

Why was John the Baptist?

Advent 3

- I. The big event is getting nearer. So **who** was John the Baptist? It is really quite interesting.
 1. John the Baptizer (Mark 6:24). Also called John the Baptist because he baptized people in the river Jordan, calling crowds to repent. It was not a different ritual washing (?). Even today in Israel may buy a bottle of water from the River Jordan to baptize their children or grandchildren. In fact, you don't even have to go to Israel. On the internet you can even buy a bottle of water from the River Jordan and have it shipped anywhere.
 2. Matt 3:14 Jesus was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness." It is difficult to figure out what this means theologically.
 3. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. Luke 1:13-15.
 4. John the Baptist was a Nazirite, one separated from the rest and consecrated to the Lord. Numbers 6:1-21. The Nazirite vows: 1) You are not to eat anything produced by the grapevine. 2) You are to let your hair grow. 3) You are not to touch a human corpse. Samuel was a Nazirite, 1 Sam 1:22. Samson was a Nazirite, Judges 13:5.
 5. John wore camel's hair, ate locusts and wild honey. How does one eat a locust? By pulling off its head, wings, and legs. In China people eat dried and salted black beetles.
 6. There was a confusion in those days over who was the genuine Messiah. In Acts 5:36-37 two are mentioned, and we know of at least five in the first century. Note Matt 11:3: "Are you the one?" John 3:30: "He must increase, but I must decrease."
 7. John the Baptist was beheaded in prison. Mark 6:28.
 8. In the Orthodox world there are many festivals commemorating John the Baptist. He had disciples (John 3:25). Later followers were called Mandeans. John the Baptist is honored in Islam and the Baha'i.
 9. All of this is "interesting." Colorful, diverting, and even amusing at points. All of this information may be useful for a college class on biblical history, but it leads us astray from **the main event**.
- II. **Why** is John the Baptist? The real question is not "who" was John the Baptist, but "why"?
 1. He was "**Elijah**." (In Hebrew "Elijah" means "Yahweh is my God.") Recall Elijah. Matt 17:3. Who appeared with Jesus at the Transfiguration? Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets. Malachi 3:1; 4-5: "Behold I will send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight."
 2. "**The Day**"! Malachi 4:5: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before **the great and terrible day** of the Lord comes." What is "The Day"? The Day is the great reset. "The Day" appears over one hundred times in the Old Testament.
 - a. **The Day of Wrath**. Zephaniah 1:14-18:
"The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the Lord is
bitter,
the mighty man cries aloud there.
A day of wrath is that day,

a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring distress on men,
so that they shall walk like the
blind,
because they have sinned against the Lord;
their blood shall be poured out like
dust,
and their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold
shall be able to deliver them
on **the day of the wrath** of the
Lord.
In the fire of his jealous wrath,
all the earth shall be consumed;
for a full, yea, sudden end
he will make of all the inhabitants
of the earth.”

Amos 5:18-20:

“Woe to you who desire **the day of
the Lord!**
Why would you have **the day of
the Lord?**
It is darkness, and not light;
as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him;
or went into the house and leaned
with his hand against the wall,
and a serpent bit him.
Is not **the day of the Lord** darkness and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?”

Rom 2:16:

“...on **that day** when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.”

b. **“The Day of the Lord”** is also when the Lord restores all things.

Joel 2:30-32: “And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before **the great and terrible day of the Lord** comes. And it shall come to

pass that **all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered**; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and **among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.**"

Acts 2:20-21: "...the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before **the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day.** And it shall be that **whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

- c. **"The new Day"** John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Also John 1:36). John the Baptist eternally points to the Lamb.
 - 1. Sacrifice for our sins: "who takes away the sin of the world."
 - 2. The image of the Lamb is reversed in John 10: The good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. 10:11: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep"; 10:14: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me..."; 10:17: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again."
- d. This is **the Gospel**, the good news to which John the Baptist points: The Lord's victory over sin, death, and the devil.