

John the Baptist

John the Baptist (late 1st century BC – 28–36 AD) was a [Jewish itinerant preacher](#) in the early 1st century AD. Other titles for John include *John the Forerunner* in [Eastern Christianity](#), *John the Immerser* in some [Baptist](#) traditions.

He is called a [prophet](#) by all the major faiths, and is honored as a [saint](#) in many [Christian traditions](#). According to the [New Testament](#), John anticipated a messianic figure greater than himself and the [Gospels](#) portray John as the precursor or forerunner of [Jesus](#) since John announces Jesus' coming and prepares the people for Jesus' ministry. Jesus himself identifies John as "Elijah who is to come" which some biblical scholars interpret to mean that Jesus believed that John was the [reincarnation](#) of the [Old Testament](#) prophet [Elijah](#) although John the Baptist in the [Gospel of John](#) explicitly denies being linked to Elijah (John 1:21). According to the New Testament, John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth were relatives.

According to the New Testament John was [sentenced to death](#) and subsequently [beheaded](#) by [Herod Antipas](#) sometime between 28 and 36 AD after John rebuked him for divorcing his wife, Phasaelis, and then unlawfully wedding [Herodias](#), the wife of his brother [Herod Philip I](#).

In Bulgaria, Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 and is known as *Bogoyavlenie* ("Manifestation of God"), *Кръщение Господне* (*Krashtenie Gospodne* or "Baptism of the Lord") or *Yordanovden* ("Day of Jordan", referring to [the river](#)). Epiphany in Macedonia is known as Vodici (Водици) and in the Republic of North Macedonia is celebrated on January 19, according to the Julian Calendar. In both countries on this day, a wooden cross is thrown by a priest into the sea, river or lake and young men race to retrieve it. As the date is in early January and the waters are close to freezing, this is considered an honorable act and it is said that good health will be bestowed upon the home of the swimmer who is the first to reach the cross.

In the town of [Kalofer](#), a traditional *horo* with drums and [bagpipes](#) is played in the icy waters of the [Tundzha](#) river before the throwing of the cross. These are very festive gatherings with lots of spectacles attending the sites. In Macedonia special food jelly from pork and beef meat and bones called "pacha" (пача) or "pivtii" (пивтии) is prepared the day before, but served on the day after Epiphany, together with warm *rakia* brandy.

Read more: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epiphany_\(holiday\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epiphany_(holiday))