

WHEREUNTO SHALL I LIKEN THIS GENERATION?

October 15, 2017

Matthew 11:1-30

“And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. But whereunto shall I liken this generation?” Matthew 11:14-16a

Matthew 11 records Christ’s thoughts regarding John the Baptist. John’s ministry was rejected by many to whom Christ was speaking. If they rejected John, they also rejected Christ, for He was the one of whom John testified —“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Jesus confronted their unbelief with this succession of truths:

1. John is greater than any Old Testament prophet (11:9).
2. John is the one whom Isaiah prophesied would come as the forerunner of Messiah (11:10; Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1).
3. John is the greatest man ever born (11:11).
4. Since John appeared announcing the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom is pressing forward, admitting those who seize it vigorously (11:12).
5. John is the new Elijah foretold by the Old Testament prophets (11:14; Malachi 4:5; Luke. 1:27).
6. Those rejecting John thereby reject Christ whom John proclaimed, playing children’s games in response to God’s revelation of Himself to man (11:16-19).
7. The Jewish cities rejecting Christ are worse than pagan Gentile cities. Judgment will be worse for them than it was for Sodom (11:21-27; Genesis 19).
8. But every troubled soul that comes to Christ will receive His enduring rest (11:28-30).

Many heard John and were hearing Christ, yet refused to acknowledge either as God’s representative. Jesus compared them to silly children playing games in the street, who take nothing of life seriously (11:17). They start their game, yet soon sink into mindless bickering regarding how the game is being played. Their plan is trivial, their execution of it is fraught with nonsense, and for all their time and effort, they can’t even pull it off. Thus Christ characterized their approach to life’s most profound, inescapable realities. On another occasion Jesus called them “blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel (Matthew 23:24).

Herein Christ demonstrates the foolish thinking of all who reject Him. He dismisses their wisdom and argumentation as silly, meaningless children’s games that cannot accomplish even its own intended purpose.

Indeed, the “reasons” given for turning from truth are many, but they all fail to exhibit any true wisdom. For “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7). “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that

in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Corinthians 1:19-21).