**Proclamation of the Kingdom | Matthew 3:1-12**

John’s presence begins the order of Jesus’ ministry, taken from Mark. *What does the Kingdom of Heaven mean for you? How do we engage with that in our families, churches, and communities?*

The attire of John is meant to reflect the Prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8) and his promised return to usher the final fulfillment of God ‘s Kingdom*. What are you looking forward from Christ right now?*

Images of “good fruit” as an expression of “repentance” is throughout the New Testament*. How have you experienced this pattern of transformation in your life?*

What *do you do with these words: “Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown in the fire?”*

*What does your Christian baptism mean to you today?*

Digging deeper

**digging deeper**

**Ecumenical Advent Bible Sharing | December 8, 2022**

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea, and saying, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

A voice of one crying out in the desert,

Prepare the way of the Lord,

make straight his paths.

*John wore clothing made of camel's hair*

*and had a leather belt around his waist.*

*His food was locusts and wild honey.*

At that time Jerusalem, all Judea,

and the whole region around the Jordan

were going out to him

and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River

as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees

coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers!

Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

*Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.*

And do not presume to say to yourselves,

'We have Abraham as our father.'

For I tell you,

God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees.

*Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit*

*will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

I am baptizing you with water, for repentance,

but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I.

I am not worthy to carry his sandals.

*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

His winnowing fan is in his hand.

He will clear his threshing floor

and gather his wheat into his barn,

but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."