

**JOHN THE BAPTIST**

You vipers' brood! Who warned you to escape from the coming retribution? Then prove your repentance by the fruit it bears. Already the axe is laid to the roots of the trees; and every tree that fails to produce good fruit shall be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptize you with water, for repentance sake...

*(JESUS picks up the baptismal bucket and looks at it curiously as JOHN continues.)*

But He who comes after me is mightier than I. I am not fit to take off his shoes.

*(JESUS lifts up one of his shoeless feet and looks at it bemusedly.)*

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire!

**JESUS**

*(Excitedly)*

Okay!

*(JOHN turns and sees JESUS standing there, holding out the baptismal bucket. JOHN is instantly abashed)*

**JOHN THE BAPTIST**

*(To JESUS, with wonder)*

Do you come to me?

**JESUS**

Yeah, I wanna get washed up.

**JOHN THE BAPTIST**

*(Kneels reverently before JESUS)*

I need rather to be baptized by you.

**JESUS**

*(Gently brings JOHN back to his feet)*

No, no. Let it be so for the present. We do well now to conform with all that God requires.

*#4 - Save the People*

*(During the following, as JESUS sings, JOHN baptizes him by giving him a light sponge bath. JESUS, clad only in his bright boxer shorts, seems to have the freshness and simplicity of one newborn.)*