

John the Baptist: A Biblical and Historical Profile

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Read or watch first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family study, an adult can select suitable portions and accept spoken answers.

Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

The teaching discusses imprisonment and John's execution. A parent or facilitator should preview the full teaching before using it with younger learners.

[Open the full teaching](#)

Teaching summary

John the Baptist prepared Israel for the coming of the Messiah. Luke introduces his parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, as members of a faithful priestly family. His birth and calling point toward YHWH's promise of salvation and forgiveness.

John called people to repent and bear the fruit of repentance. He taught generosity, honest tax collection, and freedom from extortion. His message reached people whom others despised, and his baptism expressed a commitment to turn from sin and follow God.

John directed attention to Yeshua, identifying him as the Lamb of God. His statement that Yeshua must increase while he decreased gives us an example of humility. John's task was to prepare people for the Messiah, rather than compete with him.

The ruler who imprisoned John was Herod Antipas, not Herod the Great of Matthew 2. John challenged Antipas's marriage to his brother's wife. The teaching distinguishes the Gospel's account of this conflict from Josephus's report that Herod feared John's influence.

From prison John sent disciples to ask whether Yeshua was the expected one. Yeshua pointed them to his works and the good news being preached. The teaching understands John's question as a struggle with unmet expectations and encourages us to remain faithful through suffering.

John's life is compared with Elijah's, and his ministry prepares the way described in Isaiah 40. His death does not cancel the value of his witness. We can learn from his call to repentance, his humility, and his dependence on God when faith is tested.

Summary points

- John's parents were Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- John was set apart for service before his birth.
- The teaching suggests a Nazirite connection; Luke does not explicitly call John a Nazirite.
- John called for practical fruit that matched repentance.
- His instructions addressed generosity, honesty, and the misuse of power.
- John baptized in the Jordan and pointed people to Yeshua.
- John identified Yeshua as the Lamb of God.
- Herod Antipas imprisoned John after John criticized his marriage.

- Yeshua answered John's prison question by pointing to what people could hear and see.
- John's humility and faithfulness help us direct attention to Yeshua.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. John's father was named _____.
2. John's mother was named _____.
3. John called the people to bear fruit in keeping with _____.
4. John baptized people in the _____ River.
5. John identified Yeshua as the _____ of God.
6. John said Yeshua must increase, but he must _____.

Challenging

1. John told those with two tunics to _____ with someone who had none.
2. Tax collectors were told to collect no more than they were _____ to collect.
3. Soldiers were told to be content with their _____.
4. The Herod who imprisoned John was Herod _____.
5. John's life and ministry are compared with the prophet _____.
6. Yeshua told John's messengers to report what they heard and _____.

Group discussion

Discuss respectfully and support answers from the passages. Use these lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. How do John's instructions in Luke 3 turn repentance into a practical response?

2. What does John's ministry among tax collectors and soldiers teach us about whom to invite to repentance?

3. How does the teaching explain John's baptism, and what does it avoid reducing repentance to?

4. Why is it important to identify Herod Antipas correctly in John's story?

5. How did Yeshua respond to John's question from prison, and how might that help us with difficult questions?

6. What could it look like for us to practice John's humility today?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching and the passages. Accept equivalent wording that expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. Zechariah

Luke 1:5, 13

2. Elizabeth

Luke 1:5, 13

3. repentance

Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8-14

4. Jordan

Mark 1:5

5. Lamb

John 1:29

6. decrease

John 3:30

Challenging

1. share

Luke 3:11

2. authorized

Luke 3:12-13

3. wages

Luke 3:14

4. Antipas

Teaching section John's Ministry; Mark 6:17-18

5. Elijah

Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 11:13-14

6. saw

Matthew 11:2-6

Facilitator notes

These responses give direction for discussion. They are not a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passages and consider a faithful practical response.

1. He gives concrete examples: share necessities, collect only authorized taxes, refuse extortion and false accusations, and be content with wages. We should identify practical fruit without treating those works as purchasing forgiveness.

Luke 3:8-14

2. People's reputation or work did not make them unreachable. John called them to genuine change and specific honesty. We can welcome people while taking repentance seriously.

Luke 3:10-14; teaching section John's Ministry

3. It describes baptism as a sign of turning from sin and commitment to God. A ritual by itself does not replace the fruit of repentance. Distinguish John's historical ministry from a complete explanation of Christian baptism.

Matthew 3:6-8; teaching section John's Ministry

4. Antipas is the ruler involved in John's imprisonment and death. Herod the Great belongs to the earlier events surrounding Yeshua's birth. Keeping them distinct prevents us from combining two different biographies.

Mark 6:17-29; Matthew 2; teaching section John's Ministry

5. He directed John to the healings, restored lives, and good news that marked his ministry. The teaching sees John's question as a test of faith; we can bring questions honestly and examine Yeshua's words and works.

Matthew 11:2-6; John 16:33

6. Give Yeshua the central place, serve without needing credit, and help others follow him. John's influence was used to prepare people for the Messiah rather than protect his own status.

John 3:27-30; teaching section Lessons From John's Life

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages. What will we do, and when will we revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.