



## “The Problem With Isolation”

**Luke 7:18-30**

May 22, 2022

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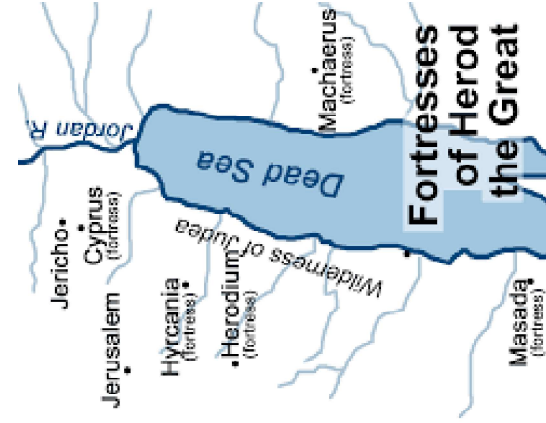
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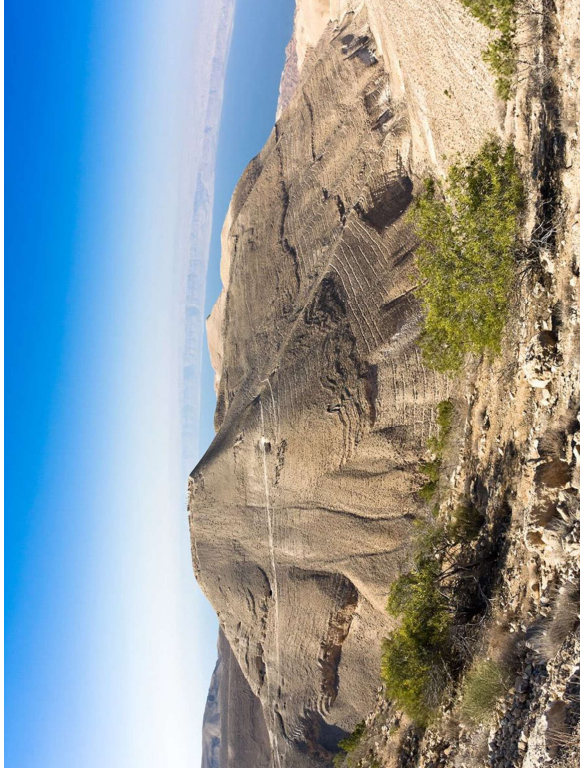
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23 “Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”

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

- John has been in prison for about a year.
- John had been put there by Herod Antipas who was the ruler of Galilee and Perea. John had confronted Herod about his wicked life, particularly about the fact that Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, had seduced his brother’s wife and then taken her and married her.
- The prison was a small, dank, and dark dungeon below the lavish palace living quarters.
- John had some of his disciples come and visit him from time to time and report what was happening.





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**Note:** These disciples repeat exactly what John asks.

**"the Expected One"** is a term for the Messiah,

- John goes directly to Jesus for the answers.

### Why did John doubt?

1. Isolation.  
Isolation from the world around us is not good. Memories become short, fears become great, loneliness dominates, routines are disrupted, and your imagination, unless kept in check, will run counter to the truth.  
Today public schools are facing a crises with their students. 1/3 of the Church are still not attending services. Some say they do not plan coming back.
2. Circulation.

### Matt 16:13-14

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

3. Disorientation.  
John had lost his sense of direction and purpose.
4. Information.

"I thought the Messiah was going to appear in judgment and then set up the Kingdom. Now I am not so sure that Jesus is the Messiah."

John saw the 2 mountain peaks but no valley.  
John's doubts came because he didn't have full information.

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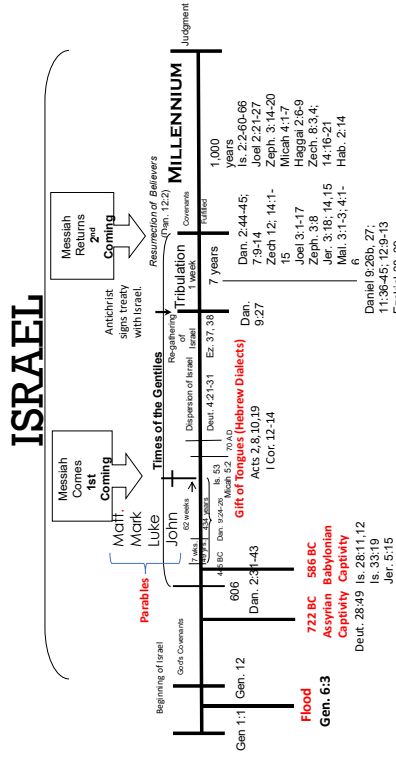
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### What had been John's experience with Jesus to this point?

"John preached vividly; he pointed to Christ; he identified Him to Israel; he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world", he baptized Him; he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending; he heard the voice of God confirm Jesus as his beloved Son. John wonderfully fulfilled his ministry, and then Jesus set out preaching to sinners, that same message as John, urging men to turn around, turn from ignoring God and all that was sinful and follow the Lord. "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand!" cried Jesus, and John encouraged his own disciples to follow Christ. Then Jesus did mighty works and John was amazed at His great signs."

- Geoff Thomas

### Old Testament View of Future Prophetic Events



### 1 Peter 1:10-12

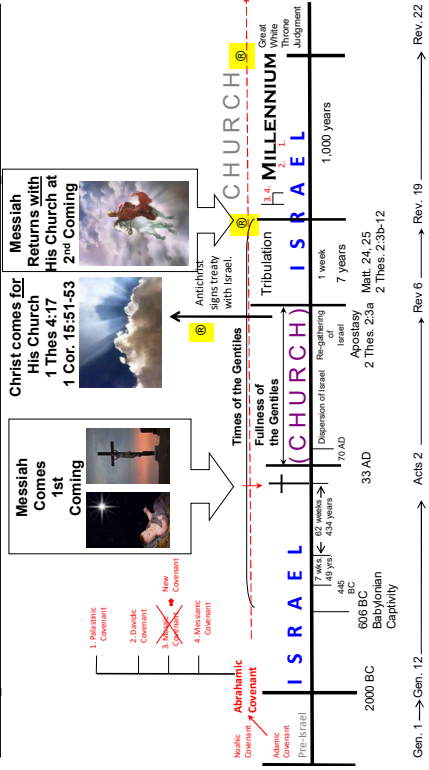
10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries.

11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you, through those who preached the gospel to you by the holy Spirit sent from heaven -- things into which angels long to look.



## Comprehensive Biblical View of Future Prophetic Events



Ⓢ = Resurrection

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### Doubts:

- Anyone and everyone doubts. Adam, Eve, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, David, Elijah, Job, Gideon, Jeremiah, Barak, the disciples, Thomas.
  - Doubt is the way you process information to come to a conclusion.
  - There is a difference between unbelief and doubt.
    - Doubt** – "I am skeptical, uncertain."
    - Unbelief** – "I don't believe it."
  - Doubt is not rejecting truth, it is questioning truth.
  - We talk much about how normal it is to have faith.
  - We talk little about how normal it is to have periods of doubt.
  - Doubt does not stand still and it loves company.
- ### Heb 2:1
- For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.
  - Do you ever experience: Doubt, despair, questions, hesitation, uncertainty, reservation, indecision, vacillation?
    - Jesus shows us how to deal with it. . . .

### 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.

- Jesus does 2 things to answer John's questions:
  - Look at my works.** Jesus doesn't talk. Instead He lets His acts of power do the talking.
    - Jesus wants John to focus on what He is doing and not on what He isn't doing.
    - Jesus wants us to get our eyes on Him and off of our situation and circumstances.

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#### 2. Look at My Word.

### Isa 35:5,6

- Then the eyes of the blind will be opened  
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.
- Then the lame will leap like a deer,

### Isa 61:1

- The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
Because the Lord has anointed me  
To bring good news to the afflicted;  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
**To proclaim liberty to captives**  
**And freedom to prisoners;**

- God's Word is the single greatest doubt-killer you possess. I can attest to that.
- "Reassurance comes as we doubt our doubts and believe our beliefs."

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**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?"

**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!

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

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.'

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."

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

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

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

- Don't be offended when things don't go as you think they should go.

- Don't be offended and begin to doubt.

- Israel took offense at Jesus.

- What have you expected of the Christian faith that turned out to be different and you have been offended?

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- Jesus waited until the messengers left.

- Jesus wants the crowds to understand John is no weak-willed, fearful, push-over.

- Jesus gives, by the way of sarcasm, 2 illustrations to show the character of John.

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"reed" – bends down to a gust of wind. John was not one who "bent down" or compromised to every "wind" of opinion.



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#### **Matt 3:4**

4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

- John is not your ordinary run-of-the-mill prophet.
- John was a man of conviction. He was strong, fearless, and uncompromising.

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.'*

- This tells us why John is like no other prophet.
- He was chosen to prepare the way for the Messiah.

#### **Isa 40:3**

3 A voice is calling,

"Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness;

Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

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- No one is greater than John at the time Jesus uttered these words.
- O.T. prophets could only peer into the future and talk about what they saw.
- John was chosen to announce the Messiah, to be present when the Messiah arrived.
- Yet John is exceeded by "the least" who is in the Kingdom.

**Why?** Because all believers after the cross, in the Church age, have knowledge and understanding of the atonement far beyond what John knew or saw.

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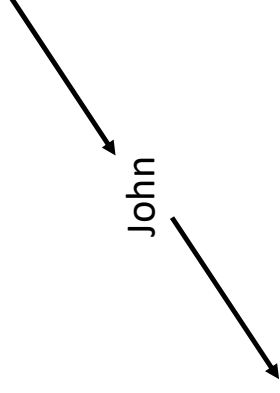
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**Weakest Church-  
Age Believer**



**O.T. Prophets** (Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Jeremiah, Daniel)

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- The people who had been baptized by John all agreed – God is just and righteous to call us to repentance from sin. They agreed with John that they were sinful and needed to repent of their sin. No argument here.

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

**"Pharisees"** – the moralists. Full of pride. Soaked in religion.

**"lawyers"** – legal experts in the Mosaic Law.

- They both reject God's purpose (will) for them to repent.
- This is really scary.

### **1 Chron 28:9**

If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

### **Heb 10:29**

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God,

"Are you in a dungeon right now and facing some doubts in your life about the Lord and His Word?"