

1. **Pray:** ask God to open your mind, soul and spirit to His teaching through His Word
2. **Think:** the questions are designed to expand your knowledge of God and His Word
3. **Begin:** using only your Bible, answer the questions without other outside sources

Lesson Three: Matthew 3:1–17

September 27, 2006

1. Who was John the Baptist? See Mark 1:1–8; Luke 3:1–20; John 1:15–34 to help with your answer.

2. What two messages did John come preaching?

3. a) Describe John's appearance according to verse 4.

b) Give a modern picture of how John would appear if he came today.

4. Was John's message successful? Use scripture to verify your answer.
(The verses from question 1 may help.)

Instructional note regarding Pharisees and Sadducees: These were two prominent groups in Judaism. Their beliefs were very different from each other, but both considered themselves as true followers of Judaism. The **Pharisees** were primarily laymen and they held not only to the Law of Moses and Scriptures, but also to a whole body of oral tradition¹. Their major function was the teaching and preaching of the Law and they practiced holiness based on observation of the Law². Paul was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:5). The **Sadducees** were associated with the priestly caste for whom worship was centered in the synagogue. They denied the validity of oral tradition espoused by the Pharisees. They rejected beliefs in resurrection (Acts 4:1–2), immortality, and angels—a factor which frequently brought conflicts between the two groups (Acts 23:8–10).

Reference:

¹Nelson

²Bible Life

5. a) What did John the Baptist call the Pharisees and Sadducees?
- b) What was John's message to the Pharisees and Sadducees in verses 7–10?
- c) How would God define your faith beliefs? For example—what law do you follow or what tradition? What do you believe about resurrection, immortality and angels? Why do you believe the way you do?
- d) What metaphor would John the Baptist use to describe you if he met you on the street? Why?
6. John's baptism was of water for repentance (v. 11) and John states a more powerful one coming will baptize with the _____ and with _____. What do you think are the differences in these baptisms?
7. Jesus wanted to be baptized to "fulfill all righteousness". What do you **think** this means and why would Jesus need baptism? (This is hard, but try and reason this without commentaries.)

Going Deeper:

8. What is the significance of verses 16–17? Be very thorough.