

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

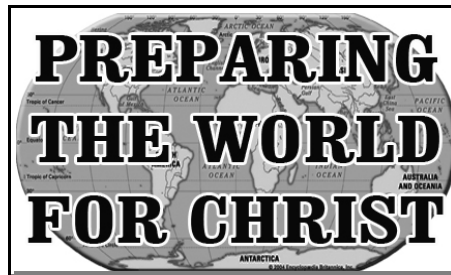
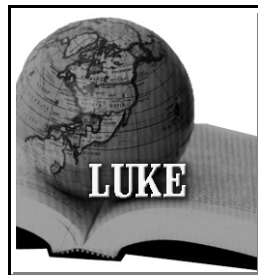
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 25

COMMENTARY ON: 7:19-35

JOHN SENDS DISCIPLES TO JESUS, AND JESUS SPEAKS OF JOHN

John had been in prison for some time – probably over a year. His disciples had been reporting to him concerning the activities of Jesus (Lk 7:18; John 3:36). Now, John's departure is at hand, and there are still disciples following him. He knows that he has to decrease, while Jesus increases (John 3:30), so he sends two of disciples to Jesus so they will know He is, in fact, the One for whom they had been waiting. He is not inquiring for Himself, for God had already revealed to Him that Jesus of Nazareth was the One for whom He was preparing the way. If He was not the One, John would have to be released from prison and continue preparing the way, and making ready a people for the Lord. The occasion we will be reviewing was not the expression of unbelief. In fact, Jesus will set John forth a premier man – *"more than a prophet."* The Lord also gave a synopsis of His ministry and affirm that the person who takes no offense, or is not annoyed by Him – whatever may occur is, in fact, *"blessed."* This was apparently His last word addressed to John the Baptist.

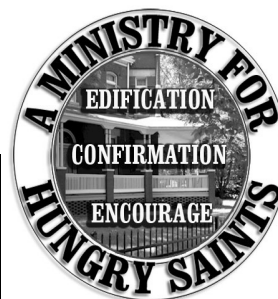


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 10/2/2015

Lesson Number 25



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1959), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JOHN SENDS DISCIPLES TO JESUS, AND JESUS SPEAKS OF JOHN

LUKE 7:19 "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 appparelled, 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. ³¹ And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? ³² They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. ³³ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. ³⁴ The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! ³⁵ But wisdom is justified of all her children." Luke 7:19-35

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

John had been in prison for some time – probably over a year. His disciples had been reporting to him concerning the activities of Jesus (Lk

7:18; John 3:36). Now, John's departure is at hand, and there are still disciples following him. He knows that he has to decrease, while Jesus increases (John 3:30), so he sends two

of disciples to Jesus so they will know He is, in fact, the One for whom they had been waiting. He is not inquiring for Himself, for God had already revealed to Him that Jesus of Nazareth was the

John sends his disciples to Jesus with a question; Jesus responds accordingly and speaks of John to the people – Given O. Blakely

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One for whom He was preparing the way. If He was not the One, John would have to be released from prison and continue preparing the way, and making ready a people for the Lord. **The occasion we will be reviewing was not the expression of unbelief.** In fact, Jesus will set John forth as a premier man – *"more than a prophet."* The Lord also gave a synopsis of His ministry and

affirmed that the person who takes no offense, or is not annoyed by Him – whatever may occur is, in fact, *"blessed."* This was apparently His last word addressed to John the Baptist.

This even has proved to be too challenging to some, who use it to make John more like contemporary men, while Jesus set him forth as a superior man. It is never right to assess a man differently that God and Christ have assessed them. It is wholly improper to diagnose a person who was filled with the Spirit as though he lived in contradiction of that fact.

In this lesson I will labor to present John as he is consistently presented by the Holy Spirit.

THE DIAGNOSIS OF MEN

In this text, Jesus will speak of how men diagnosed both John and Himself. **This confirms that the Lord does not ignore how people assess His Son, or those whom He sends.** Frankly, many men are too casual in their appraisal of God, Christ, the Prophets, and the Apostles – not to mention those who are in Christ Jesus. Much thinking about these has actually been shaped by men – not Scripture. The fact that this has, and is, taking place, confirms that we are living in a generation that is grossly ignorant of

the Scriptures – which is the only place we can find an intelligent presentation of the following. It also reveals fundamental disinterests in God and the things of God.

- ⇨ God.
- ⇨ Christ
- ⇨ The Holy Spirit
- ⇨ The purpose of God
- ⇨ The will of God
- ⇨ The nature of men outside of Christ.
- ⇨ The nature of men who are in Christ.
- ⇨ The obligations that have been laid upon men
- ⇨ The destiny of those who believe God.
- ⇨ The destiny of those who do not believe in God.

The only valid details and summations of these are expressed in Scripture. Any and all valid observations must be based on those revelations.

As simplistic as that may appear, a failure to recognize and conform to this is responsible for all division, sectarianism, false teaching, spiritual retardation, and drawing back to perdition.

In the Kingdom of God, proper reasoning is based upon the embrace of what God has affirmed about the various components of that reasoning.

JOHN SENDS TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES TO JESUS

LUKE 7:19 *"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?"*

JOHN SENDS TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES TO JESUS

"And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus . . ."

Remember, John is in prison. Yet,

from his place of confinement, he calls two of his disciples to himself. He was still thinking clearly, and was not cast down in his spirit. This was not a spiritually feeble man!

How did he get word to these disciples? It was doubtless by means of those who were visiting him. Also, Herod was, by Divine intention, lenient with John. In fact, even after John had rebuked Herod for his adultery, *"Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly"*

(Mark 6:20). Other versions read, *"When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him,"* ^{NIV} and *"For Herod had [a reverential] fear of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and [continually] kept him safe [under guard]. When he heard [John speak], he was much perplexed; and [yet] he heard him gladly."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This congenial frame of mind was the result of Divine initiative, and was doubtless the means the Lord used to allow John to continue to hear of Jesus and confer with and teach his disciples.

Calling two of his disciples was not the ordinary privilege of prisoners.

ART THOU HE?

" . . . 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?"

Matthew says of this occasion, *"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"* (Matt 11:2-3). It was the Lord who orchestrated this hearing, because He had not yet finished with John's work.

We know that at this point, many of John's disciples saw Jesus as a competitor, rather than the One for whom John was preparing the people (John 3:25-26).

There is a rather popular view that affirms this action was taken because John had become doubtful, and wanted to be assured that the One reported to Him was indeed the Messiah. This view is stated by the following commentators. There are many commentators who do NOT take this view. I understand that our understanding is not to be shaped by commentators. However, the power of the truth is seen in the fact that aberrant views can be overcome.

⇒ "HE WHO STOOD ON THE JEWISH SIDE OF THE THRESHOLD OF THE KINGDOM (VER. 11) DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE METHODS BY WHICH

THE KING WAS ACTING, AND THUS HIS FAITH WAS TRIED (COMP. TERTULLIAN, 'ADV. MARC.,' 4:18). IN THIS HE RECALLS HIS GREAT PROTOTYPE, WHOSE PLANS SEEMED TO HAVE FAILED AND HIS BOLDNESS TO HAVE DONE NO GOOD (1 KINGS 19:13, 14).^{PULPIT COMMENTARY}

⇒ "IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TO SATISFY HIS DISCIPLES THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH; OR HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN DESIROUS OF ASCERTAINING FOR HIMSELF WHETHER THIS PERSON, OF WHOM HE HEARD SO MUCH, WAS THE SAME ONE WHOM HE HAD BAPTIZED, AND WHOM HE KNEW TO BE THE MESSIAH."^{ALBERT BARNES}

⇒ "IT IS VERY PROBABLE THAT JOHN NOW BEGAN, THROUGH THE LENGTH OF HIS CONFINEMENT, TO ENTERTAIN DOUBTS, RELATIVE TO HIS KINGDOM, WHICH PERPLEXED AND HARASSED HIS MIND; AND HE TOOK THE MOST REASONABLE WAY TO GET RID OF THEM AT ONCE, VIZ. BY APPLYING TO CHRIST HIMSELF."^{ADAM CLARKE}

⇒ "JOHN'S DOUBT MIGHT ARISE FROM HIS OWN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. HE WAS A PRISONER, AND MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO THINK, IF JESUS BE INDEED THE MESSIAH, WHENCE IS IT THAT I, HIS FRIEND AND FORERUNNER, AM BROUGHT INTO THIS TROUBLE, AND AM LEFT TO BE SO LONG IN IT, AND HE NEVER LOOKS AFTER ME, NEVER VISITS ME, NOR SENDS TO ME, ENQUIRES NOT AFTER ME, DOES NOTHING EITHER TO SWEETEN MY IMPRISONMENT OR HASTEN MY ENLARGEMENT? DOUBTLESS THERE WAS A GOOD REASON WHY OUR LORD JESUS DID NOT GO TO JOHN IN PRISON, LEST THERE SHOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN A COMPACT BETWEEN THEM: BUT JOHN CONSTRUED IT INTO A NEGLECT, AND IT WAS PERHAPS A SHOCK TO HIS FAITH IN CHRIST."^{MATTHEW HENRY}

THE REAL SITUATION

- ⇒ John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Lk 1:15).
- ⇒ God had revealed to John how he would recognize the Son of God, for whom he was preparing the way (John 1:33).
- ⇒ He had seen the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus, and remain there – as God had told him (Matt 3:16-17).
- ⇒ He heard God speak from heaven affirming this was His Beloved Son (Mark 3:17; Mk 1:11).
- ⇒ He had received reports of His great working, preaching, and baptizing (Matt 11:2; Lk 7:17-18; John 3:26).
- ⇒ Jesus testified, *"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist"* (Luke 7:28).

Speaking for myself, I am not able to fit a doubtful John into those texts. Such a thought simply does not blend with what the Spirit says about John – and the Holy Spirit has said considerable about John the Baptist.

I see no sensible alternative to the persuasion that John was leading any who remained his disciples to join themselves to the One whom he was sent to introduce, preparing the people. It was the only reasonable thing to do. For me, the manner in which the Spirit testifies of John forbids any other view. Jesus clearly does not represent John as in any sense weak, doubtful, vacillating, or wavering.

IN THAT SAME HOUR

"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."

IN THE SAME HOUR
"And in that same hour . . ."

Other versions read, *"that very hour,"*^{NKJV} *"at that very time,"*^{NASB} *"just then,"*^{NRSV} *"right then,"*^{CEB} *"immediately,"*^{LIVING} *"At that moment,"*^{MONTGOMERY} and *"In the next two or three hours."*^{MESSAGE}

John sends his disciples to Jesus with a question; Jesus responds accordingly and speaks of John to the people – Given O. Blakely

A person's wisdom and authority can be measured by how quickly they are able to respond to an urgent appeal. Those who have to make extensive plans are generally neither wise nor authoritative.

A person's wisdom and authority can be measured by how quickly they are able to respond to an urgent appeal. Those who have to make extensive plans are generally neither wise nor authoritative. **With Jesus, the only modifying factor was whether or not He consented to help those desiring His involvement.** That is actually a very wonderful arrangement. Some men can do "this," but not "that." They are governed by time as well. But when you come to Jesus, the kind of thing to be done and the extent of His ability do not govern the situation.

HE CURED MANY

" . . . He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight . . ."

Other versions read, "made a number of people free," ^{BBE} and "healed." ^{ESV}

The word from which "cured" is translated [therapeuo], means "TO HEAL, CURE, RESTORE TO HEALTH," ^{THAYER} "TO CAUSE SOMEONE TO RECOVER HEALTH," ^{LOUW-NIDA}

This is a word that indicates complete healing and recovery. **It does not allow for the presence of symptoms, which are the only means of identifying a disease in the first place.**

DISEASE AND ITS SYMPTOMS

Health has not been recovered where the symptoms of the disease remain! There really is no such thing as symptoms with no corresponding disease. Those who affirm that such a thing is possible, and that we should simply deny the symptoms, are departing from sound reasoning. How

can God receive glory from acclaimed healings that have not removed the corresponding symptoms, anymore than a sinner has been saved who remains under the dominion of sin? A person who has the symptoms of disease has not been healed of that disease – some modern teaching notwithstanding. A leper has not been healed if there is any patch of skin on his body that is still leprous. A deaf man has not been healed if he requires a hearing aid. A lame man that has been healed does not require a cane. **In fact, it is the absence of any symptoms that confirms the individual has been healed.**

A text that is often used by those claiming the symptoms of a disease can remain while the disease itself has been healed, is First Peter 2:24, which includes a quotation from Isaiah 53:5: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet 2:24). Peter's explanatory note makes clear that sin is what is being addressed, not bodily diseases: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet 2:25). Elsewhere, the Gospel writers confirm that Isaiah's reference to the Lord Jesus bearing our "infirmities" (referred to in Isaiah as "griefs" and "sorrows" (Isa 53:4), was fulfilled in the earthly ministry of Jesus, which explains the details of His healings: "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: **THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our**

infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt 8:16-17). **As our iniquities were laid upon Christ when He died, so the diseases He healed were, so to speak, laid upon Him as He went about doing good.** They, of course, had no power over Him, for disease is sister of death, and Jesus was in no sense "dead" until He dismissed His spirit while on the cross (Matt 27:50; Mk 15:37; Lk 23:46).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SICK

The Scriptures do tell us what to do if any are sick among us. Their words are not for the infirm to confess they are healed. Rather, James wrote with remarkable clarity: *"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"* (James 5:15). The suggestion is that some sicknesses are the direct result of sin – as in First Corinthians 11:30). In this text, the sick being raised up is contingent upon *"the prayer of faith,"* not an mere procedure.

GO YOUR WAY AND TELL JOHN

" . . . 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."

In my judgment there was at least a sevenfold impact realized here.

- ⇨ First: God was glorified by the works Jesus was doing.
- ⇨ Second: Jesus found inner nourishment by doing the will of God, which was His "meat" (John 4:34).
- ⇨ Third: There was a confirmation that the Kingdom of God had come (Matt 12:28).
- ⇨ Fourth: A decisive blow was ministered to the kingdom of

darkness (Acts 10:38).

- ⇒ Fifth: Jesus had confirmed who He was to the multitudes among whom He was then ministering, God being “with Him” (Acts 10:38).
- ⇒ Sixth: John would be comforted by the report of the working of Jesus, the One for whom he had prepared the people.
- ⇒ Seventh: John’s disciples would have what they saw more firmly established in their minds as they reported it.

MATTHEW’S REPORT

Matthew reports Jesus saying, “Go and show John **AGAIN** those things which ye do hear and see” (Matt 11:4-6).

John’s disciples had already been reporting to John, as is stated in verses 17-18: “And this rumor of Him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.” I gather that the “again” relates to that fact.

There is another reference to reports that given to John: “And they

came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him” (John 3:26). At that time John responded, “John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: **this my joy therefore is fulfilled**” (John 3:27-29).

BLESSED IS HE, WHOEVER IS NOT OFFENDED IN ME

“²³ **And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.**”

BLESSED IS HE

“And blessed is he . . .”

Other versions read, “*blessed is the man,*” ^{NIV} “*blessed is anyone,*” ^{NIV} “*Happy is anyone,*” ^{CEB} “*God blesses those,*” ^{NLT} “*is truly happy,*” ^{IE} “*blessed (happy—with life-joy and satisfaction in God’s favor and salvation, apart from outward conditions—and to be envied).*” ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated “*blessed*” [makarios] has the following lexical meaning: “BLESSED, HAPPY,” ^{THAYER} “TRANSCENDENT HAPPINESS OR RELIGIOUS JOY BLESSED, HAPPY,” ^{FRIBERG} “PERTAINING TO BEING HAPPY, WITH THE IMPLICATION OF ENJOYING FAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES,” ^{LOUW-NIDA} and “BLESSED, FORTUNATE, HAPPY USUALLY IN THE SENSE OF PRIVILEGED RECIPIENT OF DIVINE FAVOR.” ^{GINGRICH}

McClintock & Strong’s Cyclopedia gives the following comment: “WHEN GOD BLESSES, HE BESTOWS THAT VIRTUE, THAT EFFICACY, WHICH¹ RENDERS HIS BLESSING EFFECTUAL, AND WHICH HIS BLESSING EXPRESSES. HIS BLESSINGS ARE EITHER TEMPORAL OR SPIRITUAL, BODILY OR MENTAL; BUT IN EVERY THING THEY ARE PRODUCTIVE OF THAT WHICH THEY IMPORT. GOD’S BLESSINGS EXTEND INTO THE FUTURE LIFE, AS HIS PEOPLE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF THAT BLESSEDNESS WHICH, IN INFINITE FULNESS, DWELLS IN HIMSELF.”

Easton Bible Dictionary says, “GOD BLESSES HIS PEOPLE WHEN HE BESTOWS ON THEM SOME GIFT TEMPORAL OR SPIRITUAL.”

Smith’s Bible Dictionary says, “FAVORS OR BENEFITS SPECIALLY GIVEN BY GOD.”

⇒ That special protection and care will be provided that will allow the person to serve the Lord.

⇒ That blessing will not be permitted to work with such a person at will.

You can probably see that it is exceedingly difficult to explain the state of blessedness. That is simply because it is intended to be experienced, not merely explained.

Other lexicons and dictionaries do not add to these purported definitions – **all of which I find wholly unsatisfactory, so far as academics are concerned.**

I will attempt to define what I understand Jesus to have meant when He said “*Blessed is he.*”

⇒ That God will look with favor upon such a person.

⇒ That needed provisions will be granted that will assist the person to live in this world, preparing for the world to come.

⇒ That all things will be worked together for the good of such a person.

⇒ That a special joy and peace will be enjoyed by the individual.

⇒ That satisfying insight and understanding will be ministered to the person.

You can probably see that it is exceedingly difficult to explain the state of blessedness. That is simply because it is intended to be experienced, not merely explained.

WHOSOEVER

" . . . whosoever . . . "

Other versions read, "anyone,"
NRSV "the one" ESV "the man," NIB
 "whoever," YLT "the person," IE and
 "every one." WEYMOUTH

As described, "**whosoever**" does not apply to everyone, but only to those Jesus now describes. Any one and every one who properly falls into this category will surely be blessed.

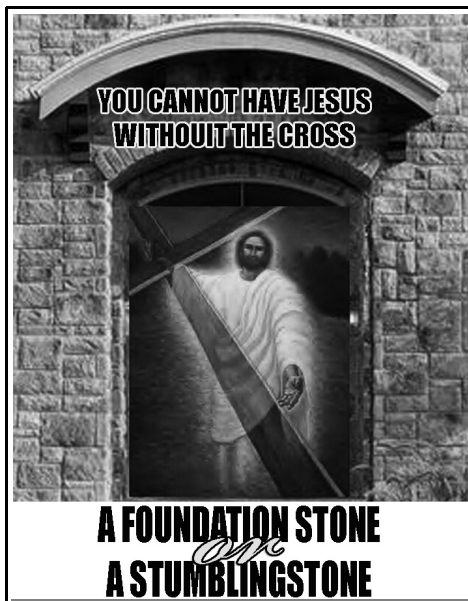
NOT OFFENDED IN ME

"...shall not be offended in Me."

Other versions read, "not offended because of Me," NKJV "keeps from stumbling over Me," NASB "does not fall away on account of Me," NIV "takes no offense at Me," NRSV "shall find no occasion of stumbling in me," ASV "has no doubts about me," BBE "not offended by me," ESV "does not find me a cause of falling," NJB "do not turn away because of me," NLT "finds nothing that repels him in me," GOODSPEED and "who takes no offense in Me and who is not hurt or resentful or annoyed or repelled or made to stumble [whatever may occur]." AMPLIFIED

The word translated "offended" [skandalizo] means, "TO PUT A STUMBLING-BLOCK OR IMPEDIMENT IN THE WAY, UPON WHICH ANOTHER MAY TRIP AND FALL; TO CAUSE A PERSON TO BEGIN TO DISTRUST AND DESERT ONE WHOM HE OUGHT TO TRUST AND OBEY; TO CAUSE ONE TO JUDGE UNFAVORABLY OR UNJUSTLY OF ANOTHER," THAYER "AS TAKING OFFENSE AT JESUS OR REFUSING TO BELIEVE IN HIM BE OFFENDED," FRIBERG "TO CAUSE SOMEONE TO NO LONGER BELIEVE - TO CAUSE TO GIVE UP BELIEVING, TO MAKE SOMEONE NO LONGER BELIEVE," LOUW-NIDA AND "BE LED INTO SIN OR REPELLED BY SOMEONE, TAKE OFFENSE AT SOMEONE." GINGRICH

Let it be clear that **Jesus is not only a Foundation, but a Stumbling Block as well**. It is written, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, **AND A STONE OF STUMBLING**, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were



appointed" (1 Pet 2:7-8).

The person who is "**offended**" is the person who is eliminated by the requirements Jesus gives.

Let it be clear to all, you cannot have Jesus without the cross. Both Jesus and His cross are stumbling blocks.

⇒ **JESUS:** "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: **but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence**, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (1 Pet 2:7-8).

⇒ **THE CROSS:** "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a **stumblingblock**, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor 1:23).

In my opinion, this word has not been taken seriously by the nominal church – in fact, it is rarely declared verbally or in writing. We do thank God for those noble proclaimers who are not afraid to quote Jesus instead of philosophers!

Here is a sampling of some of Jesus' **eliminating** statements. These

are either sayings to build upon, or to stumble on – on one must take place!

⇒ "And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted, and become as little children**, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 18:3)

⇒ "I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent**, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3,5)

⇒ "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood**, ye have no life in you." (John 6:53)

⇒ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, **except ye abide in Me**." (John 15:4)

⇒ "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3,5)

⇒ "If any man come to Me, and **hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also**, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26)

⇒ "And whosoever **doth not bear his cross, and come after Me**, cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:27)

⇒ "So likewise, **whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath**, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:33)

Whoever refuses to embrace those sayings and act upon them, has been "**offended**" by Christ. There is not the slightest chance that anyone doing this can, while in that refusal-posture, be blessed in the sense of this text.

Whoever sees Jesus as the thorough **Provider**, the ultimate **Teacher**, and the **Divine remedy** for all that was caused by sin, is the person who will be blessed. It is that individual

who will take every word of Jesus seriously. He will not balk at it, or stumble over His requirements.

There is a great deficiency in our time of in the matter of comprehending the significance of *"the cross of Christ"*

(1 Cor 1:17; Gal 6:12; Phil 3:18). The fact of being *"crucified with Christ"* (Gal 2:20) needs to be proclaimed.

HE BEGAN TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE CONCERNING JOHN

"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 appavelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts."

It is apparent that the messengers of John delivered their message in the presence of the people who were gathered around Jesus. The people had obviously witnessed the many miracles He wrought at that time.

WHEN THE MESSENGERS OF JOHN WERE DEPARTED

"And when the messengers of John were departed . . ."

Behold their instant obedience. Jesus had said to them, *"Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard"* (Luke 7:22). They instantly returned to John, just as Jesus had told them to do. Among other things, that makes known the caliber of disciples that were followers of John the Baptist. John had declared the truth, and **the truth never produces lethargic disciples, or those who are slow to respond.** You will find the same was true of the twelve, who spent time with Jesus. They always did what they were told, when they were told to do it.

HE BEGAN TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE CONCERNING JOHN

" . . . He began to speak unto the people concerning John . . ."

How many individuals were mentioned by Jesus when He taught the people? Here are some of them:

- ⇒ Noah (Matt 24:37-39)
- ⇒ Abraham (John 8:56-58)

- ⇒ Isaac and Jacob (Matt 22:32)
- ⇒ Lot (Lk 17:28-29)
- ⇒ Moses (Matt 19:7-8)
- ⇒ David (Matt 22:43-45)
- ⇒ Solomon (Matt 12:42)
- ⇒ Queen of the south [Sheba] (Mk 11:31)
- ⇒ Elijah (Lk 4:25)
- ⇒ Eliseus [Elisha] (Lk 4:27)
- ⇒ Isaiah (Matt 13:14-15)
- ⇒ Jonah (Matt 12:39-42)
- ⇒ Zechariah (Matt 23:35)

I do not believe Jesus gave these a commendation as He did to John the Baptist. He spoke about John (Matt 11:11-12, 18; 17:13; 21:25, 32; Lk 16:16; John 5:33). When He heard John been thrown into [prison], *"He departed into Galilee"* (Matt 4:12). When John was beheaded, Jesus *"departed thence by ship into a desert place apart"* (Matt 14:10). He spoke of *"the baptism of John"* (Matt 21:25)

You determine if this is the way

with the wind? . . ."

Other versions read, *"a reed swayed by the wind,"* ^{NIV} *"a tall stem moving in the wind?"* ^{BEB} *"A stalk blowing in the wind?"* ^{CEB} *"Reeds swaying in the breeze?"* ^{CJB} *"weak as grass, moved by every breath of wind?"* ^{LIVING}

Is this how the Son of God would speak about a once-strong person who was now entertaining doubts? Is there any example of Jesus commending a person who was strong, but is now weak? A person who once knew for sure, and now was not sure?

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT – #2?

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

Other versions read, *"A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in*

It is what John said and did that was significant, not what he looked like. Appearance was something about which the scribes and Pharisees had great concern (Lk 20:46). But this is not the thing that identified John the Baptist.

Jesus spoke about doubters. Is this how the Lord referred to those who were weak, who were not sure of what God had revealed to them. Judge for yourself!

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT – #1?

" . . . , What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken

luxury are in palaces," ^{NIV} and *"A man dressed up in soft garments? Behold, those who wear fine apparel and live in luxury are in the courts or palaces of kings."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Did the people go out to see an impressing looking man, arrayed in expensive garments, and being served in

the lap of luxury? That is the kind of man you would expect to have doubts. If so, that certainly is not what they saw! Instead, they saw a rugged looking man wearing a camel's hair garment,

girded with a leather belt, and eating locusts and wild honey. **It is what John said and did that was significant, not what he looked like.** Appearance was something about which the scribes and

Pharisees had great concern (Lk 20:46). But this is not the thing that identified John the Baptist. His ministry was the point, not his appearance, which was totally unworldly.

WHAT WENT YE OUT TO SEE?

"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."

The Lord continues His commendation of John the Baptist.

He said, "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

A PROPHET?

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

Other versions read "more excellent than a prophet," ^{DARBY} "greater than a Prophet," ^{GENEVA} "John is even

Jesus did not say to either Peter or Thomas, "Thou art an apostle!" Why would He say John was "greater than a prophet" if he was now wondering whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. This kind of reasoning is pygmy thinking. It disgraces John the Baptist, and misrepresents Christ Jesus. It really makes no difference who makes such statements. On that matter, they have not thought properly.

Now, Jesus will speak of John as being much greater than a prophet.

Does anyone of sound mind really think this is the way Jesus speaks of a doubter, or one who is weak in the faith?

Remember, this is not how He spoke of Peter when He began to sink in the stormy wave (Matt 14:31). He did not speak in this way of the leading Apostle of the twelve when He denied Him three times (Lk 22:61-62). He did not commend Thomas, or speak in defense of him when he refused to believe the testimony of the other apostles (John 20:27). **If John was really doubting whether or not Jesus was the Christ, is this really the way the Lord would**

more than a prophet," ^{IE} "far more than a prophet." ^{WILLIAMS}

Does anyone of sound mind really think this is the way Jesus speaks of a doubter, or one who is weak in the faith? To Peter He said, "O thou of little faith, where didst thou doubt" (Matt 14:31). To the two on the road to Emmaus He said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25). To Thomas

THIS IS HE

*" . . . **This IS he**, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."*

Jesus does not say that John "was" God's appointed messenger, but that this is what he "IS." This is not an academic assessment, but a Divine appraisal. Is there really any chance that it is incorrect? John IS a particular Prophet with a unique privilege.

THE GREATEST AND THE LEAST

"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."

NOT A GREAT PROPHET THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST

"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist..."

This is a remarkable statement that include all of the prophets that

were born up to the time of John.

John the Baptist occupied a position between that of a prophet, and the promised Messiah Himself. That made him greater than a prophet, but lesser than the Christ. He announced the coming Christ, baptized Him, and confirmed His identify to the people. That made him greater than any of the

prophets before him – none of whom knew who the Messiah was, or when He would appear. Therefore Peter wrote, *“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what [person ^{NASB}], or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”* (1 Pet 1:10-12).

All of the holy prophets of old had to take a back seat to John the Baptist. Their prophecies were not fully clarified until after Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven.

This means that it is more significant to know the specific identity of the Christ, than to be privileged to prophesy of the coming of Christ, while not knowing who He is, or when He will come. **It seems to me that this is a perspective that must be maintained by the saved.**

The epistles written to specific individual believers and churches frequently refer to the *“prophets.”*

- ⇒ The Gospel is the one that was promised by the prophets (Rom 1:2).
- ⇒ The righteousness imputed to believers was witnessed to by the prophets (Rom 3:21).
- ⇒ The manifestation of the Gospel is made known by the **“Scriptures of the prophets”** (Rom 16:26).
- ⇒ God spoke in sundry times and divers manners in times past **“unto the fathers by the prophets”** (Heb 1:1).
- ⇒ The prophets are mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews as an exhibit of true faith (Heb 11:32).

⇒ The prophets are cited as an example of *“example of suffering, and of patience”* (James 5:10).

⇒ The prophets *“prophesied of the grace that should come to”* us (1 Pet 1:10).

⇒ We are to be mindful of *“the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets”* (2 Pet 3:2).

⇒ The *“mystery of God”* will be *“finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets”* (Rev 10:7).

⇒ God is going to give reward to His servants the prophets (Rev 11:18).

Let no one imagine that the holy prophets can be despised by ignoring their writings or neglecting their ministry! Notwithstanding, of the prophets prior to Jesus' exaltation, **John stands as number one.**

HE THAT IS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM
“ . . . but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he...”

It must be remembered that the era of the New Covenant, the new birth, and translation into the Kingdom did not commence until Jesus had died, been buried, raised from the dead, ascended into heaven given a kingdom, and seated at the right hand of the “Majesty on high”

Here is a declaration worthy of much consideration: *“but he that is inferior [to the other citizens] in the kingdom of God is greater [in incomparable privilege] than he”* [John the Baptist] ^{AMPLIFIED}

Historically, as far back as, and including, Chrysostom, Augustine, Hilary, and Theophylact, theologians have had great difficulty with this text. Some thought Jesus was speaking of himself being *“least”* in age. Others thought the reference was **“THE APOSTLES**

OF CHRIST, AND THE LEAST AMONG THEM, WHO WERE THEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.” JOHN GILL
 I respectfully reject these views.

First, both John and Jesus preached the Kingdom of God was *“at hand”* (Matt 4:17; Mk 1:15). Jesus sent out His disciples, telling them *“Preach, saying **The kingdom of heaven is at hand**”* (Matt 10:7). Jesus Himself told the people, *“**The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you**”* (Lk 10:9,11). And again, *“But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt **the kingdom of God is come upon you**”* (Lk 11:20). This, however, by no means equates to the people themselves being *“in the kingdom of God.”* No one had yet been *“translated . . . into the kingdom of His dear Son”* (Col 1:13). In fact, the King had not yet been given the Kingdom (Dan 7:14).

It appears that from the very first, men had difficulty distinguishing the First and Second covenants from each other. Historically, some have thought the New Covenant was an extension of the Old Covenant, and that somehow they were blended. But this cannot be

true, for the New would not then be *“New,”* and the *“Old”* would not have been *“ready to vanish away”* (Heb 8:13).

When John wrote the Revelation, still remaining in the world, he affirmed, *“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus”* (Rev 1:9).

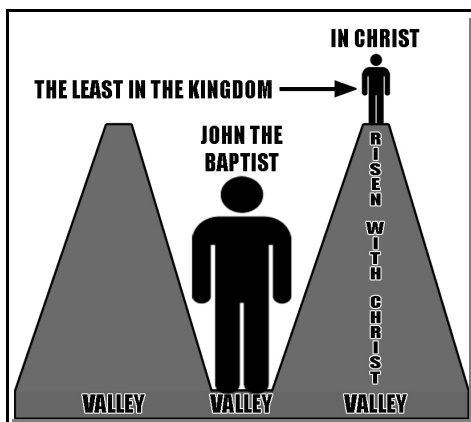
It must be remembered that the era of the New Covenant, the new

birth, and translation into the Kingdom did not commence until Jesus had died, been buried, raised from the dead, ascended into heaven given a kingdom, and seated at the right hand of the "Majesty on high" (Heb 1:3).

No son of Adam was *"in the Kingdom," "added to the Lord"* (Acts 5:14), or *"born again"* (1 Pet 1:23) prior to that. Without an enthroned Christ, those things were not possible.

The person who is *"the least in the kingdom of God,"* is not someone with the least value, being the least precious to the Lord. Rather, this is the individual who is least advanced, more of a novice, or a beginner – someone who has just been born again. They are not qualified to teach, or to lead. They are a *"babe"* (1 Cor 3:1), or a *"novice"* (1 Tim 3:6), or a *"child"* who has not yet grown up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15).

The thing that makes them *"greater"* than John the Baptist is not who they are, but **WHERE** they are. If, as person to person, they are compared to John, they would be like a midget, and John like a giant – **but they would be like a midget standing on a mountain, while John was a giant standing in a valley.**



Because Jesus had not yet taken away the sin of the world (John 1:29), destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14), and been exalted to the right hand of God (Eph 1:20-22), John did not have access to *"all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"* (Eph 1:3). He had not

yet been given all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). He, like the most noble of our race before Jesus, was not made perfect *"without us"* – or without the benefits that now belong to us (Heb 11:40).

It is not possible to adequately state how serious it is for spiritual giants of the past (like Abraham, Noah, David, Daniel, etc) to tower above people professing to be in Christ. Those stalwarts looked forward to what we now possess in Christ. It is tragic beyond description, or even imaginative thinking, that such a high level of mediocrity and inferior progress in the Lord is found in the modern church. Whole bodies of theological systems of thought have been developed to explain the condition – but they have all fallen to the ground. **No man or woman of God should engage in an effort to explain carnality in a professed believer.**

JOHN WAS AN APPOINTED MEANS OF MEASURING MEN

" . . . And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."

Because John was a prophet, and because he was especially prepared and sent by God, and faithfully spoke the truth, men could be measured by their response to what he said. This is a most remarkable circumstance. In fact, some will find it exceedingly difficult to accept that such a privilege could vouchsafed to a man. However, the Son of God Himself will affirm that this was the case. **This will confirm that the truth loses none of its potency when it is insightfully spoken by a man.**

THOSE SUBMITTING TO JOHN'S BAPTISM

Observe, the persons who submitted to John's baptism, which was a universal requirement. They *"justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John."*

Other versions read, *"they acknowledged God's justice,"* NASB

"acknowledged that God's way was right," NIV *"when they had knowledge of these things, gave glory to God,"* BBE *"acknowledged God's way of righteousness,"* CSB *"declared God just,"* ESV *"admitted that God was right,"* GWN *"acknowledged the righteousness of God,"* NAB *"acknowledged God's saving justice,"* NJB *"agreed that God's way was right,"* NLT *"declared God righteous,"* YLT *"agreed that God's requirements were right,"* LIVING *"upheld the righteousness of God,"* WEYMOUTH *"vindicated the righteous requirements,"* WILLIAMS and *"acknowledged the justice of God [in calling them to repentance and in pronouncing future wrath on the impenitent]."* AMPLIFIED

Their obedience did not vindicate John, but GOD! The rightness was not the baptism, itself, but God's requirement of it. By submitting to John's baptism, they were confessing God was right in demanding it – and it was for *"the remission of sins"* (Mk 1:4). To be ready for Jesus, this had to be done.

THOSE NOT SUBMITTING TO JOHN'S BAPTISM

It is important to take note of what the Spirit says about those who did not submit to John's baptism. This may be a sensitive subject, but we are dealing with heaven's appraisal of the reaction of men to a Divine mandate, given through a man – a requirement.

"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30).

Other versions read, *"rejected the will of God for themselves,"* NKJV *"rejected God's purpose for themselves,"* NASB *"the teachers of the law were against the purpose of God for themselves,"* BBE *"nullified for themselves God's plan,"* CJB *"despised the counsel of God against themselves"* DARBY *"the counsel of God did put away for themselves,"* YLT *"rejected God's plan for them and refused John's baptism,"* LIVING *"frustrated God's purpose as to their own lives,"* WEYMOUTH *"thwarted God's purpose for themselves,"* WILLIAMS *"the*

counsel of God discarded for themselves," ^{ABP} and *"annulled and rejected and brought to nothing God's purpose concerning themselves."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

To "reject the counsel of God against themselves" means they would not receive remission of sins – the immediate benefit to be realized. Also, by rejecting what John required, they forfeited the benefit of being ready for Jesus.

Thus, they were placed in the camp of the enemies of God, which means God was against them—something that was confirmed by the manner in which both John and Jesus spoke to them.

⇒ JOHN: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, **O generation of vipers**, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not

to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matt 3:7-10).

⇒ JESUS: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves . . . ye fools and blindguides . . . hypocrites . . . ye are the children of them that killed the prophets . . . "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Mat 23:13-15).

There you have the Divine perspective of those who ignored someone sent by God to deliver a message and carry out a baptism.

- ⇒ John was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- ⇒ He was commissioned by God.
- ⇒ He was sent to baptize the penitent.
- ⇒ The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected John's baptism.
- ⇒ The benefits of John's baptism were withheld from them.

If this was true of John's baptism, what of the baptism that is commanded to those coming to Christ (Matt 28:19; Mk 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 10:48)? How dare any mortal say that baptism into Christ is not necessary, while John's was? If it is optional, why did Peter command those at the house of Cornelius to be baptized (Acts 10:48). What shall we say of such people? That they are sincere? That they love God? That God will look upon them with favor? May the Lord rebuke those who ask us to take such a foolish stand! Let every person yield to the truth of God!

WHEREUNTO SHALL I LIKEN THIS GENERATION?

"³¹ And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?"
³² *They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept."*

WHEREUNTO SHALL I LIKEN THIS GENERATION?

"And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?..."

Other versions read, "To what then shall I compare the men of this generation," ^{NASB} "the people of this generation," ^{NRSV} "how can I describe the people of this generation? What are they like?" ^{CJB} "What comparison, then, can I find for the people of this generation?" ^{NJB} "the men of this age," ^{WILLIAMS} "What are you people like? What

kind of people are you?," ^{CEV} "the people of this day," ^{GNB} and "How can I describe the people who are living now?" ^{GW}

Even though all men are the same

when people are more, and less prone to war, and others when men are prone to peace. **All generations are the same.**

Now Jesus will address the kind of generation extant while He went about doing good.

There are some periods when unusual manners and decline occur. There are also some when people are more, and less prone to war, and others when men are prone to peace. All generations are the same.

at the root – sinners, coming short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23), alienated from the life of God (Eph 4:18), and those in whom Satan works (Eph 2:1-2), **there are certain differences in generations and ages of time.** There are some periods when unusual manners and decline occur. There are also some

LIKE CHILDREN IN THE MARKETPLACE

" . . . They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept."

LIKE UNTO CHILDREN

Other versions read, *"little children,"* GENEVA/ISV/WILLIAMS/AMPLIFIED *"a group of children,"* IE and *"spoiled children"* MESSAGE

The word translated *"children"* [paidion] does mean "A YOUNG CHILD, A LITTLE BOY, A LITTLE GIRL, INFANTS, CHILDREN, LITTLE ONE," THAYER "AS A SMALL CHILD (YOUNG) CHILD; FIGURATIVELY; OF UNDEVELOPED UNDERSTANDING CHILDISH PERSON," FRIBERG "NORMALLY BELOW THE AGE OF PUBERTY," LOUW-NIDA AND "VERY YOUNG CHILD," GINGRICH

Jesus is likening that generation to a group of small children with no understanding, and who are engrossed with playing – immature and unlearned. It appears to me that this is an excellent description of our generation also – a game-playing, fun-seeking, entertainment-crazed generation. But, Jesus goes further.

CALLING ONE TO ANOTHER

Other versions read, *"calling out to each other,"* NIV *"They complain to their friends."* NLT

Total non-productivity – just shouting back and forth seeking their own will and airing their complaints. To them, life was more like a competitive game than a quest for glory. That posture was an aggravation to the Lord Jesus, as this text confirms. He is not speaking of an individual, but of a collection of individuals – a type of people, a group with certain characteristics – a generation.

Keep in mind, Jesus is not speaking merely of individuals, but of an entire generation. He used the word as Solomon did: *"There is a generation*

that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men" (Prov 30:11-14).

WE HAVE PIPED UNTO YOU

Other versions read, *"we played the flute for you, and you did not dance,"* NKJV *"We made music for you, but you did not take part in the dance,"* BBE *"We made happy music, but you wouldn't dance!"* CJB *"You don't like it if we play wedding,"* LIVING *"We played the wedding march for you, but you did not dance,"* WILLIAMS *"We wanted to skip rope and you were always too tired,"* MESSAGE and *"We piped to you [playing wedding], and you did not dance."* AMPLIFIED

Paul referred to this kind of activity as people gathering teachers to themselves to fulfill their own desires: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"* (2 Tim 4:3). In this text, the people were discontent with Jesus because He was not addressing things "relevant" to them, and their corrupt desires. It was passingly interesting to see Him and hear Him – but there was not enough interest to follow Him and give heed to His words. **That generation continues until this very day!**

WE HAVE MOURNED UNTO YOU

" . . . we have mourned to you,

and ye have not wept."

Other versions read *"we sang a dirge, and you did not weep,"* NASB *"we wailed and you did not weep,"* RSV *"we gave cries of sorrow, but you were not sad,"* BBE *"We sang a funeral song and you didn't cry,"* CEB *"We sang a funeral song, but you didn't cry,"* GWN *"you don't like it if we play funeral,"* LIVING *"A woeful dirge we chanted, too, but then you did not mourn,"* ISV and *"we sang dirges and wailed [playing funeral], and you did not weep."* AMPLIFIED

Jesus is not likening them to people who wept like the widow of Nain (Lk 7:13), or like the woman with the alabaster box (Lk 7:38), or Mary at the passing of Lazarus (John 11:33), or the Mary who wept at the tomb in which Jesus had been placed (John 20:11). They were just playing, acting, pretending.

This was a generation that wanted Jesus to enter into their charade. They were pretending to serve God, and wanted Jesus of Nazareth to blend in with their pretensions. But He would not to so, catering to that generation.

As I have said, this generation is still with us, remaining in those who, in their religion, settle for less than reality. Then, not content to come short themselves, they insist that others join them in their religious game. And if they do not, they get angry, criticize, and pretend as though they were actually serious. As Jesus duly noted, they are like little children who have neither cogent thoughts nor manners. This type of religion has been popularized in our time, and is seemingly flourishing. Those who reject it are rare.

"HE HAS A DEMON" AND "BEHOLD A GLUTENOUS MAN"

" 33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

THEIR ASSESSMENT OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

"For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. . ."

Other versions read, *"he has a*

demon," NKJV *"He has an evil spirit,"* BBE *"He is possessed,"* NJB *"He's possessed by a demon,"* NLT and *"For John the Baptist used to go without food and never took a drop of liquor all his life, and you said, He must be crazy!"* LIVING

Here were men who *"make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments"* (Matt 23:5), and *"desired to walk in long robes"* (Lk 20:46; 23:38). When they saw John the Baptist, they saw a man with *"raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey"* (Matt 3:4). They concluded he was a wild and uncultured man, possessed of a demon.

What an ignorant assessment! They were actually beholding a man filled with the Holy Spirit, with a discerning heart, and the word of God in his mouth! It is not possible for a people to be more wrong, more deluded, more ignorant than them!

THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THE CHRIST

" . . . The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

Matthew reports, *"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children"* (Matt 11:19).

Their view of Christ was even more wrong than their view of John the Baptist. It also revealed their utter hypocrisy, not to mention their total lack of perception.

Rather than being noted for fasting, Jesus attended and participated in feasts (Lk 5:29-30; John 2:1-11). Many people affirm that at these feasts, particularly the one prepared by Matthew, Jesus drank hard liquor, or wine. **The Scriptures do not say this, and neither should men!** These words are not a factual report, but are the assessment of the **enemies** of Jesus.

Were any of these charges true?
⇒ John the Baptist had a *"demon."*

He not clearly say, *"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."* (John 15:14). Jesus is never depicted by the Holy Spirit as a *"Friend."* He is Lord, Savior, Master, Teacher – but never *"Friend."* **The saved are the ones who are the "friends."** Jesus is the King and the Head of the house.

As for myself, I do not feel comfortable thinking of Jesus as those who were His avowed enemies did. I cannot accept their appraisal of the Lord of glory as in any way being valid. The record God has given concerning

I cannot accept their appraisal of the Lord of glory as in any way being valid. Further, Jesus was certainly not commending them, either in part or in whole, for how they assessed Him and spoke of Him.

⇒ Jesus was *"glutenous."*

⇒ Jesus was a *"winebibber."*

⇒ Jesus was *"a friend of publicans and sinners."*

Does the record God has given of His Son (1 John 5:10-11) set these forth as proper presentations of the Lord Jesus? Where did Jesus say He was a *"Friend"* to anyone? Rather, did

His Son is not delivered by His Son's enemies.

Further, Jesus was certainly not commending them, either in part or in whole, for how they assessed Him and spoke of Him. If they had spoken the truth, He would have said so – as He did to the woman at the well (John 4:18).

WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN

"³⁵ But wisdom is justified of all her children." (Also Matthew 11:18).

Other versions read, *"But wisdom is justified by all her children,"* ^{NKJV} *"Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children,"* ^{NASB} *"But wisdom is proved right by all her children,"* ^{NIV} *"But wisdom is judged to be right by all her children,"* ^{BBE} *"Well, the proof of wisdom is in all the kinds of people it produces"* ^{CJB} *"proved right by all its results,"* ^{GWN} *"is shown to be right by the lives of*

those who follow it," ^{NLT} *"was justified from all her children,"* ^{YLT} *"I am sure you can always justify your inconsistencies,"* ^{LIVING} *"is shown to be right by all the things it does,"* ^{IE} *"is justified by all who are truly wise,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *"Absolved from every act of sin, is wisdom by her kith [friends] and kin,"* ^{ISV} *"Opinion polls don't count for much, do they? The proof of the pudding is in the eating,"* ^{MESSAGE} *and "shown to be true and divine) by all her children [by their life, character, and*

deeds]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Once again I want to emphasize that the remarkable variances in the translations confirm **the key to understanding the Scripture is not found in knowing the "original Greek text."** If that erroneous postulate was true, then versions that were created from the Greek text would at least be similar. If builders all use the same kind of ruler, and were all building the same size structure, their blueprints of the size of

John sends his disciples to Jesus with a question; Jesus responds accordingly and speaks of John to the people – Given O. Blakely

the structure they were building would all be the same.

The point is this: “wisdom,” the incarnation of which is Jesus Himself (1 Cor 1:24,30), is proved valid by what it accomplishes. The Pharisees gave improper assessments of both John the Baptist and Jesus. **However, the results that were produced by these men, with**

*evil fruit. A good tree **cannot** bring forth evil fruit, **neither** can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. **Every** tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**” (Matt 7:16-20).*

What do men produce? What does their doctrine produce? Is it the same as

present world, Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:11-13).

⇒ EVIDENCE OF BEING IN CHRIST. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”** (2 Cor 5:17).

⇒ EVIDENCE OF BELONGING TO CHRIST. “**And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts**” (Gal 5:24).

We are told, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1). The fundamental way of testing the spirits is to examine the people-fruit that they, their teaching, and their emphasis has produced. Jesus made it clear: “A good tree **cannot** bring forth evil fruit, **neither** can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matt 7:18). Once you have discerned what a “tree” has produced, you know the source that planted and is nourishing that tree. It is then your responsibility to respond accordingly, not treating corrupt teachers as though they were good.

One complication that exists in our time is that the mega-church mentality has conveniently obscured the kind of people that are being produced by these impressive organizations. The thrust appears to be placed on the institution itself, and numbers alone seem to be adequate proof that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are in the work. **But numbers are not enough** – in fact, they are often cited in Scripture as evidence of falsity, not truth: “**For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive MANY**” (Matt 24:5); “**And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive MANY**” (Matt 24:11); “**But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And MANY shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of**

The religious landscape is cluttered with pretenders, false teachers, and those who are continually overcome by sin. All of these are the direct result of feigned wisdom. They are the fruit of false teachers and erroneous ideas. What we have in contemporary “Christianity” is the result of doctrine, or teaching – things that have been promulgated by men that were not “sent” from God

Jesus being the primary One, confirmed they were sent by God. The results of the Pharisees, on the other hand, confirmed that were **not** sent by God.

In an academic society, such as the one in which we live, this saying is rarely, if ever, uttered. But it certainly is something to be seriously considered. **The religious landscape is cluttered with pretenders, false teachers, and those who are continually overcome by sin.** All of these are the direct result of feigned wisdom. They are the fruit of false teachers and erroneous ideas. What we have in contemporary “Christianity” is the result of doctrine, or teaching – things that have been promulgated by men that were not “sent” from God (Rom 10:15), or “given to every man” (1 Cor 3:5). They have come from the camp of the enemy.

BY THEIR FRUIT

Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so **every** good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth

the Spirit has revealed about what takes place in those belonging to Christ? – those who have believed and obeyed the Gospel?

⇒ EVIDENCE OF BEING OF GOD. Jesus said, “**He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.**” (John 8:47).

⇒ EVIDENCE OF THE NEW BIRTH. He that is “born of God,” or is “begotten of God,” does righteousness; doth not commit sin; loves; loves those begotten of God; overcomes the world; and keeps himself. (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18)

⇒ EVIDENCE OF BEING CREATED ANEW. Men are “created in Christ Jesus” in order to do good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph 2:10).

⇒ EVIDENCE OF HAVING SALVATION. The same grace that brings salvation is teaching those who receive it “**that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this**

whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet 2:1-2).

OUR LIVES MUST MATCH OUR CLAIMS

In a fragmented religious culture, it is imperative those with superior claims have lives that match them. If we preach a Gospel that speaks of regeneration, then that regeneration must be reflected in our lives. If we make much of grace, then much of

what grace does is to be seen in our lives. If we accent the truth and necessity of faith, then our lives must testify to the effects of that faith. If we affirm the sovereignty and unquestioned rule of God and Christ, then our lives must display how people who are subjected to that Sovereignty live – how we react to crisis, deprivation, abundance, hostility, civility, temptation, opportunities to do

good, etc.

In this manner, wisdom will be justified in her children. What the truth affirms will be confirmed when it is fleshed out in holy living by those who have received it. A disobedient, lukewarm, ignorant church has not been living by every word of God (Lk 4:4)! TheG3

teaching to which such a body has been subjected is not liberating truth.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/16/15. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The twenty-sixth lesson will cover verses 36 thru 50 of chapter 7: "JESUS INVITED BY A PHARISEE, AND THE WOMAN WHO ANOINTED HIS FEET." A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to his house, and while there a woman of ill-fame washes His feet with her tears, and anoints them with ointment. The Pharisee criticizes Jesus in his heart, and Jesus responds with a scathing rebuke. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.