

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. Also, as he spoke, he did not spare the people for he spoke of the seriousness of the hour. He didn't have a message that made people feel rather good, "because we hope for a good collection from you all!" No, he literally spoke what was coming from God and he was . . . **the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (verse 3).**

Now John had a special attire. It was not all the beautiful robes that we might see in certain churches. Instead, he literally wore a camel's hair raiment that went around him with a leathern girdle. **(Verse 4)**. He lived amongst people in the wilderness that lived a strange life, too. They were what they called bitumen miners and these were people who lived a very rough life. Isogogics tells us that these people were in great fear and awe of John as he walked. There they saw a man who was caught up in the presence of God, meditating on the Word, waiting, living, looking, and thinking, "How long?" for he knew that any time now, Jesus would come and Jesus would make clear His 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 as people confessed their sins. He met people and he understood people. Have you ever met 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 to the root of the problem. John certainly did as

he spoke to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He knew how they were blinding the people they should have been reaching for God; they were fitting in a method of religion that was not living in the real faith in God Himself. He 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 always saying . . . **Abraham is our father** and “Look who we are!”- but John told them:

9 . . . God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. The principle of Abraham had been his faith; it was the faith of Abraham that God honored. It is because of faith 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 the axe is laid unto the root of the trees . . .

Have you ever gone through a forest and you have seen trees and noticed that some are marked with an X? You realize those trees are 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 in a place which was hindering the new road that was coming through that community. For that reason, the tree had to go down. All the pleading was in vain; the tree went. You see,

there was a mark on that tree.

That mark is what it is referred to here as . . .**the axe is laid at the root of the trees.** Sometimes they would chip away at the bark to show where the tree should be cut.

10 . . . therefore every tree which bringeth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast into 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. *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance*, but One 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 needed to come to know Christ to be born into His family. Are you willing for this? I trust so. If so, write today for that little book, *Your Quest for God*. We are praying for you and love you.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.