

EASY BIBLE LESSONS

Alarming Preaching from John the Baptist

Luke 3:7-20

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” 11 In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” 13 He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” 14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. 19 But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added to them all by shutting up John in prison. — NRSV

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BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR THINKING PEOPLE

Today, if a preacher called his listeners a “Brood of Vipers” what would they do?

Why do you think John the Baptist used such strong words about people when he was preaching? Why don’t we hear such strong language from Christian leaders today? Do people need to hear this strong language today? Why or why not?

John answers the questions of the crowds, the tax collectors, and the soldiers. How do his answers apply the 10 Commandments? Which commandment do you think relates best to each of his answers?

Why do you think the water baptism of John was important, since the Messiah was going to come and baptize with the Holy Spirit? Is water baptism important for believers today? What did Jesus say?

Why do you think John emphasizes God’s coming judgment? Today, do you think we still need to talk about God’s coming judgment? Why or why not?

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