

JOHN THE BAPTIST – MAN OF DESTINY

Matthew Chapter 14:1-13

Sermon Outline Notes

All scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV)

JOHN IS IMPRISONED FOR HIS CONDEMNATION OF THE KING.

But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison. Luke 3:19-20

Nevertheless, Mark records that Herod feared John and liked to listen to him and was actually distressed when tricked into beheading John.

JOHN'S DESTINY AND MINISTRY. (Headlines)

Of priestly descent ~ his miracle birth and ministry foretold by Gabriel to Zechariah his father and then to Mary pregnant with Jesus ~ filled with the Holy Spirit from birth ~ a prophet of the Most High to prepare the way for God's salvation ~ the fulfillment of Malachi's promise of Elijah's return before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal 4:5-6) ~ breaking 400 years of silence from heaven ~ he was "sent from God." (John 1:6)

He bursts on the scene out of obscurity, with a twofold emphasis to his preaching: the imminence of the Messiah and the urgent need for repentance to prepare for this event.

Thousands responded to him. "Crowds" (Luke 3:7)

People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Matthew 3:5-6

This was a baptism of repentance (change of mind and behavior), not a religious ritual and John made this abundantly clear.

He had to break the mould.

He called for righteous living in keeping with repentance. Luke 3:7-20

- Just being a Jew won't save you.
- Be generous to others.
- Officials must deal honestly.
- Don't use your authority for extortion.

The time of judgment is at hand.

The Man of Destiny has his doubts. Matthew 11:1-15

John's doubts: "Did I get it wrong about Jesus?" "Where is the baptism of fire?"

Faithful servants of God can have their doubts, especially when God does not explain why they are in dire circumstances. Ex. Elijah: "I've had enough Lord. Take my Life" 1 Kings 18:-19:4

Jesus did not condemn him for his doubts, but gently took him back to the prophetic vision of the Messiah in order to refute any inadequate or false ideas about his coming. In spite of John's doubts, Jesus wholeheartedly affirms him to the crowd.

With the coming of John, there was a heightening of Kingdom advance. (V12), but he is the last of an old order (v11), providing a bridge between old and new covenants.

Jesus' conclusion: John had fulfilled his destiny.

THE SECRET OF THE SUCCESS OF JOHN'S MINISTRY AND HIS JOY.

We have to turn to John's (apostle) gospel for the necessary insights.

John 1:1-9 John was a witness and so are we.

This **light** doesn't need a witness, but God has said that there must be one. Human witness is a necessity: sent from God, not human initiative.

The words of the witness may be in writing:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:30-31.

No one is saved without a witness and that witness must be sent. Faith comes from hearing the message.

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Romans 10:14-15

God is still sending witnesses! (Acts 1:8)

John was effective as a witness because his sole aim was to promote Jesus; he had no mixed motives.

John deflected attention away from himself with "**not**", repeatedly. 1:19-21.

"Who are you?" "I am a voice." 1:22-23

Then he gave a positive witness. 1:29-34.

He was full of joy, complete joy, when attention turned from him to Christ. 3:27-29.

And for that joy to continue: "He must become greater; I must become less." 3:30

Now free from the need for personal attention, he could preach Christ with clarity.

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. John 3:35-36

This attitude is echoed by Paul:

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

1 Cor. 3:6-7

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Cor. 4:5.

