

“Repent!”

When we wandered out to the wilderness to see the man that people were calling a prophet we didn’t know what we would find. This John the Baptist was kind of **crazy**. He refused to live in a city. He would only eat what he could find in the wilderness—things like insects and honey. And he would only wear what he could find in the wilderness—like the skins of dead animals. His message was hard and simple at its core, **“Repent!”** Turn—change your mind—change your life—be born again. He said the way we thought, spoke, and acted showed that we were actually **children of serpents**, children of evil, children of Satan. So John was urging us to come and be baptized in the Jordan River, to spiritually **drown** and **die** in the waters and emerge reborn—to leave our Satanic hearts behind and be born again as children of the Creator.

Most of us in the crowds pushed back. We were Israelites! We were the Creator’s people! We were descended from Abraham! We had the right birth, the good birth! We weren’t like the pagan nations around us! John said such claims were **empty** because our lives, our actions, our **fruit** revealed what kind of people we **really** were. Just because we were physically related to Abraham was meaningless. He said the Creator could make children for Abraham from the stones in the wilderness, he didn’t need us. If we didn’t produce the good fruit of being a child of the Creator, then we would be chopped down like rotten trees and thrown into the fire.

John insisted he was preparing the way for one much greater than him. This one coming after him would be the **judge** of all peoples and nations. He would baptize with the Spirit and with fire. And then **Jesus** showed up. He wanted John to baptize him, but John resisted. John said that he was the one who needed to be baptized, to die and be born again, and that Jesus did not. But Jesus insisted that it was right for him to submit to baptism. And so John immersed Jesus in the waters—down Jesus went, dying to Civilization and the ways of Satan—and then he emerged. We saw the heavens opened and the Spirit came down upon Jesus in the form of a **dove**. Just as the dove had marked Noah’s ark as the place of salvation from the flood, now this dove marked Jesus as the new ark, the place of salvation from the destructive flood waters of Civilization. Then the voice spoke. A voice like thunder, **“This is my loved child, I am pleased with him!”** If this was the Creator’s child, why was he submitting to baptism—to death in the waters?! Surely that couldn’t be the path of the Creator’s true children?!

Jesus then disappeared in the wilderness. And there all the temptations of Satan that plagued humanity confronted him. Satan said to Jesus repeatedly, **“If you are the Creator’s child…”** Satan always disguises his way as the Creator’s way and he wanted to use Jesus’s own desire to do the Creator’s will to turn Jesus away from the Creator. Jesus had been fasting for forty days in the wilderness and was literally starving to death. Satan urged Jesus to turn the stones of the wilderness into bread. Certainly the Creator’s child would use power to make food for himself—the Creator had given him power, he should use it to keep himself alive. But Jesus declined, saying that faithfulness to the Creator’s Word was his true food—Jesus would **wait** on the Creator to **provide** for him. Then Satan urged Jesus to jump off of the top of the temple. The Scriptures themselves said that the Creator would protect his child, intervening with angels to save him. But Jesus declined, saying he would not test the Creator and that the Creator would protect him in his own way and timing—Jesus would **wait** on the Creator to **protect** him. Then Satan urged Jesus to take the power and authority of Civilization’s nations and fix the world. But Jesus declined, saying that the Creator alone is ruler and to use the power of the nations and governments is to serve Satan—Jesus would **wait** on the Creator to **rule** his creation in the way he wanted. After Jesus **waited** on the Creator, over and over, the Creator did indeed come through—he sent his angels and nursed Jesus back to health.

Jesus faced all the temptations of Satan’s way. Jesus revealed that he was indeed the true child of the Creator. We thought we were the Creator’s children, but seeing Jesus, we saw how wrong we were. We were children of Satan. We were **impatient** in everything. We always tried to provide for ourselves, we always tried to force the Creator to do things our way, and we always tried to be in control and fix the world. Jesus did none of these, he said no to himself and **waited** on the Creator in everything.

Then Jesus came out of the wilderness and began preaching the same message as John: **“Repent!”** We needed to die and be reborn. We were Satan’s children, despite thinking we were the Creator’s children, but if we listened to Jesus we could be saved. We were being called to drown in the waters of baptism and then enter the new ark of Jesus’s community and find new life and new creation in him.

Whose **child** are you? Who or what has given **birth** to you? We always bear the image of our parents. Are you the Creator’s child, do you bear his image, do you reflect his love in your life? Or are you a child of Satan, bearing the image of Civilization and its ways? What does the fruit of your life say about whose child you are? Are you bearing the fruit of **patience**, of always **waiting** for the Creator? Or are you bearing the fruit of **impatience**, always **taking things into your own hands** to do it your own way and in your own timing?

If you are living as a child of Satan, a child of this nation, a child of Civilization, it is not too late. Every day is another chance to wake up and **“repent!”** In fact, we must repent **every single day** of our lives. We live in a culture and society that is Satanic at its very core. Everything around us trains us to be impatient, to be children of Satan. Everything around us urges us to take things into our own hands—to **provide** for ourselves, to **protect** ourselves, and to **take power and control** over our world.

Jesus shows us that we must say **no** to each of these things. The Creator will provide—we must **wait** on him. The Creator will protect us—we must **wait** on him. The Creator is ruling this world—we must **wait** on him. The true child **waits** on the Creator. We need to **repent**, to turn away from our impatience, our obsessive need to be in control. We need to die and be drowned in the waters of baptism and emerge reborn, new creatures of **patience** and **faith**.

Across all space and time, the true prophets are still proclaiming: **“Repent!”** Across all space and time, John the Baptist is still crying out from the wilderness: **“Repent!”** Across all space and time, Jesus the Christ, is still calling out to you this day: **“Repent!”** May we have the ears to hear their call and may the Lord’s Spirit empower us once again to **“Repent!”** Amen.