

Jesus Answered John's Doubts – Luke 7:18-35

By David DeWitt

Interpretation—What did Jesus do?

On the way back to Capernaum, Jesus was stopped by a delegation from John the Baptist, who were apparently wondering if Jesus was indeed the Messiah. John was essentially an Old Testament prophet who expected the Messiah to go to Jerusalem and start an earthly kingdom. When Jesus didn't do that, John was confused.

Jesus told the messengers to report that He was fulfilling the Scripture that proved His Messiahship *and He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM"* (7:22). Then Jesus added the potent verse 23, *"And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."* **The point is to not stumble over Christ when what we learn about Him does not conform to what we think we already know.**

Application—If we want to follow Jesus, what should we do?

We should get our understanding of "What Would Jesus Do?" from the Scripture, that is, from our understanding of what Jesus would do from what He did in the recorded Word of God. We should always start with interpretation before we focus upon application.

Interpretation—What did Jesus do?

When John's disciples left, Jesus compared and contrasted His ministry with John's. The difference was John came fasting and drinking no wine, whereas Jesus came eating and drinking *"for John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"* (verses 33-34). But they both had the same message, the same righteousness, and the same directive style. Jesus basically said to the crowd, "What did you go out to see, a wussie?" when He described John as *"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 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"* (verses 24-25).

Notice the Similarities between Christ and John the Baptist:

1. Both appealed to tax gatherers and the people, and were rejected by the Pharisees and lawyers (verses 29-30).
2. Both called people to repentance not ritual, religion, tradition, or self-acceptance.
3. Both fulfilled Scripture (verse 27).
4. Neither was swayed by social, political, or religious pressure, i.e., neither were a reed shaken by the wind (verse 24).
5. Neither looked like or lived like the other national political or religious leaders (verse 25).
6. Neither were generally accepted by the religious leadership of their generation.

Application—If we want to follow Jesus, what should we do?

We should not be swayed by what is socially acceptable, but we can be socially either liberal or conservative. Jesus was socially liberal and John was socially conservative, **but neither were swayed by what was socially acceptable.**