saying:

Luke 7:28

For I say unto you,



Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

So Jesus honoured John, yet also gave the challenge that anyone can be as great or greater than him, if they got into the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist was the trailblazer in the New Testament. He was the connection after 400 years of God not speaking to His people, finally there came ... John!

▶ **NOT A NICE GUY!**
Let's apply just one of the possibly hundreds of lessons about John to our lives today.

It struck me this time of thinking and reading the texts about him, that John was not a nice guy at all in terms of the modern world of today, and particularly in the country where I am now residing. He was not polite as far as we can see in the text! He didn't pad his message as we do today with a bunch of things so as not to offend anyone. He had also never been to a 'Bible' college, he grew up in the Judean countryside. He was not cool, he dressed in strange clothes and ate strange foods.

Yet despite all that, he had something thousands of people wanted. What was it? A message that spoke to them. Not a nice message. Not a 'you



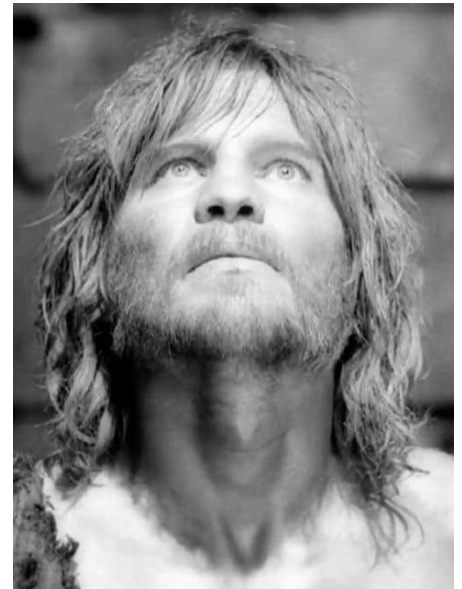
are so loved by God', or a 'you

are going to be prosperous and successful'. He didn't hang out with other pastors, attend conferences. He, like the Apostle Paul and the prophet Elijah, spent a great deal of time in the wilderness. But when his time from God came, he sure had plenty to say. He knew by the Spirit exactly what God wanted him to say and he spoke it clearly and simply, and got a harvest.

No, John was not your normal nice guy pastor, vicar, rector or priest, or just plain Christian, like we have over here in the UK or perhaps some other places in the world. 'Christians' here are so nice. They are polite. They shake your hand, they smile, although it can be some unusual type of smile I must say from what I have seen. They may even hug you in some places.

They do good stuff, help charities, smile and greet people in church, then see them again in a week or possibly a few days time. They feel good about themselves in many cases. They put their money into buildings and similar material things for the most part, in my observation. They ask if you have been vaccinated, and when you will get the booster vaccine.

They don't say what they really think. If someone should actually say something startling or just not the normal way of talking nicely, why, many people would look at that person as an odd ball. John didn't fit into that category. Poor Guy. No wonder he lost his head in the end, as he had the audacity to tell King Herod off good and proper.



Instead of honouring the important and vastly socially superior Pharisees and Sadducees who made the sacrifice to go out and see him all the way in the wilderness. He didn't give them a front row seat for his baptism nor his message; he just told them they were vipers and snakes, who were going to suffer the wrath of God. Obviously, he had no social training for polite society. Yet there he was, honoured by Jesus Christ as the greatest prophet ever. Prophesied two and a half millennia beforehand!

The greatest men and women of God in the Bible and in (church, do we have to use that word?) history, were never wimps. And that is why there are very few great people of God today, because the culture of society has suffocated the church (do we have to use that word?)

My dear friends, if any of these points resonates with you, now is a good time to fast and pray or at least pray for God to make you open to His Will and calling for you. Continue to be

nice and polite and humble if you wish, and there is definitely a need for that some of the time, but if you have a message from the Lord or a desire to follow a certain calling, you will need **POWER**, energy and some form of consecration like John the baptist had. He will call upon you to say uncomfortable things that make people either bristle or receptive.

If you follow the Lord, the Lord will honour you, but if you continue to compromise yourself to the standards of so called Christianity, you will surely be rendered virtually useless, and will just be remembered, if at all, as 'Oh, poor so and so died last week. He was a lovely man (woman) wasn't he/she? He/she was always so polite and kind.' and then you will be forgotten, because that **is** the way of the world. Ecclesiastes 9:15

At least go out of this life with all your strength and energy given to God. Resist and get rid of anything that stands in the way of you doing that. You may not attain to John the Baptist level, but you can still be even greater than him according to the scripture, if you are serving God in the Kingdom. I pray we will all have a good deep think and pray about this truth. The alternative is too frightening to think about and yet all too common.

God bless you.
Until next week, God willing.
Jerry for the WCF TEAM

Luke 1: 80

And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness

until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Matthew 3

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ...

Isaiah 40:3-5 3

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Matthew 11:11

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:12

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Matthew 17:13

Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them

of John the Baptist.

Mark 6:14

And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

Mark 6:24

And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Mark 6:25

And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

Luke 7:20

When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

Luke 7:28

For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Luke 7:33

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

Matthew 3:4

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Mark 1:6

And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

John 1:6

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.



Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel 6:16

RUN WITH PATIENCE

1WHEREFORE SEEING WE ALSO ARE COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN WHICH DOTHSO EASILY BESET US, AND LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US, 2LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH; WHO FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND IS SET DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD. 3FOR CONSIDER HIM THAT ENDURED SUCH CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS AGAINST HIMSELF, LEST YE BE WEARIED AND FAINT IN YOUR MINDS. 4YE HAVE NOT YET RESISTED UNTO BLOOD, STRIVING AGAINST SIN.

HEBREWS 12:1

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