

Sovereign Grace Church
“John's Greatness” outline
September 1, 2019

Matthew 11: 7-15

This morning we will consider Jesus' testimony to John the Baptist. We saw last time that John had certain doubts concerning whether or not Jesus was the One to whom John had been sent to testify. Jesus' answer was to describe the various signs and wonders that testified to the presence of the Kingdom. And now, after the departure of John's disciples, Jesus gives His own testimony to the value of John and his ministry to those gathered in His presence.

John the Baptist was an unusual character even for the times in which he lived. He was something of a recluse but attracted many to hear his words. Today we will consider the value of John's ministry & its significance for the work of Christ. We will also consider the difference between John's vocation and that of Jesus. In all of this we will try to sense something of the greatness of John as a representative of the Old Covenant and then compare that to the greatness that results from following Jesus into life in the New.

1. Jesus challenges the people. vv. 7-10

- a “reed shaken in the wind” II Tim. 4: 3-4; Matt. 3: 1-12

- “soft garments”

- a “prophet” Mal. 3: 1-6; Isa 40: 3

2. Jesus describes the greatness of John. vv. 11-13

- Who's the Greatest?

- **Resistance to the Kingdom Lk 16: 16; Matt 21:33; II Cor. 3**

3. Jesus identifies John with Elijah vv. 14-15

- **Was John really Elijah? Mal 4:5; Lk 1: 17; Jn 1: 21**

- **“ears to hear”**

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- 1. What is your idea of “greatness”? Do you consider yourself to be greater than John the Baptist? Why or why not? What did Jesus mean when He said that the one who resides in His kingdom is greater than John? Why do you think Jesus described John as greater than the likes of Abraham and Moses?**
- 2. Do you want to hear from God? What would you expect to hear? When you have occasion to hear from others do you actually listen? Or do you assume you understand them before they finish their thoughts so that you can respond in a timely manner? Do you look upon a conversation as a mutual exchange of ideas & an opportunity to learn or as a contest of ideas & an opportunity to defeat an opponent? What is the difference?**
- 3. What is your vocation or call from God? Is it the same as that of others? How can it be a means to glorify God and be a blessing to others? How can it become an idol which takes the place of the One who called you to it and then become a curse to others?**