

# Foreseen, Seen, To be Seen

Luke 7:28 - 30

Nutshell: OT prophets *foresaw* Messiah, but they wished they could have *seen* him, 1 Pet 1:11. John achieved their desire. But more blessed still are those who *will see* Christ as King of the earth. There they will be transformed into a glorious likeness of Him. Those, His beloved, always *begin* that transformation in this age by beholding Him, withdrawing from every defilement.

I. Context: John's question about the time of Messiah.

II. Text

**Luke 7:28** For I say to you, There is no greater prophet among *those* born of women than John the Immerser; but the small *one* in the Kingdom of God- he is greater than he [John].

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. The Messiah is born! A boyhood turning point, 1:5 - 2:52

III. **John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming,** 3:1 - 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21-38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: the FIRST MAN with absolute authority **in** Scriptures, and **over** angels/demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 - 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 - 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile into Himself

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 - 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 - 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33-39. NC: Law in ♥.

B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.

X. Picking the 12, 6:12-16.; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19

XI. Jesus' teaching manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**

A. The Sermon on the Plain gives the *earthly* evidence of the *spiritual* traits in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5-7.

Here, the poor are literal and the rich are their haters. But Christ's disciples are to love their haters.

B. Christ's disciples are to give generously, living by pity

C. Only right teaching can produce right living, always convicting *self* first. Only building squarely, exclusively on Christ will survive the floodplains life is lived in.

XII. Messiah & His Mission Portrayed in His Interactions

A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1- 10

B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17

C. Recheck: **But is this ↑ the Messiah? Just a healer?** 18-23

1. John very reasonably expected Christ to judge the world, as was prophesied

2. Jesus answered by doing more healings, since healing would characterize this long Age we're in

3. The **healings** looked forward to the **Cross**, the ultimate source of ETERNAL HEALING for the elect.

D. Jesus then challenged the crowd: what had they expected when they went out to John in the wilderness?

1. A wind-shaken reed? (A Spirit-moved man- an oddity)

2. No? How about an oddly-clothed man? (Meaning they didn't really know or care who John really was.)

3. No? A prophet? Ah, but you didn't listen to him!

a. Jesus told them how John really was a prophet

b. John was "beyond a prophet." Prophets FOREsee. John SAW.

c. Malachi foresaw Messiah, but also foresaw *John*

**Kid-speak:** How was John the baptist better than any of the prophets who came before him (like Moses and Elijah)? All the other prophets wanted to see Jesus come. John got to see Him come!

B. 7:28, Jesus continues his superlatives of John, but then brings the comparison into surprising perspective

1. Jesus epitomized John: He's the best human prophet (or at least tied for 1st: "none greater")

2. But then he puts John and anyone tied with him in a new

- basket, comparing them to members of God's Kingdom
- a. Now John is *lesser!* (In a future Kingdom)
  - b. Jesus' point was that John *as he was now* would be inferior to Kingdom Inheritors *in the future*
- C. But wasn't Jesus a prophet "born of woman?" Yes.
1. But the prophets in this context were either foreseeing or introducing Messiah
  2. Jesus *as* the Messiah was not part of that comparison
- D. (The Alexandrian texts leave out "prophet," making John the best of *anybody*- or tied for best. This would include prophets, but would not otherwise change the overall point.)

**Kid-speak:** Jesus said that John was the greatest prophet, but anybody who is with Jesus when He is King of the world will become something even better- for one thing, having bodies that can't die anymore!

- E. But what is Jesus' point? Is He just bringing John back into perspective?
1. No, He's pointing to Messiah coming *TO USHER IN GOD'S KINGDOM*
    - a. Messiah had to come because we'd fumbled the Kingdom completely away. In fact, we brought ourselves under the auspices of the *opposing* kingdom!
    - b. So Messiah has to be the **Kingdom-Bringer**
  2. John was still in a transient *Age* in a transient *state*. As great as he was, **he** was *still looking forward to* WHAT MESSIAH MUST *DO!* still looking forward to
  3. So, John's question and doubt sort of reaffirmed what still needed to happen: the Kingdom. It would just be a longer way off than he realized.
- F. "But the small one in the Kingdom of God- he is greater than he"
1. "Small" could be "least." Use of the comparative depends on sentence structure.
  2. This statement assumes that the Kingdom had *not arrived*
    - a. Otherwise, everyone in the audience was already greater than John (who had... missed the Kingdom?)
    - b. No, everyone in the Kingdom will be greater than John *presently* was (including a better John)
- ◆ c. The former prophets *foresaw*. John *saw*. Kingdom

inheritors *will see* the unveiled Christ, thereby being made like Him, 1 Jn 3:2

**Kid-speak:** How do we become like Jesus? By looking at Him when He comes back. What if we look at Him *now* (by believing what He says)? *We become more like Him!* 1 Jn 3:3.

3. There *is* a present manifestation of God's Kingdom or God's Rule
  - a. Rom 14:17 says that God's Kingdom IS righteousness and peace and joy (RP&J) in the Holy Spirit
  - b. So is a Christian who is enjoying RP&J in the Spirit greater than John?
  - c. No, the Holy Spirit (and hence His fruit) was available to Jesus' audience (Lk 11:13). The Spirit and Kingdom as we can *now* experience them are only foretastes and "down payments" of what is *to come*, 2 Cor 5:5
  - d. "Down payment" clearly implies a **future** finishing or fulfillment. That's when we will all be greater/ better/ more improved than *anyone now* can be
- G. Did you notice- Jesus now seems to have answered John's question
  1. John's question had to do with the final fulfilling of the Kingdom. That's what Jesus is telling the crowd about. So why didn't He tell John?
  2. *John believed in the coming Kingdom*. The reality of our better-ness there wasn't his question.
  3. His problem was why that Kingdom wasn't being ushered in fairly *immediately*. Jesus answered that question for him.

**Kid-speak:** Is there a Kingdom of God right now? Yes. How? By us following King Jesus. How will the Kingdom of God later be different? Jesus will be there!

**Luke 7:29** And all the people having heard- the tax collectors as well, they justified God, having been baptized *with* the baptism of John.

- H. To "justify God" means to "declare God right"
  1. Jesus was vindicating John, and the people agreed. They

- affirmed that God (who sent John) was right.
2. John had baptized them, meaning that they had confessed their need of spiritual cleansing and turning from sin
    - a. And they no doubt turned away from whatever sins John told them
    - b. And they no doubt thought they were ready for Messiah
    - c. But here He was. Evaluation: they wanted Him (“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” entering Jerusalem), **and** they *didn’t* want Him (“Crucify Him!” a handful of days later)
    - d. What this means is they only wanted Him *in a specific way*. When that didn’t pan out- Well! Of all the gall!
    - e. And Jesus knew this about them
  3. But the people at least could *see the truth of* reality as Jesus and John put it to them
    - a. *But* this shows the failure of mere agreement (or even hearty agreement) as faith

**Kid-speak:** The people in the crowd liked what Jesus said about John. They could see better that John really was from God. But is it enough to just **agree** with what’s right? No. You have to *start* there, but then you have **do** what’s right.

- b. James 2 hones in on this. Agreeing with reality- well, why *wouldn’t* you do that? True, many don’t, **but**
    - c. to simply come out of a state of *folly* (“There is no God”) does not impute wisdom.
    - d. Per Proverbs, it puts you in the in-between state of “simple,” or suggestible. Maybe that’s where these people were. But- Prov 1:4, they had to graduate.
  4. We should be able to *mentally* convince anyone of reality per Scripture. (They may hate us worse for doing it.)
    - a. Example of someone who witnessed the Resurrection and *didn’t* believe: the guards, Matt 28:4, 15.
    - b. I.e., they didn’t need convincing, they just *preferred not to accept what they knew was true*.
- I. “The tax-collectors as well”
1. The tax collectors were good test cases for hardness
    - a. They were hardened enough to bilk their own people while serving the Roman overlords
    - b. So if *they* changed, a powerful change agent was afoot!

- c. And many of them had apparently done as John told them, Lk 3:12-13
- 2. Luke is telling us that Jesus' explanation had allowed many in the crowd to piece some things together
  - a. They had been expecting the same Messianic timing that John had. With this explanation from Jesus, it put John's *preparatory* ministry in a clearer perspective.
  - b. The tax collectors who had stopped bilking, along with every other repentant person, could now see more definitively that they had done the right thing- **so far**
- 3. *But the King of the coming Kingdom was right before them!*
  - a. He had just corrected their view of John
  - b. He is about to negatively characterize their view of John and of Himself
- ‡ c. Jesus' true disciples in the crowd would confess- "Yeah, that's me. God, change me."

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and the Law *experts* set aside God's counsel as to themselves, not being baptized by him.

- J. Luke is pointing out a divide in the crowd. All who had received John's baptism were in one camp. The Pharisees and Law experts were in the other.
  - 1. Luke is telling us that John, in preparing the road for Messiah, was necessarily a FORK-IN-THE-ROAD CREATOR

**Kid-speak:** Some people in the crowd *didn't* like what Jesus said about John. Who were they? The Pharisees. If they didn't believe John or Jesus, could they follow God? No. Just in their *own* minds.

- 2. Once John said, "Here is the road. Take it," he was saying, "Get off of *your* road." Therefore, way *onto* the right road was marked as a fork *off* of their own roads.
  - a. Even many tax collector made that turn
  - b. But the Pharisees and Law experts did not
- K. Luke says that that refusal = setting aside God's counsel for themselves
  - 1. John knew of their evils (love of money, for instance, Lk 16:14); therefore, he refused *them* baptism, Matt 3:7

2. Therefore, as a group, they apparently *boycotted* his baptism
- L. **God's counsel** was simply that they turn away from every evil
  1. But they had many evils. Matt 23 is a partial catalog.
  2. The main evil was probably their belief in and insistence on their rightness, Lk 16:15
  3. Even when you're actually right, patience is still the right spirit for convincing others, 2 Tim 2:23-26
  4. But a shepherd does have to protect his flock. The Pharisees saw all Jews as their proper flock.

**Kid-speak:** God has a "counsel" or advice for your life. What does He want you to do? Believe in Jesus to wash away your sins and stop trusting yourself!

- M. Here is the chilling thing. The Pharisees refused God's counsel *in order to be God's true representatives* (they thought)
  1. They had built a "fence" around God's law, meaning protective statutes to keep from violating the Law
    - a. That was good. All Scripture interpreters must work out ramifications: How is this applied?
    - ✘ b. But the fence had become more inflexible than Scripture. Hence, every misinterpretation led to greater disobedience!
  2. How could the Pharisees have avoided the disobedience from their misinterpretations?
    - a. It ultimately comes back to correct interpretation. What IS God saying here?
    - b. Is God that unclear that He can be that easily misinterpreted?
  3. No. The nature of Scriptures is **PENETRATIVE UNTO SELF-EXPOSURE**, Heb 4:12-13. Those who don't want to be **exposed** have to deflect it by misinterpretation.
    - a. But aren't there *mere* misunderstandings- of grammar and such? Yes, but those are correctible *if* you're willing to be **exposed** before God- accepting Scripture's authority.
    - ★ b. Those who insist on misinterpretations, especially on key doctrines (Christ's deity, the Trinity, justification by faith, sanctification of those justified, etc.), don't escape being **exposed**- as frauds! 2 Pet 3:15-16

**Kid-speak:** How can you make sure you're hearing God right? Pay close attention to the Bible!

- N. It's only the "unteachable and unstable" who "wrench" the Scriptures in the self-damaging way, 2 Pet 3:15-16
1. In other words, their misinterpretation of Scriptures = the Scriptures 'interpreting' *them*- as condemned.
  2. A key Pharisaic no-no: self-justification, Lk 10:29 (Law expert); 16:15; 18:14. Luke follows that thread.
    - a. The rest of the crowd "justified" God concerning John. The Pharisees justified themselves.
    - ☩ b. *It's easy to fall into that mode!* Job did it, 32:2; 40:8. It's human nature.
- O. Luke is constructing a methodical portrait of the Pharisees. The next episode will continue it.

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")  
There is a wellness to come that we're *all* hoping for.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**  
**How have I lost righteousness?**  
Where do I justify myself?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
Where I justify myself, I can't justify (declare right) God.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
Difficulties are a constant corrective, tempting me to justify myself.

Wrap-up: God has **counsel** for every man. He's constantly teaching it to every man on a personal level, Job 33:14-30 (v 29 "multiples of three").

The Pharisees had many faults, but love of money was enough to keep them out of God's Kingdom. Love of money is bred into us as Americans.

But self-justification is bred into us as *humans*. We wouldn't justify ourselves if it wasn't 'in our bones': "I'm right." Why can't God be right? Two great loads are lifted when we say Jesus is fully right: Our sins are taken away, and we don't have to trust our own way anymore.