



SoulShare

**May 9, 2020 9:00—10:30 am Zoom Discussion
John the Baptist**

Props, Scene: man at desk with telephone, laptop computer and sign "johnthebaptist.org"

The skit is probably best done as a monologue-one-sided-phone-conversation, Bob Newhart-Style. In that case, the parts for John are just pauses in Simeon's conversation, for about as much time as it would take to say John's words. Another alternative would be to have John's words be electronically muffled so that only the volume and inflection can be made out. Finally, John could actually speak, sounding as though speaking through a telephone.

S = Simeon

J = John

[ring]

S: Corporate Communications, this is Simeon.

J: This is John and I...

S: John?!!! Sir!! I'm impressed. Making your own calls!! But, of course, this is "accessibility," very up-to-date.

J: Who are you?

S: Simeon, sir...

J: Simeon?

S: No, sir, we haven't met yet.

J: What are you doing there?

S: Who hired me? Well, your people, your Board... excuse me... you call them your "disciples," don't you.

J: Why?

S: Why? Well, Sir, as you well know, you've gotten very big. I mean VERY BIG!!! And, they felt that at this time, the organization needed some one with expertise in dealing with, you know, the media, government agencies, image development, spin control...

J: I've never heard of you.

S: My background? They told me my CV was on your desk. I'm sorry, Sir, I thought you had been briefed...

J: Just tell me.

S: Rather than try to impress you with what I have done for other organizations, just give me a minute of your time to show you what I can do for you.

J: We don't need you.

S: I know you never needed this position before, but the times are changing...

J: I don't have all day.

S: OK, I'll be very brief. #1 Dress. The clothes, sir. You have developed a power base and infrastructure with the counter-culture image and it has worked well with blue collars and the 20 something Xers and so on...

J: My clothing?

S: Yes, I'm talking about the casual attire, the coveralls or what ever it is. It's fine as far as it goes, and artistic people can get a long way with it, but to reach people with real power and money, you need a different appeal.

J: I'm losing my patience.

S: Sure, I'll speed it up. #2 Diet. My nutrition consultants are concerned that you will have trouble standing up to the heavy schedule with your intake limited to, what did they say..."locusts and honey." Besides that, they tell me you fast...how many days?

J: That is none of your business.

S: Fine, I appreciate that those matters are between you and God, but you can understand that we, if I can presume

to include myself, that we of the organization have to take a careful look at the state of our primary resource. After all, sir, nobody could realistically take your place.

J: Can you speed it up?

S: Yes, I'm nearly done. #3 Discretion. This is the hard one. You see, we all respect your personal convictions and private morals and all that. I mean, it's actually dynamite material. But you see, there are some matters you don't seem to have considered... I am not denigrating your intellect. It's just that you may not have played this out completely in your mind.

J: Get to the point.

S: The point? Frankly, sir, we in the department feel you must definitely lighten up on the Royal Family. I know they are not real popular at the moment with the masses, so you do get some real mileage with them, but remember that Herod does have his wealthy cadre of boot-lickers...

J: He is an immoral man.

S: Well, precisely. I was talking about the sister-in-law/wife issue.

J: It is an abomination!

S: Come on, sir, can't you bend a little? Isn't this a borderline issue even for you? I mean this could have major -- I mean MAJOR -- consequences down the line and how can you continue your work unless you use a little common sense and political savvy?

J: [Yelling] You devious son of a viper!

S: [pulls phone away from head as if in pain] SIR! If I may be so bold, that sort of outburst is exactly the point I was trying to make. I mean, even I might be offended to be called a "slippery snake"...

J: You're fired!

S: Sir? Sir? SIR????!! [clicks the phone then sets it down] There will be trouble. [Clears the desk] And I could have prevented it. [walks off shaking his head]

Remember that these monologues are essentially historical fiction, based on the Scripture but filling in plausible subjective details, both emotional responses and motivations. Your first task is to decide if they are reasonable.

John the Baptist was what we today would call "counter-cultural." Might he have been advised to change his style?

Might John's lifestyle have been considered by some to be a "publicity stunt"?

Did Old Testament prophets also do unusual things to get people's attention? (Isaiah 1)

Naturally, John's message would be opposed by his enemies, but can people who may agree with our cause sometimes give bad advice?

Is there an easy way to determine the difference between discretion and cowardice?

Did John the Baptist ever have any doubt about what he was doing for God? (Luke 7:20)

Do we sometimes wonder if we are doing the right thing? Should we?

Does John's imprisonment and execution prove that he was out of the will of God?

Is "don't rock the boat" sometimes a reasonable strategy for accomplishing God's will?

Might there be honest disagreement between believers on how to accomplish a task?

Is breaking the law sometimes God's will?

What is the effect on unbelievers of seeing a Christian defying authority and taking the consequences?

Is that happening in today's world?

Have you faced challenges regarding your response to the culture?

Matthew 3, 11, 14, Mark 1, 6, Luke 1, 3, 7, 9, John 1, 3, 5