

1:19-28¹

Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem apparently John was making an impact because these guys were sent 20-30 miles across the Jordan valley to ask him, “Who are you?” John 5:33-35 speaks of this meeting in an argument of Jesus’ greater witness, but the Jews had such power that they spooked parents into not even defending their son (9:25-26)² while scaring some from among them out of speaking well of Jesus (12:42-43),³ and keeping old folks quiet about their humble faith (19:38). **20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”** Acts 13:25 furthermore speaks of this as a muscle **21 And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?”** Certainly we can understand this question given what we see in the opening verses of Mark 1 & Luke 1:17 (his appearance and the promises surrounding him). Not only that, but Malachi 4 built in this generation the expectation of **Elijah. He said, “I am not.”** When you see Matthew 11:14, it seems as though Jesus is saying “Yes John is **Elijah,**” but it seems as though they did not receive it and so John was not that fulfillment.⁴

“**Are you the Prophet?**” A clear reference to Deuteronomy 18:18. Apparently, people started thinking this about Jesus (John 6:14; 7:40). **And he answered, “No.” 22 Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” 23 He said: “I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of the LORD,” ’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”** In his 40th chapter.⁵ **24 Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, saying, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” 26 John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. ²⁷ It is He who, coming after me, ⁹is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.”**

²⁸ **These things were done ^oin ¹Bethabara beyond the Jordan** regardless of where you stand on the variation in the footnote, it is on the east side of that river. **where John was baptizing.**

¹See also my commentary on Mark (1:4-8).

²A young man gained his sight and lost his religion in one day.

³Probably Nicodemus is one of them (3:1; 19:39).

⁴See my commentary on Matthew (11:14).

⁵See my commentary on Luke (3:1-6) for more on this.

ⁿ [John 3:31]; Acts 19:4; [Col. 1:17]

⁹ ranks higher than I

^o Judg. 7:24

¹NU, M *Bethany*