

AN EXCURSUS ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTISER

1. The reputation of Jesus

He was well-known Mark 6:14a

2. Identity of Jesus still unclear to many

3. Various opinions

- a) Elijah
- b) One of the prophets
- c) John the Baptist resurrected Mark 6:16

RECOUNTING THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTISER

1. The Herodian Family

- a) King Herod the Great (The one who tried to kill Baby Jesus)
- b) After his death his kingdom was split into four parts (tetrarchy)
- c) The rulers were called tetrarchs Luke 3:1
 - i) Archelaus (Judea and Samaria)
 - ii) Philip (Iturea, Trachonitis)
 - iii) Antipas (Galilee and Perea)
 - iv) Lysanias (Abilene) Luke 3:1

2. John the baptiser was imprisoned by King Herod Antipas Mark 6:17

3. His arrest was instigated by Herodias Mark 6:17

- a) Herodias was the wife of Philip
- b) Philip was the half- brother of Antipas

4. John the Baptist's word to Herod

- a) He declared that it was not lawful for Antipas to take his half-brother's wife Mark 6:18
- b) Herod imprisoned him because this word angered Herodias Mark 6:19

5. Herod's regard of John the Baptist

- a) He was a just and holy man Mark 6:20a
- b) He protected him Mark 6:20b

6. The celebration of the birthday of King Herod Antipas

- a) A Feast was held
- b) Invitees included his nobles, the high officers, the chief men of Galilee Mark 6:21

7. A special dance performed by Herodias' daughter

- a) This dance went down well with Antipas and his guests Mark 6:22
- b) Antipas offered a reward
- c) Foolishly swore (oath) that he would give her anything she desired Mark 6:23

8. Salome's request

- a) Salome (named by Historian Josephus)
- b) She consulted with her mother Herodias
- c) Salome asked for the head of John the Baptist Mark 6:25

9. Regret of Herod Antipas

- a) He was very sorrowful when he heard this request Mark 6:26a
- b) But he had taken an oath
- c) His guests heard him make a solemn promise to Salome
- d) He felt he had to accede to Salome's wicked request Mark 6:26

10. Royal command to execute John the Baptist given

- a) An executioner was sent
- b) He was commanded to behead John and to bring his head on a platter
- c) The head of John was then presented to Salome Mark 6:27
- d) Salome presented John's head to her mother Mark 6:28

11. The disciples of John

- a) They heard about their master's death
- b) They came to take away his body to give him a dignified burial
- c) John the Baptist was entombed Mark 6:29

POEMS – Charles Tan

Poem 1

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

The Gospel writer, Mark, took up his pen to write and to record,
Jesus was forthrightly introduced as the Christ, the Son of God.
There was no need to mention too many prophecies of old,
Mark's style was to write with clear lines and bold.

There was one prophecy that had to be mentioned for the record,
This concerned the forerunner who would prepare the way of the Lord.
He would be the mighty voice that cried out to one and all,
The Lord was coming and only with prepared hearts could they on Him call.

John the Baptist was that special man of God sent out to preach,
His word was powerful and many came to hear him teach.
Many hearts were convicted of their sins and they confessed,
John baptized them and helped them to walk in righteousness.

But his main task was not preaching nor even baptizing people when they came,
His life's purpose was to identify Jesus as the Christ and His name proclaim.
He urged the people to look forward to the day when the Messiah would come,
He would baptize believers with the Spirit of God and then his work would be done.

Inspiration: Mark 1

POEM 2 – Charles Tan

A JUST AND HOLY MAN

John the Baptist was indeed a just and holy man of God,
From birth he was consecrated to the work of the Lord.
He was a special gift from God to good and faithful parents,
Zacharias and Elizabeth served God faithfully with all their talents.

They brought up their son to walk in the way of God,
In due time, he would prepare the way of the Lord.
He would spend his entire life in the wilderness,
His whole focus was to cultivate a life of righteousness.

He was empowered by the Spirit to preach repentance from sin,
There was forgiveness with God and He would cleanse the heart from within.
Thousands flocked to hear this rare prophet of God,
Many believed and were baptized and added to the flock.

John lived for the day when he would announce the coming of the Messiah,
This was such a joy and privilege, it was his all-consuming desire.
When Jesus came and sought baptism from him,
John was hesitant, for before the Messiah, he felt unworthy within.

John proclaimed to all who would hear, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”
Some of his own disciples left him to follow Jesus the Lord.
John was most happy for he lived by this creed,
“He must increase and I decrease” indeed!

John was outspoken in his criticism of the King,
Herod Antipas had snatched Herodias to be his queen.
Herodias was angry and caused him to be jailed,
Antipas kept him alive in prison, his will prevailed.

Antipas celebrated his birthday where he made his biggest mistake,
In drunkenness he gave Salome a promise he should not have made.
Herodias told Salome, her daughter, to ask for John’s head,
Too late, Antipas fell into a trap that he could not evade.

John did not live his life in vain though he was killed,
His name would live forever as one who fulfilled God’s will.
He was indeed a just and holy man who truly lived for God,
His life would be honoured by all who deeply love the Lord.

Inspiration: Mark 6:20