

# John 1 (pt 2) John the Baptist - Lessons in Greatness

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## No one greater than John the Baptist

- Mat 11:7-11 ESV As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, "***Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.***" 11 Truly, I say to you, **among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. *Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.***

Joh 1:6-13 ESV **There was a man sent from God, whose *name was John*. 7 He came as a **witness**, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came **to bear witness about the light**. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the **right to become children of God**, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, **but of God**.**

## The purpose for my life is found in the heart of God

- He was great because he **recognized** God has a purpose for him - a man SENT FROM GOD
- He was the forerunner of Jesus Christ - his name is "**Jehovah is Gracious**" what a name for the one who is bearing witness of Jesus Christ FULL of GRACE and TRUTH

### **His birth was miraculous**

- Luk 1:5-20 ESV ...**Elizabeth was barren**, and both she and Zechariah **were advanced in years**...an angel appeared and told him **he would have a son**, to **call his name John**....he will be **great before the Lord**....and he will be **filled with the Holy Spirit**, even from his mother's womb.

### **He was created for a purpose - even BEFORE he was in his mother's womb**

- 16 And he will **turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God**, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, **to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.**"....

## True significance comes from doing His will

### **He was simply doing what the LORD sent him to do - to bear witness**

Sometimes we may think that greatness is found in accomplishing GREAT THINGS

- but the real question is, **WHO DETERMINES WHAT THE GREAT THINGS ARE?**

- He was not looking for **recognition or stardom** --- ***He was NOT the Light***, but simply came to bear WITNESS - to bear record, to give testimony or to report

- When we are SENT BY GOD - our small contribution in obedience to Him - **however insignificant it may seem to us** -- plays into God's greater purpose which is amazing -- **"that all might believe through him"**

**If John bore witness to the Light, and it caused others, to receive Him or believe on His name, they now have the right [AUTHORITY] to become a child of God**

- Those who receive Him
- Those who believe in his name
- **These are those who are BORN OF GOD**

Your true identity is found in acknowledging that God made you - and what He made you for

Joh 1:19-37 ESV And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, **"Who are you?"** 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" **23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."**

- He did not have to inflate himself in the eyes of the priests and Levites
- He did not have to try to look good in the eyes of others
- He did not have to fake a story to feel significant

There is no greatness without Humility

24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) 25 They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 27 even he who comes after me, **the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.**" 28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Greatness in this world is linked to our knowledge of God's word

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, **"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31 **I myself did not know him,** but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, **that he might be revealed to Israel."**

- He understood scripture and the purpose for which Messiah came
- Psa 1:1-3 ESV **Blessed is the man** who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but **his delight is in the law of the LORD,** and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. **In all that he does, he prospers.**

## Greatness if found in exalting Jesus above everything else in life

32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 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.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." 35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God!**" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and **they followed Jesus.**

- John was not jealous, nor did he suffer a sense of loss.
- Joh 3:26-30 ESV And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness--look, he is baptizing, and **all are going to him.**" 27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, '**I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.**' 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. **The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.** 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

## Like every great man, John had a time of doubt - Jesus pointed him to Scripture

- Mat 11:2-6 ESV Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "**Are you the one who is to come**, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 **the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.** 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

## John gave up His life for Jesus - His work on earth was done

Mat 14:6-13 ESV But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, 7 so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. 8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." 9 And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. 10 **He sent and had John beheaded in the prison,** 11 and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12 And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus. 13 **Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself.** But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

- I only speculate -- I am sure there was a certain amount of grief
- But there was also the incessant drumbeat of time marching closer to the cross
- It had been 400 years from the last prophet Malachi, until John - the one sent from God to be the forerunner to prepare the way --
- All other prophets prophesied about the Messiah who would come, JOHN IS THE ONLY OT PROPHET WHO ACTUALLY SAW HIM
- Now the forerunner is dead, the way has been made ready, and the time has come for Messiah to finish his work - the very reason He Too came to earth