

John the Baptist

John the Baptist was a minister extraordinary. Unlike many preachers, who owe their success to smooth sermons that can leave their congregations unruffled and satisfied, he did not come with a message of peace of mind nor with capsules filled with spiritual tranquilizers.

In John the Baptist God spoke through the unusual. From his youth, John's home was the desert. His clothing was rough—the leathern girdle and camel's hair cloak of the ascetic. His daily fare was locusts and wild honey. Christ said of him, "What did you go out into the desert to see? ...A prophet? Yes, I tell you, more than a prophet."

For about 400 years, since the time of the Old Testament prophets, there had been no direct revelation from God. As in the days of the young boy Samuel, the word of God was precious because there was no open vision. Then, as the priest Zacharias stands at the altar of incense, an angel appears to him, telling him that he and his wife will have a son who will herald the Messiah and make the Lord's people ready for him.

John occupies a unique place in the revelation of God. He appears at the end of the Old Testament period, during a dark time of political bondage and of moral and religious corruption. He stands in the profound darkness before the dawn, as God speaks again, giving him the message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

John stood at the threshold of the kingdom of Christ. Already the axe was poised at the root of the trees to cut down those that did not bear good fruit. The Messiah was approaching with his fan in his hand to separate out relentlessly the chaff from the wheat.

Instead of peace of mind, John sowed in his listeners a holy fear, so that they might repent and receive the grace of God that would appear in Jesus Christ. John had come; but he said, "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Repentance is not foreign to the gospel. One must turn away from his sins as he turns to the Son of God. Without the message of repentance the proclamation of the grace of God becomes a weak sentimentality.

*Repent, then, and turn
to God,
so that your sins may
be wiped out,
that times of refreshing
may come from the
Lord....*

Acts 3:19, 20

Covenant Presbyterian Church
1623 University Avenue, Berkeley, California 94703
www.berkeleyopc.org

MORNING WORSHIP – 11:00 A.M.

Wayne K. Forkner, Minister

510-928-8024

THE LORD CALLS US TO HIMSELF

Salutation and Call to Worship

*Hymn of Praise # 220

“From Heaven High I Come to You”

*Invocation

*Hymn of Praise # 214

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

CONFESSION OF SIN AND THE LORD'S ASSURANCE

The Law of God

Matthew 22:37-40

Confession of Sin (Congregation in Unison)

Almighty, eternal God and Father, we confess and acknowledge unto thee that we were conceived in unrighteousness and are full of sin and transgression in all our life. We do not fully believe thy Word nor follow thy holy commandments. Remember thy goodness, we beseech thee, and for thy Name's sake be gracious unto us, and forgive us our iniquity which, alas, is great.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Psalm 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Psalm 103:10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

Psalm 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

Psalm 103:12 as far as the east is from the west,
 so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

OFFERING OURSELVES IN THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

Worship in Giving

Hymn of Thanksgiving # 476

“The Light of the World Is Jesus”

Worship in Prayer

Interlude

*Congregation Standing

We extend a cordial welcome to each visitor!

THE LORD FEEDS US FROM HIS WORD

*Hymn of Preparation # 497

“I Need Thee, Precious Jesus”

Sermon Text

Luke 22:66-71

Sermon

JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

*Hymn of Response # 353

“I Love Thy Kingdom Lord”

THE LORD DISMISSES US WITH HIS BLESSING

*Gloria Patri (Praising our Gracious Lord)

734

*The Lord's Benediction

Announcements

Today, 12:30pm. Potluck luncheon following the morning worship service. All are welcome.

Tuesday, 7:30pm. Weekly Bible Study at the church or via Zoom. Our Bible study at the church begins with dinner at 7:00pm, followed by a time of study at 7:30pm. For information on attending the study via Zoom, please send an email to Pastor Wayne at wforkner86@mac.com.

Sunday, January 5, 2025, 10:00am. The adult Sunday School class will resume. We will be studying the book of Colossians.