

WISDOM JUSTIFIED BY HER CHILDREN

November 12, 2017

Matthew 11:1-20

“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.” Matthew 11:18, 19

John the Baptist had a vast, far-reaching, ministry, and Jesus’ ministry was expanding. But the religious-political powers resented both, for both eclipsed their dominance and exposed their hypocrisy. They sought to discredit John and Christ, causing some hearers to become disaffected. Moreover, the celebrity of John and Jesus attracted unbelievers, all of whom Christ rebuked in this text.

These rejected John because of his mannerisms. They rejected Christ because his manners were the opposite of John’s. This inconsistency exposed their “reasons” as nothing but vain efforts to disguise raw unbelief.

Jesus Christ and John the Baptist are the greatest men ever to live (Matthew 11:11). Humanly speaking, it is notable that from billions of humanity, the two greatest were on earth at the same place and at the same time. A tiny segment of humanity shared their lifetimes, their nation and their communities. They saw John and Jesus, and heard them preach. Yet they rejected both, offering trifles as excuses. Rebuking them, Christ said, “wisdom is justified of her children.”

This phrase is sometimes translated, “wisdom is vindicated by its works.” True wisdom is usually rejected by most who hear it, but is often vindicated in later generations. Whereas the “wise” of that age rejected John and Jesus, the fruit of both men has since exposed their “wisdom” as foolishness. Tragically, it is not simply foolishness, but damning foolishness.

1) What is wisdom? Wisdom is making the best judgment based upon the facts. Wisdom judges and interprets facts in a manner consistent with reality, with truth. Those who rejected Christ, then and since, reached their conclusion heedless of the facts—the truth He revealed. Although such was the wisdom of their age, it was foolishness, for it excluded truth, of which Christ is the creator, source, sustainer and embodiment.

2) The one Church of Christ, comprised of everyone who has ever truly believed in Jesus Christ, and the civilization that has developed within Christendom, vindicate the wisdom exhibited in John and Jesus.

3) “Christ crucified” is the wisdom of God, yet this truth is rejected as foolishness (I Corinthians 1:18-31). All treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ (Colossians 2:2, 3). Thus, “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments” (Psalm 111:10). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

(over)

Lessons:

1. The popular “wisdom” of “pop-culture” is always anti-Christ foolishness: don’t be fooled
2. Truths rejected by pop-culture are far-reaching, profound and eternal.
3. It is a mistake to imagine that adopting the ways of pop-culture is necessary to bring men to Christ. The opposite is true.
4. Since Christ spoke these words, history vindicates John’s and Christ’s earthly ministry. John was martyred and Jesus crucified, yet the impact of both, an impact only for good, continues to this day, and will continue for eternity as souls are saved from sin and wrath through Christ, whom John introduced to humanity.
5. Christ is the eternal embodiment of God’s wisdom. Scripture is the written revelation of God’s wisdom. All who submit to Christ and to Scripture will be vindicated for having done so. And their vindication will also be the vindication on that wisdom.