

Jesus Discusses Various Topics

John the Baptist Commended

August, 27 A.D.

Matthew 11:2-15

Luke 7:18-30

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Texts:

Matthew 11:2-15,

- 2. When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples**
- 3. to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”**
- 4. Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see:**
- 5. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.**
- 6. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”**
- 7. As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?**
- 8. If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces.**
- 9. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.**
- 10. This is the one about whom it is written: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’**
- 11. I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**
- 12. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.**

13. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

14. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.

15. He who has ears, let him hear.

Luke 7:18-30,

18. And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.

19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another?

20. When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another?

21. And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

23. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Commentary:

I. When John heard in the prison through his disciples the works of Christ he sent two (2) of his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the Christ or look we for another?”

A. John was in prison because he had preached that it was sinful for Herod to be living with, be married to his brother Philip’s wife, Herodias.

B. Before John was arrested he forcefully proclaimed to all that Jesus was indeed the Christ.

C. John performed no miracles, but he preached powerfully. **John 10:41, and many people came to him. They said, “Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true.”**

D. John languishing in prison came to wonder if Jesus were indeed the Christ.

1. On occasion we along with John and Thomas may entertain our doubts.
2. Jesus had made no move to free John.
3. John was suffering cruel and unjust punishment and may have been expecting martyrdom.
4. Jesus at this time was not publicly proclaiming his deity as John may have expected.

5. John may not have understood that Jesus did not dogmatically proclaim his deity lest he be prematurely arrested and crucified for sedition rather than for his teaching and divine person.

E. John through his disciples took his question straight to Jesus. This is what we should do as well.

II. Jesus told John's disciples to tell John what they had seen and heard from his ministry.

A. Isaiah 35:5, Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

B. Miracles:

1. the blind receive their sight.
2. the lame walk.
3. the lepers are (ceremonially) cleaned, healed.
4. the deaf hear.
5. the dead are raised, evidently more than the three (3) which are recorded in scripture.
6. the poor have the gospel preached to them.

C. The miracles listed by Jesus were those foretold by Isaiah as being characteristic of the Messiah.

1. Isaiah 35:5, 6, Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

2. Isaiah 61:1, The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

3. Luke 7:21, At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.

4. John 10:41, and many people came to him. They said, “Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true.”

D. The gospel was preached to the poor (in spirit).

1. Romans 1:16, I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

III. Jesus speaking in general but of John the Baptist in particular said, “Blessed is he who shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.”

A. Blessed is he who shall not doubt that I am the Christ.

B. John made no other inquiries of Jesus’ Messiahship. He accepted the evidence presented by Jesus.

IV. When John’s disciples had departed to return to John with the message Jesus gave them, Jesus began to highly praise John to the assembled multitude.

A. Those who flocked to the wilderness to hear John did not see a weak reed bending to every wind that blew.

B. John was not a trivial, minor, unstable curiosity vacillating with every political and ecclesiastical wind the blew.

C. John stood firm for God. Jesus would do the same.

D. Jesus here praised John more than he praised any other person at any time during his ministry.

E. John was not a delicate effeminate person clothed in soft fine attire. He wore a leather girdle about his loins and ate locusts and wild honey.

F. John attracted multitudes who realized he was a great prophet.

G. John was more than a prophet who not only foretold the coming of the Messiah but personally identified him and introduced him to the multitudes.

H. Jesus said John was the fulfillment of **Malachi 3:1**, **“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,”** says the **Lord Almighty**.

I. John was the messenger who was to be sent before the face of the Messiah.

J. John as a human had no superiors. **Luke 1:15**, **John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”**

K. These who are least in the kingdom of God (the church) are greater than John because of the blessings available in the church and the spiritual relationship of Christians to Jesus. John was clearly not in the kingdom because it had not then been established.

L. The publicans believed John was a true prophet and submitted to his baptism. The religious establishment rejected both John and his baptism. Sinners glorified God in this way while the religious leaders rejected both John and his baptism.

M. This is why (through obedience and belief) the publicans and harlots entered the kingdom of God before the Pharisees.

V. Beginning with the time of John the Baptist and continuing until the time Jesus was then speaking the kingdom of heaven suffered violence and men of violence took it by force.

A. Jesus here pictured the kingdom of heaven as a besieged city with the enemy storming its walls trying to force entrance so that the city could be taken and destroyed.

B. On every side the religious and political leaders such as Herod were set on destroying the work of John and Jesus.

1. The people in general, even the apostles, had erroneous views of the kingdom, many believing it would be an earthly kingdom with headquarters in Jerusalem.

VI. The prophets and the law were in force until John the Baptist came onto the scene.

A. At that time things began to change in a mighty way.

B. The establishment mightily opposed this change.

C. John was greater than the Old Testament prophets in his proximity to Christ, but he was not in the kingdom because it had not then been established.

D. Those in the kingdom have blessings which were not available to even John. He was, therefore, not as great as the least in the kingdom.

E. John was the Elijah who, according to Old Testament prophecies, was to come before the appearance of the Messiah.

1. **Malachi 4:5, 6, “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”**

2. The Jews expected a literal return of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah.

3. **Matthew 17:3, Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.** (This was at the Transfiguration.)

4. Some of the disciples also were concerned that Elijah had not literally returned. They shared the common view in this matter.

5. Luke 1:17, And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

VII. Those who have ears are advised to listen, understand and heed the words of Christ.

A. The Pharisees and other religious leaders had ears, but they did not use them to listen and heed the words of Jesus.

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Questions

1. When _____ heard in _____ what _____ was doing, he sent his _____ to ask _____, "Are you the _____ who was to _____, or should we expect _____?"

2. Jesus replied, Tell John "The _____ receive _____, the _____, those who have _____ are _____, the _____ hear, the _____ are _____ and the _____ is preached to the _____."

3. When John's _____ were leaving Jesus addressed the crowd and said that John was more than a _____. John was also a _____." Among those _____ of _____ there has not risen anyone _____ than _____ the _____, yet he who is _____ in the _____ of _____ is _____ than he."

4. Why is the least in the kingdom greater than John? _____

5. All the people, even the _____, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been _____ by _____. The _____ and _____ in the _____ rejected God's purposes for themselves, because they had not been _____ by _____.