

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

John the Baptist said, “All flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6). I praise you today as the God who sent your Son to save, not only your chosen people, Israel, but also the Gentiles (cf. Acts 28:28). Jesus truly is the Savior of the world. Praise the Lord!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me about Jesus’ childhood and the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry in Judea. It fascinates me that of all the stories you could have told me from Jesus’ childhood, you chose to share the one about him being separated from his parents. For some reason, Jesus wasn’t with the caravan when it left for Nazareth. Instead, he remained behind in Jerusalem. Mary’s question, “Son, why have you treated us so?” rules out the idea that they simply forgot him, and Jesus’ own character rules out the idea that he stayed behind without any concern for their distress. The separation must have occurred due to some unforeseen circumstance, and when Jesus realized they had gone without him, he decided to wait for them in a safe place. The temple was the obvious choice, for it was his Father’s house. Surely it would be the first place they looked when they realized he was missing. This shows me that: (1) from an early age, Jesus recognized that he was your Son, (2) Jesus had a desire to learn everything he could about you, and (3) Jesus was submissive and obedient to his parents. Even as a boy, Jesus was leaving me an example so I could follow in his steps. He was teaching me to find my identity in my relationship with you, to eagerly learn everything I can about you, and to submit myself to my authorities. That’s how to grow up like Jesus! The years flew by, and finally, in the spring of 29, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John was the messenger written of by Isaiah, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’” (Luke 3:4). The connection between repentance and straight paths teaches me that sin hinders your work in my life. When I repent of sin, I smooth the way for your grace in my heart, and when I call others to do the same, I am making ready the way of the Lord. John challenged his fellow Jews: ‘You claim to be God’s people, but your lives don’t show any fruit!’ When they asked him what they should do, John told them to clothe the naked, feed the poor, deal honestly with others, and love their neighbor. This is exactly what you had been calling your people to do for hundreds of years (cf. Isa 58:5–6), and it reminds me to love you with all my heart and to love my neighbor as myself.

Reflection

John told the Roman soldiers: “Be content with your wages” (Luke 3:14). The word “content” means “to regard as being enough.” Do I look at what you have given me and say, “It is enough”?

Request

Father, enable me to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Help me to reflect the image of Christ and to be a shining light in a world of darkness and sin.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the message of John the Baptist. He reminds me that godliness is not just a matter of who I am—it’s also about what I do.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry](#)” – Charles Coffin.

Meditation Verse: Matthew 3:12.