

John the Baptist

2. So the MODE of baptism was always immersion.
3. The purpose of his baptism – for repentance.

And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins; (Luke 3:3 NASB)

This is the way an Israelite of Jesus time could be brought back into the covenant with God – repent and be baptized.
4. The purpose of Christ’s baptism was quite different.
 - a. Christ’s baptism was not proclaimed until Pentecost – in Acts 2:38.

Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 NASB)
 - b. It symbolized Jesus’ death and resurrection that had just taken place. It could not have been practiced before the resurrection. That cares for the “Thief on the Cross” case.
 - c. It was performed the same way, but the intent was different.
 - d. Those that were baptized in John’s Baptism were immersed again.

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” (Acts 19:1-4 NASB)

Conclusion:

1. John was picked by God from birth.
2. He was raised in a God-fearing home.
3. His life’s purpose was to call Israel to repentance and prepare for the coming of Jesus, their Messiah.
4. The immersion that he practiced was not identical to Christian baptism that pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

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JOHN THE BAPTIST

Charles Dailey

1. This is about an outstanding man. Jesus said of him:

“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11 NASB)
 2. John came as a prophet after 400 years of not having a word from God in Israel. He was unconventional, yet effective. Like a passing meteor, he shined for a while and then faded from view.
 3. John worked no miracles and left no writing. He was purely the advance man for the Son of God and the focus shifted to Jesus and away from John. He died in prison during Jesus’ ministry.
 4. We can learn from John just as we can from all of God’s men. He had some great personal qualities and some great teachings.
- I. JOHN’S PARENTS – ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH
 - A. . . . were godly people.

They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. (Luke 1:6 NASB)

Recommendations greater than this would be hard to locate. So John was raised in a godly home. That is a wonderful start for any son. Every child deserves godly parents to model life for them.
 - B. Zacharias was a priest and Elizabeth was a relative of Jesus’ mother Mary. Their home was a haven to Mary the mother of Jesus during the first few months of her pregnancy.
 - C. Years before, they had prayed for a son, but heaven was silent. Then suddenly and unexpectedly, there was a response:

But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. “You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. “And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. “It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit

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and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:13-17 NASB)

II. JOHN’S EARLY LIFE — THERE IS LITTLE SAID.

A. Luke says,

And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel. (Luke 1:80 NASB)

B. John developed physically and emotionally and well as developing a rugged life-style until he was 30 years of age, the usual age of beginning public life. He may not have been very sociable as evidenced in this public criticism:

“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ (Matthew 11:18 NASB)

III. JOHN’S PURPOSE IN LIFE

A. God had ordained him as a forerunner for Jesus 700 years before he was born.

A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. “Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” (Isaiah 40:3-5 NASB)

HIS PURPOSE WAS TO FULFILL HEAVEN’S ASSIGNMENT.

B. God had ordained John to preach repentance to Israel. They were the most religious people on the face of the earth, but the nation needed to repent. They traveled to the temple in Jerusalem three times a year, tithed, went through the rituals, loved their music, but they still needed to change their personal conduct — their personal values.

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, “THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’” Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the

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district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance . . . (Matthew 3:1-10 NASB)

C. Religion and repentance can be quite different. Repentance: A change of mind that leads to a change of conduct.

CASE: Judas changed his mind, but not his conduct.

D. John preached the first coming of Christ.

1. Besides preaching repentance, he pointed right to Jesus. Read in John 1: 19- 31
2. His purpose was to transfer the focus from his work to Jesus.

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. So this joy of mine has been made full. “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:29-30 NASB)

IV. JOHN’S PREACHING

A. He used powerful and persuasive words. He did not have power for miracles. The crowd correctly said of John:

Many came to Him and were saying, “While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.” (John 10:41 NASB)

B. He drew large crowds to the countryside.

Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. (Matthew 3:5-6 NASB)

Preaching repentance did not hinder “church growth” for John!!

C. He popularized baptism in water

1. Baptism means “immersion in water” unless some other medium is stated.
 - a. The word *baptism*, standing alone, cannot mean *baptism in the Holy Spirit* unless it says so in the context.
 - b. When baptism stands by itself, it means “immersion in water.”