

Hello! This is Dorothy -

I am reading from **Matthew chapter 3**, and I am thinking about John the Baptist. Here he was in the wilderness and he had a message, which as he spoke, people were intrigued to go and to see and to listen, but as he spoke, he did not spare the people, for he spoke of the seriousness of the hour. He did not have a message that made people feel rather good, because “we hope for a good collection from you all.” He literally spoke what was coming from God for he was

3 . . . The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight.

Now John had a special attire. It was not all the beautiful robes that we might see in certain churches. Instead, he literally had on him camel’s hair, a raiment that came around him with a leathern girdle. He lived amongst people in the wilderness that had a strange life, too. They were what they called bitumen miners. These were people who lived a very rough life, isagogics tell us. These people were in great awe and fear of John as he walked, for there they saw a man who was caught up in the presence of God; meditating on the Word, waiting, living, looking, thinking “How long?” for he knew that any time now, Jesus would come. And Jesus would make clear His clear message: that He alone could save from sin.

And so, in the preparation as the forerunner of this ministry of our Lord Jesus, John baptized people in the Jordan. He did it that it might be a baptism as people confessed

their sins. He met people and he understood people. Have you ever meant somebody who has the spirit of discernment? They do not wrap it all up with a lot of nice, flowery words, but they do get right to the root of the problem. Well, he certainly did! He spoke to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and he knew how they were blinding the people that they should have been reaching for God as instead, they were fitting in a method of religion which was not living in the real faith of God Himself. John called them -

7 . . . generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. They were always saying, “Abraham is our father and look who we are!” But he said that it was possible for God . . .

9 . . . of these stones to raise children unto Abraham.

The principle of Abraham had been his faith. It is because of the faith of you and me that we come to know the Lord. It is not by the ritual of where we attend and who we know and what we feel is the religious picture of what is desired of others from us. It is when we live by faith, as Abraham did.

At that moment also, John showed that **the tree** was in a very dangerous position. This is speaking about what was happening in the rejection of Israel as they were about to reject the Messiah.

10 And now also is the axe laid unto the root of the trees. . . Have you ever gone through a forest and you have seen trees? There are some marked with an *x* and you realize those particular trees have to be cut down.

I remember, years ago, there was a beautiful tree outside the home where my in-laws lived. I know my father-in-law was absolutely distraught to think they were going to

cut that tree down. He kept talking to everybody about this tree, but, unfortunately, the tree was placed that it was hindering the new road that was going to come through their community. For that reason, the tree had to go down. All the pleading had nothing to do with it; the tree went! You see, there was a mark on that tree.

And that is what is speaking of where we read in **verse 10 . . . the axe is laid unto the root of the trees . . .** Sometimes, they would chip away at the bark to show where the tree should be cut. . . . **therefore every tree which bringeth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast unto the fire.** John had a fiery message as he said -

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, - speaking of Jesus - whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.

Let's think about this.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance . . . but One who is going to come and **baptize you with the Holy Spirit.** Yes, the other did not save people; their hearts were being cleansed as they were being turned toward God and their sins were being confessed, but it did not save them. They needed *to be born of the Spirit of God.* That is what it is **to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.** They need to come to know Christ to be born into His family.

Are you willing for this? I trust so. If so, write for that little book, *Your Quest for God.* We are praying for you and love you.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

