So; you are calling a pastor – will you call John the Baptist?

Matthew calls John the Baptizer yet emphasizes him as an OT prophet and preacher

The unique appearance and message of John makes certain: *He is Elijah to come* – come to turn hearts to God EXCEPT

* Pharisees
* Sadducees

The Pharisees and the Sadducees approach John with the intention of a baptism as something they do instead of God

* Confession cannot be false, uncertain, or fragmentary
* Our satisfaction for sin also cannot be uncertain

The Pharisees and the Sadducees are covenantal nomists

* Second temple theology is a deadly form of synergism thinking atonement is possible through a cafeteria of self-empowered behavioral expressions of covenant loyalty
  + Temple sacrifice
  + Prayer
  + Obedience to the law and perfection through works
  + Suffering
  + Martyrs death
  + Tithing
  + Sabbath observance
* Note that the subjects of this list form the basis of contention with Jesus in the NT

The response of John to the nomialism and synergism of the Jews is familiar - *the axe is laid to the root of such trees*

John is an end times preacher

* His message is for all lost sheep – repent – turn to genuine faith
* Jesus is the only one who is God and does what God does
* Baptism is our down payment for our final inheritance on the last day
* In this life; we are saint and sinner - we live out our baptism daily in repentance