

Fruits of True Repentance, Part 1

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Matthew 3:7-12.
- B. John the Baptist issued a critique against shallow religion.
- C. John's baptism was for preparing people for the coming of Christ. (Acts 4:19; 19; Luke 3)
- D. There are five elements in the narrative of John the Baptist.

II. The congregation.

- A. Matthew singles out a special group from the multitudes: Pharisees and Sadducees.
- B. There were three sects within Judaism at the time of Jesus: Pharisees, Essenes and Sadducees.
- C. The Pharisees were successors to a pietism movement that arose during the Intertestamental period. They isolated themselves from anyone they viewed to be unclean.
- D. The Sadducees were the high priestly class.
 - 1. They did not believe in the resurrection.
 - 2. They believed that Scripture and human code were two valid authorities. They gave special authority to the first five books of the Old Testament.
 - 3. The Sadducees rejected divine decree. Pharisees accepted divine decree and human freedom.
- E. Pharisees and Sadducees came together over their hate of Jesus Christ.
- F. The Pharisees and Sadducees both relied on self-effort to please God. They were part of the religion of human achievement. (Matthew 27:18)

III. The confrontation.

- A. John calls the Pharisees and Sadducees deceitfully poisonous snakes. (Matthew 12:34; 23:33)
- B. John confronts them by asking who chased them out to the wilderness. The answer was Satan.

IV. The condemnation.

- A. John recognizes their phoniness and demands fruit of repentance.
- B. The fruit of repentance is a changed life. (Acts 26:20, Jeremiah 33:18, Isaiah 1:16)
- C. Abraham was not the Jews' passport to heaven.

V. The confirmation.

VI. The consolation.

Application Questions:

1. How would you distinguish the Pharisees and the Sadducees?

2. What did the two groups have in common?

3. Why is self-effort a deadly thing in religion?
