

## Saturday 14th December



*There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light.  
He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in.  
John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.*

[John 1:6–8, The Message]

One person who is often overlooked in the Advent narrative, especially by those who skip straight to Christmas, is John the Baptist. Luke tells us of the miracle of the birth of John. His parents Elizabeth and Zechariah were too old to have children, yet God sent Gabriel to tell Zechariah that they would have a son. Zechariah is literally struck mute by the experience!

John is a loner in the wilderness who draws great crowds, preaches and baptises people. Despite his immense popularity, he constantly points people to Jesus rather than himself. Many of Jesus' followers were previously followers of John. It would be John that baptised Jesus in the Jordan.

John is the one who points to Jesus as the light of the world. He calls people to attention, but attention on God, not himself. Advent is a time to prepare for the coming of God like John, through humility. How often do we do things without wanting recognition for it? Advent is a time for us as Christians to look at what we do and ask why – is it for ourselves or God? As a church, does what we do point to God or to the church?

Spend some time looking at the advent hymns that speak of John, such as 'On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry' (*Singing the Faith* 182) by John Chandler, which speaks of cleaning our lives and being ready. Alternatively try 'Wild and lone the prophet's voice' (*Singing the Faith* 189) by Carl Daw, which reminds us of the choice we need to make to follow Jesus.

Advent God

we thank you for the prophets who pointed to your coming,  
for the prophets who spoke to the issues in our world.

Help us to hear the voice of your prophets today:

those who speak of your love for us;

those who highlight the issues we would rather ignore.

Help us to hear your words through them,

to work for your coming kingdom

rather than hiding ourselves away.

Advent God, we praise you.

Amen.