

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE CLASS**  
**MATTHEW 11:7-15**  
**SEPTEMBER 11, 2019**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. The disciples of John come and ask Jesus a question.
  - a) **MATTHEW 11.3:** *“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*
  - b) **MATTHEW 11.4-6:** Jesus is doing the works of the Coming One. (cf. Luke 4.16-21)
2. **MATTHEW 11.7:** *“As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John”*

**I. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS A SEER**

- A. **MATTHEW 11.7:** *“What did you go out into the wilderness to see?”* (theaomai – “investigate.”) Not everyone was baptized. (Mark 1.4,5; Matt. 3.7; Luke 7.29,30)
  1. **MATTHEW 11.7:** *“A reed shaken by the wind?”* Some expected John to be someone who was weak and easily influenced. (Luke 3.7-9,19,20)
  2. **MATTHEW 11.8:** *“A man clothed in soft garments?”*
    - a) John the Baptist came in clothes made of camel’s hair. (Matt. 3.4)
    - b) **MATTHEW 11.8:** *“Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.”*
  3. **MATTHEW 11.9:** *“But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.”*
- B. How is John the Baptist a prophet?
  1. A prophet is one who speaks on behalf of another. (Ex. 4.15,16; 7.1)
  2. John was a prophet and so much more. (Matt. 3.1-3; Luke 3.2,3)
    - a) He was the subject of prophecy. (Matt. 11.10).
    - b) He was the forerunner of Christ. (Matt. 11.10; cf. Mal. 3.1; Luke 1.76)

**II. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS A SERVANT**

- A. **MATTHEW 11.11:** *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but...”*
  1. **MATTHEW 11.11:** *“but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”*
  2. **MATTHEW 11.12:** *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”* (Luke 16.16; John 6.16)
- B. How was John a servant?
  1. John exalted Christ over himself. (John 3.27-29; Mark 1.7,8)
  2. John lowered himself under Christ. (John 3.30)

**III. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS A SYMBOL**

- A. **MATTHEW 11.14:** *“And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”*
  1. The prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah. (Mal. 4.5,6)
  2. John the Baptist is identified as Elijah that was to come. (Matt. 17.10-13)
- B. How was John the Baptist likened to Elijah?
  1. John would turn the hearts of many back to God. (Mal. 4.6; Luke 1.13-17)
  2. Was John the reincarnation of Elijah? (John 1.19-23)
  3. Just as Elijah brought the people back to God, so John the Baptist would turn the hearts of Israel back to Him. (1 Kings 17.1; 18.36-40)

himself. In the first chapter of John the Apostle's gospel, John the Baptist identifies himself as the messenger of [Isaiah 40:3](#), not as the Elijah of [Malachi 3:1](#). John the Baptist even goes so far as to specifically deny that he was Elijah ([John 1:19-23](#)).

John did for Jesus what Elijah was to have done for the coming of the Lord, but he was not Elijah reincarnated. Jesus identified John the Baptist as Elijah, while John the Baptist rejected that identification. How do we reconcile these two teachings? There is a key phrase in Jesus' identification of John the Baptist that must not be overlooked. He says, "If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah." In other words, John the Baptist's identification as Elijah was not predicated upon his *being* the actual Elijah, but upon people's *response* to his role. To those who were willing to believe in Jesus, John the Baptist functioned as Elijah, for they believed in Jesus as Lord. To the religious leaders who rejected Jesus, John the Baptist did not perform this function.