

## What Kind of God Are You Looking For?

Luke 7 (18~23)

It would be interesting, to pass a sheet around, and have everyone describe God... What He is like, His character traits, His attributes, and so on...just to get an idea, of what *each one thinks* God is like. I would be interested to see, how many of those would correspond with the God that is revealed in the bible, and how many would be vastly different. You'd be surprised, how many are serving "a god of their own making," rather than the "God manifested in the scripture." Many have created a god, formed after their own lust and desires. A god that "Fits" their lifestyles, whatever that may be.

The scripture tells us, that Jesus came to this world, to bear witness to who God is, and what He is like. In John 14, Jesus said, "He that has seen me, you've seen the Father!" Another place He said, "I come not to do my own will, but the will of the Father!" In other words, to know Who God is, and what He is like, we need but study the life of Jesus Christ!

*Here we find John the Baptist, asking the question...Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?* A question that Jesus answers by pointing to "His life and ministry," and basically tells John, "Now you tell me...am I the One?"

We learn here, that John's questions concerning Jesus, came about, upon hearing the "rumors" that were going around about Him. Basically, what John was "hearing" was not lining up with John's expectations of Jesus. The "conflicting rumors" John was "hearing about Jesus" troubled him, enough so, that it caused him to send two of his disciples to Jesus himself, to find out what was going on. Given what Luke says, the rumors John was hearing, apparently started as a result of Jesus' raising the widow's son...

(Vs 16~20) <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. <sup>17</sup>And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. <sup>18</sup>And the disciples of John showed him of all these things. <sup>19</sup>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? <sup>20</sup>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?

It is clear, the rumors he was hearing, certainly raised questions in John's mind, but I am convinced that he ask them more to dispel the rumor, than from doubting Jesus was the Son of God. I'm convinced that John is asking the question, more **as a confirmation** of *what he believes to be true*, rather than from doubting who Jesus was. By that, I mean, John's question, was not a rhetorical, but a definitive one.

*Art thou he that should come? Aren't you the ONE that was to come?* It's like, "**You are the ONE...right?**" "*There's not someone else that we're not aware of...are they?*" No doubt, the rumors troubled John, because they contradicted what John had proclaimed Him to be. John had declared him to be much, much more than a prophet, John claimed that this is the ONE that was to come, was the LORD himself!

(Luke 3) **While baptizing in the wilderness...John declared...** *I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:* <sup>17</sup>Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

The "Coming One" was a common expression used in reference to the Messiah. John's message was that the Lord of Heaven and earth was coming to visit His people, and here John call's for the people to

prepare themselves for His arrival! It is clear by what John says here, that he associated “Judgment” with the Lords coming. <sup>17</sup>Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. That metaphor was a well known expression to the people of John’s day, during the harvesting of the wheat, the bundles would be threshed, separating the wheat from the stalks, putting the grain into the barns, while burning the wheat. It was a picture of judgment.

Keeping that in mind, and given that John was hearing Jesus referred to as “*a prophet*,” and the fact that there apparently was no judgment taking place, putting all that together, it helps maybe to understand John’s questions...

(Vs 20~23) <sup>20</sup>*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?*

Basically, what John was “*hearing*,” didn’t line up with his expectations, and, as a result, John sends two of his disciples to clear up the matter.

**Now notice, the answer Jesus gave, (or you might say, that lack thereof)...** <sup>21</sup>*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.* <sup>22</sup>*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.* <sup>23</sup>*And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

When I first read this, ***I had a question***, why didn’t Jesus just simply answer John’s question, and assure him that He was? Notice, Jesus *never verbally answered* John’s question... Notice that He never said, “*Yes I am He*”...nor did He say...“*No I am not.*” He never answered John, at least in the sense of telling John one-way or the other. But rather, Jesus responded to John’s question, by performing miracles in the presence of John’s disciples, and then told them to go tell John what they had seen and heard.

**John’s question...** “*Are you the ONE?*” **Jesus’ answer...** “*you tell me.*” Given the testimony of your disciples, about what I have done, and what I have said, you tell me, am I the ONE? Jesus told John’s disciples to go and tell John, the things they had seen and heard... How He healed the blind man’s eyes, how He healed the legs of the crippled man, and how you saw him walk. How Jesus healed the man of leprosy, restoring the man back to full health. Tell him how the one who was unable to hear anything, can now hear everything. Tell him how you saw me restore life to a dead man, and how he got up and it was though he had never died.

Go tell John of all the things that you see me doing among the lowly, the hurting, those who are suffering... I’m convinced that’s what the statement, “*to the poor the gospel is preached.*” Tell John what I am doing among the “*poor and lowly...those who are hurting.*” Do this...and John will have his answer.

You say, “*How will that confirm that He is the one?*” These things that Jesus was doing among these Gentiles would “*bear witness*” to the kind of man He was! This appears to be in keeping with what He had just taught His own disciples, just prior. How that “*you will know them by the fruit they bear...*” John was wanting to know if He were the ONE or not... Jesus answers by telling John’s disciples; to inform John of the “*kind of fruit*” they saw in Jesus. And the things they saw and heard testified of a loving, merciful God, full of compassion and pity on the suffering...

Not only would this “*fruit*” of His life bear witness that He is the ONE, but these things He was doing among the poor, was in keeping with the testimony of scripture, concerning the ONE that was to come. Various prophecies throughout Isaiah’s writings stated that the Messiah would do these very kinds of things. **(Isaiah 29:18-19) (Isaiah 35:4-6)**

The life and ministry of Jesus, was in keeping with the testimony of scripture, concerning the Messiah, and what he would do. Upon hearing from his disciples, of these things that Jesus was doing “*among the poor,*” John would have his answer!

Jesus makes an interesting comment at the end there, that really ties all it all together... <sup>23</sup> *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.* The word “*offended,*” is often times translated “*stumbling,*” and is a word that refers to the trapping or snaring of an animal. It was metaphorically used to signify entrapment, or a stumbling block, carrying the meaning of offense. What is Jesus saying?

Truth is, not all men will embrace Jesus Christ... For whatever reason, there will be many who will not receive Jesus Christ as Lord of their life! What that reason is doesn't really matter, the point is, He is the ONE... He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth... And to not embrace Him for whatever reason, will seal your doom! *But blessed is the man who doesn't allow anything to “keep him from” Jesus Christ...*

But, the sad truth is, for one reason or another, many will not receive Jesus as Lord... **Israel didn't...** Even though they saw the miracles, and heard the things He said, *they still rejected Him.* Have you ever thought about why that was? Have you ever wondered how they could witness all the miracles that Jesus did, but yet reject Him? Well the answer is, **He didn't “fit” what they were looking for.** Jesus **didn't meet their “expectations”** of what they thought the Messiah would be. Israel was looking for ONE who was a strong, political and military leader, a man similar to King David! The fact He was a poor pheasant from Galilee, from Nazareth at that! They were looking for ONE who would destroy their enemies, rather than teach them to love their enemies! They were looking for ONE who would establish righteousness, by judging unrighteousness! Jesus was not what they were looking for!

Israel's “*stumbling,*” at Christ, was largely in part due to these very miracles Jesus is talking about here. Israel could not believe that God would intermingle with such people... These miracles here, were done among the Gentiles, something that they could not embrace. They could not accept that God would have anything to do with these people! They could not fathom the thought that “*Their God*” would have anything to do with SINNERS! All these infirmities Jesus healed were real, but they represented a spiritual truth, speaking of the spiritually blind, the spiritually lame, the spiritually dead, the spiritually corrupt, the spiritually deaf and on and on. The fact that Jesus went in and ministered to the “*Ungodly*” as they saw it, that became a stumbling block to them receiving Him! They could not imagine, what a Holy God would have to do with such UNHOLY people. This perception came, from they thought they were a HOLY people. A people who had the perception that Holy, Righteous God would have nothing to do with such sinners of the world... To which, the life and ministry of Jesus, said just the opposite...

(1Corinthians 1) <sup>1</sup>*For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* <sup>22</sup>*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:* <sup>23</sup>*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*

In the Jews mind...there was no possible way they'd accept a “*Crucified Criminal*” as “*Their Messiah*”. They could not even begin to imagine, the Holy God of Israel, hanging on a tree, between two criminals! Their expectations were that of a man of authority, one who would rise up in great power and overthrow Rome, restoring Israel to its former glory, and set up the Kingdom of God here on the earth! I could go on and on, as to what they “*expected*” Him to be...but the point is, *Jesus was not what they were looking for!*

What about John? We're not told anything else about this... And what about “*his expectations*” of the One that was to come, John clearly associated “Judgment” with His coming...what about that? Though it was not exactly the way many might have expected it to be, there was Judgment... I'm talking about the Cross! On the cross, Jesus himself took on the judgment of God for sinners! The message of the cross is a

two-fold message, one of grace and mercy for those who will repent and come to Christ. And at the same time it is a message of judgment and condemnation to those who reject Christ. In Romans, speaking in the context of the cross, Paul says... <sup>18</sup>*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

Men will either be justified...or...condemned, based on what they do with this Jesus!  
In the words of Jesus himself... <sup>23</sup>*And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*