

Vindicating Wisdom

"Are You the One?"

Matthew 11:1-19

Adult Church School
July 20, 2020

Scripture Matthew 11:2-19

- ▶ ² John was in prison when he heard what Christ was doing. So John sent some of his followers ³ to ask Jesus, “Are you the one we should be looking for? Or must we wait for someone else?”
- ▶ ⁴ Jesus answered, “Go and tell John what you have heard and seen. ⁵ The blind are now able to see, and the lame can walk. People with leprosy^[b] are being healed, and the deaf can hear. The dead are raised to life, and the poor are hearing the good news. ⁶ God will bless everyone who doesn’t reject me because of what I do.”
- ▶ ⁷ As John’s followers were going away, Jesus spoke to the crowds about John:
- ▶ What sort of person did you go out into the desert to see? Was he like tall grass blown about by the wind? ⁸ What kind of man did you go out to see? Was he someone dressed in fine clothes? People who dress like that live in the king’s palace. ⁹ What did you really go out to see? Was he a prophet? He certainly was. I tell you that he was more than a prophet. ¹⁰ In the Scriptures God says about him, “I am sending my messenger ahead of you to get things ready for you.” ¹¹ I tell you that no one ever born on this earth is greater than John the Baptist. But whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John.
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Scripture Matthew 11:2-19

- ▶ ¹² From the time of John the Baptist until now, violent people have been trying to take over the kingdom of heaven by force. ¹³ All the Books of the Prophets and the Law of Moses^[c] told what was going to happen up to the time of John. ¹⁴ And if you believe them, John is Elijah, the prophet you are waiting for. ¹⁵ If you have ears, pay attention!
- ▶ ¹⁶ You people are like children sitting in the market and shouting to each other,
- ▶ ¹⁷ “We played the flute,
but you would not dance!
We sang a funeral song,
but you would not mourn!”
- ▶ ¹⁸ John the Baptist did not go around eating and drinking, and you said, “That man has a demon in him!” ¹⁹ But the Son of Man goes around eating and drinking, and you say, “That man eats and drinks too much! He is even a friend of tax collectors^[d] and sinners.” Yet Wisdom is shown to be right by what it does.

Focus of this Lesson

- ▶ Through **Jesus**, **God** was restoring His rule over His world, setting right what human rebellion had made wrong.
- ▶ **Matthew** put special focus on the surprising way in which God fulfilled His promises to Israel in **Jesus**.
- ▶ Review **Jesus'** criticism of the generation of His day for their lack of *wisdom* in the evaluation of both Him and **John the Baptist**.
- ▶ Determine where we need to improve in the exercise of *godly wisdom* in this day.

The Road Becomes Hard

- ▶ Jesus warned his disciples that their work on behalf of the kingdom of heaven will be greeted with resistance, outright conflict, false charges, and painful divisions even in their own families (Matt. 10:16-39)
- ▶ Jesus faced these forces of dissension himself. There were flare-ups of doubt and antagonism earlier, but now the conflict intensified, and the looming shadow of the cross will fall more heavily over Jesus.



John the Baptist



- ▶ **John's birth** was announced by an angel of the Lord.
- ▶ His **parents** were old when he was born.
- ▶ His **parents** named him **John** as told by the angel.
- ▶ He was a **Nazarene**. He was filled with the **Holy Spirit** from birth.
- ▶ He will go before the Lord in the spirit of **Elijah** to turn the hearts of men to the *wisdom of the righteous*.
- ▶ He baptized **Jesus** and saw the dove descend on Christ.

The Main Question: “Are You the One?”

- ▶ The first one in this section of Matthew’s Gospel to voice doubts about Jesus is His friend, John the Baptist.
- ▶ John has been arrested and was in Herod’s prison (Matt. 4:12).
- ▶ He sends Jesus a question by his followers and Matthew wants all his readers to consider the question,

“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”



Group Chat

- ▶ What has provoked doubt in John? Why does one who had such a high view of Jesus now question Him?
- ▶ What provokes doubt in you during this pandemic? Are John's doubts similar to your doubts?



Jesus Sends His Proof

(Matt. 11:4-5)

Jesus' Deeds

- ▶ Go and tell John what you hear and what you see:
 1. The **blind** receive their **sight**
 2. The **lame** walk
 3. The **lepers** are cleansed
 4. The **deaf** hear
 5. The **dead** are raised
 6. The **poor** have **good news** brought to them

Messianic Expectation

- ▶ To expect **God** to come only as a destroyer and not as a **savior** is to distort the essential message of the Old Testament and to miss the character of God.
- ▶ The true scriptural vision of the **messiah** is one who will bring a time of healing and deeds of mercy.

The Role of John the Baptist

- ▶ **John** represents all who are disappointed in **Jesus** because He fails to meet our expectations.
- ▶ Most of us are, on occasion, *impatient* with the ways of **God** in the world.
- ▶ We wish that **God** were more vigorous in punishing evil, swifter in response to prayer, clearer in renewing creation.



Part 2: (Matt.11:7-19)

Who Is John and Who Is Jesus?

John the Baptist

- ▶ Prophet - the last in the line of the great prophets.
- ▶ More than a prophet
- ▶ John was not a weak or vacillating individual.
- ▶ He did not wear fine clothes
- ▶ He neither eating nor drinking
- ▶ He is the Elijah who was to come.
- ▶ They say he has a demon

Jesus (The Son of Man)

- ▶ Came eating and drinking
- ▶ They say He is a glutton and a drunkard
- ▶ He is a friend of the tax collectors and sinners

Where Is Wisdom?

- ▶ Not only were some persons in the crowd beginning to doubt Jesus but some were starting to revise their estimation of John (vv. 7-8).
- ▶ Rejection of both John and Jesus is *inconsistent* and *hypocritical*, like children playing the marketplace who refuse to play the wedding and funeral games proposed by their companions.
- ▶ “This generation” did not respond to either Jesus or John even though each one proclaimed the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ John presented the message in a mournful style but this generation would not repent - they said he had a demon.
- ▶ Jesus came with merriment, kingdom joy and compassion. His ministry was one of eating and drinking with all sorts of people - they said he was a glutton and a drunkard.

Where Is the Wisdom

- ▶ The problem is in the packaging; John and Jesus do not look like saviors. They have the wrong diets, wrong music, the wrong companions, the wrong words.
- ▶ This generation is looking for hope, searching for salvation. But they cannot commit to either John or Jesus on stylistic grounds alone.
- ▶ Jesus knows this and hurls a proverb in their direction: “Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds (v. 19).

The Proof of the Kingdom is in the action, in what is happening in the world through Jesus.