



Wayne's Words

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Going Up By Stepping Down

God recruits all sorts of characters for his work. There are people from the outlaw bike scene, a former Mafia boss, ladies of the street and high-flying celebrities and sports champions – and 'not so ordinary' Joe and Mary Blogs like you and me. It has always been so. Both high ranking and 'low life' are among the OT heroes, including Ezekiel who lay on his side for over a year enacting the siege of Jerusalem in the sand for passersby.

John the Baptist fits such odd company. From his youth he was an isolate, making his home in the desert and surviving off bush tucker - locusts and wild honey. Dressed in camel's hair with a leather belt round his waist, he was a 'look-alike' for Elijah from earlier times.

The desert had always been the place of closeness to God, stripped of all the distracting luxuries of city life. John grew up without the corrosive effect of ease or peer group pressure and constant media manipulation. It was him and God and survival, and that's how God had intended it to be. He was a man with a mission.

John was to be the forerunner of the coming of the Lord, the voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.' (Is 40:3-4) He was the 'Elijah' who was to come before the great and dreadful 'Day of the Lord', called to bring an end to strife between the generations and turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to their fathers. (Malachi 4:5-6)

John was fearless in calling people to trade in their sinful attitudes and hard hearts and to prove they had done so through generosity to the poor and by dealing fairly and not exploiting others.

When Jesus ultimately arrived on the scene, John was the model of humility. He refused to take on the jealousy for his reputation that his followers were concerned about. He described himself as the attendant to the bridegroom (Jesus) saying, 'He must become greater. I must become less.' Jesus commended John, saying there had been no one greater up to that time.

Would that we had such devotion to Jesus that cared nothing for ease or what others think, and everything about promoting the honour of God's Son. Why not give it a go?

God bless you,
Wayne