

GREAT EVENTS OF THE BIBLE --
THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST!

(SLIDE #1) GREAT EVENTS OF THE
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BAPTIZER!

Introduction:

- A. In A Previous Lesson We Talked About John The Baptizer.
1. He was the prophesied forerunner who would prepare the way for the Messiah!
 - a. Is. 40:3 “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.’”
 - b. Mal. 4:5,6 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”
 - c. His Mission:
 1. He was to make things ready for the coming of the Messiah.
 2. He would prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah.
 2. He was born to Zacharias and Elisabeth. Lk. 1:5-23
 - a. While Zacharias was serving at the Temple, an angel prophesied that Elisabeth would bear a son who would be turn Israel to the Lord. He would prepare them for the Messiah.
 - b. After John was born, Zacharias prophesied that Jesus would prepare the way for the Messiah. John would guide the Jews to the Messiah for remission of sins! Lk. 1:76,77
 3. After 400 years of “silence” from the end of Malachi, John was a God-ordained prophet with a vital mission!
 4. Rome was the world-wide Empire.
 5. Herod was the King of the Jews in Galilee and Perea. 5
 - a. He is known as Herod Antipas; he was the youngest son of Herod the Great.
 - b. He was the King of Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. - A.D. 39.
 - c. He is called a “Tetrarch” (meaning “ruler of a quarter); that is because he ruled over about one-fourth of the land of Israel after his father Herod the Great died in 4 B.C.
 - d. He divorced his first wife, Phasaelis, the daughter of King Aretas IV of Nabatea.
 - e. He induced Herodias to leave her husband Philip, who was the half-brother of Antipas.

f. He beheaded John the Baptist.

B. Tonight: Why The Death Of John The Baptizer Is A Significant Event In The History Of The Bible.

I. (Slide #2) John's Teaching And Baptism Were Preparatory For The Messiah, For Forgiveness Of Sins, And For His Kingdom.

A. (Slide #3) John Preached In The Wilderness Of Judea.

B. (Slide #4) John's Message -- The Kingdom Of Heaven Is About To Arrive!

1. Mt. 3:1 "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!'"
2. After John was imprisoned, Jesus taught the SAME Message! Mk. 1:14,15 "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'"

B. (►) John's Baptism Was "For The Remission Of Sins."

1. It was Heaven-ordained!
 - a. Mt. 21:25-27 "'The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.' ²⁷So they answered Jesus and said, 'We do not know.' And He said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'"
 - b. Mk. 11:30-32 "'The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.' ³¹And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ³²But if we say, 'From men' '--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed."
2. Mk. 1:4 "John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."
3. Lk. 3:15-17 "Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, ¹⁶John answered, saying to all, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He

will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”

C. (▶) John’s Mission -- His Goal Was To Finish The Preparatory Work For The Kingdom Of Heaven To Arrive!

1. Old Testament prophets foretold John’s work:
 - a. See above Isaiah’s prophecy in Is. 40:3 and Malachi’s prophecy in Mal. 4:5,6
 - b. He was the voice in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord!

2. The angel told Zacharias that Elizabeth would become pregnant and bear a son and about his mission: “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’* and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Lk. 1:16,17

D. (▶) John Fulfilled His Mission!

1. Mt. 11:11 “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”
 - a. Jesus is saying that John the Baptizer was the greatest man who had been born up to that time!
 - b. Why?
 1. He was the prophet of God who had the privilege of ushering in the Messiah and His work.
 2. He was able to actually see what all the other prophets of the O.T. were looking into but could not understand.
 - a. I Pet. 1:10,11 “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”
 - b. None of the other prophets knew that JESUS was the Christ!
 3. John glorified Jesus; He baptized Jesus; He prepared the Jews to listen to Jesus!

2. And John fulfilled his mission!
 - a. Later Jesus would say, “It is finished!” referring to His Mission -- as He died, forgiveness of sins is now provided by His Blood; His Kingdom is ready to begin, and soon all men, Jews first, and then Gentiles will have salvation by His Blood!!!!

- b. In reality, the end of John's mission and his death were the final things that needed to happen before Jesus would be exalted in His Mission and His Death would soon occur and His Kingdom would be initiated!

- E. Yet, Jesus Makes An Amazing Comment About John: "He Who Is Least In The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Greater Than He." Mt. 11:11
 - 1. John saw and baptized Jesus.
 - 2. However, He did not see His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, His Ascension, And His Kingdom!!!!
 - 3. John did not see the Lord's Kingdom come with power!!!!
 - 4. And John was not in the Kingdom personally!

II. (Slide #5) John Reprimanded Herod For His Sin.

- A. Herod Married His Brother's Wife. Mk. 6:17
 - 1. He married his sister-in-law, Herodias.
 - 2. This was an adulterous marriage.

- B. **(Slide #6) John Fearlessly Reprimanded Herod For His Adultery!**
 - 1. Mk. 6:18 "For John had said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.'"
 - 2. Mt. 14:4 "Because John had said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.'"

- C. John Also Condemned Many Other Sins Of Herod!
 - 1. Lk. 3:19 "and for all the evils which Herod had done,"
 - 2. What might some of those evils have been?
 - a. He had murdered many of the wise men of Israel.
 - b. He was known for his reveling and debauchery -- wild drunken parties and immoral activities.
 - c. Jesus later called him "that fox!" Lk. 13:32

- D. Interestingly, Herod Still Had Respect For John.
 - 1. Mk. 6:20 "Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly."

2. It seems that Antipas in some ways realized that John was a man of God.
- E. But Herodias Was Livid!
1. Mk. 6:19 “Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;”
 2. She HATED John for condemning their adultery; she wanted him dead!

III. (Slide #7) Herod Had John Imprisoned.

- A. Herodias Was Demanding That John Be Killed!
- B. Herod, Desiring To Please Her, Wanted To Put Him In Prison.
- C. He Was Afraid Of The Jews.
- D. (Slide #8) But He Proceeded To Imprison John.
1. Lk. 3:19,20 “But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, ²⁰also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.”
 2. Mk. 6:17 “For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her.
 3. Mt. 14:3-5 “For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. ⁴Because John had said to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’ ⁵And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.”
 4. Observations:
 - a. The impetus for John’s imprisonment was Herodias.
 - b. Her anger ultimately brought Herod to also want to kill John.
- E. When John was put in prison, Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee. Mt. 4:12

F. John's Questions Of Jesus: Mt. 11

1. Mt. 11:2-6 "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³and said to Him, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' ⁴Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵*The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'"
2. His question may seem confusing:
 - a. His mother and father knew who Jesus was!
 - b. He testified of Him at the Jordan River!
 - c. He baptized Jesus.
3. So, WHAT DOES HE MEAN when he asks, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"
 - a. Perhaps John sought personal affirmation.
 - b. Perhaps he was wanting to know WHEN Jesus is going to step forward and bring the Kingdom of Heaven into existence.
 - c. Perhaps John was sending his disciples to ask this question more for THEIR benefit than for his own benefit!

IV. (Slide #9) Herodias Finagled (Engineered) A Way To Have John Murdered!

A. (Slide #10) Texts:

1. Mk. 6:17-32 "For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. ¹⁸For John had said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' ¹⁹Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; ²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. ²¹Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. ²²And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, 'Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you.' ²³He also swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.' ²⁴So she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask?' And she said, 'The head of John the Baptist!' ²⁵Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' ²⁶And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet*, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a

tomb. ³⁰Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. ³¹And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. ³²So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.” (This is a record of the event as it occurred.)

2. Mt. 14:6-13 “But when Herod’s birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. ⁷Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. ⁸So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, ‘Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter.’ ⁹And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her*. ¹⁰So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. ¹¹And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother. ¹²Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. ¹³When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.” (This text is AFTER THE FACT -- Herod in his guilt thought that Jesus was John reincarnated!)

B. (▶) Herodias Used The Guise Of Herod’s Birthday As A Way To Get Rid Of John. This Was Her Opportunity To Strike And Act!

C. (▶) She Had Her Daughter, Herodias, To Dance Before Herod; He Was Pleased And Enamored.

1. It was such a lustful dance that Herod offered her anything she wanted up the one-half of his kingdom.
2. Mt. 14:7 “Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.”
3. Mk. 6:22 “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you.”
4. Mk. 6:23 “He also swore to her, ‘Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.’”

D. (▶) Her Daughter Asked Herodias What To Request; She Told Her Daughter To Ask For The Head Of John On A Platter.

1. The girl quickly returned to Herod!
2. She asked for John’s head on a platter!

E. **(Slide #11)** Herod Was Sorry; However, Because Of His Oaths And To Save Face Of Those Who Watched, He Gave The Decree For John To Be Beheaded.

1. Herod had invited very important men to his birthday -- “his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee.” Mk. 6:21
2. He immediately sent the executioner to the prison; John was beheaded, and his head was brought on a platter as had been requested.
3. Herod lost his head “Figuratively”; John lost his head literally!
4. John’s disciples buried his body in a tomb; then they went to tell Jesus of his death.

F. Subsequent Events:

1. As Jesus went about doing many miraculous deeds, Herod thought that this was the reincarnate John!
2. Mt. 14:1,2 “At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus ²and said to his servants, ‘This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’”
3. Mk. 6:12-16 “So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. ¹³And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*. ¹⁴Now King Herod heard *of Him*, for His name had become well known. And he said, ‘John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’ ¹⁵Others said, ‘It is Elijah.’ And others said, ‘It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.’ ¹⁶But when Herod heard, he said, ‘This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!’
4. What a story about how sin can haunt you in the future!

(Slide #12) Conclusion:

- A. Again The Question, “Why Is John The Baptizer’s Death One Of The Great Events Of The Bible?”

- B. (▶) He Had Fulfilled His Mission To Prepare The Jews For Jesus, The Messiah!
1. Mt. 17:9-13 “Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.’¹⁰ And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’¹¹ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.¹² But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”

 2. (▶) He prepared the nation of Israel for the Christ!

 3. (▶) He did his job; then he transitioned his leadership to Jesus the Messiah and His ministry. He urged his disciples to become disciples of Jesus!
 - a. Jn. 1:35-37 “Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”
 - b. When some of his disciples became envious of Jesus and His disciples baptizing more people and having more followers than John, he corrected their misunderstanding, “And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!’²⁷ John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’²⁹ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.³⁰ He must increase, but I *must* decrease.” Jn. 3:26-30
 - c. Unfortunately, some like Saul of Tarsus and Apollos did not make this connection and did not realize that Jesus was truly the promised Messiah. But when they did understand, they became STAUNCH ADVOCATES for Jesus and proclaimed Him as the Messiah!
 1. Ac. 9:20-22 “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.²¹ Then all who heard were amazed, and said, ‘Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.”

2. Ac. 18:26-28 “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; ²⁸for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”
3. (▶) And we today must be STAUNCH ADVOCATES for Jesus Christ! He IS the Promised Messiah! Sinners must not follow any prophet of God in the past (not even John the Baptizer); they must not follow any self-proclaimed prophet since Jesus came, not even one today!!! Our proclamation is, “Jesus IS The Christ, the Son of God!”