

Luke 07 - Centurion's Servant Healed; Raising the Widow's Son at Nain; Confusion on Jesus' Identity; Jesus' Testimony on John the Baptist; Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

III. Galilean ministry of the Son of Man (Luke 4:14—9:50)

(5) Compassion (7:1-50)

- (A) Healing the centurion's son (7:1-10)
- (B) Raising the widow's son (7:11-17)
- (C) Responding to John's doubts (7:18-35)
- (D) Forgiving the sinful woman (7:36-50)

Luke 7

(5) Compassion (7:1-50)

- (A) Healing the centurion's son (7:1-10) (Cf. Matt 8:5-13)

1 When He had completed all His teaching in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.

1 When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.

1 After Jesus had finished saying all these things to the people who were there listening, he went to Capernaum.

1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

- Leaving the countryside, Jesus entered His adopted "hometown": Caper Naum = "Village of Nahum"

- This incident shows Jesus extending grace to a Gentile through Jewish intermediaries. The similarities between this event and the conversion of Cornelius are striking (Cf. Acts 10)

- This verse helps us understand that people in general, not just Jesus' disciples, were listening to the Sermon on the Mount (at least part of it, Cf. Matt 7:28)

2 Now a centurion's slave, who was **highly regarded** by him, was sick and about to die.

2 And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.

2 There a centurion's servant, whom he valued highly, was sick and about to die.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

- "...highly regarded" - *entimos*, the centurion had a personal concern for his servant, whom he honored and respected

— His affectionate regard for the servant is also clear from the use of *pais* to describe the servant (v7)

- In Luke's writings—both the Gospel and Acts—centurions are always presented as quality men of good character. In all, the NT refers to centurions 9x, always in a favorable light:

(1) Here, a Roman centurion in Capernaum whose servant is healed (Luke 7:1-10)

(2) At Jesus' crucifixion (Matt 27:54)

(3) Cornelius, the first Gentile convert to Christianity (Acts 10)

(4) To whom Paul revealed his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-26)

(5) To whom Paul spoke about his nephew (Acts 23:17-18)

(6,7) Two who prepared for Paul's transfer from Jerusalem to Caesarea (Acts 23:23-24)

(8) To whom Felix changed to keep Paul in custody in Caesarea (Acts 24:23)

(9) Julius, who treated Paul kindly on his way to Rome (Acts 27:1,3,43)

3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to Him, asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.

3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.

3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and save his servant's life.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

- The servant was evidently too sick to bring to Jesus. Luke described him as about to die. Matthew described him as paralyzed and in great pain (Matt 8:6)

- Jewish leaders had little love for Romans in general and soldiers in particular. And synagogue leaders are not given to running errands for anyone, let alone a Gentile officer. She shows that the centurion enjoyed the respect of the Jews in Capernaum.

- This centurion loved the Jewish people and even built them their synagogue! (v5)

- Matt 8:5-13 records the same event, but doesn't highlight the use of intermediaries, messengers

4 When they came to Jesus, they strongly urged Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him;

4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him;

4 So they went to Jesus and begged him repeatedly, "He deserves to have this done for him,

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

- They presented the centurion to Jesus as "deserving" and "worthy"

5 for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue."

5 for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue."

5 because he loves our people and built our synagogue for us."

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

- By building their synagogue, the centurion had placed the Jewish residents in his debt, which in that society was expected to require repayment in some form.

- The fact that he was so generous with the Jewish residents of Capernaum shows his selfless concern for their welfare.

6 Now Jesus *started* on His way with them; but already, when He was not *yet* far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself *further*, for I am not worthy for You to enter under my roof;

6 Now Jesus *started* on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;

6 So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to tell Jesus, "Sir, stop troubling yourself, because I'm not worthy to have you come under my roof.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

- That's a switch. That's how the Jews usually felt about Gentiles. He seemed to want to want to spare Jesus the embarrassment of entering a Gentile's house, since many Jews would be critical of such a move.

- Roman soldiers were not characterized by humility, especially in front of their Jewish subjects. A Roman officer told a poor Jewish rabbi that he was *unworthy* to receive Him into his house?

- He even felt unfit (spiritually, morally, religiously) to meet Jesus outside his house.

7 for that reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You; but *just* say the word, and my **servant** shall be healed.

7 for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but *just* say the word, and my servant will be healed.

7 That's why I didn't presume to come to you. But just say the word, and let my servant be healed,

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

- "...servant" - *pais*, primary use is to describe a child; the centurion uses it here to connote that he viewed the servant as if he were a son

8 For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under myself; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*."

8 For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*."

8 because I, too, am a man under authority and have soldiers under me. I say to one 'Go' and he goes, to another 'Come' and he comes, and to my servant 'Do this' and he does *it*."

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

- The centurion understood:

- Authority, that Christ had authority like he had
- Action at a distance
- The parallel between him and Jesus: he commanded soldiers, and Jesus commanded diseases!

9 Now when Jesus heard this, He was **amazed** at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "*I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.*"

9 Now when Jesus heard this, He marvelled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "*I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.*"

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, "*I tell you, not even in Israel have I found this kind of faith!*"

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, *I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

- "...amazed" - 2x in the Gospels we are told that Jesus "marvelled" [KJV]:

(1) In Capernaum, He marvelled at the centurion's faith

(2) In Nazareth, He marvelled at the Jews' unbelief (Mark 6:6; Matt 8:10 (parallel story); Cf. Luke 4:14-30).

— This centurion had faith Jesus had not found in all of Israel

- Jesus' comment did not slander the Jews. One would expect them to have faith, since they had the prophecies of the Messiah in Scripture, but the Gentiles did not have that light.

— The centurion believed that Jesus *could* heal his servant, not that He *would* heal him

Why did Jesus "marvel"?

(1) The man's background: uncircumcised Gentile, raised outside the Covenant, without the tutoring of the Scriptures.

(2) The man's occupation: He was a soldier; an instrument of the oppressive pagan establishment. As an officer, he wielded considerable power.

(3) The man's wealth: an unusually rich soldier; he'd built a synagogue. Riches are not a spiritual advantage; they foster this-world attachments (Cf. Luke 18:24-25).

(4) The man's confidence: His surety was expressed in stark simplicity: "Say the word and my servant will be healed."

Somehow he had embraced Jesus with far more perception than the Jews. The only other person Jesus commended for having "great faith" was a Gentile woman whose daughter was delivered from a demon (Matt 15:28). In both of these instances, Jesus healed *at a distance*.

Ps 107:20: "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."

Eph 2:11-13:

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Jesus' Healing Ministry

Jesus did not limit His healing ministry solely to people who believed that He was the Messiah. He evidently healed some who expressed no understanding of His true identity,

simply because He felt compassion for them and chose to bless them (Cf. John 9:11; Acts 10:38). Even the disciples did not realize that Jesus was both God and Man until God revealed that to Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:16). It may therefore be incorrect that the centurion became a believer in Jesus' deity here, though he may have. However, Jesus rewarded his faith because he responded, as he should have, to the information about Jesus that he had.

10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant in perfect health.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

- Indeed. Would that we, with our greater available revelation of God, might have such faith. "Lord, increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5).

Faith is always cultivated by looking at its object; faith is always weakened by looking at itself. When we come to Christ for salvation, we are told to believe Him. We are exhorted to live the Christian life by walking by faith in Him. If we look at our faith, we will be discouraged; if we look at Him, our faith will be strengthened.

(B) Raising the widow's son (7:11-17)

This miracle raised the popular appreciation of Jesus' authority to new heights. Luke continues to stress Jesus' compassion for people, in this case a widow's son who had died. She was the epitome of the "poor" to whom Jesus came to bring good news. The importance of faith in this passage is not paramount, however the theme of the joy that Jesus brings is constantly shown.

11 Soon afterward *Jesus* went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd.

11 Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd.

11 Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a city called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd were going along with him.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

- Nain was about 20 miles southwest of Capernaum—a full day's journey. (He went even though He was not requested to go.)
- Two groups present: the Twelve, and a large multitude of presumably non-disciples.

12 Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.

12 Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.

12 As he approached the entrance to the city, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

- Friends were carrying the dead body out through the city gate to bury it outside the town, which was customary.

- She has lost not only her son, but her only male provider, and faces being destitute.

- The death of a child is most unnatural and hardest to bear. Death is a cruel thief when it strikes down the young. Carl Jung calls it, *"a period placed before the end of the sentence."*

- The woman was not only grieving, she was now completely alone and seemingly unprotected, without a close male relative. Help for widows is a major theme in both the Old and the New Testaments, especially under the Covenant as related in Deuteronomy, the saga of Naomi with Ruth, etc.

Warren Wiersbe suggests that there were four special meetings at the city gate that day:

- (1) Two contrasting crowds met: One group was rejoicing in the blessings of the Lord; the other was lamenting the death of an only son. Jesus had not been summoned, but He had an appointment.
- (2) Two only sons met: one alive but destined to die; the other dead but destined to live.
- (3) Two sufferers met: The "Man of Sorrows" could easily identify with the widow's heartache.
- (4) Two enemies met: The Way, the Truth and the Life met "the last enemy": death (1 Cor 15:26,51-58)

13 When the Lord saw her, He **felt compassion** for her and said to her, **"Do not go on weeping."**

13 When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep."
13 When the Lord saw her, he felt compassion for her. He told her, "You can stop crying."
13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.
- "...felt compassion" - *splanchna*, "inner parts of the body"—the viscera; the bowels ("heart went out," NIV).
— The inner organs were considered to be the seat of the emotions (we use "the heart").
— This noun *splanchna* is used 10x: Luke 1:78; 2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 1:8; 2:1; Col 3:12; Philemon 7,12,20; 1 John 3:17.

14 And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!"
14 And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!"
14 Then he went up and touched the bier, and the men who were carrying it stopped. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"
14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.
- Touching a coffin or bier violated the ceremonial laws and made Him ritually unclean (Num 19:11,16). Yet, mercy above sacrifice (Hosea 6:6). A word, from the Logos Himself.
— Probably His action told the bearers that He wanted to do something, so they stopped. The residents of Nain undoubtedly knew of Jesus and His reputation.
— This was the first time Jesus restored life to someone who had died, according to the Gospel record
— Interesting...Jesus is always is precise about whom He is raising. Maybe other people would rise from the dead otherwise? Cf. "Lazarus, come forth." He was the only one who was supposed to come forth!

15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him *back* to his mother.
15 The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.
15 The man who had been dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.
15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.
- The boy heard Him! (He was fully "alive" somewhere!)
— The young man heard the voice of Christ and obeyed—as must every deceased human in its own time.
- Heb 9:27 - And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
— This verse is often used to support the view that the 2 Witnesses in Rev 11 are Enoch and Elijah.

— Not everybody dies just once. Some people have died twice: Lazarus; Jairus' daughter; the son of the widow of Zarephath (by Elijah) in 1 Kings 17:19-24.

— Heb 9:27 refers to the general pattern, and is simply a rebuttal to reincarnation, etc.

- Jesus "delivered" the son back to his mother, further illustrating His compassion for the widow, and His grace.

- Jesus raised two other dead people back to life: Jairus' daughter (8:54), and Lazarus (John 11:43)

16 Fear gripped them all, and they *began* glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has appeared among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

16 Fear gripped them all, and they *began* glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

16 Fear gripped everyone, and they began to praise God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said, and "God has helped his people."

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

- Imagine the situation; a grieving widow, a dead son. They were getting used to the idea of his death. It shook them up to have him back.

— No doubt the people thought of the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, which occurred in that very area. Elijah and Elisha were also sent to deal with the unbelief and decay in the Northern Kingdom on its path to ruin...The inference is that there was another prophet risen up to arrest their decay and unbelief before they were wiped out as a nation (Jerusalem fell 40 years later).

17 And this report about Him spread throughout Judea and in all the surrounding region.

17 This report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.

17 This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding countryside.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.

- Luke may have recorded this raising of the widow's son from the dead here to set the stage for the interchange between John the Baptist's disciples and Jesus.

— There is a deliberate parallel between John and Elijah.

News Travels Fast

Jesus' healings and exorcisms contributed to the very rapid spread of His fame: After the exorcism in the synagogue of Capernaum, "And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about" (4:37). Then, after the healing of the leper, "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him" (5:15a). In the next scene, Pharisees and teachers

of the law are present "which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem" (5:17). This is surpassed in 6:17-18, where we hear of "a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases." We reach the climax of this development in 7:17: "And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about."

(C) Responding to John's doubts (7:18-35)

18 The disciples of John also reported to him about all **thesethings**.

18 The disciples of John reported to him about all these things.

18 John's disciples told him about all these things. So John called two of his disciples

18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

- This event happened while John was in prison (Matt 11:2)

— John's moral courage to condemn Herod's marriage to Herodias, Herod's one-time sister-in-law, caused his incarceration in the dungeon of Machaerus, the desert fortress-palace perched on a desolate high ridge of the Dead Sea (Cf. Luke 3:19-20).

— The remains of the castle's dungeons can still be seen, complete with iron hooks. It must have been difficult for one accustomed to the *al fresco* freedom of the wilderness to be confined.

- It was only natural for John the Baptist and his followers to have questions about who Jesus really was. Was He a prophet? Elijah? The prophet Moses had predicted? Messiah?

— He was preaching righteousness, healing the sick, casting out demons, even raising the dead...all predicted of the coming Messiah.

— However, He was not, as John and many other expected, fulfilling other Messianic prophecies, such as: freeing the captives (John was one), judging Israel's enemies, and restoring the Davidic dynasty to power.

— Thus John was anxious concerning the Messiah. He knew the OT well and knew of the works of the Messiah—but apparently now was confused.

- "...these things" - the activities of Jesus that Luke had recorded, including the healing of the centurion's servant and the raising of the widow's son at Nain.

There is a difference between doubt and unbelief: Doubt is a matter of the mind: we cannot understand what God is doing or why. Unbelief is a matter of the will: we refuse to believe God's Word and obey what He tells us to do. [Wiersbe]

Doubt is not always a sign that a man is wrong; it may be a sign that he is thinking. — Oswald Chambers

Rejection of John the Baptist (Cf. Matt 11:2-15; Luke 7:19-28)

19 And after summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or are we to look for another?"

19 Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?"

19 and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the Coming One, or should we wait for someone else?"

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?

- John had promised that "the kingdom was at hand," but there was no evidence of it so far.

— John was maybe having second thoughts about Jesus, because Messiah was supposed to release prisoners (Is 61:1), and Jesus claimed to fulfill that prophecy. However, He had not released John, who was in prison.

20 When the men came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, 'Are You the Coming One, or are we to look for another?'"

20 When the men came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'"

20 When the men had come to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the Coming One, or should we wait for someone else?'"

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?

- Luke evidently reported John's questions twice to emphasize that this was the issue at stake.

21 At that *very* time He cured many *people* of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many *who were* blind.

21 At that very time He cured many *people* of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many *who were* blind.

21 At that time Jesus had healed many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind.

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 And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: people who were blind receive sight, people who limped walk, people with leprosy are cleansed and people who were deaf hear, dead people are raised up, *and* people who are poor have the gospel preached to them.

22 And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

22 So he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have observed and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear again, the dead are raised, and the destitute hear the good news.

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.

- Jesus listed several messianic miracles that He just finished doing (Cf. Is 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:7; 61:1). He gave them deeds, not discourse. He gave them *empirical* as well as *Scriptural* evidence.

— He's reminding them of his mandate from Is 61:1-2. At least four separate Isaiah texts were alluded to in Jesus' answer: Is 26:19; 29:18ff; 35:5ff; as well as 61:1-2.

— Isaiah did not predict that Messiah would cleanse lepers. Perhaps Jesus mentions this because His ministry fulfilled Elisha's ministry, and he cleansed a leper (Cf. 2 Kings 5).

23 And blessed is anyone who does not **take offense** at Me."

23 Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

23 How blessed is anyone who is not offended by me!"

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

- Jesus' response is derived from Is 8:14-15. Much of the time, Jesus' words come directly from the OT. "In the volume of the book it is written of me," (Ps 40:7).

- "...take offense":

— A metaphor: to offend; to entice to sin; to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away

— To cause one to judge unfavorably or unjustly of another; since one who stumbles or whose foot gets entangled feels annoyed

— To cause one displeasure at a thing; to make indignant; to be displeased, indignant

Jesus' Testimony to John's Identity (Cf. Matt 11:7-11; Luke 7:24-28)

24 When the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

24 When the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to ask the crowds about John. "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

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?**

- Jesus spoke these words in praise of John because John's question about Jesus' identity made John look like a vacillator, or a reed blowing in the wind. John was not a compromiser; not seeking the praise of the crowd.

25 **But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are *found* in royal palaces!**

25 **But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are *found* in royal palaces!**

25 **Really, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? Look! Those who wear fine clothes and live in luxury are in royal palaces.**

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

- Jesus assured His hearers that that was not what John was; John's testimony to Jesus' messiahship was reliable

- John was not "soft" or effeminate; he did not serve an earthly king, but the heavenly King

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

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

26 **Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and even more than a prophet!**

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 the one about whom it is written: 'BEHOLD, I AM SENDING MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'**

27 **This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way before You.'**

27 **This is the man about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'**

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

- Not only a prophet, but one whose ministry was prophesied! (Is 40:3; Mal 3:1-2)

— Gabriel referred to the Malachi passage in his announcement to John's father, Zechariah

— In Mal 3:1-2, two messengers are spoken of:

(1) The Forerunner, revealed here as John the Baptist

- As Messiah's forerunner, John enjoyed a role greater than any other prophet, even those who gave messianic prophecies

(2) "the Messenger of the Covenant" who will purify His people. That is, the Messiah Himself.

28 I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

28 I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

28 I tell you, no one has ever been born who is greater than John. Yet even the least important person in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

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.

- "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16; Matt 11:13).

— John the Baptist ends the OT period. He's saved, but he's part of the OT, not part of "the Church"

Jesus Condemns His Unbelieving Generation (Cf. Matt 11:16-19; Luke 7:29-35)

29 When all the people and the tax collectors heard *this*, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

29 When all the people and the tax collectors heard *this*, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

29 By having been baptized with John's baptism, all the people who listened, including the tax collectors, acknowledged God's justice.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

- Many of the common people, even tax collectors, had responded to John's message and had undergone his baptism (3:12,21).

— When they heard Jesus preaching, they responded positively ("justified God"), meaning they accepted God's ways as they were, and did not try to force Him to behave as they may have preferred.

30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

30 But the Pharisees and the experts in the Law rejected God's plan for themselves by refusing to be baptized by John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

- Verses 29-30 are the words of Jesus, not an explanation from Luke (Cf. Matt 21:32)

31 "To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?"

31 "To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like?"

31 Jesus continued, "To what may I compare the people living today?"

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

- Luke highlighted the deep division in the thinking of the people who listened to Jesus' words. They were similar to faithless Israel in the past (Cf. Deut 32:5,20; Judges 2:10; Ps 78:8; 95:10; Jer 7:29):

— Those who had been baptized by John had repented of their sins and had been baptized to show their sincerity and agreed with Jesus and acknowledged that God's way was right.

— In contrast, the Pharisees and experts in the Law rejected God's purpose for themselves. By refusing to be baptized by John they showed that they did not accept his message of repentance or accept the kingdom. Thus they rejected God's plan of salvation for them, and were subject to God's wrath.

32 They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another, and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a song of mourning, and you did not weep.'

32 They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'

32 They're like little children who sit in the marketplace and shout to each other, 'A wedding song we played for you, the dance you all did scorn. A woeful dirge we chanted, too, but then you would not mourn.'

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.

- Childish, not childlike!

- They were like someone who sat in the marketplace and called out to others to march to their tune. However, their peers would not cooperate, so the religious leaders criticized

them.

33 For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'

33 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'

33 Because John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, yet you say, 'He has a demon!'

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

- The religious leaders did not like John because he was too much of an ascetic; he would not "dance" to their tune.

— Because he ate locusts and wild honey instead of bread and wine, the unbelieving Pharisees and lawyers accused him of having a demon.

34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look! He's a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

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!

- They did not like Jesus because He was too much of a *libertine* as they defined the term: too joyful. He would not "weep" for them

— Jesus, contrary to John the Baptist, took part in feasts, eating and drinking freely; however, the unbelieving Pharisees accused Him of gluttony and drunkenness.

— According to the OT, an Israelite who was "a gluttonous man and a drunkard" as deserving of stoning (Cf. Deut 21:20). Furthermore, Jesus associated with people whom the Jewish leaders regarded as apostates.

35 And yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

35 Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

35 Wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

- Despite the rejection of the Jewish leaders, those who accepted God's plan as John and Jesus announced it, demonstrated its rightness. Their lives were testimonies to the truthfulness of what they had believed, which John and Jesus had proclaimed.

— Jesus states this truth as a principle.

- God's wisdom is not frustrated by the sophistry of the "wise and the prudent"

(D) Forgiving the sinful woman (7:36-50)

36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to eat with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined *at the table*.

36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined *at the table*.

36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. So he went to the Pharisee's home and took his place at the table.

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

- This is the first of three reported occasions where Jesus is invited to dine at a Pharisee's house (11:37-54; 14:1-24). Each time is an occasion for conflict.

- By accepting this invitation, Jesus shows that He had not cut off the religious leaders simply because most rejected Him. He always dealt with people as individuals.

- Simon had not yet formed an opinion about Jesus, like Nicodemus had (John 3). The story presents him as inhospitable and insulting, but not hostile or antagonistic.

— Simon's invitation may have been insincere, however, since common courtesies were omitted: the greeting of a kiss; the anointing with a touch of olive oil; the washing of sandaled feet

- Because most roads were unpaved and the normal foot attire was sandals, it was common for people's feet to be dusty or muddy. Simon did not provide for Jesus' feet to be cleaned at the beginning of the dinner party (v44).

— For special dinner parties, low-lying recliners or couches were provided for the guests to recline on their left elbow, while eating with the right hand, feet extending away from the table.

37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining *at the table* in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,

37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining *at the table* in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,

37 There was a woman who was a notorious sinner in that city. When she learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's home, she took an alabaster jar of perfume

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

- Social custom allowed needy people to visit such meals and partake of the leftovers; also, it was not unusual for people to drop in when a rabbi was visiting
- Women were not invited to banquets in those days. Jewish rabbis did not speak to women in public. A woman of this (apparent) type would not have been welcomed in the house of Simon the Pharisee.
- Her life was known enough for the Pharisee to characterize her as a sinner (v39). She was not an invited guest at the dinner gathering, but went in anyway with a jar of perfume.

38 and standing behind *Him* at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, and *began* kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

38 and standing behind *Him* at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

38 and knelt at his feet behind him. She was crying and began to wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. Then she kissed his feet over and over again, anointing them constantly with the perfume.

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

- This should not be confused with a similar event involving Mary of Bethany (John 12:1-8), nor with Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9).
- Jesus was probably reclining to eat, with His head and arms close to the table, and His feet stretched out away from it. This was the customary position at important meals.
- By kissing Jesus feet, the woman was expressing her affection, respect and submission (Cf. 1 Sam 10:1). Normally people anointed a person's head, not their feet.
- Letting her hair down in this setting would have been on par with going topless in public.

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman *is* who is touching Him, that she is a sinner!"

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."

39 Now the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and told himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who is touching him and what kind of woman she is. She's a sinner!"

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

- She was apparently known to Simon. He deduced that Jesus could not be a prophet because if He were, He would not permit a sinful woman to do what this woman was doing.
- The touch of a "sinner" brought ceremonial defilement

40 And Jesus responded and said to him, "**Simon, I have something to say to you.**" And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."

40 And Jesus answered him, "**Simon, I have something to say to you.**" And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."

40 Jesus told him, "**Simon, I have something to ask you.**" "Teacher," he replied, "ask it."

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, **Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.** And he saith, Master, say on.

- Jesus was about to deal with *Simon's* blindness: he was blind to the woman, to Jesus, and blind to *himself*.
- Simon had no reason to expect Jesus' words to him to have anything to do with what he had been thinking. He had concluded that Jesus could not tell sinners from non-sinners.

41 "**A moneylender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred denarii, and the other, fifty.**

41 "**A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.**

41 "**Two men were in debt to a moneylender. One owed him 500 denarii, and the other 50.**

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

- These were huge debts: for one pence (denarius coin) was worth a day's wages

42 **When they were unable to repay, he canceled the debts of both. So which of them will love him more?"**

42 **When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?"**

42 **When they couldn't pay it back, he generously canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?"**

42 **And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?**

43 Simon answered and said, "I assume the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And He said to him, "**You have judged correctly.**"

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one who had the larger debt canceled." Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly."

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, *Thou hast rightly judged.*

- The answer may have been obvious to Simon, but he seems to have known very little about forgiveness and love.

44 And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

44 Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

44 Then, turning to the woman, he told Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You didn't give me any water for my feet, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, *Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.*

- Simon was likely surprised that Jesus made the woman the focus of His parable, and contrasting her with Simon. Even worse, Jesus made her the heroine and Simon the villain, the opposite of what Simon thought.

45 You gave Me no kiss; but she has not stopped kissing My feet since the time I came in.

45 You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.

45 You didn't give me a kiss, but this woman, from the moment I came in, has not stopped kissing my feet.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.

46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.

46 You didn't anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with perfume.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

- The woman was guilty of sins of commission, but Simon was guilty of sins of omission

- All the things Simon had failed to do for Jesus were common courtesies that hosts frequently extended to their guests
- Simon may not have acted discourteously, but he had just not performed any special acts of hospitality for Jesus
- The woman, however, had gone far beyond courtesy and made significant and unusual sacrifices for Jesus out of love
- Simon appears in the incident as the greater “sinner” of the two

47 For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but the one who is forgiven little, loves little.”

47 For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

47 So I’m telling you that her sins, as many as they are, have been forgiven, and that’s why she has shown such great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little.”

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

- The woman’s great love proved that she had appreciated great forgiveness

— Jesus did not mean that she had earned great forgiveness with her great love. Her love was the result of, not the reason for, her forgiveness

— It was her faith, not her love, that saved her (Cf. v50). As a maxim, the intensity of one’s love tends to be proportionate to his perception of the greatness of his forgiveness.

48 And He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

48 Then He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

48 Then Jesus told her, “Your sins are forgiven!”

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

- How Jesus confirmed to the woman what had already taken place. This was a word of assurance.

— Jesus was not now imparting forgiveness to her for the first time, but was commenting on her “forgiven” condition. This is clear because throughout the story, Jesus consistently regarded the woman as a forgiven person. Her acts of love sprang from her sense of gratitude for having received forgiveness.

— Cf. the paralytic man in Capernaum (5:20). Jesus was not actively forgiving the sins of the sinful woman, but announced authoritatively that they had in fact been, and were still, forgiven.

49 And *then* those who were reclining *at the table* with Him began saying to themselves, “Who is this *man* who even forgives sins?”

49 Those who were reclining *at the table* with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this *man* who even forgives sins?"

49 Those who were at the table with them began to say among themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

- This is either blasphemy, or they are in the presence of God himself. Jesus clearly claimed to be God. Repeatedly. He was either a lunatic, liar, or Lord.

50 And He said to the woman, "**Your faith has saved you; go in peace.**"

50 And He said to the woman, "**Your faith has saved you; go in peace.**"

50 But Jesus told the woman, "**Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.**"

50 And he said to the woman, **Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.**

- She was not saved by her tears, her gift, or her love: Jesus made it clear that it was *her faith alone* that saved her. No amount of works can pay for salvation (Titus 3:4-7)

— Jesus accepted her tears and her gift because her works were the *evidence of faith* (James 2:14-26)

— How did she know her sins were forgiven? Jesus told her. How do we know our sins are forgiven? God tells us in His Word (Cf. Is 1:18; 43:25-26; 55:6-7; Acts 13:38-39; Rom 4:7-8; Eph 4:32; Heb 8:12).

— Jesus healed the centurion's servant: a great miracle. Jesus raised the widow's son from the dead: a greater miracle. But here was the greatest miracle of all: saving this woman from her sins and making her a new person.