## "What Went Ye Out for to See?"

Mt. 11:7-15; Luke 7:24-30

**Background**: John the Baptist was in prison for his stand for the truth. He sent some of his disciples to Jesus to confirm Jesus was truly the Christ. Even the best believers may sometimes encounter doubts.

After Jesus confirmed His identity to John's disciples, He speaks to the multitudes about John's identity.

- 1. John's **pulpit**—John's pulpit was in the wilderness. This is a picture of where we preach today—The wilderness of the world.
- 2. John's **person**—Many who went into the wilderness to hear John, were disappointed. They did not find what they expected.

A shaking reed? A reed is a tall flexible plant that grows in wet areas. It was easily swayed by the direction of the wind. It was a picture of CON-FORMITY—yielding to the conditions of the environment.



- If that is what the multitudes went to see, they were disappointed. John was nothing like a reed shaking in the wind. John was more like an OAK who stood STRAIGHT no matter which way the wind blew. He never varied in his preaching to fit the crowd (Mt. 3:7; Mk. 6:18). That was why John was currently in prison.
- A man in soft apparel? Silky... smooth... luxurious... good looking. John was clothed in camel's hair and a leather belt (Mk. 1:6). Soft apparel is a picture of COMFORT. John's clothing spoke of his office and self-denial—He was more concerned about spiritual things than earthly fashions.



- <u>NOTE</u>: Jesus was not saying it is wrong to dress nice. He is referring to those whose clothing show they are more interested in a life of ease, luxury, and self-indulgence, not self-denial.
- 3. John's preaching—John's preaching was one of CONVICTION.

Jesus asked <u>three times</u>, "What went ye out for to see?" "For to see" is old English meaning, "For what purpose did you go into the wilderness?" The question refers to their motives—"Why did you go into the wilderness to hear John?"

This is a **good question for us** to consider. *"What went ye out for to see?"* Why are you here today? God is more interested why you came to church today, than the fact you are sitting here. God is concerned more about the AIM in you coming than the ACT of you coming to church.

Attending church is good, but that is not the end. Attending church is only a means to an end. You should NOT leave this morning merely satisfied that you did your religious duty for the week. <u>The purpose in coming to church should be that we leave changed</u>. The Pharisees who came into the wilderness to hear John, left unchanged. That is what prompted Jesus' question.

I ask <u>you</u>, as Christ asked—"*What went ye out for to see*?"—Why did you come to church today? What did you expect to find at church today? ➡Some come to a church service for same reasons implied in out text.

Some come looking for a "**reed-like church**"—A church that conforms to the times we live in. They are looking for *compromise*, not *commandments*.

May we not be like a reed (Rom 12:2). Conformity is what the world desires. Christian, don't be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

• Some come looking for a **"soft raiment" type of church**—A church that is soft and comfortable... A church that is easy-going... A "feel good" church... A church that is fashioned after the trends of the world and appeals to the eye.

Thank God, there is still a few who are looking for a "prophet-like" church that preaches the truth no matter what, with convictions!

Here are a few proper motives for coming to God's House, as seen in the ministry of John the Baptist. These five ends God wants to accomplish when you come to church.

- A. John's PREACHING. What did John preach? That Jesus <u>must</u> IN-CREASE (John 3:30)!
  - John did not point to himself. He pointed to Christ—"Behold, the Lamb of God!" "He it is, who coming after me is PRE-FERRED before me" (John 1:27).
- B. John's POSITION—John was only a friend of the bridegroom (John 3:29).

At a wedding, the focus is not on the friend of the bridegroom. It is the bridegroom who has center stage. The best man may be handsome, but he is only there to make the bridegroom look good. John knew, he was only there to focus peoples attention on Jesus and make Christ attractive and supreme.

- Paul said, "We preach <u>not ourselves</u> but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5). Paul said, "It is **not I**, but CHRIST" (Gal. 2:20).
  - We must make Christ SUPREME in our preaching... singing... serving... giving...in our LIVING!
- 2. This is the work of the Holy Ghost. Jesus said, "He shall testify of me...He shall glorify me" (John 15:26; 16:14).
  - The world won't tell you that! The world belittles Christ. This world has no use for Christ. If you want to hear Christ exalted, you must go to where He is preeminent. <u>We must make MUCH of Christ</u>!

When you come to church, come wanting Christ to be exalted... magnified... and glorified, in your life.

- A. John's AIM. "He must increase, but I must DECREASE."
  - For Christ to be made SUPREME means <u>you must become</u> <u>small</u>. The bigger Jesus is in your life, the smaller you will become.

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus—Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace."

- You cannot have it both ways—Either you are increasing and Jesus is decreasing, or He is increasing and you are decreasing. It is impossible to see the greatness of Christ, as long as I'm seeking to be great.
- 3. *"I must decrease.*" I don't see this mind-set in the world or in any political party. The philosophies of the world fuel the feelings of one's own self importance. Social media is full posts saying, "It's all about me," and "Look what I've done."
- B. John's ABASEMENT—John was a man who personified humility.
  - When asked who he was, John simply answered he was just a "voice crying in the wilderness" (John 1:23). John preached, "There cometh one MIGHTIER than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose" (Mk. 1:8).
  - 2. Do you come to church to be praised or to be humbled? God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
    - I don't want to come to church to show how good I am—I know better! I want to come to church that I might DE-CREASE—Less of me and more of Christ.
    - When Job saw the greatness of God, he also saw how small he was. This is what happens when Christ is IN-CREASED—We decrease!
- Come to church praying—"Lord, increase my faith!" When I leave a church service, I want to leave with a stronger faith than when I came in.
- A. For my faith to be made strong, I must come with open ears to hear God's Word, and a submissive heart ready to obey. It does no good to sit in a service and hear the preaching of God's Word without a predisposition to do what it says (1 Sam. 3:9).

- B. The Pharisees came out of curiosity, with no desire to obey John's message (see Luke 7:30).
- A. When Christ becomes SUPREME in your life, your faith will be made STRONG to believe He is SUFFICIENT for your every need.
- B. What you have in Christ is enough... yea, MORE THAN ENOUGH. Problem—People just don't know what they have in Christ!

He will never let you down!

- A. John preached, "Flee from the wrath to come." But, where do we flee? We flee to the Christ John preached—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Jesus is the only shelter from God's wrath upon sin.
- B. Did you come to church today, unsure of where you will go when you die? Coming to Bible Baptist Church will not get you to heaven, <u>but</u> it will give you the answer of how to know you are going there.
- C. Christ is the answer. Jesus is the One who died and shed His blood for your sins. When you receive Christ, you receive for-giveness of sin and the gift of eternal life (1 John 5:12).

**SUMMATION**: *"What went ye out for to see?"*—Why have you come to church today?

- 1. Was it that Christ may be made SUPREME in your life?
- 2. Was it that you might be made SMALL?
- 3. Was it that faith may be made STRONG?
- 4. Was it that God's grace might be seen as SUFFICIENT?
- 5. Was it that heaven may be made SURE?

All these things will be true, when you come for the right reason.

If you come for any other reason, you'll be disappointed, as those who came into the wilderness were disappointed expecting to find a flimsy reed or a man finely dressed in soft apparel.