

John the Baptist Beheaded

by Rich Fullmer

1. All four Gospels talk of the preaching of John the Baptist, but Luke's account is the fullest.
2. John knew that he was the Elijah of his day. Perhaps it was intentional that he copied the habits and dress of Elijah.
3. John's call came when he was 30 years old, and his preaching electrified the nation. It was immediately popular and successful. Even Herod liked to listen to him.
4. Josephus said that John had great influence over the people, who seemed ready to do anything he might tell them.
5. At the height of his popularity, John the Baptist accomplished his mission when he baptized Jesus and proclaimed Him to be the Messiah. His work was done when he roused the nation and then presented the Son of God.¹
6. Herod Antipas ruled about ¼ of a Roman province called Galilee from 4 B.C. – 39 A.D. It is thought he imprisoned John at his fortress Machaerus, which is at the east end of the Dead Sea. Or it could have been at Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
7. The death of John the Baptist was recorded in three of the four gospels (Matt, Mark, and Luke).
8. Herod's father was Herod the Great who tried to kill Jesus when he was a baby. Herod's mother was a Samaritan.
9. Matthew records that when Jesus heard of John's execution, he departed to a desert place. Later, when Jesus was brought before Herod, he would not talk to him.
10. Herod's wife was Herodias. Her first married was to her uncle Philip (her father's brother). They had a daughters whose name was Salome. She danced for Herod and then asked for John the Baptist's head on a charger or platter.
11. Tradition says Herod beheaded John the Baptist on August 29, A.D. 28. It was about a year after he baptized Jesus, and a 1½ years after starting his preaching ministry.
12. History shows that after John's death, the Herodian family never escaped bloodshed and violence.

From the Internet:

1. 173,000 internet links to John the Baptist.
2. You can purchase John the Baptist athletic apparel.
3. Sometimes people give John the Baptist gold medallions for baptismal gifts.
4. You can purchase John the Baptist cartoons.

¹ Halley's Bible Handbook pages 653-656