

Character Study: John the Baptist

Part 3 – His Legacy

Mark 6

What's happening?

- John the Baptist continued to faithfully point people to Christ. When in the presence of Jesus, John declared, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 36). John kept the attention on Christ, stating, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).
- John was well known, but not popular with everyone. John had told Herod (Herod Antipas) that he was wrong in taking his half-brother's wife (Herodias) as his own wife. Though Herod respected John, he put him in prison and granted Herodias' daughter her request (on behalf of her mother) to have John's “head on a platter” (he had promised to give her whatever she asked). When hearing about Jesus, Herod's guilt caused him to initially think that He was John raised from the dead. (Mark 6:14-28)
- John's disciples took his body and placed it in a tomb (Mark 6:29). John's public ministry did not last long, nor did he get to witness the ministry of the One whom he proclaimed. But his legacy up to that time was unmatched. Jesus Himself said, “Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11).

What's God doing?

> God used John the Baptist to accomplish the mission of paving the way for the Lord. God gave John enough recognition to allow his message to easily spread, while enabled him to maintain a humble attitude and keep Christ the center of attention (note John 1:27). God strengthened John with the “spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17).

What's to learn?

→ Living for Christ brings a significant calling to our lives. It may also bring significant persecution (we are all told to be prepared for persecution to some degree – II Tim. 3:12). When our desire is to live out our calling, no level of persecution will hinder our mission!

→ John displayed boldness that was characterized by humility. He showed courage that was characterized by faith. And he demonstrated service that was characterized by faithfulness. John's ministry and life set an example for us all!