

Medal of Honor [Lesson 1 of 2]



Scripture:

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.

Introduction:

Written 400 years prior to fulfillment:

Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

Written 700 years prior to fulfillment:

Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Fulfilled:

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

Endorsed by Jesus Himself:

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.

Born to Zacharius and Elisabeth, John's conception was pre-announced by Gabriel. Elisabeth and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were cousins. The Old Testament prophets had foretold John's mission as the forerunner and announcer of the Messiah's presence on earth. He was compared to Elijah and fulfilled his mission as planned by God Himself.

Noteworthy and unusual facts about John the Baptist:

- Mission assignment announced before conception by Gabriel
- Was an ODD DUCK personality
 - Dressed like a 1960s Hippie
 - Ate bugs
 - A Loner when not doing public ministry; a recluse.
- Taught Repentance which looked nothing like the religious community of his day
- Had disciples; two left him to follow Jesus; one of those was named Andrew, Simon Peter's brother
- Announced Jesus arrival into ministry; then baptized the Son of God
- Was beheaded by Herod for standing by the Truth of God's Word concerning lifestyle choices. Died a martyr.
- Jesus awards him the highest honor possible in the eyes of mankind by his personal endorsement: *....No one Greater....*

As a side note:

The Medal of Honor was established during the Civil War.

There have been 3000+ recipients since its beginning; 1500 of those were issued in the Civil War. Therefore, the average per year since that time has been 10 per year.

This is the highest military award available. It is presented by the President of the United States on behalf of the U.S. Congress for "personal acts of valor..." and "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life....above and beyond the call of duty."

Often it is awarded posthumously to the next of kin.

THE WILL OF GOD WILL NOT ALWAYS COME PACKAGED AS YOU EXPECT.

CHOSEN FEW

The Medal of Honor is for a very select chosen few. It is reserved for exceptional valor and many of those that receive it do so after their own ultimate sacrifice, that is, of life itself.

John the Baptist had no say in the task and purpose of his mission. Someone had to do it; and he was picked out especially for this duty long before his conception; in fact, 100s of years before.

JOHN THE BAPTIST DID NOT CHOOSE HIS OWN MISSION; NEITHER DID HE RUN FROM IT.

His mission was stated in Isaiah and in Malachi. His father, Zacharius was told straight out by the Angel Gabriel:

Luke 1:76-77 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

Zacharius and Elisabeth must have prepared John for this mission while growing up because the Bible says:

Luke 1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

Luke 1:80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel

The mission was clear to his parents. This mission had to also be clear to John. He was chosen, called out, for a particular time in history to do a particular job.

WE, ALSO, ARE CHOSEN, CALLED OUT, FOR A PARTICULAR TIME IN HISTORY TO DO A PARTICULAR TASK.

BUT JUST LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST, WE MAKE A CONSCIOUS CHOICE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT SALVATION; THEN ACCEPT/FULFILL OUR PURPOSE OR REJECT GOD'S CALLING AND MISS OUR PURPOSE.

John was chosen to announce the Messiah; to clear the way for people to understand that prophecy was being fulfilled.

He did just that. He had that mountain top experience of baptizing Jesus, seeing the heavens actually OPEN UP and a dove come out of the clouds and land on Jesus; then heard audibly the voice of God say:

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

However, John the Baptist did not choose to die in martyrdom. Who would? But nonetheless, this was his earthly end.

A Medal of Honor recipient does not start out to earn the Medal of Honor. The cost is great and the cost is uncertain, but he does not run nor shirk from his duty either.

LESSON 2 MEDAL OF HONOR continues next page.

Trail Markers to Discuss:

Take each highlighted sentence and use as a discussion point asking some of these questions:

- Can you think of where this can apply to you today? Right now at this point in your life?

Activity:

Refer to: War Heroes 2-Teen Workbook

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Scripture:

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MADE THE CHOICE: Enlisted

The old *Mission Impossible* television series and the movie utilized this phrase: "If you choose to accept your mission....."

John the Baptist did have a choice. He had free will just like you and I have free will. He had a choice to accept Christ or not; to accept his mission or not; to accept his calling or not. He could enlist or not enlist.

BUT ONCE ENLISTED THERE ARE REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION AND TRAINING INVOLVED IN ORDER TO GO BEYOND ENLISTMENT AND TO BE IN THE BATTLE; JUST LIKE WE HAVE THE SAME OBLIGATIONS IF WE ACCEPT OUR PERSONAL MISSION.

Just as a soldier must undergo basic training and special skills training for his particular military position, so did John the Baptist for his and so must you and I for our assignments.

John the Baptist:

- To get his orders from Headquarters, he had to be Holy Spirit filled.
- To be set apart and used in a mighty way, he had to be different from the World.
- He was misunderstood by the masses because his message was not the same as their message.
- Spent 30 years in seclusion before his mountain top experience of baptizing Jesus
- Spent less than 2 years preaching publicly the repentance message, baptizing, and making disciples
- Accomplished his mission to "make straight the way of the Lord."
- Spent about 18 months in prison for standing on the Word; paid the ultimate cost humanly possible: Died in the line of duty.

COMPLETED THE MISSION

Matthew 3:1-17 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

As a side note:

Matthew 3: 7-8

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized but had NO repentance.

As a side note:

Matthew 3: 11

“unto” repentance.... The word “unto” is from the Greek word “eis” which means: pointing towards, towards, or in our vernacular today “as a result of”. It is an “indefinite preposition of reference.

A changed mind/heart is always a prerequisite to baptism.

As a side note:

Matthew 3: 13

Jesus the perfect Lamb of God had no need to be “saved”; He is the Savior! His baptism was not about that at all; but rather an obedience to the Father. Baptism pictures his death, his burial, his resurrection.

John the Baptist was chosen to fulfill a mission. You are, too.

John 1:23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

John the Baptist chose to accept his mission.

Whether you accept yours or not accept yours is up to you.

John the Baptist completed his mission.

Paul the apostle speaking of himself as he neared the end of his life as a prisoner and was about to be beheaded said:

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

I WONDER WHAT WILL BE SAID OF US, OF ME AT THE END OF MY MISSION. I DO NOT REALLY CARE WHAT PEOPLE THINK. HOWEVER, I DO REALLY CARE WHAT JESUS THINKS. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

John knew what he believed. He knew he believed the truth. What do you believe?

LIFE ON THIS EARTH IS NOT ABOUT YOU AND ME. HOWEVER IF YOU THINK IT IS, THEN YOU WILL ALWAYS COMPROMISE TO TRY TO GET WHAT YOU WANT.

John’s mission was completed successfully. The Messiah was introduced as the scripture said He would be.

The Bible is clear that John the Baptist completed his mission successfully because he had the Holy Spirit of God guiding his way.

Once his primary mission was completed we see John the Baptist preaching and baptizing just a few more months before King Herod is offended; John is imprisoned; John is beheaded. Does not look like much of a victory to some people. He is a casualty of a spiritual warfare that rages on this planet until the end of the age, however.

But we can also see it as a promotion. He simply steps into the presence of God. His mission was completed already.

YOU ALSO HAVE THE ABILITY TO BE GUIDED BY THE VERY HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD; BUT THERE ARE STIPULATIONS.

Accepting salvation is only the beginning of service. There is no service until then. You can do good things, look like a profitable or successful person in the community, your school, and your church even, but there is no lasting service until you are born-again.

Without belonging to Jesus, without a personal relationship with Him, you are on your own. You can try for a while, you can be unique for a while, you can even play church and Christian-like for a while, but in the end you are powerless to keep up the act or do any "mission" for Jesus Christ. You are not in the army of God until saved/born-again.

Do you know Him? Do you want to have the power to Stand Up and Stand apart? *(Present salvation here.)*

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Activity:

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