

Justified! The Series: Chapter 3: You Didn't Know Who He Really Was

Description

7 Then as these men went their way, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about J
8 What did you go out to see then? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, tho
9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one [out of
10 This is the one of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger ahead of
11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone grea
12 And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom o
14 And if you are willing to receive and accept it, John himself is Elijah who
15 He who has ears to hear, let him be listening and let him consider and perc
19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking [with others], and they say, Behold

Matthew 11:7-15,18-19 AMPC

John the Baptist was a very complex individual during the days that he walked and ministered among the people. His purpose was one that no matter who it was, they were going to have a difficult time given the responsibility that came with the assignment. John the Baptist was to be a kind of a guide to the children of Israel, almost like Moses had been in the Old Testament to help the children of Israel leave a former way of thinking and enter into a new covenant (thinking of that symbolism gives me an idea for a post looking at the relationship between Moses to Joshua and John the Baptist to Jesus (considering that Joshua and Jesus is etymologically the same name)). John the Baptist had lived a misunderstood life up until the point we see in the text above. He was born to old parents (Luke 1), lived alone in the wilderness and ministered to the people across the Jordan River preaching repentance and offering baptisms (Luke 2 and Matthew 4), was often rebuked by the religious elite (Luke 2 and Matthew 4), baptized Jesus (Matthew 4), but was ultimately imprisoned (verses above), and finally beheaded by Herod (Matthew 14). Reading this last sentence, one might ask why would John the Baptist be included in the **Justified** series. The verses above serve as possibly the greatest compliment that had ever been spoken on a living person until that time, and arguably afterwards. In the verses preceding the ones above, John's disciples approached Jesus with a message from John asking whether Jesus was the Messiah/savior that he had been preaching about, and the Old Testament had promised. Jesus wasn't offended on account of John's question, he simply provided a veiled answer (Matthew 11:1-6). Jesus ends that discussion by turning back to the crowd who was listening to him and proceeds to **Justify** John the Baptist.

The people of Israel and the gentiles alike wondered about who John the Baptist really was. Was he a crazy man, was he the Messiah/savior of Israel, was he a false prophet, was he a prophet, etc. Jesus to this opportunity when John's disciples approached him to do a very important thing; he **Justified** John in front of his disciples, and the people who came to hear/see Jesus. Jesus begins his **justification** of John first by posing a question to the people. This a common tactic that we'll come to be familiar with by Jesus, because oftentimes he will first ask what you think or know before he provides an answer.

What did you go out to see? A prophet?
Matthew 11:9 AMPC

Jesus poses this question to the people and then follows up with a strong, undeniable answer that nobody can dispute. He confirms that John the Baptist is not only a prophet, but the actual messenger whom Isaiah foretold will precede the Messiah. Let that marinate. Jesus is actually saying two things; John the Baptist wasn't crazy or wasting his time, he was actually fulfilling God's plan with his ministry, and secondly Jesus is the Messiah that John preached, and the Israelites were waiting for as confirmed through his previous words to John's disciples in the chapter:

4 And Jesus replied to them, Go and report to John what you hear and see:
5 The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed (by healing) and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good news (the Gospel) preached to them. [Isa. 35:5, 6; 61:1.]
matthew 11:4-5 AMPC

Jesus' words should have done two things if people were in tune with the Holy Spirit; 1st his words should have been confirmation to John the Baptist that the sign he saw when he baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (Matthew 4) was real and that his efforts/ministry/life had not been in vain, and secondly the people listening should have finally understood the significance of John's ministry, and the fact that they were witnessing the fulfillment of prophecy in the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus is careful in his response as well, because even as he gives John the Baptist one of the greatest compliments of anyone who ever walked the Earth, he also puts it into perspective that even the greatest human is lower than those who make it into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus knowing that John's disciples were going back to report his answer to John was intentional about proclaiming this praise about John because he knew that John needed the encouragement during a very dark moment in his life. It's interesting to see that Jesus was actually catching a glimpse of his own future in John's current situation in that he would later be arrested, persecuted, and killed out of jealousy and hate, just for being obedient to God. It's important to note that Jesus took this moment to give John his flowers while he was still living. Many Christians believe that heaven is their only reward and that God only cares about their happiness when they die, that life is only pain and misery. We would do well to remember that Jesus took a moment to acknowledge John while John was living, and he did it in the presence of John's enemies, as well as those who didn't even understand what his life and ministry meant.

Reflection Time

Do you believe that you've been **Justified**? What would Jesus say about you if he was to evaluate your life up to this point? What would like for Jesus to say about the life that you have lived up to this point? How do you act, or what do you believe when you feel like Jesus has abandoned or forgotten about you? What do you do to encourage yourself when you are feeling down or upset? Do you believe that you have obediently followed God's directions for your life to this point? Take some time and reflect on how you've lived to this point, and pray for direction/guidance from God to effectively fulfill his plans for your life, so that Jesus can **justify** you before the Father.

I'd like to suggest these verses which I often read when I'm troubled for your reflection the next time you feel abandoned by or disappointed with God

23 The steps of a [good] man are directed and established by the Lord when He
24 Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord grasps his
25 I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the [uncompromisingly

Psalms 37:23-25 AMPC

2 Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or enc
3 Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out
4 But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a tho

James 1:2-4 AMPC

1 DO NOT let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated). You believe in an

John 14:1 AMPC

8 We are pressured in every way [hedged in], but not crushed; perplexed [unsur

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

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