**Why Did John Die?**

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 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 (Isa. 40:3-6; Lk. 3:2-6). He stands out in the Bible for the work he did. In fact, he was prophesied as coming “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Mal. 4:5-6; Lk. 1:16-17; Matt. 17:11-12). 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 (Mk. 6:22-28). Why did John die? 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 people for the Lord’s coming kingdom included crying out for the people’s repentance (Lk. 3:7-14) and warning Herod it was not lawful for him to be married to his brother’s wife (Matt. 14:3-4; Mk. 6:18). Because he would not relent nor 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 (Heb. 11:36-39; Acts 12:2; Rev. 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 (Mk. 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 did not waver despite cruel treatment; so Herodias 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 the 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 (Mk. 6:23). We don’t know if John was told why he was being executed. We just know that it was carried out “immediately” after the request was made. Herod was “sorry” for what he had vowed, but not sorry enough to try to change Herodias’ or her daughter’s mind. He was not “sorry” enough to try and offer something else. John died that day because of a man’s foolish vow! (Jas. 3:2-12)

 Let us be thankful for John and people like him who are faithful to God to the point of death (Rev. 2:10). John’s righteous life and death was not in vain (I Cor. 15:58). He teaches us how to conduct ourselves and how to be faithful to God.

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