

Matthew 3:3-5

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

...

⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:8-10

⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones [*'abanim*] God can raise up children [*banim*] for Abraham.

¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Matthew 3:11-12

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Winnowing Fork

(Wikimedia Commons)



Isaiah 11:1-4

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—
³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the
earth.

Reflection Questions

- What reactions do you have to John the Baptist? To his words of judgment?
- Who did John the Baptist think the Messiah would be? Did Jesus match his expectations?
- What does it look like to prepare ourselves in order to be able to receive God's Messiah?