

§15: JOHN'S PREACHING OF REPENTANCE

Matt. 3:7–10; Luke 3:7–9

Matt. 3:7–10	Luke 3:7–9
<p>7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them: O offspring of vipers! Who warned [or, directed] you to flee from the coming wrath?</p> <p>8 Therefore, bring forth fruit corresponding to repentance.</p> <p>9 And do not suppose (you are) to say to yourselves: We have Abraham as father! For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.</p> <p>10 And the ax is already laid at the root of the tree. Every tree therefore not bearing good fruit is cut down and thrown into fire.</p>	<p>7 He was saying therefore to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him: O offspring of vipers! Who warned [or, directed] you to flee from the coming wrath!</p> <p>8 Therefore, bring forth fruits corresponding to repentance.</p> <p>And do not begin to say to yourselves: We have Abraham as father! For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.</p> <p>9 And also the ax is already laid at the root of the tree. Every tree therefore not bearing good fruit is cut down and thrown into fire.</p>

Notes

1. **Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 3:7).** The development of Jewish parties took place in the “inter-testamental” period, probably sometime during the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C. The Pharisees were composed of scribes, lawyers, some priests (mostly of the lower ranks) and laymen. They held to the so-called “oral law” (Halakah), the traditions of the elders which they claimed had been handed down from generation to generation from the time of Moses. The oral law supplemented and explained the written law (Torah), according to the Pharisees, but Jesus takes issue with them on this point frequently. The Sadducees were primarily aristocrats who were dominated by political interests. They were concerned with maintaining the status quo particularly in regard to the Temple and its services. When the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D. the party of the Sadducees basically ceased to exist. The religious difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees is given in Acts 23:8 (see also Mk. 12:18,28).

2. **Offspring of vipers (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7).** The word offspring here can also be translated “brood.” The word translated viper usually designates a poisonous snake. It is used also in Matt. 12:34; 23:33; Luke 3:7; Acts 28:3.