

## **John the Baptist**

**Matthew 3:1-2- In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** (KJV)

Holy St. John the Baptist merits serious thought throughout our Christian lives. St. John the Baptist had the distinct honor to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ. St. John was chosen from among all men of all centuries to baptize Jesus. The singular honor given to St. John reflects Jesus' highest regard of John. If Jesus was so willing to honor St. John, each believer does well to honor St. John.

**Matthew 11:12- And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.** (KJV)

Believers benefit from thinking seriously about St. John's call for repentance. St. John was not alone advocating repentance, as Jesus also called for repentance. The need for repentance is firmly established by these highest authorities. Only the unwise fail to consider the value of repentance so highly advocated. Firm initiative including a change of heart and mind are needed for repentance.

**Mark 6:25- And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.** (KJV)

St. John the Baptist's commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ put his life in peril. St. John was beheaded but his voice and influence were not silenced or eradicated. St. John's presence is very much alive and influential in God's Holy Church. God's Holy Church celebrates St. John the Baptist throughout the liturgical year. St. John's image is enshrined on the iconostasis of every Orthodox Church.

**Luke 7:28- For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.** (KJV)

St. John's birth is liturgically celebrated in God's Holy Church each year. Parish churches are named in honor of and dedicated to St. John the Baptist. Parents lovingly name their sons and daughters after and in honor of St. John. Icons are written and prayerfully venerated in honor of St. John the Baptist. Serious believers are inspired by St. John and heed the need for repentance.

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Beheading of St. John the Baptist. August 29/September 11, 2024.

Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic