

## 1010 The life of John the Baptist

(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

We describe some key points in the life of John the Baptist who was the forerunner for Jesus. First, let us use verses to take a look at his birth, and we can also see from those verses that we have to use New Testament to explain the unclear parts of Old Testament. Secondly, we want to see his growth and preaching style, which is based upon facts without worrying that he might scare people away. Thirdly, he is clear what he was assigned to do, like what he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Fourthly, he has testified that Jesus is the Son of God. Finally, we talk about how he dies, and why the Bible says that he has his febleness

In Luke 1:8-17, it talks very clearly about his birth. Let us take a look at what the verses say. We see the angel appeared to his father Zacharias and told him in advance that his wife Elizabeth would give birth to John the Baptist, and also told him that the child's name should be John [1]. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. And because of his birth, he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God [2]. And Luke 1:17 states, "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit 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."

Notice that fathers use the plural. So, it doesn't mean God the father. If we look at the corresponding verses in Malachi 4:5-6 of Old Testament, it says, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse." If you use tools, you will see that "father" is a male noun and doesn't specify if it is plural or singular. In this case, we have to use New Testament to get the correct meaning of the words in Old Testament.

Secondly, we can see that he grew in the wilderness [2]. When the word of God came to him, he started to preach the baptism of repentance [3]. As Isaiah said, he is the forerunner of Jesus [4] We can also see his preaching style is very different from many people, which is based upon facts not on the worry that he might scare people away [5].

Thirdly, he baptized Jesus since it is fitting for them to fulfill all righteousness (6). He is very clear what he was assigned to do, as he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." [7] He preached that Jesus would baptize people with Holy Spirit and fire [8].

Fourthly, let us take a look at how he testified for Jesus. Since he baptized Jesus, he saw in Matthew 3:16-17, "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." Therefore, "John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit

**descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.'" (John 1:32-34)**

**Finally, let us look at how he died and how the Bible honestly described his feebleness. John was arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias [9]. In Matthew 11:2-3, it says, "Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"" "Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight 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. And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.'" (Matthew 11:4-6) Although he knew that Jesus is the son of God, he is still feeble. Therefore, although we are often feeble, we cannot use feebleness as an excuse. We really need to repent.**

#### **Some related verses**

- [1] Luke 1:8-13, Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. 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.**
- [2] Luke 1:14-16, 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.**
- [3] Luke 3:2-3, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;**
- [4] Luke 3:4-6, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight. 'Every ravine will be filled, And every mountain and hill will be brought low; The crooked will become straight, And the rough roads smooth; And all flesh will see the salvation of God.'"**
- [5] Luke 3:7-9, So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up**

**children to Abraham. Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."**

**[6] Matthew 3:13-15, Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.**

**[7] John 3:28-30, You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' 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.**

**[8] Luke 3:16-17, John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

**[9] Mark 6:17-19, For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not do so;**