

Why John the Baptist Was Like a Rock Star

“What then will this child [John] be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him. (Luke 1:66)

Today, we continue to examine seven ways in which John the Baptizer was, as Jesus said in Luke 7:28, the greatest man who has ever walked the earth.

3. John humbly prepared the way for Jesus

After John was born, Zechariah prayed a prophecy over his newborn son: “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways” (Luke 1:76).

John’s role was to get people ready for Jesus. John humbly prepared the way for Jesus rather than using Jesus to build his own fame. He certainly could have exploited the opportunity. John was something like a rock star in his day once his public ministry began. There had not been a prophet for some 400 years until John opened his mouth and the Spirit anointed his preaching. He was a bit of a wild man who grew up in the wilderness and was not owned by the religious establishment. He was young, charismatic, strong, eccentric and fearless. Crowds flocked to him.

Yet, John was not all about John. John was all about Jesus.

“After me comes he who is mightier than I,” John said, “the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie” (John 1:27, ESVUK). As his stock was at an all-time high and his first tour just starting, John said he was unworthy to do the work of a slave for Jesus Christ. Later, when his fame was hotter than ever and he could have cashed it all in for a huge ministry, he set it all aside, sent all his

disciples to follow Jesus, and said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

4. John was an evangelist

Zechariah proclaimed that John's ministry would be "to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God" (Luke 1:77-78).

When you tell people about salvation through Jesus, that's called evangelism. And salvation is this: You and I have sinned against a holy and righteous God; he has come into human history as the man Jesus Christ to reconcile men and women to God; he's lived the life we have not lived, the life without sin; he's died the death we should have died, the death for sin; and he has risen to give the gift we cannot earn, forgiveness of sin. This gift is ours through repentance and faith. We turn away from sin and toward Jesus, acknowledging our need for his forgiveness and righteousness.

John was an evangelist. He did not settle for just doing good deeds or giving good advice – as good as they are. He kept preaching the bad news of sin and the good news of salvation, even though he knew that by preaching repentance he would be despised, hated, and opposed. But he loved God and he loved people. John knew that people were bound for hell, and he wanted them to go to heaven. He knew that people were enslaved by Satan and sin, and he wanted them to be liberated and children of God.

John never got tired of preaching repentance. The number is uncertain, but insofar as we can tell, most commentators agree that the Holy Spirit working through John converted thousands of people in a short period of time.

Who do you need to talk to about Jesus and salvation? Be courageous today and look for the opportunities the Holy Spirit has provided to have that conversation. {eoa}

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