### Matthew

## Chapter 3

1It was back in those days that John the Immerser came preaching in the desert around Judea, 2saying:  
  
 ‘Repent, for the Kingdom [of God] has drawn near.’  
  
3He’s the one about whom the Prophet IsaiAh spoke, saying:  
  
 ‘A voice is calling out in the desert:  
  
 ‘Prepare the way for the Lord…  
 Before him, straighten the roads!’  
 [Isaiah 40:3]  
  
4John wore clothes made of camel’s hair, he had a thick leather belt around his waist, and what he ate was locusts and wild honey.  
  
5Then, [people from] JeruSalem (as well as from the rest of Judea and the area all around the JorDan) came to him 6to be immersed in the JorDan River, as they openly admitted their sins.  
  
7And when he saw many of the Pharisees and SadDucees coming to be immersed, he said to them:  
  
 ‘Children of vipers!  
  
 ‘Who has shown you the need to flee from the coming rage? 8You should first produce the [type of] fruit that proves you’re worthy of repentance!  
  
 9‘And don’t be so bold as to say, Our father is AbraHam; for I tell you that God can make children of AbraHam from these stones!  
  
 10‘Now the ax is already lying at the roots of the trees and every tree that isn’t producing good fruit is going to be cut down and thrown into the fire!  
  
 11‘Indeed, I dip you in water [as a sign of your] repentance. But the one who is coming behind me is greater than me… In fact, I’m unfit to remove his sandals!  
  
 ‘[When he arrives], he will immerse you in fire and Breath… 12Yes, he’ll [take] his shovel into his hands and completely clean up his threshing floor, then he will gather the ‘wheat’ into his storehouse and burn all the ‘chaff’ with a fire that can’t be extinguished!’  
  
13Then sometime later, Jesus came from Galilee to see John at the JorDan River in order to be immersed by him. 14But [John] tried to prevent him, saying:  
  
 ‘Since I’m the one who should be immersed by you; why are you coming to me?’  
  
15But Jesus told him:  
  
 ‘Let it be like this for now… This is the right thing for us to do, so we can fulfill all that’s righteous.’  
  
And at that, [John] no longer tried to stop him.  
  
16Well, after Jesus was immersed, immediately after he came up out of the water, {Look!} the heavens opened up before him, and [John] saw God’s Breath descending upon him [in the form of] a dove.  
  
17And {Look!} there was also a voice that came out of the sky that said:  
  
 ‘This is My dearly-loved Son, with whom I’m well pleased.’