

Jesus, John, and the End of the Age: Part Two

—Riddles from Q, Week 4—
Matthew 11:7-19//Luke 7:24-35 (NIV)

I. John Had the _____ of a _____

⁷ As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you,

²⁴ After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ²⁵ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you,

II. John Had the Greatness of the _____ Prophet of the _____

and more than a prophet.

¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:
 “ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,
 who will prepare your way before you.’

and more than a prophet.

²⁷ This is the one about whom it is written:
 “ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,
 who will prepare your way before you.’

III. John Had the Greatness of the _____ Who Ever _____.

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist;

²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John;

IV. Yet Jesus Brings Such a Great _____ That the _____ the Age of Fulfillment Is _____ than _____.

yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴ And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵ Whoever has ears, let them hear.

(See Luke 16:16)

²⁹ (All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus’ words, acknowledged that God’s way was right, because they had been baptized by John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

If you would like to analyze these passages visually, you can: (1) put a box around material that is unique to either gospel; (2) Material that is shared exactly you can underline in both gospels; and (3) Material that is similar you can underline with a dotted line in both gospels.

V. But Our _____ are So _____, We Can Always Find _____ for What We _____

¹⁶“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

¹⁷“ ‘We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’

¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

³¹ Jesus went on to say, “To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other:

“ ‘We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not cry.’

³³ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’

³⁴ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ ³⁵ But wisdom is proved right by all her children.”

The Bottom Line:

_____ all _____ and _____ the _____ of the _____

On the “Parable of the Brats” (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 266-67)

Other parables have clearly indicated [that God will have the upper hand against those who reject him] at the end of the age, but for now the power of the gospel is cloaked with powerlessness. Full vindication awaits a future date.

John Nolland concludes his explanation of the children in the marketplace with a theological summary as applicable to the twenty-first century as to the first:

Despite every setback, the climax belongs to a positive note. God’s wise plan, tied up as it is in the roles of John and Jesus, will certainly not come to nothing. There maybe many who do not comprehend, but Wisdom will seek out its children. And they will see the wise purpose of God coming into effect to their own great benefit in the initiative represented by the coming of John and Jesus. They will have no doubt that it has all been done right (*Luke 1-9:20*, 348).

People’s reasons for rejecting Christianity today regularly cancel each other out as well. It is too raucous; it is too sedate. It welcomes too many ne’er-do-wells; it is too bourgeois. It is too judgmental; it is too tolerant. It is too involved in society and politics; it cares only about the individual and life to come. The list could be extended at length. Every criticism is justified somewhere; none of them threatens the religion of Jesus. All of them point out the shortcomings of some Christians; all of them highlight the kinds of sins from which all people need forgiveness. When every knee bows before Christ but not all by choice (*Is 45:23-24*; *Phil 2:10*), then the truth of the gospel will be universally clear.