



Chapter 3:1-12

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"
3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

*"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
Make His paths straight.' "*

4 Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him
6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Observations

1. List all the facts that Matthew provides about The Messenger that God sent to prepare the way for the coming King (who, what, where & why).
2. What was John's message?
3. What was John's ministry?
4. How did John prepare Israel for the coming of their Messiah?
5. What are the similarities between John's message & ministry and what Jesus has commissioned you to do?
6. In your opinion why did God choose to send John rather than one of the priests who served in the Temple?
7. Compare vs. 9 with Romans 9:6-9; who are the true children of Abraham (& God) according to John & Paul?
8. Look carefully at vs. 10, 11 & 12: in your opinion what three future events does John have in mind?
9. What can you take away from this text and apply to your life?