



## Part 8: Repent and Bear Fruit

### Matthew 3:1-12

#### Background on Prophets of the Bible

Prophet: someone who authentically recognizes God's active presence in our lives, challenges our current reality and points us back to the Heart of God

“In the prophets we see a story unfold that recounts how the people of Israel (and their neighbors) responded to God and his revelation to them. We see a tragic story of rebellion against God, followed by terrible consequences. Yet at the same time the prophets show us God’s great capacity for forgiveness reflected in his constant call for repentance and renewal of the hearts of his wayward people.” – Daniel Hays, *The Message of the Prophets* (p. 22)

#### Significance of John the Baptist

“John wasn’t just another religious zealot drumming up support for a new following. As a road must be cleared of obstacles before an approaching king, John is calling for the people to clear the obstacles out of their lives that might hinder their reception of the Lord. He calls for the people to get themselves ready—to prepare their heart and life—for the arrival of the Coming One with the kingdom of heaven.” – Michael Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew* (p. 132)

#### Three primary postures/responses from John's words in verses 5-12

“People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.”’

I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 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. 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. 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.” Matthew 3:5-12 (NIV)

1. Those who want to see the commotion
2. The religious leaders who are looking to police
3. Those who are ready to repent and living in line with the Coming Kingdom

*Big Idea:* God sends us prophets and messengers to prepare us to receive His Son and our best response is to repent, believe and bear fruit.

*Application Question:* What Kind of Fruit are you bearing in your life in this season?

### **Additional Reading**

*The Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values to Root Us in the Way of Jesus* by Rich Villodas

*Uncommon Ground: Living Faithfully In A World of Difference* by Tim Keller

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Do you agree with the definition of a prophet? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever experienced a prophet in your life? If so, what impact has that voice had in your life?
3. Is there anything new that you learned about John the Baptist from this week’s sermon? Why do you think that may be important for your understanding of the Story of God found in the Bible?
4. Why do you think it was important for John the Baptist to be linked to the story of Jesus?
5. As you do a quick evaluation of your posture in response to John the Baptist (Just there for the action, religious leader, one who is ready to repent) which one of the three options would you most resonate with?
6. How does this message impact your life as a disciple of Jesus this week and beyond?

### **Bibliography**

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