

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

133- Jesus and John the Baptist- Part 4
Wisdom is Vindicated by Her Deeds- Part 3

Church July 13, 2025

Matthew 11:7-19

7 As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces!

9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'

11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one 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 suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.

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

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

15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children,

17 and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!'

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Back when the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, in **Luke 1:13b-17**, he told this Priest,

13 ... "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.

16 And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

17 It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

... and then in **Matthew 11:14**, Jesus *re-enforced* what the angel said here in verse 17, when He said,

And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come

Now these Statements by the angel Gabriel and the Lord Christ have to do with the ancient Prophecy that was spoken by the Prophet in **Malachi 4:5&6**:

5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

... and as we have already seen, the Way we are to understand Malachi's Prophecy about the Coming of Elijah is in the Way that Jesus spoke about it in **Luke 1:17**:

It is he [John] who will go as a forerunner before Him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

So, John the Baptist was NOT *literally* Elijah. That isn't what Jesus said. Jesus said that John the Baptist came **"in the spirit and power of Elijah"** to act as a **"Forerunner"** to the Messiah.

So, when we read things like this- as well as the Event when Jesus was transfigured and the already dead Elijah and Moses appeared with Him- we need to keep in mind that Christianity teaches about *"Resurrections"* but it does NOT teach about *"Re-Incarnation"*. Re-Incarnation comes from the **"doctrines of demons"** (1Timothy 4:1) of eastern Man-made mystical religions such as Hinduism and Bhuddism while Resurrections comes from the inspired; inerrant; and infallible Word of the living God.

But one of the main Distinctions between the Truth of physical *"Resurrection"* and the Lie of Re-Incarnation is that in a genuine Resurrection- the saved soul is *re-united* with the very SAME physical Body that the soul was in- during the person's Life- that has been supernaturally and miraculously "glorified". But in the false Teaching about *"Re-Incarnation"*, the soul is *supposedly* brought back- enclosed with a DIFFERENT physical Body- even that of insects or animals.

Now the MAIN Resurrection was Jesus' own Resurrection where our Lord was physically and literally raised from the Dead **"by the Glory of the Father"** (Romans 6:4) three Days after He *physically* died by Crucifixion. And THAT Resurrection was God the Father unmistakably showing His absolute and total APPROVAL of ALL that Jesus said and did during His Time on earth. And believing and hoping in THAT Resurrection is a Requirement for Salvation (The Acts 13:30; Romans 10:9; Galatians 1:1; Colossians 2:12; 1Peter 1:21)!

But even though Jesus' own Resurrection is the Main Resurrection in Scripture- it is NOT the only one. We see various people raised from the Dead- all through the Bible. And the Scriptures declare that ALL of us will experience a *literal* Resurrection of our own *physical* Bodies at some Point in our Future! And THAT Resurrection is the "final Part" of our Salvation!

So, Christianity is the ONLY religion that teaches that the Salvation of the individual is NOT finished- until the saved soul of the person- that was separated from the physical Body at Death- is joined again to the SAME Body that is now glorified!

And so, even though a redeemed soul may have been in the Presence of God for thousands of years- that person's Salvation is NOT finished until the soul is *rejoined* to a glorified Body! And so, there is a spectacular Event that will occur at some Point in our Future- the 2nd Coming of Jesus to this earth- that we should expect; think and talk about; preach and teach about; look forward to; fast for; and pray about- where our *physical* Bodies will be *instantly and permanently* glorified! And at that moment- those *glorified* Bodies will be connected again to our *redeemed* souls. Please look at 1Thessalonians 4:15-18

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Now the Context of the entire Book of **1Thessaolonians** is about the 2nd Coming of Jesus to this earth. That's what Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 5 talk about. So, there is NO Reason to then assume that Chapter 4 is talking about a completely separate Event that many call, the "*Rapture*". It isn't. Because that would be taking this Chapter completely out of Context with the rest of the Book.

So, **1Thessaolonians 4** is about the 2nd Coming of Jesus to this earth and NOT a sperate Event- just like the rest of the Book. And it is telling us the "Order" in which the glorification of our physical Bodies will take place. The already Dead saved will be resurrected and their Bodies will be glorified- FIRST! And then those who are alive and on the earth when Jesus comes will be instantly and eternally glorified- escaping both Death and a Resurrection! So, in verse 15, the Apostle Paul was talking about two different Groups of people:

1. Saved people who have already died in Christ
2. Saved people who are still "alive" and who "remain" on the earth

Now the phrase in verse 15, "**those who have fallen asleep**" refers to the people, who were saved, but who have died BEFORE Jesus comes back. And the phrase in verse 15, "**we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord**" are those people who have genuinely experienced the Miracle of the New Birth, but who are alive and who are on the earth at the very Moment Jesus comes back.

Now Paul also described what would happen to those two Groups of saved people in the 2nd Coming- in **1Corinthians 15:50-54**- that says,

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

So, here in verse 51, God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to say, “we”- talking about the two Groups of saved people...

... will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

So, it simply is NOT true that *everyone* will taste of Death. The Bible has NEVER taught that. Now it IS true that *almost* ALL people WILL taste of Death. Yet there will be *some* saved people- who will be alive when Jesus comes back to this earth. And **1Thessalonians 4** says those saved people, who are alive when Jesus comes back, will ALSO be those who will “Remain on the earth” until Jesus comes back! And those saints will NEVER taste of Death!

So, these saints will NOT be in Heaven- as many teach today. The Bible says they will be alive; and they will be living on the earth (remain) at the very moment when Jesus bursts through the Clouds and returns! And when Jesus comes back to this earth- those saved people will simply be changed!

The “*Dead in Christ*” those saved people, who died *before* Jesus returns- will rise from their Graves in the very SAME body they died in- that has now been glorified!

So, the Bible says that, at the 2nd Coming of Jesus to this earth- two *different* things will happen to those two Groups of saved people:

1. The “*Perishable*” (the saved Dead) will *immediately* become “*Imperishable*”
2. The “*Mortal*” (those saved people who are still alive on the earth in a mortal Body) will immediately put on “*Immortality*”!

... and THAT is the Promise of our Resurrection!

Now I’m sure you have many Questions about what I just said- and I will be happy to answer them all- but for today- I mentioned this ONLY because of what Jesus said about John the Baptist being the Fulfillment of the Prophecy of Malachi about Elijah. Because it is possible that at the Event known as the “*Transfiguration*”- both Moses and Elijah were temporarily resurrected- because

they both had a physical Body. But here with John the Baptist- John was simply a “Type” of Elijah- having the same “spirit and power” of that Prophet.

But now please remember what the angel Gabriel said about John to Zacharias in **Luke 1:15a**,

... he will be great in the sight of the Lord

So, the angel- delivering a Message directly from God- said that John would be “*Great*”! But then he gave a *Qualifier* or a *Caveat* about that promised “*Greatness*”. John would very *narrowly* be “**Great in the Sight of the Lord**”- but he would NOT be “*Great in the sight of Man*”. In fact, John would be *criticized*; *scorned*; *belittled*; *ridiculed*; *imprisoned*; *beaten*; and *martyred* by Man. So, John’s “*Greatness*” would be *limited* to what God sees- and also what those, who truly love God, see.

Now you might think that *whatever* God *says* about someone or *how* God *sees* someone is what the world thinks about him and how the world sees him. But that has NEVER been true. Most of the Time- those who are “Great” in God’s Sight are barely even considered by the people of this lost and pagan World.

For example, as we seek to obey what **Hebrews 13:7** teaches- and we study the Biographies of Christian people who lived before us- we might zero in on the fact of how Humble they were; or how they preached God’s Word with Boldness; or how they suffered to God’s Glory; or how they refused to complain; or how they demonstrated Love to their Enemies. But if the World considers these people at all (which they usually don’t)- they would emphasize things about them that would hardly even matter.

For example, as we would rejoice at the grasp of Scripture that the greatest Theologian that America has ever produced, Jonathan Edwards, had- to the degree that what he wrote forces us to our knees- the pagan World would simply discuss the Fact that he was fired from his Church and died from a reaction to the smallpox Vaccine.

Christians see Martin Luther as the man God used to ignite the Fire of the greatest Revival in the History of the world- the “*Protestant Reformation*”. But if the lost world would notice Luther at all- they would emphasize how “controversial” his Teachings were and that he drank beer.

So, the lost and pagan world has ALWAYS gotten “Greatness” wrong. And they ALWAYS chase after the wrong things in order to achieve “Greatness”. For example, if a man invents Computers or Software and builds a Business like Microsoft or Apple- he is praised as a “*Titan of Industry*” and a “*truly great man*”! Never mind that Steve Jobs completely *abandoned* his first Daughter and only

contributed the minimum amount of financial support because he was forced to by the Courts. And forget that Bill Gates routinely ran around on his Wife with female Employees who felt they couldn't resist his Advances.

But even in the religious World- this wayward, wrong, and unbiblical Concept of what "spiritual Greatness" is and how to obtain it- is alive and well. And so, many, many people in that arena have, for Centuries, run after the wrong things in their pursuit of "Greatness".

For example, "*Assepsumas*" (died AD 376) thought he could get rid of his Sin and become "spiritually Great" by purposefully causing himself physical Pain. So, he wore so many chains around his body that he had to crawl around on his hands and knees. "*Bessarion*", a monk (AD 1403-1472), would not even give in to his body's Desire for restful Sleep. So, for forty years he wouldn't lie down. So, this man pursued "spiritual Greatness" by sleeping while sitting in a chair. "*Macarius the Younger*" (born AD 300) wrote that obtaining Favor with God and becoming "Great" in the Spirit was received through living as harshly as he could. So, this man sat naked in a swamp for six months until mosquito bites made him look like a victim of Leprosy. And "*Maron*" pursued spiritual Greatness by spending eleven years in a hollowed-out tree.

And among the group of deceived people called, the "Ascetics", the most celebrated were "*Simeon the stylite of Syria*" and "*Danielle the stylite of Constantinople*". These were people who, for some reason, thought spiritual Greatness was gained by sitting on top of Pillars. So, Simeon spent 37 years sitting on different Pillars, each one higher and narrower than the last. And Simeon died in AD 460 at the age of 72 when he fell off a Pillar that was 66 feet high. And his Church prayed for his soul for over a week after he died.

Over in Westmalle near Antwerp, there is a Convent of "Trappist Monks", who live under a "Vow of perpetual Silence". They dress in rough sackcloth; shave their heads; always keep their beards unkempt; they sleep on hard boards; and eat nothing but dry bread, sour milk and vegetables. And every day the monks go to the garden to stare into an open grave- which awaits the first monk to die. Because these men think that "spiritual Greatness" comes by not speaking while pondering Death every day.

"*Agnes de Roucher*" was the only daughter of one of the wealthiest merchants in Paris and admired by all who knew her for her Beauty and Virtue. Her father died leaving her the sole possessor of his great Wealth. But this young lady was deceived into thinking that "spiritual Greatness" could be achieved by becoming a "Recluse" and passing the remainder of her Days in a narrow Cell built within the wall of a Church. So, on the fifth of October, 1064, when the cell in the wall of the Church of Saint Opportune, only a few feet square, was finished- Agnes entered her final abode.

The Bishop of Paris, attended by his Chaplains and the Canons of Notre Dame, entered the cell and celebrated a “pontifical Mass”. Then he approached the opening of the cell, sprinkled it with “holy water”, and after the poor thing had bidden adieu to her friends and relations, ordered the masons to fill up the opening. This was done as strongly as stone and mortar could make it with only an opening, a small hole through which she might look and watch the Church Services, remained.

Now, nobody even tried to tell this poor deceived woman that her Efforts to become “spiritually Great” were completely unnecessary, totally unbiblical, and ridiculous. Instead, they all marveled at her amazing display of “Dedication” and celebrate her to this day! She was 18 years when she went in and 80 years old when she died- never having come out! God help such foolish, misplaced Piety!

All these pitiful people are praised today by millions of lost people (who have never read the Bible) for their supposed Dedication and Self-sacrifice! Yet they are all examples of deceived people, who thought that by doing odd, weird, and hard things- that God would take notice of their Efforts and reward them with Salvation and “spiritual Greatness!”

And listen, there are many Man-made religions and humanly engineered Philosophies that teach exactly that! But Christianity doesn’t- and never has! And the Holy Bible doesn’t- and never has! Because NONE of that has anything to do with true, spiritual Greatness!

These are NOT even good Examples of “Self-control”! Those Actions are simply being ridiculous and have NOTHING to do with pleasing the Lord or of obtaining Salvation or spiritual Greatness! But if somebody back then knew at least SOME of the Bible- they may have been able to rescue those poor people from a completely wasted Life of fruitless Misery!

Dear friends, when I talk about the “*Beauty of Life of Self-denial*”, I’m NOT talking about those pitiful, wayward, and deceived people! I’m talking about a person, who has been gifted by God, to come to the Conclusion that there is NO GOOD THING in him at all! Because that is the person who will display the “Power of godly Humility” and the “Majesty of God’s Grace in Salvation” and who will run to Jesus for Mercy and Forgiveness!

God, through the angel, said that John would be “**Great in the Sight of the Lord**”- and here in **Matthew 11**- Jesus is telling those Jews and us just how Great John really was. Please look again at verses 7&8:

7 As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces!

Here Jesus is describing John as a strong, godly and loving Man, who refused to compromise with either the godless Pharisees or the Roman Authorities. Now I already taught about how the Pharisees had entered into an ungodly Alliance with Rome and how the pagan roman Authorities made those religious Hypocrites wear feminine clothing to their Banquets and Events. So, here, Jesus is illustrating the great Distinction between unsaved religious Bigots and a true Man of God. Now please look again at verses 9-11:

9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'

11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Now we already have gone over this Passage, so I won't repeat what I have already taught about this. But suffice it to say that Jesus said here that John was NOT merely the "greatest" Prophet- but...

... among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!

... so, even though the World did NOT consider John to be "Great" at all- Jesus said here that...

... among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!

... but then Jesus was quick to also say,

... Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

... which- as I already taught- had to do with the New Covenant Blessing of the 3rd Person of the Trinity dwelling internally inside every genuine Believer- *forever!*

So, here Jesus was correctly and fully *interpreting* the 400- year-

old Prophecy that God “moved” on the Prophet to write down in the “written *predictive* Revelation of God” from **Malachi 3:1-5** that says,

1 “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts.

2 “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.

3 “He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.

4 “Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

5 “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the Lord of hosts.

... where the “**Messenger**” of verse 1 is John the Baptist and the “**Lord , whom you seek**” and the “**Messenger of the Covenant, in whom you delight**” is Jesus. But now look at verses 12&13:

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.

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

Now this two-verse Passage probably deserves an entire Sermon all on its own. But suffice it to say that one Way in which the “violent takes the Kingdom by force” is by Jesus going right into satan’s Stronghold and *forcefully* removing every soul on whom God has “set His Love”- right in satan’s face! And by literally “stealing” the souls of those chosen by God *away* from satan- Jesus is exercising His absolute Authority over all things!

But this phrase also has to do with each genuine Believer utilizing the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to exercising the Gift of “Self-control” over the various Lusts of their Flesh- precisely because they have *already* entered into the Kingdom of Heaven by virtue of the Miracle of the New Birth! And, by demonstrating that godly Self-control- the Believer is proving- *unmistakably*- that

they are citizens of that glorious Kingdom- because God the Holy Spirit does, in fact, dwell continually inside of him!

But as anyone, who has actually done this can testify- exercising Self-control over our fleshly Lusts- is truly an ongoing Battle. And it is also truly Violent- precisely because of the deep- seated Depravity of our fallen Flesh!

So, Jesus was talking here about two types of Violence:

1. Jesus' own Ministry in *violently* taking total Authority over all things by *forcefully* dominating satan by *powerfully* removing lost souls from satan's Grip and delivering them to God
2. The individual Believer's violent Exercise of the indwelling Spirit by demonstrating his Liberation (Freedom) from being cruelly "driven" by sinful Lusts

You see, as lost people- human beings are very *cruelly* and *forcefully* "driven" to obey the "Desires of our Flesh"- in various Ways. Please read **Mark 4:19**, where our Lord said:

but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

... so, Jesus said those three things:

1. The Worries [NOT the Sins] of the World
2. The Deceitfulness of Riches
3. The Desires for other Things

... actually have the Power and Ability to choke the Word of the living God until that Word becomes unfruitful in our Lives! That's a lot of Power! Now please read **Galatians 5:16-24**:

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,
 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Now this Passage deserves a complete in- depth Teaching all of its own. But I simply want to point out a few Facts about this inspired Text:

- Paul said here (v16) that saved people **WILL NOT** [as opposed to *ought not*] carry out the Desires [Lusts] of the Flesh- **IF** we “walk by the Spirit”
- Verse 17 shows the amazing Hostility that exists between the unconverted Flesh and the Spirit of the Believer
- Verse 18 teaches that the ONLY Reason Believers today should NOT submit themselves to the Law of Moses- is because being Led by God the Holy Spirit is *infinitely* superior to being “commanded by Law”
- Verse 24 says, “those who belong to Christ Jesus **HAVE** crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”. So, *systematically* killing [crucifying] our unconverted Flesh (with its sinful Passions and Desires) is part and parcel to belonging to Jesus.

So, the “**Violence**” to which Jesus refers in **Matthew 11** is *partly* about the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit waging War against Sin and our fallen Flesh. And the Reason He linked this with a Discussion about John was because it was John, who first identified the Truth that God the Holy Spirit no longer dwells in Temples made with hands -but lives inside the genuine Believer- making any new, physical Temple on earth- completely irrelevant.

And so, in a nutshell- Jesus is also illustrating here that John was the last of the Old Testament Prophets; and that, through his Ministry, He is bringing in the New Covenant! And, finally let’s read **Matthew 11:14-19** again:

14 And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.
 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

**16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children,
17 and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'
18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!'
19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."**

Now I've already explained verse 24 in a previous Sermon- so you may want to look that up. But in verses 15-19 Jesus is illustrating the unbelievable Fickleness of the average Jew of the 1st Century toward ANYONE, who is genuinely trying to obey God. And so, Jesus contrasts the primitive and harsh Nature of John with the more relaxed nature of Himself in His 1st Advent. John NEVER touched a drop of alcohol and ate only locusts and wild honey. And yet, the average Jew found fault with that rugged Austerity by saying that John was demon-possessed. Yet when Jesus came- eating and drinking- they called Him a glutton and a drunkard.

Now most people would simply say that Jesus was talking about the Fact that a Minister simply can't please the people! And so, no matter what he says or does- some will find Fault with him. Now even though that is true- to some extent, I genuinely believe that Jesus was actually teaching something much deeper here.

Jesus was illustrating the Impossibility of Salvation and the fact that unless God *sovereignly* unveils the Heart and Mind of those who are Lost- they will not only NOT come to Jesus for Forgiveness and Salvation- they will actually find Fault with Him!

And this illustrates the unbelievable Hardness; Unwillingness; and Inability of the human Soul in its fallen Condition. That Hardness; Unwillingness; and Inability is so deep-seated and so pervasive- that unless God *sovereignly* unveils the Mind; unless He *sovereignly* opens the eyes and ears; and unless God *sovereignly* takes the hard, stony heart out and *sovereignly* replaces it with a soft heart- that is both able and willing to believe- NOBODY would ever be convicted; NOBODY would ever repent; and NOBODY would ever be saved!

And the Bible says that what makes the New Covenant infinitely superior to the Old is that all the Work that is needed for anyone to be saved- is accomplished for the lost Sinner by God Himself! And God accomplishes that Work- all by Himself- *sovereignly*- in the Miracle of the New Birth! So, absent that sovereign Work- Salvation is NOT hard or difficult- Salvation is totally and completely

Impossible! Yet with that sovereign Act of God- in the New Birth- all things are possible! Now please look again at the End of verse 19:

... Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

Now this is Jesus' Way of saying that the "*proof of the Pudding is in the Eating*". So, by contrasting John with Himself- Jesus is teaching that true, genuine, and godly Wisdom is proven beyond any Doubt by the Results, Actions, and Fruit it produces. So, while the lost, pagan World judges something based on superficial Appearances or by pre-conceived Notions- God's Wisdom- even though seen by the world as "*Foolishness*" is revealed by its eternal Impact.

Both John AND Jesus were OF God- even though they were seemingly as different as Night and Day. But the Damnation of the lost Jews of the 1st Century came as a Result of them NOT recognizing God in either the external Harshness of John NOR the external Ease of Jesus. And this proves that no matter what God did- those people- who laid claim to be the "sons of Abraham"; those who said they belonged to God; those who circumcised their Flesh; those who worshipped in the Temple: those who were given MORE by God than any other people on earth- *refused* to bow; *refused* to repent and *refused* to embrace WHOEVER God sent.

And that proved- beyond ANY Doubt- that the Reason they didn't come to Jesus OR to John and embrace them- was NOT because they were *confused* about what God was doing through John or Jesus. They didn't come to either John or Jesus- and they didn't embrace either one of them- because they didn't love God- at all! And the Absence of Love for God meant that they really were NOT true Jews at all. They were NOT sons of Abraham; and they were NOT God's chosen people.

So, what Jesus is talking about here in this Passage is what true "spiritual Greatness" looks like. It will NOT be admired by the World- they will condemn it. It will NOT be attractive to ANYONE- unless God has sovereignly "Set His Love" upon them. And it will NOT be pursued by ANYONE- unless they are called and chosen by God- before the Foundation of the World! But for those called and chosen peculiar people- loving Jesus and striving to obey whatever God has called them to do- is the Delight of their Lives!

And as they yield and surrender and submit to the Truth of God's Word- as they crucify their fallen and unconverted Flesh; and as they are led by the indwelling Spirit of God- even though this is NOT their Goal- those people WILL achieve true "spiritual Greatness"! And even though they will be despised by the pagan World- they will be "Great in the Sight of God"!

Amen. Let's pray.

© 2021-2025 by *Delighting in God Ministries, Inc.* All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

Delighting in God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.delightinginGod.life

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission

This is a single Transcript in a larger series of Sermons of a verse-by-verse “Journey” through the **Gospel of Matthew**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without Cost or Reimbursement to us with the Stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this Transcript without the express written Permission of *Delighting in God Ministries, Inc.* and that this complete Copyright Statement remains at the end of all Copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God ALONE!