

Matthew 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

John's baptism 'with water unto repentance' was preparatory and symbolic, pointing forward to the Messiah who 'shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' The Holy Spirit baptism represents regeneration and empowerment (Acts 2), while fire suggests both purification and judgment. John's confession 'whose shoes I am not worthy to bear' demonstrates humble recognition of Christ's infinite superiority.

Historical Context

Jewish ceremonial washings were common, but John's baptism was unique—a one-time act symbolizing repentance and commitment. The phrase about shoes refers to a slave's lowliest task. John declares himself unworthy of even menial service to Christ.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Have you experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit John prophesied?
2. How does John's humility before Christ challenge your own pride?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγὼ	μὲν	βαπτίσει	ὑμᾶς	ἐν	ὕδατι	εἰς	μετάνοιαν	ὁ
I	indeed	baptize	you	with	water	unto	repentance	G3588
G1473	G3303	G907	G5209	G1722	G5204	G1519	G3341	
δὲ	ὀπίσω	μου	ἐρχόμενος	ἰσχυρότερός	μου	ἐστίν,	οὗ	
but	after	I	he that cometh	mightier than	I	is	whose	
G1161	G3694	G3450	G2064	G2478	G3450	G2076	G3739	
οὐκ	εἰμὶ	ἱκανὸς	τὰ	ὑποδήματα	βαστάσαι·	αὐτὸς	ὑμᾶς	
not	I am	worthy	G3588	shoes	to bear	G846	you	
G3756	G1510	G2425		G5266	G941		G5209	
βαπτίσει	ἐν	πνεύματι	ἁγίῳ	καὶ	πυρί·			
baptize	with	Ghost	the Holy	and	with fire			
G907	G1722	G4151	G40	G2532	G4442			

Additional Cross-References

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.

Luke 3:16 (Holy): 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:

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

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.

Titus 3:5 (Holy): Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

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.

Matthew 3:6 (Baptism): And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Acts 19:4 (Repentance): Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Luke 1:17 (Spirit): And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Mark 1:4 (Repentance): John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.