

So. Day - Feb. 20, 72 AM.

MUST WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER

Luke 7:18-23

John the Baptist asked this question. He was a strong, vigorous, muscular man with a special dress. A leather girdle about his loins, a simple dress - locus and wild honey. Unaffected by the luxury that some enjoyed. Dedicated to high ideals and the proclamation of a powerful message.

He was uncompromising, severe - this kind of man asked the question -- must we look for another?

I. WHY DID HE ASK IT

He had preached for 18 months - time is up for the wicked.

Then John was arrested. And that kind of a preacher is never very popular - to stand up with the courage and dedication of John the Baptist, and point out the evils of his day. He was arrested by Herod, the King, and carried to the East side of the Dead Sea and put in a prison of Machaerus.

The prison was a dungeon. The Dead Sea is 1300 feet below sea level. And in the midst of summer, it must indeed be the hottest spot in the world.

Imagine how very dreary and depressing it must have been for John the Baptist - though he was strong and confident. Having preached 18 months and having been in prison for 12 months. He sent his Disciples unto Jesus and asked the question -- must we look for another.

Why did he ask this question.

First, (some people) say John the Baptist (had come to doubt) that Jesus was the

Messiah. Maybe Jesus was just another fore-runner of the true Messiah. That after Jesus, there would come another greater than he. And he would set into operation the laws of the kingdom of Heaven.

Others thought that John the Baptist was not so interested in himself but in his Disciples. They did not understand why Jesus' Disciples ate and drank while they were required to fast. On occasion, Jesus was asked the question - why do the Disciples of John the Baptist fast often. But thine eat and drink. So it is thought that perhaps John the Baptist wanted his disciples to go and see him and find the answer for themselves.

Others say that John the Baptist, believing that Jesus was the true Messiah, he had the power to establish the Kingdom - just needed to be called out of Galilean country side. And so John sent his Disciples to Jesus in order to stir up a crisis - to make an occasion for Jesus to come out of hiding. To come from the Galilean hills and his quiet simple ministry and declare himself - King of Kings and greater than Solomon, and greater than Herod.

It appears to me that John was not doubting that Jesus was the Messiah. Heaven had so revealed him to John. A voice had been heard on Jordan's banks saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

John could not forget that. He is not so much doubting Jesus as the Messiah, he is perplexed about how Jesus is going to establish his Kingdom and cast down Herod and over come the Roman authority and bring peace to the world.

He is disturbed more about the methods of the master. I am sure that whatever the reason for John asking the question - it was purely personal.

When Jesus sent his answer, he said to the Disciples of John - go and show  
John. John needed the answer.

## II. WHY DO WE ASK THIS QUESTION IN THE 20th CENTURY

We have been preaching this same Jesus for 2000 years. We have been saying,  
"repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." We have been saying that the  
Kingdom of God is greater than all other Kingdoms. The Kingdom of God will  
eventually prevail over evil.

We have been preaching Jesus as the full and complete revelation of God. The  
expressed image of God. In whom we find all the treasurers of wisdom and knowledge.  
Yet, wickedness reigns.

In John's day Herod seemed to be more powerful than Jesus. Evil was rampant.  
Good people seemed to suffer most.

John could not understand that, and that is why he asked the question. Not  
withstanding the word which we have preached for nearly 20 centuries. There is  
a Kruschev who seems to be more powerful than Jesus.

But before there was a Kruschev, there was a Stalin. Before there was a  
Stalin, there was a Lenin. And before that, there were other world rulers.

The Caesar's have always existed. There has not been a long period of history  
when there were no wars. When there was universal peace, always nations have  
been fighting against nations.

Always, there have been diplomatic misunderstandings, tensions, distress, among nations of the world.

Is Jesus not able to cast down evil men.

If he is able, why does he not do it?

Was not Jesus able to cast Herod down? If he were able, why did he not do it? Is not the Kingdom of God more powerful than the Kingdom of the World. If it is, why does it not conquer the kingdom of the world and subdue them. Why is it that the majority of the people of the world are still lost? Even though we have preached King Jesus for 2000 years.

Is Jesus not able? Has the church failed?

I am certain that many people today can appreciate that question of John the Baptist, when he said, Art thou the one who is to come - or must we look for another?

✓ A woman in Nashville went to a preacher, late at night, just about darkness. By her side was a little 12-year old boy. She had a tale of woe that so many people have these days. She was there for some help. She wanted a place to sleep that night. The thing that bothered the preacher most, were her words - that went like this.....I thought that when you became a Christian, things were better for you.

She said her little boy thought that when he became a Christian and now he is confused.

✓ 22 ✓  
Let us find the answer of Jesus - both for John and for us. He said, in this 22nd verse, then go your way and tell John what things you 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.

The last word that Jesus gave in his answer was - and the poor had the Gospel preached to them. This word is lifted from Isaiah 61 which is prophesy describing the word of Jesus. Our Lord read from this passage when he opened his ministry in Nazareth. It is significant to note that he stopped reading just before the words - the day of vengeance of our God. He mentioned those last words so that John would go get his few and go back to Isaiah and see what was the first stage of his ministry. Namely to proclaim, the acceptable year of our Lord - to go from house to house, person to person, and meet individual needs and seek individual salvation for the people. This was a day of grace - and not a day of ultimate judgement. This was a day of opportunity for the peoples of the world.

Then God wanted them to hear and harden not their hearts. Jesus came to give men an opportunity as individuals to repent, to be saved, and to be ready for whatever eventually was to come.

Someone says that Jesus and communism cannot co-exist. One must conquer the other. But Jesus and communism has always co-existed. This is inescapable. There has always been a Herod. There has always been a Hitler. The Kingdom of God must co-exist with the Kingdoms of the World. We do not know for how long. It has been going on now for 2000 years. It may go on for 2000 more. Or it may not go on another year - we do not know.

If 90% of the world stiffens their necks and hardens their hearts against

There is none other to whom we may go. He has the words of eternal life.

We may not understand why the wicked flourishes. We may not understand why the kingdom of the world is so terrifying. Blessed is he who trusts Jesus and is not offended in Jesus. Leave it to him. We need not look for another.

We need to look for him to come again. When he comes the second time, it will be to proclaim the "day of vengeance of our God". It will be to issue the word that will be sharper than a two edged sword and will destroy the kingdoms of this world. This will be the purpose of vindicating the righteous. When he came the first time - it was to proclaim grace. Personal opportunity for salvation. When he comes the second time, without sin unto salvation, it will be to proclaim that time will be no more. That men and nations have had their opportunity to repent. And have repented not. He personally will intervene and destroy the kingdoms of the world and establish the everlasting Kingdom of God. And it will be not until then that we have everlasting peace.

### III. MUST WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER

John had been in this prison a long time. He may have developed a mood. It was once clear enough to him but this prison environment was depressing. We would say a (thousand times "no") - he is the only one. Whether people believe in him or not. Who can answer all of our questions. The question of life. The question of death. The question of eternity. He is the one that gives promise to life, that now is and will come.

(Ward Sumpter), a chemistry professor in Bowling Green, Ky, told the story that when he was a graduate student in Yale University a strange thing happened.

A brilliant Greek student was graduating from Yale with a degree in Chemistry. The time had come for him to prepare for going back to his home country. He planned a farewell party. Ward Sumpter was invited. There were about a half a dozen others present. During this farewell party, this Greek student, took a preparation of (potassium cyanide) and drank it. Ward said that he did not know what was happening until it had happened. It was his farewell party. The Greek priest who officiated at the grave side closed the service with these words - "that's all."

But Jesus standing by the graveside of every believer - he does not say "that's all", he says "the best is yet to be". Standing in the midst of every discouraging situation, Jesus says to the Christian, be of good cheer. I have over come the world.

I attended a funeral this week of a Baptist preacher, E. M. Richardson, of Riverside Baptist Church. And in the service one of the pastors who was leading the service, closed his message with the last words which this pastor spoke, while he was in the hospital and knew that he did not have long to live. He said, he quoted Phil. 4:19, but my God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. This indeed is the answer we are searching for today. John the Baptist said, must we look for another - indeed not.

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