



Now How Are We Supposed to Act?

By Johnny Caruso on January 5, 2022

READING: Luke 3

The majority of John the Baptist's ministry is recorded in this chapter of Luke. It is obvious the powerful influence it had on the crowds. But they misunderstood what John's baptism was really about. John quickly informed the crowds that they were coming for the wrong reason. In verses 7-9, John calls them a brood of vipers because they thought the baptism of John was going to protect them from the upcoming judgment. This is a fast reminder to those of us who claim the name of Jesus but produce no fruit. Those trees (or people) will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

The crowds then asked in verses 10-14 what repentance looks like. *"What shall we do?"* John told the people to share with those less fortunate; to the tax collectors he said to collect only what was owed in taxes; and to the soldiers he said to be content with their wages. That last one is the hardest for a lot of people. It comes down to trusting in God's sovereignty for our lives. I think it is very interesting that when I talk about God's sovereignty there is always a "but." It is as if people think they have an exception--as if God is in charge of everyone else except the situation that exists in their lives.

Then perhaps the most familiar words of John the Baptist: Luke 3:16, *"John answered them all, saying, 'I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'"* John understood his calling and where he fit in the story of the gospel. In verse 17 John says, *"His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."* A winnowing fork looks much like a pitchfork and is used to scoop up the wheat, shake it, and then throw it into the air. The husk or chaff of the wheat is separated, and the wind blows it away.

Over the years I have observed many members of the church who call themselves Christians, but they live their lives contrary to the Word of God. They have excuses for the way they live. Please do not be fooled--every tree that does not produce the fruit of the Spirit will be cut down and thrown into the fire of damnation.

Repentance is necessary to have a relationship with Christ. Turning away from sinful ways is not always easy. Changing the habits we have become comfortable with can only happen with a changed heart and turning ourselves over to the Holy Spirit for renewal.

PRAYER: Lord, though we have accepted You as Lord and Savior we fall short of a life that You intended for us. We grieve You by our thoughts and actions, but we desire to serve and follow You. Father, please forgive us for You deserve no less than our best.

TOMORROW'S READING: Luke 4

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