

STUDYING THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lesson 6 - John the Baptist Prepares the Way - Matthew 3:1-12

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

MT 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea [2] and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." [3] This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.' "

MT 3:4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. [5] People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. [6] Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

MT 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? [8] Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. [9] And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. [10] The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

MT 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. [12] His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 6 - John the Baptist Prepares the Way - Matthew 3:1-12

62. What famous preacher is described in this passage? (3:1)
63. Where was John the Baptist's "sanctuary" or "pulpit"? (3:1)
64. What was John's message? (3:2)
65. Why was John's ministry significant? (3:3)

66. What did John look like? (3:4)
67. What kind of unusual diet did John follow? (3:4)
68. How did people receive John's message? (3:5)
69. Besides strong preaching, what went on at John's "desert revival meetings"? (3:6)
70. Where did John perform his baptisms? Who came? (3:5-6)
71. What kinds of religious leaders came to listen to John? (3:7)
72. What harsh name did John call the religious leaders? Why? (3:7-10)
73. What was John's message to the local "men of the cloth"? (3:7-10)
74. What was the purpose of John's water baptism? (3:11)
75. How did John compare himself to the one who would come after him? (3:11)
76. How did John describe the type of baptism Jesus would bring? (3:11)
77. With what images did John describe Jesus? (3:12)
78. What does it mean to repent?

Lesson 7- The Baptism of Jesus - Matthew 3:13-17

MT 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. [14] But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

MT 3:15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

MT 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. [17] And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 7- The Baptism of Jesus - Matthew 3:13-17

79. Where did Jesus come from? Why? (3:13)

80. Why did Jesus leave Galilee and travel to the Jordan River? (3:13)
81. How did John react to Jesus' request? (3:14)
82. What exactly did John say to Jesus? (3:14)
83. How did Jesus respond to John's reluctance? (3:15)
84. Why was it important for John to comply with Jesus' request? (3:15)
85. What change took place in heaven after the baptism of Jesus? (3:16)
86. How did the Spirit of God play a role in the baptism of Jesus? (3:16)
87. What was the Spirit's appearance? (3:16)
88. What kind of voice was heard at the baptism of Jesus? (3:17)
89. What was the relationship between Jesus and the Father? (3:17)
90. What did God the Father say about Jesus? (3:17)