

Luke, the Researcher (from Transcription Notes)
(with permission from Janet Crisler)

It's as if a fire had caught on to a field, and the vipers feel the heat and are trying to escape it. There's something that John is reaching right into human thought that is accepted without question: *ecclesiasticism*. He is turning over the human mind as if he were plowing earth, ready again for the seed.

3:8

In Luke 3, Verse 8, he said one thing is obviously missing: fruits, "*fruits worthy of repentance*." In its Greek original, the word "repentance" means "*To change one's concept*." Notice that fruits are the result of this changed state of mind. All that is needed is a changed state of mind and fruits, results, follow.

One of the key things about Judaism was the reverence given to the bloodline back to Abraham, as if genealogy was the key to salvation. John the Baptist seeing that, says, "*Don't say within yourselves, We have this biological link to Abraham, because here is the divine fact, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*." And then looking squarely at the Pharisees, he says, (Verse 9,) "*the axe is laid at the root of the tree*."

You know what the next move is: the tree is going to come down if it isn't bearing good fruit. That's John the Baptist's message to religions that aren't practical. The axe is already there. In mentioning root he obviously has in mind, too, the definition of biological roots that the Jews have had in tracing their lineage back to Abraham. That is not the basis for salvation.

3:10

Verse 10, "*The people say, What shall we do?*"

In Verse 11 there's interesting advice that John the Baptist gives very briefly, "*He that hath two coats, share. He that hath extra food, meat, also, be willing to feel compassion towards your neighbor and share your abundance*."

3:12

Verse 12, "*Publicans came and said Master, what shall we do?*" (Verse 13), "*He said, Don't exact any more than that which you should*."

Verse 14, "*Soldiers asked the same*." John the Baptist said, "*Do violence to no man, don't accuse anyone falsely; be content with your wages*."

LUKE 3:15

Ring a few familiar notes, John was speaking with such a sense of basic common sense and authority that they asked him if he were the Christ or the Messiah (Verse 15). John makes it quite clear in Verse 16, "*No*," he says, "*I can't*"

even perform a slave-duty to the Messiah." Only a slave unloosed the sandals at someone's feet. Even the rabbinical students did not unloose the sandals of their master or the rabbi. John the Baptist said he was not even worthy to accomplish a slave's job.

Part of the contrast he draws is in baptism: that he is to *"baptize with water."* Here is, once again, the seventh mention of the term Holy Ghost, *"He,"* Jesus, *"will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire."*

Those of you who may have read the commentaries on Matthew will remember Holy Ghost, or wind. Add wind to fire and what do you have? They work together. What kind of baptism is it? Is that a literal wind and fire? The water is literal. But John the Baptist says Jesus is going to be baptizing, cleansing, purifying at a higher level.

It's meant to be mental, and spirit, of course, is a term that refers to what is mental. *"The holy spirit and with fire,"* think of that, then, in mental terms.

In Verse 17 the *"fan"* is part of this mental activity. The fan was not the Madame Butterfly variety. It was a winnowing fork. What did you do with the mixed-up mess of wheat and chaff on the threshing floor? You had to throw it into the air. The wind did the separating. What does the separating in Jesus' baptism then?

The Holy Ghost does the separating of the true from the false. Once again we have an insight into the nature, mission and office of the Holy Ghost: It is to distinguish between right and wrong, to interpret for us.

Our responsibility is to get to that threshing floor which has no obstruction between it and the wind. If we do that mentally, then we move into this mixture we call the human mind with its plus and minus conflicts. We dig into it, confront it, deal with it, and throw it into the air where the Holy Ghost, the wind, can blow through it. The lighter chaff will blow away from the wheat and the heavier wheat will fall at our feet. We're supposed to do something with it, according to Verse 17. We're supposed *"to gather that wheat into the barn or the garner."*

What are we supposed to do with the chaff? *"Burn it up."* If we don't what would happen? It would go back in and mix with the wheat. We're being told in vivid imagery how you and I are to deal with our thinking. To discipline it away

from dualism to the commitment to One, as we see Jesus and his example throughout his life.

The equation that he used and solved daily was: *"If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light"* (Luke 11:34, 36). The single eye is not a double one. In fact, he gives us another equation:

$$\mathbf{EE} = \mathbf{DB}$$

("Evil Eye") = ("Dark Body")

That's the reverse kind of thinking. What does that stand for? "Evil eye," or if your eye is evil, your whole body will be filled with darkness.

Again, notice the parallel. A "single eye" results in a body filled with light. An evil eye equals a dark body. Your whole body is filled with darkness, a mental darkness. It comes from *"evil"* which is an exact opposite of *"single."*

You can derive from Jesus' comment his definition of the devil. It's anything that leaves us double-minded with diverse loyalties and divided thinking. *"A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand"* (Mark 3:24), and Jesus said, *"The kingdom is within us"* (Luke 17:21). If the kingdom-within us is divided, it's chaos, not kingdom. It's rebellion. It's riot. It's anarchy, not kingdom.

We find that John the Baptist sees quite clearly that Jesus' baptism is going to be mental. The Holy Ghost is going to separate good from evil if we are on our mental threshing floors utilizing the fan. That's our responsibility. Then the Holy Ghost's role is to do the separating out from human thinking anything that does not belong or reflect the divine nature.

What do we do with what's been separated out? That's what the fire's role is. In a way we come right down to that World War II song "You have got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don't mess with Mr. In-between." It's that messing with Mr. In-between that is the double-mindedness James talks about. He says, *"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways"* (James 1:8).