

The Love Shuttle Unit 10

Chapter 50

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Luke 1:41, 76-79; 3:4-6, John 1:23, 29-30

Shiloh slid down the pole into the Time Travel Lab and landed with a “thud” on the floor below. “Hey Handsome!” he greeted the hand, who was typing codes into the Time Travel computer. “Dude, I thought I knew all there was to know about Christmas, but I’ve been learning things I never knew before. Like, did you know God’s plan to save the world didn’t begin the day Jesus was born?”

Handsome made a fist and nodded yes.

“Like the prophets had been pointing the way for years and years and years!” Shiloh continued. Handsome pointed up and Shiloh nodded. “That’s right, all of the prophets were pointing to Jesus. That’s what prophets do, they point to the truth. What are you pointing at?” He looked in the direction that Handsome was now pointing and realized it was the Time Travel Tube. “Oh, were getting a visitor!”

“Time Travel Alert! Time Travel Alert! We have a time travel visitor in 3-2-1!” the computer announced. A man wearing a robe of tan camel hair with a brown strip of leather tied as a belt slid down the tube. The man bounded to his feet as he reached the bottom of the tube.

“What’s up, Dude! Let me guess. You’re a prophet,” Shiloh greeted.

“Nope! I’m a Baptist! Prepare ye the way of the Lord!” the man bellowed.

Shiloh noticed the leather bag of water that was attached to the man’s belt. “Dude, I get it! You’re John, the Baptist!”

“That’s me, John the Baptist! What gave me away?” John opened another leather bag and scooped out a handful of small green and brown snacks.

“Well, the water for one thing and also, you said, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord!’” Shiloh answered. “My friend Isaiah said you are the voice of one calling in the desert.”

“Hey, you really know your prophets!” John said as he popped one of the snacks into his mouth. It made a crunching sound as he bit down on it. “What’s your name?”

“Shiloh.” he responded.

John held out his handful of snacks. “You want one, Shiloh?”

"Sure! Thanks!" Shiloh selected a green oval and bit down on it. In almost the same motion, he spit it back out. "Yuck! Those are disgusting! What are they?"

"Locusts." John replied.

Shiloh coughed. "Locusts! Like the bugs, locusts?"

"Yup," John held up a large brown one before plopping it onto his tongue. "Delicious, aren't they?"

"No, they're gross!" Shiloh yelped, his face scrunched up in a disgusted look. "You eat those?"

"Yup, we don't have a whole lot of McDonald's in the desert," John stated. He looked around when a bell rang three times.

Shiloh waved at Handsome, who had reappeared. "Hey Handsome, this is John, the Baptist! John, this is my friend Handsome."

"Well, well, well, it's good to see you keep God's Word on 'Hand!'" John commented when he saw Handsome was carrying the Bible from the Power Source.

"Thanks Handsome!" Shiloh took the Bible and noticed Handsome had marked Luke 1:76-77. "John, look what the Bible says about you!" Shiloh read, "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins."

"You know what? That's what I've been doing my whole life, pointing people to my cousin, Jesus!" John pointed to his chest and proudly added, "We're second cousins, you know."

Shiloh gasped. "Wow! You and Jesus are related?"

John nodded. "Oh yeah, my mom, Elizabeth and His mom, Mary were cousins. They got together one time when Jesus and I were both inside our mom's bellies! When Mary walked into our house I jumped around like crazy!"

"So...you were pointing to Jesus in your mama's belly?" Shiloh asked in amazement.

"Yeah, I did!" John replied with a grin.

"Groovy!" Shiloh exclaimed. "God called you to be the one to tell the world Jesus was coming."

"Not just me! If you think about it, all of the prophets had been telling the people through the ages that God would save His people!" John explained.

"That's true! Joel, Elijah, Isaiah all promised us a Savior!" Shiloh said.

"Oh, I studied all those prophets, too!" John said. "I especially like what Isaiah had to say."

"Me, too! I love that part about the voice of one calling, 'In the desert make straight the way for the Lord!'" Shiloh quoted.

John thumped his chest with his thumb. "That's me! God called me to point the world to my cousin, Jesus, and I was living in the desert." John tossed the last of the locusts he was holding into his mouth and wiped his hands on his hairy robe.

"How did you survive out there?" Shiloh asked.

John shrugged. "I wore camel's hair for protection and I lived on locusts and honey."

Shiloh's face scrunched up in disgust again and he coughed at the memory of the bug in his mouth. "I still don't see how anybody can eat bugs."

"You gotta use a lot of honey," John recommended.

Shiloh shuttered and tried to change the subject. "So, what happened in the desert?"

"I started calling out," John explained. "I was telling people to prepare their hearts for the Savior; and people started coming."

"Then what did you do?"

"I started baptizing them. You know, baptism back then was sort of our way of asking God to wash our sins away; to show God that we'd turned to Him." John explained. "I thought this way they'd be cleaned up and ready when the Savior came."

"And did He come?" Shiloh asked.

"You're not going to believe this...Jesus showed up to get baptized!" John exclaimed.

"No way!" Shiloh gasped. "What did you do?"

"I baptized Him!" John stated. "I told everyone, 'This is the one I've been talking about, the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world!' Then the heavens opened up and a dove descended from heaven and landed on Him."

"The Holy Spirit!" Shiloh said in reverent awe.

"Bingo!" John agreed. "And then we heard a voice from heaven say, 'You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased!'"

"So, even as a grown up, God was still using you to point people to Jesus?" Shiloh asked.

"All my life. That's what God called me to do," John said.

"You know what, Dude? I think that's what God is calling me to do," Shiloh reflected. Handsome tapped on the table and pointed up. "You, too, Handsome?" Shiloh asked. Handsome nodded yes.

"It's a great way to spend your life," John assured.

Shiloh said, "We should always point up. And, like my uncle says, we should remember that 'no matter where you are in time, God is good all the time!'"

"Very good!" John scooped several more locusts out of his bag and offered them to Shiloh. "You sure you don't want more?" he asked.

Shiloh scooted quickly towards the galley door. "No thank you. How about trying a Christmas cookie instead?" Shiloh waved for John to follow him. John took another bite of locust, shrugged, and followed Shiloh through the door.