

# The Greatness of John the Baptist

Matt. 11:11

## Introduction:

- A. Our Lord's great tribute to John the Baptist.
- B. John was the "Baptist" by occupation not affiliation.
  - 1. Like "Simon the tanner" or "Alexander the coppersmith"
  - 2. Simply means "the baptizer" — distinguishes him for other Johns.
- C. John was not great for reasons that some may think.
  - 1. Not because he was great miracle worker — do none (John 10:41)
  - 2. Not because he founded the church — did not, not even member

Note: He died before church established (Matt. 14 w/ Mt. 16:18).
- D. However, there are factors that did contribute to his greatest, from which we can learn.

## Discussion:

### I. His Great Parents.

- A. Provided him with greatest potential for spiritual greatness.
  - 1. "They were *both* righteous before God" (Lk. 1:5, 6)
  - 2. As righteous Jews:
    - a. They would have taught him as law commanded (Deut. 11:18-21).
    - b. Would have disciplined him as needed (Prov. 23:13).
- B. Did not guarantee his spiritual success.
  - 1. Godly parents had wayward children (Eli and Samuel).
  - 2. Parents can greatly increase or decrease the odds.

### II. His Great Principles.

- A. Would not be governed by expediency.
  - 1. To gain popularity (Matt. 3:7).
  - 2. To gain security (Matt. 14:1-12)
- B. Would not be governed by pride or selfish ambition.
  - 1. Would not allow himself be jealous of Jesus' success (John 3:28-4:1)
  - 2. Would baptize Jesus only after prevailed upon (Mt. 3:14, 15)
- C. Would not be deterred from duty.
  - 1. Once Jesus ordered, "permit to be so now", he did it
  - 2. Once convinced the course was right, nothing could stop him.

### III. His Great Preaching.

- A. Authorized by heaven (Luke 3:3; 20:4)
- B. Turned people from sin to God.
  - 1. Repentance and remission of sins (Luke 3:3)
  - 2. Condemned unlawful practices rather than justify them (Matt. 14:1-12).
- C. Preparatory rather than permanent (cf. Acts 19:1-5)
  - 1. Preaching and baptizing under Great Commission is unto end of world (Matt. 28:18-20)
  - 2. Preaching of the great principles on morality and marriage until end (cf. Matt 19:1-9).

## Conclusion:

- A. As great as John was, least in kingdom is greater.
- B. Are you in the kingdom — the church?