

# Luke 3:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

## Analysis

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John declares: 'I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' John contrasts his water baptism (symbolizing repentance) with Messiah's Spirit baptism (effecting transformation). The phrase 'mightier than I' (Greek 'ischyroteros mou,' *ἰσχυρότερός μου*) emphasizes Christ's superior power and authority—John isn't worthy to loose His shoe latch. Spirit baptism is Pentecost's promise (Acts 1:5, 2:1-4), while fire baptism suggests both purifying judgment and refining power. Christ's baptism doesn't merely symbolize change but actually accomplishes it through the Holy Spirit's power.

## Historical Context

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Old Testament prophets promised Spirit outpouring in the messianic age (Joel 2:28-29, Ezekiel 36:25-27). John's announcement that Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit identified him as the one who would fulfill these prophecies. The 'fire' imagery recalls both purifying fire (Malachi 3:2-3) and judging fire (Matthew 3:12). Pentecost fulfilled this promise—tongues of fire appeared as the Spirit descended (Acts 2:3). John's ministry pointed beyond itself to Messiah's greater work.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does John's contrast between water baptism and Spirit baptism illustrate the difference between outward ritual and inward transformation?
2. What does the combination of Holy Spirit and fire baptism teach about both the purifying and judging aspects of Christ's work?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀπεκρίνατο ὁ Ἰωάννης ἀπασιν λέγων, Ἐγὼ μὲν  
answered G3588 John unto them all saying I indeed  
G611 G2491 G537 G3004 G1473 G3303

ὕδατι βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἔρχεται δὲ ὁ ἵσχυρότερός μου  
with water baptize you cometh but G3588 one mightier than I  
G5204 G907 G5209 G2064 G1161 G2478 G3450

οὐ εἰμὶ ικανὸς λῦσαι τὸν ίμάντα τῶν  
of whose not I am worthy to unloose the latchet G3588  
G3739 G3756 G1510 G2425 G3089 G2438 G3588

ὑποδημάτων αὐτὸς αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι  
shoes he he you baptize with Ghost  
G5266 G846 G846 G5209 G907 G1722 G4151

ἄγιω καὶ πυρί·  
the Holy and with fire  
G40 G2532 G4442

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 1:5** (Holy): For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

**Matthew 3:11** (Holy): I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

**John 1:33** (Holy): And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

**John 1:26** (Baptism): John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

**1 Corinthians 12:13** (Spirit): For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

**Isaiah 4:4** (Spirit): When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

**Isaiah 32:15** (Spirit): Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

**Proverbs 1:23** (Spirit): Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

**Zechariah 13:9** (Parallel theme): And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

**Acts 2:33** (Holy): Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.