

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 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. 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."

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

People began to wonder if this John the Baptizer was the Messiah. This atypical man dressed in camel hair and eating locusts was probably not who the Jews thought would be the Messiah but when he showed up they sensed a change was coming and they thought maybe this is the guy.

John goes on to tell them that he is not who they are waiting on, but rather someone else is on the way. One who will keep the good, the wheat from the gospel reading, and get rid of the bad, the chaff. Then Luke talks briefly about the baptism of Jesus and his anointing just to say that this is the one who you expect.

As we start to think about a new year, I'm not asking you to make resolutions, but instead think about what is the good, the wheat, and the chaff, the bad, that you want to get rid of this coming year?

What are the things that you are working for?

What are some things that you are looking forward to?

Jesus represents hope for the Jewish people. What represents hope for you?