

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Why is he so prominent?

Outline

1. Who was John the Baptist
2. Problems with the Forerunner
3. How Luke “deals” with that
4. The Annunciations
5. Compare and contrast
6. The Virginal Conception

1. Who was JB?

1. JB was a 1st cent. Jewish prophet, proclaiming an eschatological message with some apocalyptic traits.
2. His message was imminent judgement and the way to avoid that was by repentance, illustrated by his baptism.
3. There is an implied critique of the adequacy of the Temple worship.
4. The differences between JB and Qumran are greater than the similarities.
5. He anticipated “the coming one”, but it is difficult to be more precise than that - an angel? the messiah? a heavenly figure? God himself?
6. He had a big influence in his day - as the need to execute him illustrates. Still, any idea of a revolt is due to Herod’s paranoia rather than to anything JB actually said.
7. The relationship between Jesus and John is hotly disputed - e.g. did Jesus follow his “mentor’s” example and baptise?

2. Problems with JB

Best example is the Baptism in all four Gospels

1. Mark
2. Matthew
3. Luke
4. John

Mark 1:9-11 Then Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn and two angels appeared to him. And a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Matthew 3:13-17 Then Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn and two angels appeared to him. And a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3:21-22 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." John 1:9-13 The next day John the Baptist stood with two of his disciples and Jesus also came to the baptism. And John would not let him, saying, "I am unworthy to baptize you." And Jesus answered him, saying, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him to be baptized. And as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn and two angels appeared to him. And a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

2. Problems with JB

Acts 1:5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.”

Acts 10:37 That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced:

Acts 11:16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

Acts 13:24 before his coming John had already proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his work, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet.’

Acts 18:25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Acts 19:3 Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.”

3. How Luke deals with JB

Luke 7:18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” 20 When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’” 21 Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. 22 And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. 23 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

7:24 When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. 26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

28 I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” 29 (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John’s baptism. 30 But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God’s purpose for themselves.)

3. How Luke deals with JB

Luke 9:7 Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, 8 by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. 9 Herod said, “John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he tried to see him.

Luke 20:1 One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and telling the good news, the chief priests and the scribes came with the elders 2 and said to him, “Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?” 3 He answered them, “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: 4 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” 5 They discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ 6 But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” 7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 Then Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

4. The Annunciations

1. God or an angel appears (Gen 16:7; 17:1; Judg 13:3)
 2. The immediate reaction (Gen 17:3)
 3. The name of the person (Gen 16:8; 17:5)
 4. Reassurance (Gen 17:4ff.)
 5. Announcement of the birth (Gen 16:11; 17:16, 19; Judg 13:3;)
 6. The child's name (Gen 16:11; 17:19)
 7. Future destiny (Gen 16:12, 17:19, 21; Judg 13:5)
 8. An objection (Gen 15:8; Judg 6:15)
 9. A sign (Gen 17:21b; cf. Gen 15:9, 17; Judg 6:17ff.)
- Task: examine the Annunciations

5. Compare and Contrast

* Focus: Christ

* Focus: Continuity

Luke 1:17 With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Luke 1:32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Luke 1:18 Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.”

Luke 1:34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

Luke 1:15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:35 The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

6. The Virginal Conception

Classical Background

1. Human father, human mother (Solomon)
2. No father, no mother (God, Melchizedek)
3. Divine father, divine mother (Horus, son of Isis and Isiris)
4. Divine mother, human father (Persephone, daughter of Demeter and a human)
5. Divine father, human mother (Dionysius, son of Zeus and Semele; Asclepius, son of Apollo and the human Coronis)

6. The Virginal Conception

Biblical Background

1. Virginitv was essential before marriage but not desirable as a life-long state
2. Virgin means primarily a young woman, living under her father's roof
3. It can be used to refer to Israel / Zion
4. [Exod 22:16](#) When a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married, and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. [17](#) But if her father refuses to give her to him, he shall pay an amount equal to the bride-price for virgins.
5. [Deut 22:28](#) If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are caught in the act, [29](#) the man who lay with her shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman's father, and she shall become his wife. Because he violated her he shall not be permitted to divorce her as long as he lives.

6. The Virginal Conception

In Luke's Gospel

1. Exaltation Christology: the resurrection grounds Jesus' present heavenly reign
2. The virginal conception grounds his unique earthly life
3. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, (Phil 2:8–9)
4. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1–6)