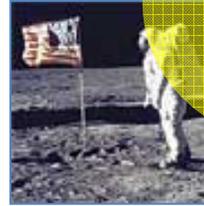


QUESTIONS:

1. John's baptism was immersion in water. TRUE / FALSE
2. He lived in a palace . TRUE / FALSE
3. Where did He baptize people?
 - a. In his palace
 - b. In church
 - c. In the river Jordan
 - d. In the sea.
4. Did he command anything else apart from baptism?
 - a. A donation of money
 - b. That they be called "Baptists"
 - c. Repentance
 - d. That they eat wild locusts and honey
5. How did he know that Jesus was the Son of God?
 - a. Jesus told him
 - b. The crowds told him
 - c. Jesus had a halo over His head
 - d. The Holy Spirit came on Jesus in the form of a dove and God said, "This is my Son..."
6. What was Herod's sin?
 - a. He was committing adultery
 - b. He was helping the Romans
 - c. He was angry
 - d. He was a tyrant
7. How did John die?
 - a. He was crucified
 - b. He was stoned
 - c. He was beheaded
 - d. He was starved to death
8. To be properly baptized today one must be immersed in water and the Spirit YES / NO
9. Jesus' ministry began when He was baptized in water YES / NO
10. Our salvation begins when we are baptized in water. YES / NO

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But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29

A LOOK INTO THE HEART OF GOD THROUGH THE STUDY OF HIS WORD

Part Eight

The Cost of Courage — **John the Baptist**

Some Bibles call him "the immerser" because baptism is the act of immersing someone in water. There is a man-made movement whose members call themselves "Baptists" but they came into existence hundreds of years after John lived. A Christian is a follower of Christ and the Bible allows for no other name for such a person. In the beginning there was never a doubt that a person who was baptized into Christ had given his / her life to Christ. It wasn't long before it was said that anyone who was baptized into Christ had signed his / her own death warrant.

That was certainly the case for Jesus when He came to be immersed by His relative, John, in the Jordan River. All four gospels record this event (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; John 1:29-34). Mark calls this the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1) and Luke calls it the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Luke 3:23). That is why John is so important as the "forerunner of Jesus". When the Jews asked him who he was he answered...

... "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (John 1:23)

Then they asked John, "Why are you baptizing..." (John 1:25)

We need to ask that question today to understand the connection between Jesus and John and also between my baptism and Jesus' baptism. Turn the page to see John's answer John's answer.

John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." John 1:26,27

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1:29-34)



Here are the facts that we learn from this answer:

1. John was sent by God to baptize all Jews but there was one whose baptism would show Him to be the Son of God.
2. That person was Jesus Christ.
3. John's ministry helped to get Jesus' ministry started but Jesus was greater than John.
4. John baptized with water, Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
5. When Jesus was baptized God provided visual evidence of the Holy Spirit coming upon Him.

Jesus' ministry soon overshadowed the ministry of John but both of them would end up being executed. Why was John killed?

1. In Matthew 3:1-6 we learn that he was something of a wild man. He lived in the wilderness and ate wild locusts and honey.
2. It was his message that led to his murder. He called people to "repent" and demanded that they produce fruit of repentance.
3. As the account continues in Matthew 3:7-10 he is particularly hard on the Pharisees and Sadducees and they were the "establishment" at the time. John was no respecter of persons.
4. It takes courage to lead a person to baptism because you have to tell them that they need to repent of their sins. (Acts 2:38).
5. The Jewish ruler at the time was Herod the Tetrarch and he was an adulterer who had taken his brother's wife. John told him "it is not lawful for you have her". We read about this in Matthew 14:1-12. Eventually Herod had John beheaded.

The cost of courage for John was his life. He was sent to call the Jewish people to repent and he was faithful to do just that without exception. He was not arrogant because when Jesus appeared John told Him that Jesus should be baptizing him instead of Jesus being baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13-15). He made it clear when he told his disciples that "He (Jesus) must become greater, but I must become less." John 3:30.

Sometimes the greatest courage is required of us when we repent of our own sins.

John was human, though, and he needed some assurance just like the rest of us do. We read in Matthew 11:2-5 that, after Herod had put him in prison, he sent his disciples to make sure that Jesus was the messiah. Jesus told them to tell John what they had seen and heard. They had seen all kinds of miraculous power to help people and they had heard the gospel preached to save people. This was the proof that the Spirit of God was at work in Jesus. Jesus wanted to assure John that his baptism was still working, even though John was not receiving any miraculous help to get out of prison, or avoid execution.

John was often recalled in the teaching of the Apostles of Christ. They recognized that they could not teach the gospel of Christ without mentioning John, especially to Jews.

In Acts 1:15-26, when they were looking for a replacement for Judas, they needed someone who had been a witness since the beginning, which was the baptism of John. Peter referred to this beginning when he preached in the house of Cornelius, the Gentile. (Acts 10:37,38). They definitely understood what Jesus meant when He said *"...unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* (John 3:5)

So we understand that what began when Jesus was baptized by John is completed when we are baptized into Christ. We fulfill the water command and God fulfills the spirit command. From then on we echo John's words spoken at the river:

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

