

# Acknowledged Prophet, Unreceived

## Luke 7:26 - 27

Nutshell: Even when the crowds were right, thinking John to be a prophet, they were wrong, focusing on his oddity rather than complying with his warnings.

I. Context: John's question to Jesus.

II. Text

**Luke 7:26** But no- what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and beyond *just* a prophet.

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 *earthy* 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.

**Kid-speak:** What happened that made the world completely different? **The Cross**. Since Jesus died on the cross, we can tell people that God can take away their sins for good.

- B. Last time, we looked at Jesus' challenging words to the crowd after John's messengers left.
  - 1. Rather than allowing the crowd to sit in judgment of John for his question/doubt, Jesus challenged **their motivation in visitng the wilderness to see John** (since pretty much everyone had gone out to see/hear him, Matt 3:5)
  - 2. He first asked them if they were expecting John to be "a reed shaken in the wind"
    - a. Jesus was saying that many of them had gone out to see the spectacle of a fully Spirit-controlled man, using the wind as a figure for the Spirit, with John moving under His influence
    - b. We saw how this was like the Israelites' response to Ezekiel, who was like a singer of love songs, with *no core influence* on his audience, Ezek 33:32.
  - 3. Jesus went on with the crowd's second wrong motive: "But no- what did you go out to see? A man enrobed in soft garments?"
    - a. They had heard of John's unusual clothing. Jesus casts

- them as curiosity-seekers, with John as the curiosity.
- b. Jesus chided them that they could have searched more productively elsewhere if all they wanted was to find people characterized by soft clothes
- ‡ 4. Jesus' descriptions of John are important supplements to those of John's (soft) camels' hair coat and odd diet
- a. They indicate that John *was indeed a spectacle*, but seeing the spectacle alone or even mainly was to *completely miss the real John*
  - b. Reading between the lines, Jesus' description of John might tell us that he was a slender man (fasting often, Lk 5:33; the metaphor of a reed)

**Kid-speak:** Jesus was talking to a big crowd. He told them that they had gone to hear John the baptist talk mainly because John was kind of strange. It was exciting to hear somebody so different. But does that mean they were listening to God? No.

5. Today, Jesus closes out his challenge to the crowd's concept of John, telling them that, though they knew him to be a prophet, the ear they lent him was not one of obedience to the prophet's God
    - a. The prophet's God was presumably their God
    - b. But they had missed Him
    - c. As Israel seemed to have largely missed Him most of their recorded, OT history
- C. 7:26, Jesus continues His well-formulated series of questions with question #3: "But no- what did you go out to see?"
1. This is in exact parallel with question #2, which began with the same question, which had mimicked their fickleness.
    - a. Q. 1: Did you go out for *this*?
    - b. Q. 2: Well, maybe not. How about *this*?
    - c. (And now) Q. 3: "Oh, well how about *this*?"
  2. Meaning they hadn't even made up their own minds, nor was it that important to them. John was just a curiosity: something to "feed the eyes," as the Kenyans say (per John Bovard)
  3. They had never made their minds up about John. Now Jesus was the new curiosity.
    - a. Whether or not they had positive feelings towards Jesus,

His core message of repentance (same as John's) had *not* reached them

- b. If it had, they could not have been swayed a couple of Passovers in the future to call for His crucifixion
4. This is the danger of spectacularism in the Church! -and always has been
  - a. First- the Church cannot help it nor does she object to God doing His wonders in and through us
  - b. And men cannot help being drawn to the spectacular (root: spectacle)- nor can we
  - c. But the Church has learned Jesus' lesson poorly, as He constantly told men *not* to trumpet His wonders
  - d. A spectacle must be diverted to its proper use: that men see (inspect) God and His Word

**Kid-speak:** Why does God send us miracles? So we'll want more and more miracles? No, so we'll see that HE is God and start paying all our attention to HIM!

5. The Word is the constant. The Word is what keeps us in God.
  - a. But we always think we know best. "More spectacle = more belief!" Oh, and the 9 lepers? And Capernaum? And the Red Sea?
  - b. There is a great desire for signs and wonders today: NAR, for instance. (Un)fortunately, some of their leaders have already discredited themselves by succumbing to the flesh they unwittingly promote by spectacularism.
  - c. But what is THE great wonder God does in any generation? Granting people faith and repentance towards Himself. Changed lives are always the Church's greatest 'spectacle'
6. So now Jesus completes his series of probing questions with the 'right' answer, *but* insinuating that his audience still *missed* it
7. V 33 verifies that Jesus knew that whole "generation" (v 31) had misperceived John
- D. "A prophet?"
  1. You perceived John a Spirit-swept man?
  2. You checked him out as a man of unusual appearance?
  3. Oh- you actually thought him a prophet?? Ah, even there

you erred.

- E. The people *did* count John as a prophet, Lk 20:6
  - 1. But it had been so long since God's people had a prophet!
    - a. They knew of Ezekiel's oddities. This helped their mind run toward John's being an oddity.
    - b. 'If you don't know how to take John- Ah well, that's how it is with some of the prophets!'

**Kid-speak:** Even though the people thought John the baptist was a prophet, they mainly thought he was an oddball. Did they do what John said and turn from their sin? No.

- 2. Jesus said that that generation were true children of their fathers who *killed* the prophets, Lk 11:47
  - 3. Ironically and tragically, that generation *thought they had corrected* course where the prophets had warned them
    - a. Probably their greatest 'proof'? They had ridded Israel of idols. Over the 400 years between the OT and the NT, idolatry was virtually purged from Israel.
    - b. That was a notable stride! Imagine being in such a generation. How easy to think you had progressed past all your forefathers' mistakes.
  - 4. A lesson to us to *always* be course-correcting, never stagnant in that pursuit
    - a. But how to do that without removing a feeling of stability?
    - b. Just consider conviction par for the course, BUT conviction unto correction
- F. "A prophet? Yes, I say to you."
- 1. "I say to you." In other words, Not by your (wrong) perception, but on *My* authority, I give you the *correct* view.
  - 2. "Yes," in word you correctly identified John, but you don't know what prophets really are nor how to hear God through them
    - a. What generation has ever heard its prophets- teachers who best perceived God's Word and will in their day?
    - b. Are people that transparent? You can always count on them to choose teachers who affirm them? Or at least to avoid those who don't?

**Kid-speak:** What kind of teachers do people NOT want to listen to? The ones who tell them they need to stop sinning. But what does God tell preachers to tell people? Stop sinning!

- c. What prophet can be both all-affirming *and* faithful to God?
- d. Is that why the preacher must *first* convict and rebuke, 2 Tim 4:2? Because people are naturally so fatuous?
3. “I say to you.” The two-word Greek phrase occurs 111x in the Gospels (all by Jesus, I think)
  - a. Buttressed by an additional pronoun in the Sermon on the Mount: “I- I say to you.”
  - b. Preceded by a strengthening “Amen, amen” throughout John
  - c. But always with the force of the Final Prophet
  - d. Confirming that Jesus was *correcting* them
  - e. (Why do we not stand to attention when we hear His “I say to you”?)
- G. “Yes, I say to you, and beyond a prophet.”
  1. As Jesus will now explain, only *one prophet* would fulfill the desire of *all the rest* in **seeing The Prophet**, 1 Pet 1:10-12

**Kid-speak:** Remember all the prophets in the Old Testament? Moses and Elijah and Zechariah and Jeremiah? Only one prophet got to be there when Jesus came into the world, and guess which one that was? We’re talking about him. John the baptizer!

2. Telling us that a prophet, by definition, mainly spoke of Christ
  - a. **Therefore** he told the people their sins. They were not ready for Messiah while walking in their sin!
  - b. **Thereby** he gave them hope. You who turn from sin, Your Messiah will save you.
  - c. Therefore and thereby, true prophets (preacher-teachers: Rom 12:6 with 1 Pet 4:11) *still* point to Messiah, telling the people their sins and giving the repentant hope in Jesus- while *modeling* the same repentance and hope
3. “Beyond a prophet” meaning he was the ultimate prophet- the *culmination* of what all the true prophets had built toward. John got to say, “Here’s the Christ.”

**Luke 7:27** This is he about whom it has been written: "Behold, I send My messenger" before Your face, who "will prepare Your road before You."

- H. What other prophet had a prophesy written about *him*?!
  - 1. The *nature of history* pointed to one special "messenger." If God was going to continually send messengers to His people, it would eventually fall to one of them to introduce Messiah.
  - 2. Also the *specific choice of God* determined that one man would announce the Son's arrival in the world
- I. Jesus is quoting Malachi
  - 1. Malachi prophesied of John
  - 2. If Messiah was to be great, His preparatory prophet's coming would also be momentous

**Kid-speak:** The last book in our OT, Malachi, said that John the baptist would come and tell about Jesus! John knew the Bible talked about him, but did he think he was great? No, he just thought that he was one of God's helpers.

- J. Malachi quotes the Father speaking to the Son
  - 1. "I send," says the Father, "My messenger" (John) "before Your (Son's/Messiah's) face, who will prepare Your (Son's) road before You (Son)."
  - 2. The Father sent John to start getting people on the path that Messiah would both *teach* and eventually *become* ("I am the road," Jn 14:6, same word as here)
- K. John was a "messenger": *angelos*, 175x. All but about 10 are "angel." The only times *angelos* isn't "angel" in Matthew and Mark are when they, too, quote Malachi 3:1 of John.
  - 1. Luke's first time *angelos* wasn't "angel" was of John's "messengers" 3 verses earlier, v 24.
  - 2. (We don't become angels at death. Angels are a separate order of beings.)
  - 3. We, too, are God's "messengers" IF we carry His message
    - a. To carry His message, we have to know His message
    - b. To carry His message, we have to turn from our native, human message of independence from God
    - c. To turn from that independence, we have to recognize our complicity in it. Before conversion, our lives are stamped "Independent of God."

- d. Conversion is a conscious choice. But it is a work of God. The ‘real thing’ is a complete change. It is accompanied by a new birth.

**Kid-speak:** If you know God and love God, you’re supposed to be a messenger, like John the baptist. But what is your message? It’s that if people will turn to God, He will save them from sin. That means they won’t go to Hell, *and* they will have power to stop sinning on purpose.

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) Being weak makes us feel like oddballs. But God has had more than one oddball in His service.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?**

How much do I agree with the world and the worldly church to let the Bible be an agreeable book?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”): **How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**

I will hold to the Bible and Jesus as they are by nature: sin-convicting.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?** Pleasantness eventually runs its course with those who don’t want to be corrected, but Lord, may I be as pleasant and positive as I can for as long as I can (while still correcting).

Wrap-up: Life plays out its little drama on many stages, but in the end, only one thing will have mattered: Which script were we reading from? There are only two. Both include a lot of ad-libbing, but the theme of one script is, “Do it your way.” That theme often includes, “And throw God in for good measure.”

The other script just says, “STAY tuned to God.” Everyone with that script has a Bible in their other hand.