



**Worship Illustration: Storybook
The Love Sub
Prophets & Promises: Advent of the Promised One
Unit 10, Lesson 50**

Advent 3: John the Baptist

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

Shiloh slid down the pole into the lab and landed with a thud. "Hey, Handsome!" he greeted the hand. Handsome was typing codes into the Time Travel computer. "Dude, I thought I knew everything 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, the prophets were pointing to Jesus. That's what prophets do; they point to the truth. What are you pointing at?" He realized Handsome was now pointing at the Time Travel Tube. "Oh, we're getting a visitor!"

"Time Travel Alert! Time Travel Alert! We have a Time Travel visitor in 3-2-1!" the computer announced. A man in a robe of tan camel hair with a brown leather belt slid down 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 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?" he asked while opening another leather bag and scooping out a handful of small, green and brown snacks.

"Well, the water for one thing, and you said, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!' My name is Shiloh. My friend Isaiah said you are the voice of one calling in the desert."

"Hey, you really know your prophets!" John said. He popped one of the snacks into his mouth; it made a crunching sound as he bit down on it. "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 popped a large brown locust onto his tongue. "Delicious, aren't they?"

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

"Yup! We don't have a whole lot of McDonald's restaurants in the desert," John stated.

A bell rang three times. Handsome had reappeared and was waving the Bible. "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.

"Thanks, Handsome!" Shiloh took the Bible. He noticed Luke 1:76-77 was marked. "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. One time, they got together 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 even when you were in your mama's belly?" Shiloh asked in amazement.

"I sure was!" John replied, with a grin. "God called me to be the one to tell the world Jesus was coming. But, not just me! If you think about it, all the prophets had been telling people through the ages that God would save His people."

"That's true! Joel, Elijah, and 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 the 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 shuddered and tried to change the subject. "So, what happened in the desert?"

"I started calling out," John explained. "I told 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 we had turned to Him," John answered. "I thought, that 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, but 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. This is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world!' Then, the heavens opened up and a dove came down 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 them.

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 toward 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 the locusts, shrugged, and followed Shiloh through the door.