



John the Baptizer

The Announcer of the Messiah

Profile

John was a prophet, but he was a very special kind of prophet. His job was to prepare the Jews for the arrival of the Messiah (the Savior).

Birth

John was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth in the hill country of Judah around 5 B.C.. His father was a Jewish priest from the tribe of Levi. (see Luke 1:5-80)

Death

John died around 27-29 A.D. (during Jesus' ministry). He was killed by Herod Antipas for opposing Herod's marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. (see Mat 6:17; 14:1-12)

Life and Ministry

Before John was born, an angel appeared to Zechariah in the Temple and told him he would have a son who would fulfill the prophecies of Malachi 4:5-6 and Isaiah 40:3-5. Zechariah was told to name his son John. John is born at the end of Luke 1 and we aren't told anything else about him until his story picks up again when he is around 30 years old. John was given specific insights by the Holy Spirit into God's plan to bring the Messiah (Jesus) into the world. John spent most of his time in the wilderness of Judea and around the Jordan River preaching the imminent arrival of the "Kingdom of Heaven" (Mat 3:2). John told the Jews to repent and to be baptized for the "forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3). In Matthew 3:13-17, Jesus visited John at the Jordan River and was baptized by him to "fulfill all righteousness" (Mat 3:15). John told the people that Jesus was the promised Messiah and the King who would reign over them. After Jesus' ministry began, John continued preaching boldly and pointing people to Jesus until he was arrested by Herod Antipas and put in prison at Machaerus. Herodias, Herod's wife, hated John and wanted Herod to have him executed. Herod initially resisted, but eventually relented and had John beheaded. Jesus commended John's ministry and spoke very highly of him to the Jews (Mat 11:1-19). He called him the greatest man born of women up to that day.