

JOHN THE BAPTIST AS REVOLUTIONARY PROPHET: AN EXPLORATION OF JOSEPHUS' LABEL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA AND NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined an assessment of Josephus' label of John the Baptizer as a revolutionary Prophet: lessons for Africa and Nigeria in particular. John the Baptist confronted social vices by preaching repentance to those who were guilty of the said offences. Josephus, however, was said to have labeled him as a revolutionary prophet. The paper aimed at assessing the labeling of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet by Josephus and drawing lessons for Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The study adopts the qualitative design and used historical method for data collection with secondary data as the main source of information, and the study used analytical and descriptive approach for analysis. The study revealed Josephus' contribution in unraveling and preservation of Jewish history while John the Baptist was a voice crying out in the wilderness for repentance. Also, the study examined the labeling of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet by Josephus. In addition, the study considered scholarly criticism of Josephus' label; the assessment of how John's teachings intersect with the happenings in Nigerian society. A comparison of other authors on Josephus' labeling of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet and whether Josephus actually labeled John

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the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet and lessons drawn for Africa and Nigeria. The study is significant to the general public in Africa, Nigeria, African leaders and Nigeria in particular, and researchers for further studies. The study recommended that; people of good standing like John the Baptist are required to speak out to confront evil. Religious leaders should rise up to the task of preaching undiluted word of God. The general public should adhere to genuine leaders who have good intentions of restoring the dignity of the Nigerian society among others.

Keywords: Revolutionary, John the Baptist, Prophet, Josephus, label

Introduction

In the annals of history, certain figures emerge not just as individuals but as symbols of profound social change and spiritual upheaval. Among these figures stands John the Baptist, a charismatic preacher whose life and message reverberate through the ages. Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, is said to label John as a “revolutionary prophet,” a moniker that encapsulates the essence of his mission and its impact on society. Josephus, writing in the first century CE, offers invaluable insights into the socio-political landscape of ancient Judea. In his writings, he portrays John not merely as a religious figure but as a catalyst for change, a voice crying out in the wilderness against the injustices of his time. By characterizing John as a “revolutionary prophet,” Josephus underscores the disruptive nature of his message and its challenge to the established order. Drawing parallels between the historical context of John the Baptist and the contemporary challenges facing Africa, particularly Nigeria, unveils pertinent lessons for societal transformation. **Courageous dissent against Injustice:** Like John, Africa’s prophets of change must boldly confront societal injustices, speaking truth to power despite the risks involved. Whether it is advocating for political reform, social equity, or economic justice, the courage to dissent can catalyze

transformative movements. **Rootedness in Cultural Context:** John's message resonated with the cultural and religious milieu of his time, tapping into the deep-seated aspirations and anxieties of his audience. Similarly, prophets in Africa must ground their message in the cultural context of their communities, addressing issues that are relevant and meaningful to their people. **Call for Repentance and Renewal:** Central to John's proclamation was the call to repentance and spiritual renewal. Likewise, Africa's prophets must challenge individuals and institutions to reflect on their actions, acknowledge wrongdoing, and embark on a path of collective renewal and reconciliation. **Commitment to Justice and Equity:** John's critique extended beyond individual morality to encompass systemic injustices perpetuated by the ruling elite. In Nigeria, prophets of change must advocate for policies and practices that promote justice, equality, and the common good, addressing root causes of poverty, corruption, and marginalization. As we reflect on Josephus' portrayal of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet as the topic claim, we recognize the enduring relevance of his message for Africa, particularly Nigeria. In an era marked by socio-political upheaval and economic disparity, the call to emulate John's courage, cultural relevance, and commitment to justice resonates profoundly, offering a blueprint for transformative leadership and societal renewal.

Conceptualization of the Term Revolutionary

The term "revolutionary" connotes a significant departure from established norms or systems, often involving radical change and upheaval. As noted by historian Eric Hobsbawm, revolutions are "rapid, fundamental, and violent transformations in the system of government and social structure" (Hobsbawm 45). They represent a rupture with the past and a reconfiguration of power dynamics within a society.

Furthermore, political theorist Hannah Arendt argues that revolutions are not mere instances of chaos but rather moments of intense creativity and reconstitution of political authority

(Arendt 72). They are imbued with a sense of urgency and purpose, driven by a collective desire for liberation from oppressive structures.

In contemporary discourse, the term “revolutionary” is often applied to individuals, movements, or ideas that challenge existing paradigms and strive for radical transformation. For example, activist Angela Davis is frequently described as a revolutionary figure due to her tireless advocacy for racial and gender equality (Davis 33).

The term “revolutionary” encompasses not only acts of rebellion but also the aspirations for a more just and equitable society.

The Man Flavius Josephus

Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, provides invaluable insight into Jewish history, culture, and the socio-political context of his time. Born Yosef ben Matityahu in 37 CE, he hailed from a priestly lineage and was well-educated in the Jewish law and Greek literature (Mason 4). Josephus is best known for his works “The Jewish War” and “Antiquities of the Jews,” which are critical sources for understanding the Jewish-Roman conflicts and the history of the Jews up to the first century CE.

Josephus initially fought against the Romans during the First Jewish-Roman War but was captured and subsequently defected to the Roman side. This controversial switch from Jewish commander to Roman client according to Steve Mason is often scrutinized, yet it granted him the unique position of being able to document the war from an insider’s perspective (Mason 7). His writings provide a detailed account of the Jewish rebellion, the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Second Temple, events that significantly shaped Jewish history.

“The Jewish War” is particularly notable for its detailed narrative of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Jonathan Price notes that Josephus’s descriptions of the siege and destruction are poignant and vividly capture the tragedy of the event. His account has been corroborated by archaeological evidence,

lending credibility to his work (Price 129). Additionally, "Antiquities of the Jews" traces Jewish history from creation up to the outbreak of the war with Rome, aiming to present Jewish culture and history to a Greco-Roman audience.

Josephus's works are not without controversy. Some scholars argue that his accounts are biased due to his complex relationship with both the Jewish and Roman communities. However, despite potential biases, his writings remain indispensable to historians. Seth Schwartz agrees that his unique perspective as a participant in and observer of key historical events provides a comprehensive view of first-century Judaism and the broader Roman Empire (Schwartz 45). Flavius Josephus's contributions to historical literature are profound. His detailed recordings in "The Jewish War" and "Antiquities of the Jews" offer crucial insights into the Jewish-Roman world, making him an essential figure for both ancient history and biblical studies.

John the Baptist

John the Baptist is a significant figure in both religious and historical contexts, known for his role as a prophet and for baptizing Jesus Christ. Understanding his life, ministry, and impact requires an examination of historical and biblical sources.

John the Baptist's Biblical Accounts

According to the Gospel of Luke, John was born to elderly parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, who had been barren. Zechariah, a priest, was visited by the angel Gabriel, who foretold John's birth and mission (Luke 1:5-25). This miraculous conception marked the beginning of John's extraordinary life.

Godwin Toryough refers to him as a prominent figure in the New Testament, recognized for his role in heralding the coming of Jesus Christ. His life and ministry were marked by a profound dedication to his mission, which included baptizing repentant individuals and calling out the moral and spiritual failings of his society. His ascetic lifestyle and fearless preaching set him apart as a significant prophetic figure (Toryough 4).

John the Baptist: The Preacher

Godwin Toryough asserts that John's preaching was characterized by its directness and urgency. He openly criticized the religious leaders of his time, labeling them as a "brood of vipers" and warning of imminent judgment. His message centered on repentance and a return to genuine faith, calling people to demonstrate their repentance through ethical behavior. His baptism symbolized the cleansing of sin and corruption, preparing the way for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven (Toryough 12). To further buttress the point, the scripture records that "John's ministry is characterized by his preaching of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4). "He emerged as a voice in the wilderness, preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:3). "John's ascetic lifestyle, wearing clothing made of camel's hair and eating locusts and wild honey, symbolized his separation from worldly concerns and dedication to his prophetic calling" (Matthew 3:4).

John's Preaching and Its Consequences

John's fearless denunciation of corruption and his call for repentance had significant repercussions. He attracted large crowds and gained a reputation that even reached the highest religious authorities in Jerusalem. Despite the potential dangers, Godwin Toryough notes that he remained steadfast in his mission, emphasizing the need for ethical conduct and warning of divine judgment for those who failed to produce "good fruit" (Toryough 13). John the Baptist's preaching had profound consequences both religiously and politically. His message was centered around repentance and the imminent arrival of God's Kingdom. John criticized the religious leaders of his time, calling them a "brood of vipers" and warning them of impending judgment (Luke 3:7). This harsh critique of the religious establishment, combined with his call for a return to genuine faith and ethical behavior, made him a significant and contentious figure. John's baptism was more than a ritual; it was a symbol of repentance and a call to moral and spiritual

renewal. He proclaimed that his baptism with water was a precursor to one greater, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire, indicating the transformative power of the Messiah (Matthew 3:11). To John Meier, this message aligned John the Baptist closely with prophetic traditions, positioning him as a forerunner to Jesus and linking him to the eschatological hopes of Israel after a long period of prophetic silence (Meier 385). John's outspoken condemnation of Herod Antipas for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias, directly led to his imprisonment. Herod's marriage was against Jewish law, and John's public denunciation of it was a bold stand against the moral corruption of the ruling class (James Scott 97). Herodias, holding a grudge against John, eventually manipulated Herod into ordering John's execution. This episode highlights the dangerous consequences of John's fearless preaching and his willingness to confront powerful figures about their immorality (Mark 6:17-28).

Qualities of John the Baptist

John exhibited several qualities that made his ministry effective. His sincerity and commitment to his message were evident in his lifestyle, which was marked by simplicity and self-discipline. He avoided seeking favor from those he preached to, which lent credibility to his message. His focus was entirely on the spiritual and ethical aspects of life, avoiding political entanglements (Toryough 13-14). The qualities of John the Baptist are well-articulated, emphasizing his commitment, simplicity, and focus on ethical preaching. The work rightly identifies John's austere lifestyle and fearless preaching as central to his influence.

John the Baptist: A Revolutionary Prophet According To Josephus

Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century CE, provides valuable insights into the socio-political landscape of ancient Judea. In his work "Antiquities of the Jews", Josephus depicts John the Baptist as a significant figure, labeling him as

a revolutionary prophet. This characterization sheds light on the role of religious leaders in challenging the existing power structures of the time.

Josephus describes John as a charismatic preacher who attracted large crowds with his message of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins. However, it is Josephus's portrayal of John's revolutionary tendencies that warrants further examination. According to Josephus, John's teachings were not confined to spiritual matters but also carried political implications, challenging the authority of Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee and Perea at the time.

In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus writes:

Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause" (Josephus, Book 18, Chapter 5).

This passage highlights Herod's concern over John's potential to incite rebellion among the masses, indicating the perceived threat posed by John's revolutionary message. Josephus's characterization of John as a threat to political stability aligns with his broader narrative of Jewish resistance against Roman and Herodian rule during this period.

Furthermore, Josephus's labeling of John as a revolutionary prophet underscores the complex interplay between religion and politics in ancient Judea. John's call for repentance and moral renewal was intertwined with a critique of the ruling elite, challenging their legitimacy and calling for a return to Jewish principles of justice and righteousness.

Josephus's portrayal of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet offers valuable insights into the political and religious dynamics of ancient Judea. By examining Josephus's narrative alongside other historical sources, we can gain a deeper understanding of John's significance as a figure who not only preached spiritual renewal but also challenged the existing power structures of his time.

Critique of Josephus' Labeling of John the Baptist as a Revolutionary Prophet

Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century, offers a compelling description of John the Baptist in his work *Antiquities of the Jews*. However, his labelling of John as a revolutionary prophet has been a subject of significant scholarly debate. This critique explores the historical, theological, and sociopolitical implications of Josephus' characterization of John, assessing its accuracy and the motivations that might have influenced Josephus' portrayal.

Historical Context and Josephus' Perspective

Josephus' account in *Antiquities* (18.116-119) describes John the Baptist as a virtuous man who encouraged moral reform and ritual cleansing. While Josephus acknowledges John's popularity among the masses, he also implies that John's influence posed a political threat to Herod Antipas, ultimately leading to his execution. Scholars like Rivka Nir argue that Josephus' labelling of John as a potential revolutionary prophet might have been influenced by his efforts to align with Roman political sensibilities, portraying Jewish leaders as threats to imperial stability (Nir 215).

Theological Misalignment

The Gospel accounts portray John the Baptist primarily as a religious reformer and forerunner of Jesus Christ, emphasizing his role in preaching repentance and preparing the way for the Messiah (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:2-8). Unlike Josephus' emphasis on John's sociopolitical influence, the New Testament underscores his spiritual mission. E.P. Sanders critiques Josephus' interpretation, noting that the historian's secular framework may have obscured the theological essence of John's ministry (Sanders 98).

Sociopolitical Dynamics

Josephus' labelling of John as a revolutionary prophet can be contextualized within the broader sociopolitical environment

of first-century Palestine. During this period, Jewish society was rife with tension due to Roman occupation, leading to the emergence of various revolutionary movements. Shaye Cohen suggests that Josephus might have associated John with these movements to rationalize Herod's actions while maintaining his own credibility as a historian loyal to Rome (Cohen 174). However, such an association oversimplifies John's mission, which was predominantly spiritual rather than political.

Motivations Behind Josephus' Portrayal

Josephus' works were written primarily for a Roman audience, which may explain his tendency to frame Jewish figures in a way that resonated with Roman concerns about rebellion. As Martin Goodman argues, Josephus' portrayal of John as a revolutionary prophet served to distance him from the purely religious sphere, aligning him more closely with figures like Judas the Galilean, who actively resisted Roman rule (Goodman 123).

Evaluating the Evidence

While Josephus' account provides valuable historical insights, it must be critically evaluated against other sources. The New Testament and early Christian writings present a more nuanced view of John the Baptist, emphasizing his role in calling people to spiritual renewal. Paula Fredriksen highlights the need to distinguish between Josephus' political biases and the theological dimensions of John's ministry, cautioning against overreliance on a single historical source (Fredriksen 67).

Josephus' labelling of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet reflects a complex interplay of historical reality, theological interpretation, and political expediency. While his account offers a valuable perspective, it must be balanced with other sources to avoid misrepresenting John's true mission. By critically engaging with Josephus' portrayal, scholars can achieve a more comprehensive understanding of John the Baptist's role in the first-century Jewish and Christian contexts.

Did Josephus Actually Label John the Baptist as a Revolutionary Prophet in his Work?

Flavius Josephus did mention John the Baptist in his work "Antiquities of the Jews," but he did not label him explicitly as a revolutionary prophet. Josephus portrays John the Baptist in a largely positive light, emphasizing his role as a preacher of virtue and righteousness rather than as a revolutionary figure.

In *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.5.2, Josephus writes:

Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, who was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.

This passage underscores John's moral and spiritual teachings rather than revolutionary activities. Josephus mentions that Herod Antipas feared John's influence over the people, worrying that it might lead to some form of uprising, which led to John's arrest and execution. However, this concern appears to be Herod's rather than an indication that John was actively promoting rebellion.

Therefore, while Josephus acknowledged the potential political implications of John's popularity, he did not directly describe John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet. Instead, he depicted him as a preacher urging ethical conduct and religious purification, whose execution was viewed by some as an unjust act by Herod. The paper however sees the claim of Josephus as labeling John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet as partially unfounded.

How John the Baptist's Teachings Intersect with the Happenings in Nigerian Society

John the Baptist was a pivotal figure in the biblical narrative, known for his revolutionary message of repentance and social justice. In discussing how his teachings intersect with the happenings in Nigerian society, we can draw parallels to issues such as corruption, inequality, and moral decay.

In Matthew 3:1-12, John the Baptist proclaims, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matthew 3:2, New International Version). This call to repentance challenges societal norms and calls for a transformation of hearts and minds.

In Nigeria, corruption has been a longstanding issue that undermines societal progress and perpetuates inequality. John the Baptist's denunciation of corruption aligns with contemporary concerns about political and economic corruption in Nigeria. His message serves as a reminder that true change begins with individual repentance and a commitment to righteousness.

Moreover, John the Baptist's emphasis on social justice resonates with the struggles faced by marginalized communities in Nigeria. In Luke 3:10-14, he instructs tax collectors and soldiers to act justly and treat others fairly. This rebuke of exploitation and oppression speaks to the need for equitable treatment and compassion towards the less fortunate in Nigerian society.

Furthermore, John the Baptist's confrontational approach to religious leaders parallels critiques of religious hypocrisy and moral decadence in Nigeria. Just as he challenged the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 3:7-10, his message confronts religious leaders who prioritize ritualistic observance over genuine righteousness.

Comparison of Authors on Josephus' Labeling of John the Baptist as a Revolutionary Prophet

Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, references John the Baptist in his work *Antiquities of the Jews*, portraying him as a significant figure in Jewish history. However, interpretations

of Josephus' characterization of John the Baptist vary among scholars. This paper aims to compare the perspectives of various authors on Josephus' portrayal of John as a revolutionary prophet.

1. E.P. Sanders: Sanders argues that Josephus' depiction of John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet is not entirely accurate. He suggests that Josephus, writing under Roman rule, may have exaggerated John's role to fit his own agenda of portraying Jewish movements as potentially seditious. According to Sanders, Josephus' portrayal of John should be understood within the context of his broader narrative strategy rather than as a reflection of historical reality (Sanders 112-115).
2. John Dominic Crossan: Crossan takes a more nuanced approach, acknowledging Josephus' portrayal of John as a revolutionary figure but placing it within the broader context of Jewish resistance to Roman occupation. He argues that while Josephus may have exaggerated John's revolutionary tendencies, there is likely some truth to the idea that John's message posed a challenge to the status quo. Crossan emphasizes the importance of considering multiple sources when evaluating John's historical significance (Crossan 75-78).
3. Paula Fredriksen: she offers a different perspective, suggesting that Josephus' portrayal of John as a revolutionary prophet may be more accurate than previously thought. She argues that John's message of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins would have been seen as a direct challenge to both Jewish religious authorities and Roman political power. Fredriksen emphasizes the radical nature of John's message and its potential to inspire social and political upheaval (Fredriksen 45-48).

While there is consensus among scholars that Josephus portrays John the Baptist as a significant figure, there is disagreement about the extent to which he was a revolutionary prophet. E.P.

Sanders argues that Josephus' depiction is influenced by his own narrative agenda, while John Dominic Crossan and Paula Fredriksen offer differing interpretations of John's historical significance within the context of first-century Judaism.

John the Baptist's Message: Lessons for Africa and Nigeria

John the Baptist emerged in the 1st century AD as a figure preaching a message of repentance and preparation for the arrival of the Messiah in Judea. His revolutionary approach to prophetic ministry and his impact on society provide valuable lessons that resonate with contemporary African and Nigerian contexts.

1. **Social Justice Advocacy:** John's call for repentance was not merely individualistic but also had societal implications. He challenged societal structures and injustices, calling out even the powerful. In Luke 3:10-14, he instructs tax collectors and soldiers to act justly and treat others fairly. This underscores the importance of addressing systemic injustices and advocating for social equality, a lesson pertinent to contemporary Africa, where issues of corruption and inequality persist.
2. **Fearlessness in Speaking Truth to Power:** John fearlessly confronted the religious and political authorities of his time, including Herod Antipas, for their moral failings (Mark 6:17-18). His imprisonment and eventual execution highlight the risks associated with challenging entrenched power structures. In Nigeria, where corruption and abuse of power are prevalent, John's example encourages speaking truth to power despite potential consequences.
3. **Emphasis on Spiritual Renewal:** Central to John's message was the call for repentance and spiritual renewal (Matthew 3:2). This emphasis on inner transformation speaks to the need for moral and ethical renewal in African societies plagued by corruption, violence, and social unrest. John's message underscores the importance of addressing root causes rather than merely surface-level issues.

4. Preparation for a New Era: John's proclamation of the coming Messiah heralded a new era of salvation and redemption. His role as a precursor to Jesus Christ emphasizes the importance of preparing the way for positive change. In the African context, this serves as a reminder of the need to lay foundations for a better future through education, socio-economic development, and good governance.
5. Humility and Servanthood: Despite his popularity, John humbly acknowledged Jesus' superiority, stating, "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30). This humility and servant leadership stand in contrast to the self-aggrandizement often observed among political and religious leaders. In Nigeria, where leadership is often characterized by egoism and elitism, John's example underscores the importance of humility and serving the common good.

John the Baptist's revolutionary prophetic ministry offers profound lessons for Africa and Nigeria, emphasizing social justice advocacy, fearlessness in speaking truth to power, spiritual renewal, preparation for a new era, and humility in leadership. By reflecting on his teachings and example, societies can work towards positive transformation and sustainable development.

Recommendations

This study has critically examined the portrayal of Josephus' labeling of John the baptizer as a revolutionary prophet and recommends the following:

1. People of good standing like John the Baptist are required to speak out to confront high level of moral decadence, corruption, hypocrisy and injustice among others, in Africa and Nigerian society in particular.
2. Religious leaders should rise up to the task of preaching undiluted word of God instead of prosperity gospels and seeking favors from political leaders.

3. The general public should adhere to genuine leaders who have good intentions of restoring the dignity of the Nigerian society.
4. Patriotism should be the watch word for both leaders and followers to have an effective society with good morals and fair play in the judicial system.
5. Africa and Nigerian leaders should lay foundations for a better future through education, socio-economic development, and good governance.

Conclusion

In historical discourse, Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, provides a critical perspective on such figures. Among the individuals Josephus wrote about is John the Baptist, a prominent prophetic figure known for his call to repentance and moral renewal. John the Baptist, as depicted by Josephus, is often scrutinized for his role in the socio-political landscape of Judea. While Josephus does not explicitly label John as a revolutionary prophet in his works, he acknowledges John's substantial influence and the potential threat he posed to established authorities. Josephus describes John's growing following and his emphasis on ethical behavior, which resonated deeply with the masses and thus, held revolutionary implications by challenging the status quo and inspiring change from within the society. A critical analysis of Josephus' portrayal reveals a nuanced perspective. While some scholars argue that Josephus' account implicitly frames John the Baptist as a revolutionary due to his mass appeal and the socio-political ramifications of his teachings, others contend that Josephus aimed to present John more as a religious reformer than a political agitator. The debate hinges on interpreting Josephus' intent and the broader context of his writings, which were influenced by his own position and the Roman audience he addressed. The intersection of John the Baptist's teachings with contemporary Nigerian society offers insightful parallels. Like Judea under Roman rule, Nigeria faces challenges of moral

decay, corruption, and social injustice. John's message of repentance, ethical integrity, and communal responsibility resonates with the ongoing struggle for a just and equitable society in Nigeria. His call for moral reform and social justice provides a timeless framework for addressing modern societal issues. Comparing various authors on Josephus' labeling of John the Baptist reveals a spectrum of interpretations. Some scholars emphasize John's role in provoking societal change and challenging established norms, aligning him with revolutionary ideals. Others focus on his spiritual mission, suggesting his primary goal was religious renewal rather than political upheaval. This scholarly discourse enriches our understanding of John the Baptist's impact and the multifaceted nature of revolutionary figures in history. John the Baptist's message holds significant lessons for Africa and Nigeria, advocating for moral integrity, social justice, and communal responsibility. These principles are essential for addressing contemporary challenges and fostering a just society. As Nigeria navigates its socio-political landscape, the teachings of John the Baptist offer a beacon of hope and a call to action, urging individuals and leaders alike to embrace ethical conduct and strive for meaningful change. The ongoing scholarly debate about Josephus' depiction of John the Baptist underscores the importance of historical context and interpretation in understanding revolutionary figures and their legacies. The paper however without ambiguity, dismisses the claim that Josephus labeled John the Baptist as a revolutionary prophet since it is not seen in any of his works.

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