



accept the Lord's teachings and plan of salvation. The people's acceptance of St John as a **godly man** prepared them for the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah. It was St John's **spiritual discipline** and teachings that made a pathway for the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke highly of St John; *Among those born of women none is greater than John, yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he* (Luke 7:28). What did this mean? The Lord Jesus Christ was explaining not only high praise of St John but that a new era of history had begun with His ministry and that St John remained still a part of the earlier era.

St John was imprisoned by Herod Antipas whose anger against St John derived from the saint accusing Herod of breaking Jewish law in marrying a half brother's wife, Heriodas. At a banquet Heriodas daughter danced for Herod and giving him such great pleasure that he made a promise to her without limits. She asked for St John's head upon a platter. Herod had the forerunner beheaded and his head placed upon a platter for his stepdaughter and a dance.

Following St John the Baptist's martyrdom it is believed he became a forerunner in the Hades. Hippolytus writes, *He also first preached to those in Hades, becoming a forerunner there when he was put to death by Herod. For He wanted there too, to reveal that the Savior would descend to ransom the souls of the saints from the hand of death.*

To further St John's honor, the Holy Book of Acts 1:21-22 tells us the vacancy in the apostolic college was filled by one who had been St John's followers.

St John, the lowly and humble whose desires were upon the Lord only, stood piously at the very beginning of the Holy Gospel story. St John stood compassionately for social justice and taught the poor and the rich from different walks of life, anyone who would hear the Word of God. St John only request was a beginner's mind. He taught spiritual discipline through his simple ascetic example of fasting, prayer, and obedience. Through the heart of St John truly a ***New Word was heard.*** ✚

How Would the Repaired Violin Sound?

British violinist Peter Cropper was invited to Finland for a special concert. As a personal favor, the Royal Academy of Music lent Peter their priceless 285-year-old Stradivarius.

The violin was known the world over for its incredible sound. At the concert, a nightmare happened. Going on stage, Peter tripped and fell. The violin broke into several pieces!

Peter flew home to England in a state of shock.

A master craftsperson, Charles Beare, spent endless hours repairing the violin. Then came the moment of truth. What would the violin sound like?



Those present couldn't believe their ears. The violin's sound was better than before.

The story of that violin is our story. Sin nearly destroyed us, but God, the master craftsperson, repaired us. Our sound is now more beautiful than it was before.