

Repentance and Baptism

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In this meeting we look at Baptism with the theme of “Repentance”. To start our reflections we look at the account of the Birth of John the Baptist, celebrated in the Church calendar on the 24th of this month, and his ministry.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist was a fascinating man. Crowds came to him, but he constantly told them that he was nothing—that the coming Messiah was everything. In the end, his life was cut short because he criticized a king for sinning [Mark 6:17-18](#).

Although John the Baptist was an unusual character Jesus Christ called him the greatest of men [Matt 11:11](#).

JOHN’S BIRTH

John’s birth is recorded in the Gospel of Luke [Luke 1:5-25](#) , [Luke 1:57-80](#).

HIS WORK

God set John apart for a special mission [Luke 1:17](#).

Instead of serving at the temple as a priest, he dressed in a camel’s hair garment and a leather belt and ate locusts and wild honey [Matthew 3:4](#). He told the crowds that came to see him that they needed to repent and that the Kingdom of God was at hand [verses 1-2](#), the same message that Jesus Christ the Messiah proclaimed [Mark 1:14-15](#), and prepared the way for Him [Matt 3:3](#).

When religious leaders of his time came to see him John rebuked them for ignoring God’s message of repentance. They believed that they didn’t need to repent since they were directly descended from Abraham. But he told them, “And do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones” [Matt 3:9](#).

John pointed the people to Christ regularly [John 1:6-8](#), [19-27](#), [29-34](#) and encouraged his disciples to follow Him [verses 35-37](#).

John reluctantly baptized His Lord and Saviour [Matt 3:13-15](#), but when Jesus was ready to start His public ministry, He came to John to set an example to all by being baptized.

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DISCUSSION THOUGHTS:

1. Other Scripture References to John the Baptist

- His coming foretold [Isaiah 40:3](#) , [Malachi 4:5](#) , [Luke 1:13-17](#)
- Office, preaching and baptism [Matt 3:1-12](#) , [Mark 1:1-8](#)
- Baptizes Jesus [Matt 3:13-18](#) , [Mark 1:9-11](#)
- Sends his disciples to Christ [Matt 11:2-3](#) , [Luke 7:19-20](#)
- Imprisoned and beheaded [Matt 4:12](#) , [Mark 1:14](#) , [Matt 14:10](#)
- Christ's testimony [Matt 11:11-14](#) , [17:12](#) , [Mark 9:11-13](#)
- His disciples receive the Holy Spirit [Acts 18:24](#) , [19:1-6](#)

2. Who was John the Baptist

- Son of Zacharias and Elisabeth [Luke 1:5-25](#)
- Why was he called John? (Hebrew meaning: Jehovah has been gracious) [Luke 1:13](#)
- What was his Mission? [Matt 11:7-10](#) What did he preach? [Luke 3:3](#)
- What can we learn from John's life? (courage, humility)

3. What is Repentance

- New Testament: Greek - metanoeo - to think differently, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)
- Is Repentance a necessary condition to be Baptised?

4. What is Baptism

- Who is it for? [Matt 28:19](#) , [Acts 10:44-48](#)
- Can anyone be saved without being Baptised? [Luke 23:39-43](#) , Are all who are Baptised with water saved?
- What is the significance of Water Baptism? [Rom 6:3-4](#)
- What does it mean to be Baptised with the Holy Spirit?

5. Old Testament Baptism types

- Moses [1 Cor 10:1-5](#)
- Noah [1 Peter 3:18-22](#)
- Circumcision [Col 2:11-12](#)