



John the  
**Baptist**

## John the Baptist

Welcome to Jesus Time where we spend time with Jesus in His time and culture.

Today we will take a look of what's inside the good book concerning John the Baptist.

We already know that the Angel Gabriel appeared within the Temple of Jerusalem unto John's father Zechariah, Gabriel then explained how Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth's soon to be born son John was chosen to be The Elijah of Malachi 4:4-5.

Again as we learned last week from the Living Words of Christ Himself found within Matthew 11:11-14, which does confirm that during Jesus First Advent or Coming that John the Baptist served as the stand in for Elijah, while at Jesus 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming Advent Elijah and Moses themselves will return as Christ's representatives to conclude the one remaining 7 year cycle of the Age of Law.

When Jesus went to the cross as Daniel predicted the Age of Law was interrupted with one 7 year Sabbatical week remaining to be completed at the conclusion of the Age of Grace after the Rapture.

Now get this- during the Tribulation scripture says a new rebuilt/restored 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple will be in Jerusalem. Sacrificial Rabbinic Judaism will once again be practiced within Israel & the world will go insane.

Even though the animals used in this ritual will be consumed as in just like going to the supermarket the world will be astonished and offended to the maximum degree.

While the simple truth is this: it will be GOD Himself who will be utmostly offended by those Jews returning to sacrificial Judaism apart from Jesus who is the true one and done sacrifice as our Christ.

The Two Witnesses ( Moses & Elijah ) are actually the lawgiver through and by GOD- Moses, and the chief Prophet of Israel- Elijah, they will each be there in person to condemn those who continue to pursue the Lord for peace through Judaism. Judaism was completed by Messiah Jesus.

Scripture in several places states that it takes two witnesses to bring charges against a person or a people.  
( For example: Deuteronomy 19:15 ~ Matthew 18:16 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:11 )

At this time the Church Age will be completed by the Rapture, and per scripture only one 7 year Sabbatical cycle of Biblical history will remain for the Jewish people and those who remain upon the Earth at this time to complete in order to freely chose Jesus as their Messiah or not.

If your interested this begins when: the antichrist will confirm and affirm a 7 year "Peace in the Middle East" plan between Israel and her Arab relative neighbors.

Sometime soon after the Rapture of the church we do not know the exact time gap.

This complete study of Jesus and the End Times can be found on this Church website or on You Tube under the name of the Wintersville United Methodist Church of our study of the Book of Revelation.

Now what we begin to see is this is why the Pharisees' so violently opposed their own Savior.

They knew His arriving meant the loss of their power and control. This be unto Him our Lord Jesus.

Jesus was born human in order to repay our human Sin debt unto His and our Holy and Pure Heavenly Father. As a man a human being, Israel's elite attempted to not only oppose but to destroy Jesus. As in they forever replacing Him. ( Please read Jesus' story parable of the Tenant Farmers of Matthew 21: 33-46 which fully explains the thought of how the Pharisees were indeed trying to replace the very Christ they had anticipated with themselves.)

But briefly that was and is the difference between John standing in for the Prophet Elijah during the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent of our Messiah Savior, and Jesus' Second Coming Advent as our conquering King and Lord.

Israel wanted the invincible conquering King to restore all things GODLY at Jesus first coming Advent. It was and is certainly not just Israel and the Jewish elite at Jesus Time but many in our own time and down through the ages that still do not understand this fact:

Jesus First Advent of Coming was to prepare us to be able to receive in belief through Him, Christ our Lord, the only way to be eligible to enter into GOD'S Thy Kingdom Come, when- Jesus does finally return at His Second Coming Advent. Then, He will establish the Kingdom of GOD which we know as the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus knew we first have to be prepared to be able to enter into GOD'S Kingdom.

Like Jesus Himself scripture does not detail very much as to the early years of John the Baptist. Dr. Luke 1:80 just gives to us this:

✝ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Of course we know by Jewish Law and custom that John the Baptist had to have emerged and publicly began his work of preparing the way for Christ Jesus at thirty years of age.

John no doubt was raised by his parents knowing what his purpose in life was to be because the Arc Angel Gabriel had informed Zechariah of John's purpose and stated that John was to be dedicated to his ministry from birth.

There also can be little doubt that likewise John's mother Elizabeth had indeed told him the story of how when she was carrying him as a babe that the virgin Mary visited them and how he- John, had leapt and danced with joy within her womb at the arrival of the Christ child within his relative Mary.

In fact we know this to be true by the scriptures because when Jesus arrived unto John at the Jordan river to be baptized by him, John questioned Jesus you want me to baptize you? Matthew 3:13-14

Obviously Jesus had not yet began his public ministry and was still unknown as the Christ save maybe for His family in the know about His miraculous birth. The point is John knew:

Perhaps by each family recognition or even by the Holy Spirit within him, for Dr. Luke detailed that John was Blessed with the Holy Spirit John the Baptist questioned if he should Baptize Jesus.

At this time before Jesus completed His life's work upon a cross only select people actually received the Holy Spirit. King David, Noah, Daniel, Judge Deborah, Joseph, Samuel, even the problematic Samson were examples of Spirit filled, empowered, or led people before the Age of Grace.

Today the Spirit indwells us when we are Saved & He gives to us an understanding and recognition of people or circumstances meaning we just know when something or someone is right or wrong for us. Call it intuition or that little voice of conscience when GOD guides us as too His Will.

It might not be literal audible words like through the burning bush as the Lord spake unto Moses- But GOD does lead and guide our hearts if we are still in Prayer and listen for Him- in His Time.

So what do we know about everyday life in Israel under Roman rule at this time in which the Lord introduced and unleashed John the Baptist? Lets begin by talking about some real meat and potatoes, not just some dry empty facts or time faded historical dates, as in for starters;

Many Biblical scholars feel that John the Baptist was influenced by the Essenes.

If you have ever heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 within the Judean desert of the northwestern Dead Sea. Then you have heard of the Essenes, the scrolls most likely belonged to them.

The Essenes like John separated themselves and stuck primarily to the wilderness areas.

Unlike John who wore camel hair clothing and never cut his hair, the Essenes would often dress in pure white.

Also the Essenes did keep for themselves homes for travel and business in every area or town of Israel.

This is similar to the Amish communities of today as in being a part of society but keeping unto themselves.

The Pharisees never verbally engaged an Essene for the Essenes would shame them as too their departure from GOD'S Word meaning their shameless addition and elevation of manmade superstitions and traditions.

In fact of all the groups and affiliations of the different peoples in Jesus Time; the Essenes are the only ones in which the scriptures record no public rebuke by our Lord and Savior Jesus.

As for Rome; at this time in the years leading up to John the Baptist and ultimately the arrival of Jesus our Christ, it was Octavian aka Caesar Augustus who secured his throne through civil war with Mark Anthony and Cleopatra- this was after Octavian's uncle & adoptive father Julius Caesar was assassinated.

Octavian, now Augustus Caesar became the first citizen of Rome thusly becoming Rome's first Emperor.

During Augustus's rein Rome was transformed from brick to marble.

All by brute force, spilled blood, and oppressive political tyranny.

For a the very select few- life was boundless luxury built upon the excesses of entitlement while abject poverty through fee's, liens, & taxes meant a life of misery for most.

Physical labor was looked down upon by the elite of Rome as being only for the menial & unimportant.

Death was actually preferred for any Roman who found themselves stripped of their rank & privilege thusly losing their wealth or power. For them poverty and working was a fate far worse than death.

Only those whom toiled in agriculture were deemed just a little bit better than those who labor or were slaves.

Roman culture itself thrived upon immorality & this was continually evident in Rome's entertainment.

Found through out the Empire were it's theaters known only for vice and sin and likewise the sports of the day were blood soaked gladiatorial violence or carnage filled chariot racing within Rome's arena's.

So corrupt was the average Roman that a common Jewish idiom of this time was:

"To sway or appease a Roman you had to either flatter their pride or gratify their sensuality."

The indulgences of Roman society were so continual that conscience was without meaning.

Seneca the Roman Philosopher - Longed for someone to lift Rome from immorality.

Cicero the Roman Academic Statesman- Desired for virtue to return to Rome.

Tacitus the Roman Historian- Declared Roman life to be a complete farce devoid of purpose or meaning.

Astonishingly much to Rome's surprise- Jewish culture not only survived under harsh Roman rule Judaism actually thrived. There were 3 distinct cultures at the time of Jesus Christ within the Roman Empire.

First and foremost of course was the culture of "might is right" and "honor was all" to be found within Rome and her Legions. Th intellectual aspect of life of course was the Hellenistic Greek influence.

Rome had no such deeper thoughts and thusly it was Greek tradition that carried the day as to knowledge and reason. And as for Religion, it was Judaism that prevailed.

You see in a world full of thousands of false pagan deities & uncountable false manmade religions of superstition or tradition- It was accepted throughout the Empire that if any god was real, it was Jehovah GOD of the Jews. This was because of all the historical records of Noah's flood, of the legends of Moses and Pharaoh of Egypt & most of all it was because of the prophets of the Bible.

The Torah and the Prophets had astoundingly predicted future events all coming true without error.

Chief among them was Daniel and his God given prediction of coming world Empires including Rome.

In fact the Romans were in awe of Alexander the Great the Greek King Warrior who was also predicted by scripture & the world knew Alexander also believed the Torah and knew it spoke of him personally.

Alexander never sacked Jerusalem in fact he made a legal sacrifice to GOD within the Temple.

Many coverts to Judaism could be found throughout the Roman Empire and the Temple system headquartered in Jerusalem became unimaginably rich. Jerusalem literally financed the wealthy class of Rome. Alexandria in Egypt also had a lessor Jewish Temple & this was where all the nefarious financial activities of the entire Empire took place. Still funneled and financed through Jerusalem but under far less scrutiny with Rome's cut of course.

Also at this time in Israel- King Herod the Great, during his lifetime had indeed packed Israel's supreme court the Jerusalem Sanhedrin with Pharisees, Sadducees, all Priests & Doctors of Law who were beholden unto him.

Amongst all this oppression; of Israel's corrupt religious elite coupled with the abuse of everyday & in everyway humiliation of the might of Rome- Now suddenly comes a solitary man in the wilderness saying Repent for the Kingdom of GOD is at hand.

( To Repent is to have a complete change of mind and heart from sin and selfishness unto GOD )

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

(John the Baptist was a Holy Spirit filled preacher giving unto the people of Israel the one thing they lacked- Hope. For both the New & Old Testaments proclaim Messiah will institute the Kingdom of GOD for us.)

<sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’

(John is quoting Isaiah 40:3 that he is the one as the Angel Gabriel said- would prepare the way for the arrival of Messiah)

(Common clothes & food of the poor in wilderness areas- as such were the prophets like Elijah.)

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

<sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

(Jews did not believe they needed to repent or had to be Baptized for they were guaranteed Salvation by birth alone. Interestingly Gentile converts to Judaism HAD to be Baptized and called “ Born Again ” to be Saved.

Get that? The Jewish elite KNEW a person had to repent and be reborn Spiritually.

But not them- for they thought WE are born above GOD’S Law.

Now John is telling them they too must repent.)

<sup>7</sup> 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? (John was drawing crowds away from Synagogue & the Temple itself & the Baptists told them I’m preparing the way of the Messiah.)

( John saying Jewish Elite not serving GOD as they came to John to spy upon him- while others came to learn of GOD.)

<sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> The ax 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. (John has now informed the Jewish elite they as well that their birth rite will not automatically Save them.)

(John now states the Messiah WILL impart the Holy Spirit unto all who follow Him.)

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> 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.”

( Fire = GOD’S Judgement in Scripture, winnowing as in separating the Believing from the unsaved.

He Messiah will winnow or separate the wheat from the chaff as in people including ISRAEL.)