



## World Christian Fellowship

[www.wcflondon.com](http://www.wcflondon.com)  
[wcflondon@gmail.com](mailto:wcflondon@gmail.com)

### **Matthew 3:7-9** **King by Messenger.**

**Matthew 3:7-8,** *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,*

Matthew is presenting Jesus Christ as the king in his Gospel.  
Not only as the king, but as the king of kings.  
Not only as the king of kings, but as the anointed of God.

That is his intention; and, in so doing, everything sort of focuses on that reality.

In chapter 1, Matthew presented Jesus as King by virtue of His birth. He showed us the royal character of Jesus' birth.

In Matthew chapter 2, he presented Him as King by virtue of the circumstances that surrounded His birth. The magi, Parthian king makers acknowledge Him as King. The hatred of Herod. was an acknowledging that He was a king and a threat to Herod's own throne.

The fulfilment of the Old Testament prophetic Word. The Old Testament prophecies that pointed to the King in specifics were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Matthew has one other approach here in the beginning of his gospel to show us that He was a king.

Israel was lost in sin. Israel was unworthy of the King and, thus, unable to inherit the kingdom.

Baptism that was done on Gentile proselytes who were coming into the Jewish faith. By offering a baptism John was in effect saying to them, "You are no better off than a Gentile. Apart from God you are a non-subject in His kingdom, and you cannot receive His King."

They needed to do what any Gentile needed to do. They needed to repent, be converted, and the outward sign of that inward washing was to be baptized.

John was calling for a fundamental change. He was calling for a tremendous and total transformation. They were sinful and filthy, and they needed cleansing to be ready for the Messiah.

John was preparing people for the coming of Messiah. This was a baptism of preparation. This was a baptism which symbolized an inward confession and cleansing of sin.

Apostle Paul comes to Ephesus. Spoke to the people in the church. These people were some disciples of John the Baptist.

**Acts 19:1-3,** *And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples <sup>2</sup> he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup>And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”*

John's baptism made them a true Old Testament saint, but they needed to be made a true New Testament saint.

**Acts 19:4,** *Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”*

John's was a baptism of conversion and repentance. But it was not the conversion that was to come later when Christ came. It was a preparation for the coming of Christ.

When Christ came, it was needful for them to believe on Him to be saved.

**Acts 19:5-6,** *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>And when Paul had laid hands on*

*them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.*

Acts 19 is people who had become Old Testament saints in the true sense under John became New Testament saints under the ministry of the apostle Paul.

When they confessed their sins and set their hearts right before God under John, they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ when He arrived. Then that was that which John was preparing them for.

This portion of Scripture is one of the clearest presentations of genuine saving repentance in all of the New Testament.

**V 5-6, People were coming from Jerusalem and Judea.**

They were excited about the coming of Messiah.

Many of them were genuine.

They wanted to get their lives right.

They wanted to really confess their sin.

They wanted to repent and be converted and get ready and receive the King and His kingdom.

They were listening, converted, baptized, and they were ready for the King.

But not all were so genuine.

*V 7, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism.*

Holy Spirit through Matthew singles out this special congregation of Pharisees and Sadducees.

They came for the purpose of being baptized.

When we study the New Testament, the gospel records constantly mention the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Sometimes they are designated as the chief priests and elders, but usually those people were either Pharisees or Sadducees.

Who are they?

Why did they come?

Were they sincere?

What was really on their minds?

Judaism at that time, had three special little groups/sects.

1. Pharisees, larger group
2. Sadducees
3. Essenes

We know very little about Essenes from the New Testament, although archeologically we have discovered some interesting things about them. The reason we do not know much about them is because they lived way out in the desert and they were

sort of like hermits. It was their copying of the Scriptures that left us with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Pharisees and the Sadducees played an important part in the gospel record because they were in the mainstream of Jewish life.

## **Pharisees**

They were successors to a group known as the Hasidim.

The Hasidim means “the pious” or “the saints.”

There was a period between the Old and the New Testament of 400-year period known as the inter-testament period. During that period, we have a lot of information from the history of that period because of some books that are called the Apocrypha. They are not inspired books, but they are books that give us a little information about history.

During that 400 years, Greeks ruled in Israel. The Jews got really upset about the way the Greeks ruled. **Antiochus Epiphanes**, who was a Greek ruler in Israel, who was horrible. He went inside the temple and slaughtered a pig on the altar and stuffed the pork down the priest's throat. The Bible had forbidden them to eat pork and he made a mockery out of it.

During this period of Greek rule there arose in Judaism a group called the Hasidim. These were the pious, the dedicated, the devout, the consecrated, and the spiritual ones.

They literally despised Greek culture and custom. They wanted to adhere steadfastly to the principles of Judaism. They were devout and pious, and they were also super patriotic.

They aided and encouraged the Maccabean Revolution where Judas Maccabeus, who was a Jew, and his sons got a revolt together. They were part of the heroic struggle because at first the Maccabean Revolution was propagated basically by religious conviction. It was propagated because, those Jews felt this was a desecration of the sacredness of their religion and their land. So, the Hasidim, although they were devout, spiritual, pious, almost mystical people, supported the revolution because they were so zealous for the sacredness of their country.

Later, the Maccabean Revolution got a new leader **John Hyrcanus**, and he began to pervert the real motive and it became political with him. He secularized the revolution.

The Hasidim pulled out of it. They lost all interest in it. They violently opposed the descendants of those they had supported in the revolution.

Now, scholars feel that the Pharisees are the descendants of the Hasidim, that by the time of Christ this would be the reorganized Hasidim, or this would be the reformed Hasidim under a new name.

Pharisee is a word that means “separatist.”

- They saw themselves as the most devout.
- They were so pious and super spiritual and separated.
- They separated themselves from the Gentiles.
- They separated themselves from publicans, tax collectors.
- They separated themselves from sinners.
- They separated themselves from Jewish people who were even indifferent to their causes.

**John 7:49**, *But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”*

They looked at them with disdain.

They separated themselves from everybody who was not what they were.

They did not want to become contaminated or defiled by associating with anybody or anything that was in any way ceremonially unclean.

By the time it got to the reorganized Pharisees, they perverted everything.

- There was no inward life left.
- There was no real devotion.
- There was no real consecration.
- There was no real piety.
- There was no real godliness.

It was all an external to set themselves above everybody else as the real super spiritual people. They were self-righteousness. They withdrew themselves.

**Luke 7:39**, *Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."*

They tried to condemn Jesus for even going near sinners. They blasted Him for hanging around drunkards, winebibbers, and sinners, and any of those kinds of people. They tried to force Jesus into their same kind of fanatical self-righteousness.

The historians tell us that when they returned from the marketplace, they immediately performed a series of washings. Before they would ever eat anything,

**Mark 7:4**, *When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.*

They performed these washings because they were afraid that they may have bumped against somebody while they were in the marketplace who was an unclean person.

By the time of Christ, the whole concept of patriotism was gone. They had lost their patriotism. Departed with the Hasidim. They had lost their true piety. They were nothing but shameful hypocrites.

They had an influence that they no longer deserved and which they harmfully abused, lording it over the people. Jesus really attacked them.

Jesus does not condemn people.  
Jesus condemns sin in the gospels.

There was only one person or one group of people that He really condemned with scathing words and they were the religious hypocrites of His day.

He forgave people taken in adultery.  
He dealt with sin and never damned sinners until it came to the religious hypocrites, and He let them have it.

Jesus last message in Matthew 23, He unleashed an outburst against them. So, they were the spiritual hypocrites. There were lots of them.

### **Sadducees:**

We do not know what the word comes from. There are all kinds of possibilities.

Maybe the best one would be the fact that in the Old Testament, 1 Kings 1, there was a high priest by the name of Zadok.

Some scholars believe that they took this name Zadok and from it they got Sadducee, because they were basically the high priestly class. We do not know that that is true.

They were the opposite to the Pharisees because they were the compromisers.

- They did not particularly care about the intrusion of Greek culture.
- They did not have any problem in observing Greek customs.
- They were the ones who courted, influenced with Rome to get everything they could out of it.
- The high priests at the time of Jesus were Sadducees.
- They were compromisers.
- They did not believe in any resurrection, so they did not have to worry about how they lived because there were not any consequences.

They did everything they could politically to make sure they got out of Rome all they could get, and they played the political game to get into the seats of power.

They were few but extremely wealthy.

The term chief priest, the New Testament, is almost a synonym for the Sadducees. Their big thing was to make money, and they ran the temple franchises.

They had big business in the temple. When certain feast time came pilgrims from other countries, to make sacrifices. The first thing they had to do was exchange their money, because they had to buy sacrificial animals.

In the temple they sold everything, the doves, the pigeons, the goats, and the sheep. They sold it all there. When these pilgrims would come to the temple, they would have to exchange their money to trade in Jerusalem. The place they exchanged their money was at the temple. They were charged an exorbitant interest to change the money.

When they went to buy the animals, they paid heavily overpriced animals and the Sadducees were getting wealthier and wealthier.

That is why Jesus went in with a whip and cleaned them out. When He cleaned the thing out, He alienated the Sadducees because that was their business that He was messing with. People like Annas and Caiaphas hated Him for the rest of the time that He lived and ministered, until finally they got Him to the cross.

So they were wealthy, they were political, they were influential, and many of them were in the Sanhedrin, and they were very sympathetic to Rome. The Pharisees were a lot more popular with the people because the Pharisees were at least sort of minimally patriotic, whereas the Sadducees were hated by the people for the most part because they kowtowed to their conquerors.

## **Differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.**

### **1. Resurrection**

*Acts 23:6-9, But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!" <sup>7</sup> And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. <sup>8</sup> For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. <sup>9</sup> Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."*

A Pharisee literally lived for the resurrection. He spent his whole life keeping every little, minute aspect of the law. Hoping

that someday when it was over, he would be in the resurrection, glorified.

Pharisees said no to everything in this life so they thought they could get God in a position to have to say yes to everything in the life to come. You do not live the way they lived unless you figure you are going to get it later.

The Sadducees did not even believe in the resurrection, so they just made it while they could.

They did not believe in any resurrection.

They did not believe in anything spiritual.

They did not believe in any angels.

They believed everything was here and now in the physical world and that was it.

First, they differed over eternity, the future.

## **2. Scripture**

The Pharisees recognized two standards of divine truth.

One was the Old Testament and the second was oral tradition.

Like the Roman Catholic Church where you have Scripture plus tradition. They believed that the Scriptures, that was one way we got God's revelation and, secondly, by oral tradition.

They had added to the Scripture oral tradition from rabbis through the centuries to make up their laws and codes.

When Jesus confronted them in Matthew 15, He said the Pharisees have corrupted up the law of God with their tradition. But they believed in two sources.

The Sadducees, on the other hand, believed in only one. In fact, they believed that only the Scripture, not tradition, not oral tradition. They rejected all that extra, all those ceremonies that had been added to the Old Testament.

They believed that only the five books of Moses were the ones that were superior, so that they put the Pentateuch even over the rest of the Old Testament. They thought the Old Testament was important, but the five books of Moses were even more important. So, there was a difference there.

### **3. Sovereign will of God**

Sovereignty and free will.

The Essenes were the hard-line sovereignty.

No freedom.

You do not have any choice.

It is all God laid it and nobody has got anything to do with freedoms.

The Sadducees totally rejected a divine decree. They were the ancient Armenians. It is a big free-for-all.

The middle path were the Pharisees. They believed in divine decree and man's freedom.

Do you realize that all throughout the history of the Pharisees and Sadducees, they never had anything in common except their mutual hate of Jesus Christ?

Amazing!

When John the Baptist came, they got together, because they saw somebody and a message that was a threat to their security.

The Sadducees faded out of existence in 70 A.D. When the destruction of the temple came, the Sadducees just faded out of existence.

The Pharisees come popping back a little while after and they are basically responsible for re-devising what is today known as reconstituted Judaism. They are the ones who kind of put it all back together again after the destruction of the temple.

### **Summary:**

- The Pharisee was a ritualist.
- The Sadducee was a rationalist.
  
- The Pharisee was a formalist.
- The Sadducee was a free thinker.

- The Pharisee was a separatist.
- The Sadducee was a sceptic.
  
- The Pharisee was a commoner.
- The Sadducee was an aristocrat.

Though they differed, they were yet in perfect agreement on one thing, and that one thing is this: You can achieve it by your own works!

For the Sadducee, man, it is all here and now, so get out there and get it any way you can get it.

For the Pharisee, it is all in the afterlife, but the way you get it there is to work like mad here with self-effort.

- The Sadducees working like crazy to get it now.
- The Pharisees working like crazy to get it later.

So, religion for them was self-effort, externalism.  
Suddenly John the Baptist comes into the scene.

John the Baptist came and spoke about their heart.  
Their emphasis was on the outside.  
John emphasis was on the inside.

Their emphasis was on the outside.  
Jesus' emphasis was on the inside.

**Matthew 23:27**, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.*

Jesus exposed the Pharisees for their externalism.

**Matthew 23:23**, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

Jesus did the same thing to the Sadducees with a whip when He threw them out of the temple. He alienated both groups. They hated Jesus, and they despised Jesus.

**Matthew 27:18**, *For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.*

They were jealous of Him. At last, they showed their real unity.

There are only two religions in the world:

- The religion of divine accomplishment and
- The religion of human achievement.

**Matthew 16:6**, *Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”*

## **Do we have Pharisees and Sadducees today?**

Of course!

The ritualists are the legalists.

The rationalists are the liberals.

The ritualists are the people who tell us that if we go through enough beads we will be saved. The ritualists are the people who tell us if we just do certain ceremonies on the outside, we are all right.

The rationalists are the ones who tell us the Bible is not really the Word of God. You must feel God in your own personal way. Jesus is not really God incarnate. He is just a good man to follow.

Although they differ greatly, they both are the religion of human achievement. Either by doing it or thinking it up!

### **If they are so bad and they are with their human achievement, why are they coming John to be baptized?**

Why are they coming to be baptized?

What do they want out of John?

The Bible does not tell us why they came.

They may have come because they were curious. The whole city of Jerusalem had come out there, so they need to figure it out.

The Bible tells us that all men perceive that John the Baptist was a prophet. They must have been intimidated by the population that thought this man was a prophet of God.

Maybe they even had some real questions because they had no prophetic word for 400 years.

Under the pressure of curiosity and the pressure of the people believing he was a prophet, they showed up.

They probably wanted to get in on the movement so they could move to the top and take it over. We have got that in Christianity today. We have got all kinds of people running churches and running organizations in Christianity who are not Christians. Satan moves these people in.

The apostle Paul told us that.

**Acts 20:29**, *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*

- Watch out for false teachers.
- Watch out for false apostles.
- Watch out for the people who want to come in and take over the church as false leaders.

They wanted to get in on it.

We can see they were all the wrong reasons.

There was no real repentance,

- no real confession of sin,
- no honest spirituality,
- no real search for God,
- no real heart-rending sorrow,
- no desire to get a heart that was sinful righteous,
- to get ready for the coming King and His kingdom.

They were self-righteous.

There was not any conversion, no transformation. They were just deceitful hypocrites.

When John saw them come for baptism, he indicted them.

*V 7, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

Now, that is a very direct approach.

- No diplomatic speech.
- No politically correct speaking.
- No sugar-coated speech.
- No joke!
- No dance!
- No entertainment.

*"You offspring of vipers."*

Our Lord Jesus must have liked that title for them because He used it a lot. It became rather common.

**Matthew 12:34**, *Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

**Matthew 23:33**, *Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*

### **What does he mean by that?**

He exposes in one expression the great and fatal sin that marked them. He condemns them instantly as religious hypocrites.

Viper refers to a small, poisonous desert snake, very familiar to John the Baptist. That snake was so deceitful. It looked like a dead branch or a little stick, and it would stay still and somebody gathering firewood, phew!

Exactly what happened on Malta in Acts 28.

**Acts 28:3**, *But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.*

That was the viper, deceitful. Suddenly it would strike and sink its teeth in and shoot its poison. Now, he does not call them just vipers but he calls them offspring of vipers, for they were

just the product of the people who preceded them. He really talked about the sin of their fathers.

- They were deadly hypocrites.
- They were poisoning a whole nation with their fatal deception.
- They were passing themselves off as if they were harmless and they were venomous.

John called them vipers because their own originator and their own leader was nothing but a viper himself, Satan.

**Revelation 12:9**, *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

**Revelation 20:2**, *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;*

Satan is seen as a serpent. He is a serpent in the Garden.

**John 8**, he is a deceiver. He is a liar.

*"Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

John knew the desert very well.

Small bushes which are dry lies in the desert and some time these are left after the harvest.

These stunted little bushes sometimes a desert fire would come. When a desert fire would break out, it would sweep like a river of flame across that dry grass and those brittle little thorny bushes.

Invariably, in front of that wall of fire would come scurrying these little vipers, and other little scorpions and desert creatures running for their lives.

During the time when the grain was growing, the snakes would hide in the grain. They would live there. They might endure the harvest. The field burning would come and if the field were being burned, we can see the little snakes fleeing across the desert in front of the fire.

John the Baptist faces the snakes and says, "What made you run to safety before the fires of judgment?"

**Do you see this picture?**

Very Graphic.

This is a blast of indictment.

**What brought you out of your holes?**

**What fire got you moving?**

John knew it was the fire of the judgment of God!

They were not moved by the fire of the judgment of God. They were chased out of their holes by Satan. The devil had pushed them out there to carry out their hypocrisy. Like snakes scurrying before a fire, they were running out there as chased by Satan. They should have been running out there running from the wrath of God with real repentance.

*"who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

It was the wrath to come that he was talking about. The word wrath occurs 300 times in the Old Testament, many times in the New Testament - refers to God's judgment.

### **Who warned you about God's judgment?**

**V 8, *Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,***

John opens to them what must happen.

He saw the hypocrisy, he saw them pretending to be running from the wrath to come, as it were, fleeing to prepare for the Messiah.

He recognized their hypocrisy and so he gives them a true statement, a way that they can prove their genuineness.

If you are really running from the wrath to come, if you are really snakes scurrying before the fire, then let them show the fruit of your real repentance.

### **What are the fruits of repentance?**

A transformed life.

The apostle Paul replying to King Agrippa about his ministry.

**Acts 26:20**, *but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.*

### **Do you have the works of repentance?**

#### **What are the works of repentance?**

Same Message by John as recorded by Luke.

**Luke 3:7-8**, *Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

**Luke 3:10-14**, *So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"<sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."<sup>12</sup> Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"*

*<sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." <sup>14</sup> Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."*

John was saying to them is that there ought to be a change in your lifestyle.

- Stop doing what you used to do.
- Do righteous things, not unrighteous things.
- Be loving and sharing and kind.

He says to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, if you got two coats, give one to somebody.

If you have got food, give it to somebody who is hungry.  
Let me see something in your life.

This is what exactly what James says in his letter.

**James 2:17**, *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

You will never prove true repentance unless the fruit of repentance and the work of repentance is visible. True repentance will manifest a changed life.

**V 8**, *Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.*

That Greek word means "of equal weight."

There ought to be works that are of equal weight with repentance so you can see it is legitimate.

This was not true of them, and he knew it, they knew it, and everybody around knew it.

Those Jews knew repentance. They knew it inside out and upside down. Repentance was a part of their life. It was central to their thought. It was central to their theology, central to the Old Testament.

The Old Testament was literally loaded with words calling the Jew to repentance, to changing his life, to eliminating sin and in its place, establishing righteousness.

**Ezekiel 33:18-19**, *When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. <sup>19</sup> But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it.*

They knew what the standard of God was. There was never a question about it at all - turning from sin, turning to God.

**Hosea 14:1-2**, *O Israel, return to the Lord your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity; <sup>2</sup> Take words with you, And return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.*

**Jonah 3:10**, *Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.*

You want to know something wonderful about that verse? - that it says that God saw their - What? - works. You know how God evaluates repentance? Listen to me.

### **Do you know how God evaluates repentance?**

By your works, your fruit.

- It does not say God read their thoughts.
- It does not say God heard their prayers.
- It says God saw their works.

The Jewish teachers used to teach that one of the most important verses in the Old Testament was Isaiah.

**Isaiah 1:16-17**, *“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, <sup>17</sup>Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.*

That is a fabulous thing!

You see how it all starts.

- First you wash yourself,
- You make yourself clean,
- You put away evil from before your eyes,
- You cease to do evil.

- You learn to do well.
- You seek justice.

It starts inside then it works outside and then you relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow, and it all lines up in works.

The Jews knew repentance. They knew it not as a sentimental sorrow, but as a real transformation of life.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees should have known the fruits of repentance. They should have known the works of repentance.

John the Baptist says to them, "Bring forth, therefore, fruits befitting your repentance." The rabbis used to teach that the gates of repentance never close. Such is the mercy of God that He will receive even secret repentance.

*"It is the way of the world when a man has insulted his fellow in public, and after a time seeks to be reconciled to him, that the others say, 'You insult me publicly and now you would be reconciled to me between us two alone? Go bring the man in whose presence you insulted me, and I will be reconciled to you.' But God is not so. A man may stand and rail and blaspheme in the marketplace and the Holy One says to him, 'Repent between us two alone and I will receive you.'"* **Rabbi Eleazar.**

Jewish Rabbi told that "Repentance is like the sea. A man can bathe in it any hour."

The rabbis said, "Great is repentance for it brings healing upon the world. Great is repentance for it reaches to the throne of God." The law was created 2,000 years before creation, but repentance was created before that."

The rabbis said, "A man can shoot an arrow for a few furlongs, but repentance reaches to the throne of God. And to the Jews repentance is the gateway to God."

They knew what real repentance was. **Maimonides**, that great Jewish scholar of medieval times, defines repentance and traditional Judaistic terms with these words:

*"What is repentance? Repentance is that the sinner forsakes his sin, puts it out of his thoughts and fully resolves in his mind that he will never do it again."*

The rabbis always felt that God would take a man, no matter what he had done in the marketplace, and if he repented, God would forgive him in private, if no one ever knew. He did not have to go back and set all the records straight. So, these Pharisees and Sadducees, they knew that. Repentance was extended to them. The opportunity was there. It was available.

Giving you the opportunity to bring forth fruits befitting repentance.

V 8 is an invitation and an indictment.