

Is Jesus Definitely the Promised One?

Sunday, 12/16 – 8:00 & 10:45

Third Sunday in Advent – 2018

During Advent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: On the day that Adam and Eve fell into sin, *God promised to send a future descendant of the woman who would defeat the devil!*

Then, the next 4,000 years included many reminders of the Messiah's coming, as well as some details like ➡the virgin birth taking place in Bethlehem and ➡John preparing hearts to receive Jesus – *just before the beginning of Jesus' ministry.* In today's text, John – who had prepared the way for Jesus with ➡*much difficulty* and ➡*great boldness* – is now in prison. Since John's situation was ➡*so unexpected* and ➡*so miserable*, he sought some *assurance* through his own disciples.

1. **What Was Reported to John?** ¹⁸ **The disciples of John reported all these things to him.** // Earlier in chapter 7, it is recorded that Jesus ➡healed the servant of a centurion, and ➡raised a dead man to life! Those things, *and many similar things*, were reported to John by his disciples.
2. **What Was the Task of John's Disciples?** **And John,** ¹⁹ **calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come [literally, the Coming One], or shall we look for another?"**
 - a. The phrase, **"the Coming One"** was often used to refer to the coming Messiah (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:27).
 - b. When Christians suffer *because of their relationship with Jesus*, it's natural to struggle, so Jesus said,

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man” (Lk. 6:22 NAS).

- c. John certainly believed Jesus was the Coming One; earlier, he declared Jesus to be “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29 ESV)! Then, in prison, *John still believed and sought some assurance!*

3. **John Wanted to Know: Is Jesus the Messiah?** ²⁰ **And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come [the Coming One], or shall we look for another?’”** // If you were asked a question about Jesus, where would you find the answer? *Yes, in the Bible!* John certainly knew the prophecies about the Coming One – how, *when He comes*, according to Isaiah, “the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy” (35:5-6 ESV). Therefore, Jesus could have just *told* John’s disciples what He had done!

4. **How Did Jesus Convince John’s Disciples?** The Bible records: ²¹ **In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.** // Keep in mind how impossible such things were at that time in history; nevertheless, *Jesus answered with many amazing actions!*

5. **How Were John’s Disciples Told to Answer John?** ²² **And he answered them,**
 - a. **“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up,**

the poor [Matt. 5:3] **have good news preached to them.**

// John's disciples **SAW and HEARD!** Can you begin to imagine the **shouts of excitement** that came from the ♦blind, ♦lame, ♦leprous, ♦deaf, ♦dead, and ♦sorrowful when Jesus restored them? *That was the answer they took back to John!*

- b. ²³ **And blessed is the one who ~~is not offended~~ [does not stumble] ~~by me~~ [in connection with me].** // To “stumble” is to fall; the Greek word means *to be trapped and killed*. In this case, *spiritual death!* So the one who does not fall away is blessed by God – *because He is the One who keeps us in Christ* (Phil 1:6).

6. **What Did Jesus Say About John?** ²⁴ **When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John:** // At an earlier time, Jesus' hearers had gone out to see John; here, Jesus asked them three questions, *to prompt them to search their own hearts and minds about WHY they actually went out.*

- a. **“What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?”** // As a reed is moved by the wind, *so many politicians and even preachers are moved by the opinions of the people*; however, that was NOT true of John (1 Th. 2:4)! *John was the opposite!*
- b. ²⁵ **What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts.** // John could have been a people-pleaser, which could have brought him soft clothing and kingly service, but, instead, *his life was the opposite!* Jesus could have said, **“...you went out to see a man who had the courage to rebuke even a king”** (Lenski, 411).

- c. **26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.”** // The word “see” has a deeper meaning; Lenski explained: They went “to hear him and his proclamation with their own ears, to let him move them to repentance and the baptism for the remission of sins” (412). Thinking about Jesus’ three questions, I challenge you to search your hearts and minds about WHY you gather here each week; *for what purpose?*
- d. **Greater:**
- i. **28 I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John.** // Why? Many prophets foretold the future; John is greater than others because **his very ministry** was foretold and **he prepared the way immediately before** Jesus was anointed the Messiah!
- ii. **Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”** // Why? John, *confined in prison*, did not hear Jesus’ teaching or witness His miracles; then he died *before* Jesus suffering, death, and resurrection. Those who heard and witnessed all such things are – *in those ways* – greater than John! What about us? God has **opened our eyes**, **given us faith in Jesus**, and **made us His holy children!**

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, TY for **Your Word**, **Jesus’ ministry**, and **confirming that He Is the Coming One!** Help us celebrate His birth and always trust in Him for eternal life!

CONNECT WITH US → Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com

Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230