

Why Did John Die?

John the Baptist plays a very important role in the first century. It was he who prepared the people for the coming of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3-6; Luke 3:2-6). He stands out for the work he did. In fact, he was prophesied as coming “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:11-12; Luke 1:16-17). Yet, after a time of preaching and preparing the people for the coming Messiah and His kingdom, we see him die at the request of a wicked woman (Mark 6:22-28). Why did John die at her request? Let me suggest to you some reasons why he died.

John died because he would not change God’s message when people got mad. His message of preparing for the coming kingdom included crying out for repentance (Luke 3:7-14) and warning Herod it was not lawful for him to be married to his brother’s wife (Matthew 14:3-4; Mark 6:18). Since he would not relent or change the message, Herod had him put in prison and later killed. John was not the first nor the last to suffer such treatment for standing strong in the faith (Acts 12:2; Hebrews 11:36-39; Revelation 2:13). Yet, he stands out as a great example of faith and courage; and his godly example lives on to this day.

John died because a wicked woman saw no other way to silence him (Mark 6:17-28). After Herodias’ daughter danced for Herod, he promised her: “Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.” She consulted her mother, and Herodias demanded John’s head. It is evident that John’s faithfulness to God and His message was not wavering despite cruel treatment; so she decided to silence him the only way she could. Sadly, there are people today who, like Herodias, blame the messenger when they do not like the message! As we know, from putting John to death, to the crucifixion of Christ, to the persecution of Christians, such treatment did not silence the gospel message, but spread it farther (Acts 8:4)!

John died because a wicked man made a foolish vow (Mark 6:23). We do not know if John was told why he was executed. It was simply carried out “immediately” after the request was made. Herod was “sorry” for what he had vowed to Herodias’ daughter, but not sorry enough to try to change her mind or offer something else. John died that day because of a man’s unruly tongue (James 3:2-12)!

Be thankful for John and people like him who are faithful to God to the point of death (Revelation 2:10). John’s righteous life serves as a great example to this day. Truly, his death was not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 Timothy 5:24-25; Revelation 14:13). John teaches us how to conduct ourselves in this life. When persecutions and imprisonments come, be encouraged and inspired by John!

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