

Christmas

Advent 3 : The promise of God through John the Baptist

Foundation

Bible passage: John 1.19-41

On the Third Sunday in Advent, we remember that God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus by calling people to repent and be baptized.

John was born three months before Jesus and they were relatives. His parents, Zachariah and Elizabeth, had not had any children and were too old to do so. But God blessed them and they were told that they would have a son who would prepare the way for the Lord.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

After his birth we hear nothing more about John until he was about thirty years old and he was living in the wilderness, wearing a camel hair coat and eating whatever he could find there to eat - which was evidently locusts and wild honey.

When people heard about John or met him they thought he was like the prophets they had read about in their Bible. He was quite a strange character but there was something about him and the way he spoke that people found compelling. Even King Herod, who later found John unsettling, was fascinated by him.

John was preparing for people for the Lord and baptised them in the river Jordan, which is why people started calling him “The Baptist”. John would talk about the wrong things people had done and call them to repent, saying sorry to God and changing their lives.



One day Jesus came to see John and when John saw him he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” By this John was doing what his parents were told he would do, he was pointing people to the Lord - to Jesus.

John wanted people to follow Jesus. Andrew, the fisherman, heard John talk about Jesus and, after taking his brother Simon (Peter) to see Jesus they both followed Him.

Christmas is a time when people get very excited about presents and parties, but the most amazing thing about Christmas is that Jesus came among us so that by trusting in Him our sins might be taken away.

Prayer at the lighting of the third candle

God our Father, in their old age you gave to Zachariah and Elizabeth a son called John. He grew up strong in spirit, prepared the people for the coming of the Lord, and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins. Help us to be ready for Jesus, and like John to point people to him. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.



John prepared the way for Jesus, pointing people to Him so that they might become His followers as Andrew did.