

The Biography Of John The Baptist

Posted on September 20, 2019

Introduction

John the Baptist was a well-known figure for Jewish people for his remarkable preaching and baptism. He was sent by God for a special purpose: to guide humanity and ask them to come to the path of success by getting forgiveness for their sins to purify their souls. He guided people regarding the message of God regarding final judgment. He attracted people toward baptism, so he called by the name of John the Baptist. He was sent by God to clear His path. This research paper is about the life, the purpose of his life as a prophet, and the death of John the Baptist. The biography of John will be discussed in this paper. The mission of John and what he was sent for will be elaborated on in detail. The concept of incarnation and the relation of John the Baptist with Elijah will be reviewed by the Old Testament.

Biography Of John The Baptist

“John the Baptist” is considered as the forerunner and predecessor of Jesus Christ. He was a very famous Jewish preacher. He preached to the people and gave the messages of God and His final judgment. He guided the people to get forgiveness from God and those who were guilty; he baptized them to get them ready for God’s acceptance. The people who apologized for their wrongdoings made them self-prepared and pure by baptizing them for the God to come^[1]. He arose as the prophet in the lower valley of the Jordan River. He is well-regarded and respected in the Christian church as he is reflected as the precursor of Jesus Christ^[2].

The main sources of information about John the Baptist, his work, and his life are the four Gospels, which include Luke, John, Matthew, and Mark^[3]. The Antiquities of the Jews by the Jewish historian Josephus has some valuable information about John the Baptist. The ancient Greek book Acts of Apostles also has some information about John. Acts of Apostle is the preceded version of the Gospel of John.

John the Baptist had a miraculous birth; his parents were descendants of the priest Aaron’s family. They were named as Zachariah and Elizabeth. It was a very old couple, and Elizabeth could not have a child as she was considered barren. Zachariah was the priest in the temple of Jerusalem. One day, Zachariah was in the temple where he saw an angel named Gabriel, who told him that he would have a baby. Elizabeth would give birth to a boy who would be named John. God had sent him for a special purpose and task so he would be raised apart from his family to complete that special task he was sent for. After some time, Elizabeth gave birth to John in a very old age near Jerusalem^[4].

At the age of thirty, he started preaching to the people on the banks of the Jordan River valley. He told the people about God's final judgment and asked people to get forgiveness for their sins. He attracted them towards baptism and self-atonement. According to the Bible, the Prophet Jesus also attained baptism from John. After the baptism of Jesus, John's ministry period ended, and the Jesus ministry period started after him. John continued to preach in the Jordan Valley ^[5].

After six months of his ministry period, Herod Antipas imprisoned John due to the fear and fright of his immense power and rising popularity and the opposition he made to his marriage to the wife of his half-brother. He killed John on a girl's wish named Salome.

The Mission Of "John The Baptist."

John the Baptist started the early Christian preaching. The mission of John the Baptist was just to make the people aware of and ready for the Final Day of Judgment when the Lord is coming. He made the people aware of getting baptized, hence getting the name of John the Baptist, to repent for the sins they have done in their lives and to ask for forgiveness for the wrongdoings they have done. His preaching told everyone that the Judgment of God on the world was forthcoming, before that He comes they should confess their sins and get purified if they want to avoid punishments of those sins and avoid doing any misconducts. He educated people about living a life free of sins. His mission was for all the stations and ranks of Jewish society. He encouraged the people to get forgiveness and produce suitable fruits of atonement. John was sent as the predecessor of Jesus Christ^[6]. He baptized Jesus Christ, and he was the first one who recognized Jesus and pronounced him as the Messiah of the people to get guidance from him and follow him. Christians supposed that 'Elijah,' another famous prophet of his time, would come before Jesus Christ rather than John the Baptist. However, there was a need for the precursor of the Messiah, such as John the Baptist.

John and Jesus both had the same mission. Their preaching was for the people who came to them voluntarily. They were sent just to lead and guide the people who want to get guidance on free will. Their mission was not to lead the people to get to heaven; rather, their mission was to lead the people towards having righteous activities, thinking, and a pure soul. John's mission was to make people aware of performing religious activities not just by their mere actions but to align those religious matters and beliefs with the deeds, thoughts, and words they do in their routine lives. The purpose of John's preaching can perfectly be depicted by the Sanskrit Prayer comprised of three main points, i.e., a) Guidance of the people from an unreal, meaningless life to a real, meaningful life. b) Guidance of the people to bring the light from the darkness of sins c) Guidance of people from death to life and immortality. His mission was to restrain people from their sins, free themselves of their self-egos, and lead them towards the path of true self-consciousness ^[7].

Old Testament References To John The Baptist

There are many quotes and verses that point out that John the Baptist was sent to clear the way of the Lord. There are many verses quoted in the four Gospels that use references to quotes from Isaiah and Malachi about the presence of John the Baptist as a predecessor of Christ. There are many sources that reflect that John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ, and John's ministry period ends with the start of the ministry period of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah

From Isaiah 40:3, it is evident that before God, someone was sent to make his way and clear the path for the Lord. John the Baptist was the one who guided people towards the righteous path and good deeds to clear the path for God and make arrangements for Him. People were drowned in sinful life before Jesus Christ, and they were living a negligent life, so God sent the messenger before coming Himself to make the people baptized. That messenger was John the Baptist.

Malachi

From Malachi 3:1, there is an evident illustration of a person who will come before God to make his way clear and open and make the people ready for God. In Malachi 3:1, it is narrated that God is going to send a messenger, i.e., John the Baptist, and after that, the God everyone was waiting for will come.

The Gospel Accounts Of John The Baptist

In the Gospel Matthew 3:3, there is a reference from Isaiah 40:3 about the role of the messenger sent before God, saying that he would have to clear the path of God. There, the verse is linked with John the Baptist, as Jesus Christ came just after John's ministry[8].

In the Gospel, Mark 1:1-3, a reference from Isaiah, the prophet book, was used to refer to John the Baptist. It stated that God said He would send a messenger before coming Himself. He will prepare the path, clear the way for the Lord, and make the people ready for the Lord to come.

In Gospel Matthew 11:10, a reference from Isaiah is used to say that the Lord is coming for the people and that before that, He will send his messenger to guide the people and make His way clear for Him. Make the people spiritually clear and sin-free.

In the Gospel of John 1:23, John himself said that he was the one who was sent by God to make the path for God clear and straight. He was sent to complete this special task as a Prophet for the Jewish people.

Was John The Baptist The Second Coming Of The Old Testament Prophet Elijah?

John the Baptist could not be the reincarnated second coming of the Old Testament Prophet Elijah. From what we learn from the Old Testament, it is not possible for a person to reincarnate in any other person. There are many verses that support the concept that after death, there comes a final day of judgment, which will govern the decision of whether to be heaven-bound or not. According to the Catholic church of Catechism, Death is the end of the person's earthly life, and the time comes whether to accept or reject the virtuous grace in Christ. After death, the remunerations of the deeds are given as a form of entering the eternal blessings of heaven or either by eternal condemnation of punishment in hell. Hebrews 9:27 narrates the same concept that after death, there comes a judgment day for every person. The concept of reincarnation rejects all these above-stated verses and suggests a new concept of an ongoing cycle of life and death, again reincarnation and death, and the cycle goes on like that[9]. Even though Elijah was not dead, according to the Old Testament, the theological possibility will be something else, not the concept of reincarnation.

The Death Of John The Baptist

After the end of 'John the Baptist's ministry period, he was imprisoned by Herod Antipas (a Herodian ruler) for six months because Herod married Herodias. Herodias was also Philip's wife, who was the brother of Herod Antipas, but John opposed him and named it a sinful act. He became an enemy of John and wanted to kill him, but they were afraid of a large number of people who believed that John was their prophet. Due to the preaching John did as a priest, there were many followers of him who supported John, and it made Herod Antipas not kill John. Rather, he restrained him in captivity on the Dead Sea. One day, Herodias daughter Salome danced in front of a public gathering, which impressed Herod Antipas. He made a public oath to give the girl anything she wished to have as a reward for the dance performance and impressing him. She asked her mother what she should get from Herod Antipas. Her mother instantly asked her to get the head of John the Baptist as John opposed the idea of her marriage with Herod Antipas. Salome did what her mother asked for, and as Herod Antipas was bound by the public oath, he beheaded John and gave his head on a platter to the girl. In this way, Herod Antipas got an excuse for the public to kill John without the fear of John's followers. He murdered John by making the public oath as an excuse for his assassination^[10].

Conclusions

The research paper is on John the Baptist, who was sent by God as the Prophet of the Jewish people. He was the son of Jewish priest Zachariah and Elizabeth, who was the cousin of Saint Mary. His mission was to make the people pure and repent of their sins by asking for forgiveness and confessing the sins they had done throughout their lives. He preached about the final day of judgment

and prepared the Jewish people for the arrival of God. He was the one who performed the baptism of sinful people, so he started to get recognized as John the Baptist. He was the one who recognized Jesus as the Messiah and baptized him. His ministry period ended right before the start of Jesus Christ's ministry period^[11]. The sources of information about John the Baptist are the four Gospels (Mark, Matthew, John, and Luke). There are many references quoted in these Books as well as in the old testaments, i.e., the Bible, Isaiah and Malachi, about John the Baptist and his purpose of sending by God. John the Baptist was sent by God with a mission to clear His path and make His way clear to Him. After six months of ending the period of his ministry, he was kept in prison by the Herodian leader, Herod Antipas. John opposed the marriage of Herod Antipas, and he became his enemy. He beheaded John after some time.

End Notes

1. Bulgakov, Sergei. *The Friend of the Bridegroom: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Forerunner*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.
2. Casey, Maurice. *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.
3. Chris Keith, Larry Hurtado, and Larry W. Hurtado, *Jesus among Friends and Enemies: A Historical and Literary Introduction to Jesus in the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.
4. Darrell L. Bock, Benjamin I. Simpson, Darrell L Bock, and Benjamin I. Simpson. *Jesus the God-Man: The Unity and Diversity of the Gospel Portrayals*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.
5. Edwards, Mark. *Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries Ser: John Through the Centuries*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2004.
6. Fuller, J. Bruce. "Saint John the Baptist." *The Southern Review*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2017, p. 607. Academic OneFile,

http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A511455178/AONE?u=vic_liberty&sid=AONE&xid=8142fec4. Accessed 11 Feb. 2018.

1. Gibson, Shimon. *The Cave of John the Baptist: The Stunning Archaeological Discovery That Has Redefined Christian History*. New York, NY: Doubleday Publishing, 2004.
2. Hartman, Lars. *Into the Name of the Lord Jesus: Baptism in the Early Church*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark Publishing, 1997.
3. Lea, Thomas D. and David Alan Black. *The New Testament, Its Background and Message*. Nashville, TN: B and H Academic, 2003.
4. Letham, Robert. *The Message of the Person of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.
5. Meyer, F. B. *John the Baptist*. London, UK: Morgan and Scott Publishers, 2008.
6. Meyer, F. B. *John the Baptist*. London, UK: Morgan and Scott Publishers, 2008. ↑
7. Hartman, Lars. *Into the Name of the Lord Jesus: Baptism in the Early Church*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark Publishing, 1997. ↑

8. Darrell L. Bock, Benjamin I. Simpson, Darrell L Bock, and Benjamin I. Simpson. Jesus the God-Man: The Unity and Diversity of the Gospel Portrayals. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. ↑
9. Bulgakov, Sergei. The Friend of the Bridegroom: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Forerunner. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003. ↑
10. Edwards, Mark. Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries Ser: John Through the Centuries. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2004. ↑
11. Casey, Maurice. Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010. ↑
12. Gibson, Shimon. The Cave of John the Baptist: The Stunning Archaeological Discovery That Has Redefined Christian History. New York, NY: Doubleday Publishing, 2004 ↑
13. Chris Keith, Larry Hurtado, and Larry W. Hurtado, Jesus among Friends and Enemies: A Historical and Literary Introduction to Jesus in the Gospels. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. ↑
14. Lea, Thomas D. and David Alan Black. The New Testament, Its Background and Message. Nashville, TN: B and H Academic, 2003. ↑
15. Fuller, J. Bruce. "Saint John the Baptist." The Southern Review, vol. 53, no. 4, 2017, p. 607. Academic OneFile ↑
16. Letham, Robert. The Message of the Person of Christ. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. ↑