

**Who is John the Baptist?****Luke 3:1 - 20 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,

<sup>2</sup>in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

1. *Tiberius Caesar—His predecessor was Augustus.*
2. *Herod—Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. He ruled Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39 (cf. Lk 3:19-20; 13:31; 23:7).*
3. *Philip—Like Herod Antipas, he was a son of Herod the Great. He ruled Iturea and Traconitis, northeast of Palestine from 4 B.C. to A.D. 33/34. A Tetrarch was one who ruled over part of Palestine which was then divided into four parts.*
4. *Lysanias—no significant historical reference.*
5. *Pilate—This is Pontius Pilate who ruled as governor from A.D. 26-36.*
6. *Annas—“The official high priesthood of Annas had ended in A.D. 15, but his influence was so great, especially during the high priesthood of his son-in-law Caiaphas (A.D. 18-36) (cf. Jn 18:13), that his name is naturally mentioned along with that of Caiaphas”. It appears that Annas, according to the Jewish law, was high priest for life (Jn 11:49; 18:13; Acts 4:6).*
7. *Caiaphas—He was the officially designated high priest by the Roman government (A.D. 18-36). He was the fourth to be appointed after Annas.*

<sup>3</sup>And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

<sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, (Isa. 40:3-5)

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,

‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,

MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.

<sup>5</sup> ‘EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED,

AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW;

THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT,

AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;

<sup>6</sup> AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.’”

- *His message was simple, yet profound: repent and be baptized. Like us, they were “justified by faith” (Rom 4:1-25; Gal 3:1). The only difference is that we look backward to the cross and they looked forward to it. But all are saved by faith, that is, by trusting God’s promise.*
- *This is figurative language that describes the preparation made for the coming of a king or some other dignitary. When it was known that a king was coming, “construction crews” would literally go out and prepare the road. They would clear the rocks, straighten the curves and fill in the potholes. John did this for Jesus through his preaching.*
- *He introduced many Messianic concepts as well as a baptism of repentance which would prepare the hearts and minds of the people to follow Jesus.*

**1. Water baptism does NOT save a person. ONLY faith in Jesus Christ saves a person.**

**EPHESIANS 2:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup>FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD;

**GALATIANS 3:26 - 27 (NASB)**

<sup>26</sup>FOR YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

<sup>27</sup>FOR ALL OF YOU WHO WERE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE CLOTHED YOURSELVES WITH CHRIST.

**ROMANS 10:9 - 11 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>THAT IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH JESUS AS LORD, AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED;

<sup>10</sup>FOR WITH THE HEART A PERSON BELIEVES, RESULTING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND WITH THE MOUTH HE CONFESSES, RESULTING IN SALVATION.

<sup>11</sup>FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

**2. Water baptism, does NOT remove our sins, it is a symbol of our faith in Jesus Christ.**

*But we show this faith—we say this faith and signify this faith and symbolize this faith—with the act of baptism. Faith unites to Christ; baptism symbolizes the union.*

*Analogy: "With this ring I thee wed." When we say that we don't mean that putting the ring on the finger is what makes us married. No, it symbolizes the covenant, but honoring the covenant/vows make the marriage. So it is with faith and baptism.*

**ROMANS 6:3 - 5 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup>OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT ALL OF US WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH?

<sup>4</sup>THEREFORE WE HAVE BEEN BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH, SO THAT AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD THROUGH THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, SO WE TOO MIGHT WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.

<sup>5</sup>FOR IF WE HAVE BECOME UNITED WITH HIM IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH, CERTAINLY WE SHALL ALSO BE IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS RESURRECTION,

*In baptism, by faith, we are united with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism portrays what happens spiritually when we receive Jesus. Our old self of unbelief and rebellion and idolatry died, and a new self of faith and submission and treasuring Jesus came into being. That's what we confess to the world and to God when we are baptized.*

**3. Water baptism is ONLY for people who are ALREADY saved.**

**COLOSSIANS 2:12 (NASB)** <sup>12</sup>HAVING BEEN BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, IN WHICH YOU WERE ALSO RAISED UP WITH HIM THROUGH FAITH IN THE WORKING OF GOD, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.

*Baptism is an expression of faith and therefore only for believers. Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have repented and come to faith express their union with Christ in His death and resurrection.*

*This is clearly taught in Acts 2. In this chapter, Peter is preaching the gospel message on the Day of Pentecost. Peter proclaims Jesus' death and resurrection and commands the crowd to repent and believe in Christ (Acts 2:36, 38).*

- *The response to Peter’s gospel presentation is recorded in verse 41: “Those who accepted his message were baptized.” Note the order of events—they accepted the message (the gospel of Christ), and then they were baptized. Only those who believed were baptized. We see the same order in Acts 16, when the Philippian jailer and his family are saved.*
- *They believe, and then they are baptized (Acts 16:29–34). The practice of the apostles was to baptize believers, not unbelievers.*

<sup>7</sup>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?”

<sup>8</sup>“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.

**\*Acts 26:20 (NASB)** <sup>20</sup>BUT KEPT DECLARING BOTH TO THOSE OF DAMASCUS FIRST, AND ALSO AT JERUSALEM AND THEN THROUGHOUT ALL THE REGION OF JUDEA, AND EVEN TO THE GENTILES, THAT THEY SHOULD REPENT AND TURN TO GOD, PERFORMING DEEDS APPROPRIATE TO REPENTANCE.

<sup>9</sup>“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.”

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?”

<sup>11</sup>And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.”

<sup>12</sup>And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”

<sup>13</sup>And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.”

<sup>14</sup>*Some* soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And *what about* us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ,

<sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>“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.”

- *But there was something even beyond John’s baptism, and that was the baptism that the Messiah would administer (Luke 3:16). He would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit, and this began at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1ff). Today, the moment a sinner trusts Christ, he or she is baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).*
- *What is the “baptism of fire”? It does not refer to the “tongues of fire” at Pentecost, for tongues over a person’s head could hardly be called a “baptism.” John’s use of the symbol of “fire” in Luke 3:9 and 17 indicates that he is talking about judgment and not blessing. In A.D. 70 the nation experienced a baptism of fire when Titus and the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the people. All unbelievers will experience a baptism of judgment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).*

<sup>18</sup>So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.

<sup>19</sup>But when Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the wicked things which Herod had done,

<sup>20</sup>Herod also added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

## **Monday Morning Moment**

*"We ALL need to repent: change your thought and change your walk!"*

*The Pharisees and Sadducees were right in coming out to be baptized by John, but their motives were clearly wrong. What they needed was repentance which produced appropriate fruit. The word "repentance" literally means "a change of mind." The Greek concept of "mind" included the will as well as the thoughts. The mind controlled both the thoughts and the behavior of a person. Just as faith without works is dead, so repentance, without appropriate changes in behavior, is meaningless (Acts 17:30-31; 26:20). The issue is not the level of a person's holiness, but his direction. Are we moving toward the nature of God, or away from it?*