



## Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

### John the Baptist: Preacher of Joy? December 16, 2018

*(Luke 3:7-18)*

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> 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.”

<sup>10</sup> “What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

<sup>11</sup> John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.”

<sup>12</sup> Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

<sup>13</sup> “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

<sup>14</sup> Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

<sup>15</sup> The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup> And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them.

1. **Icebreaker:** Do you send out Christmas cards? Why or why not? What is your favorite type of card to send?
2. **Discuss:** John seems to be pointing to the necessity of “fruits of repentance” in order to have salvation. Does this mean we can’t be saved unless we do enough good works? If not, what does he mean?
3. Why was the Israelites’ belief that they were saved because of their bloodline that connected them to Abraham such a deceptive spiritual venom? If they remained in that belief, what would happen to them?
4. List at least 3 things you can glean about “fruits of repentance” from the examples John shares with the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers.
5. We can say that John “rightly divided law and gospel” in his message here. Where do you see him preaching the Law? Where do you see him preaching the gospel? What happens with the people that shifts his focus from the one to the other?
6. In John’s visual about “separating the wheat and the chaff,” it’s obvious that the wheat (believers) and chaff (unbelievers) are together on earth for a time. Based on the other discussion about “fruits of repentance,” what are some things God wants us to do while the wheat and chaff are together on earth for this time?