

# Bible Stories for Adults

## John Sends Two Disciples to Jesus

Luke 7:18-35

### Opening

- Gathering: What ways do people use today to point others to Jesus?  
Which seem to be more effective?
- Today's Focus: John the Baptist had a clear understanding of his mission to prepare the way for the Messiah and helped others look to Jesus as the Christ.
- Key Verses: *This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." Luke 7:27*
- "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." Luke 7:22*

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

Elijah II (*Matthew 17:1-13*) = Note: Jews leave an empty chair for Elijah at Passover

- What kind of warning did the Jews expect to let them know the Messiah was coming?  
Malachi 4:5-6 = Elijah would return and warn people of judgment and they'd repent
- How long would it take for the Messiah to come after this messenger prepared the way?  
Malachi 3:1 = Suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple
- Did Jesus agree with the Jewish understanding that Elijah would return first?  
Matthew 17:10-11 = Yes
- What had happened right before Jesus said this?  
Matthew 17:1-3 (1-9) = Moses & Elijah had met with Jesus on a mountain (Transfiguration)
- Was this brief visit the expected second coming of Elijah?  
Matthew 17:12 = No, he had come to the people but they didn't recognize him
- Who was Jesus talking about?  
Matthew 17:13 = John the Baptist

John as Elijah (*Luke 1*)

- Was Jesus the first to learn that John was the Elijah who was to turn the hearts of the people?  
Luke 1:13, 16-17 (13-17) = Zechariah was told John would go *in the spirit and power of Elijah*
- Did Zechariah understand what he was told?  
Luke 1:67, 76-77 (67-79) = Yes, he explained John's mission when he regained his speech
- How did God's selection of John's parents help prepare him for his ministry?  
Luke 1:5-7 = They were educated & faithful priests who would have taught John
- How did being born to elderly parents prepare John for his ministry?  
Luke 1:80 = He lived in desert after his parents died - no earthly ties (family, business)
- How could he live in the desert?  
Matthew 3:3-4 (1-6) = He lived on locusts and wild honey
- Wasn't it unclean for a man of God to eat something like locusts?  
Leviticus 11:20-23 = Locusts were considered clean and acceptable
- Rough camel hair clothes were worn by the poor. Who else wore clothes like these?  
2 Kings 1:7-8 = Elijah - Not only in the spirit & power of Elijah, but also in his clothes

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### John's Views on Himself (*John 1:15-34*)

- Did John recognize himself as being Elijah? = Prophet was per Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (prophets)  
John 1:19-21 = No, he said he was not Elijah
- Who did he say he was?  
John 1:22-23 = Quoted Isaiah 40:3 to show he was calling the people to repentance
- Why was he doing this?  
John 1:24-27 = Because the Messiah was already among them
- Did John know who he was talking about?  
John 1:15, 29-31 = Yes, he pointed out Jesus as the one
- How did he know Jesus was the Messiah, especially if he didn't know Jesus?  
John 1:32-34 = The Spirit told him when he baptized Jesus

### John's Baptism (*Mark 1:4-5*)

- What did John do in the desert besides eat locusts?  
Mark 1:4 = He preached *a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*
- How effectively could he reach out to people in the desert?  
Mark 1:5 = People from all over Judea & Jerusalem came to confess & be baptized
- Why did John baptize the people who repented? = Leviticus 11-15 describes clean & unclean  
Numbers 19:17-19 = It was a cleansing ceremony making the person clean before God

### John's Ministry (*Luke 3:1-16*)

- How did John convince people to repent (turn from their evil ways)? = Judaism is not immunity  
Luke 3:7-9 = He warned of God's wrath in punishing an evil people
- Did John tell them to follow the Written and Oral Laws completely to escape judgment?  
Luke 3:10-14 = No, he preached a repentance to live God's love as Jesus did
- With unique teachings like this, did the people think John was more than a regular rabbi?  
Luke 3:15 = They thought he might be the Messiah
- How did John respond to such lofty thoughts?  
Luke 3:16 = He said the Messiah was coming to baptize with fire

### Baptism of Fire (*Luke 3:17*)

- How did John understand that the Messiah would baptize with fire?  
Luke 3:17 = He thought the fire was God's wrath and vengeance against the evil
- What was this baptism of fire that John spoke of?  
Acts 2:1-4 = The Holy Spirit came as fire at Pentecost
- Was the fire of Pentecost only active on that day?  
1 Thessalonians 5:19 = No, the fire is the Spirit's activity among us - let it burn!

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### John vs. Jesus? (*John 3:22-4:3*)

Was John the only one who baptized or did others do it also?

John 3:22; 4:2 = Jesus' disciples baptized also

What did John's disciples think about what Jesus' disciples were doing?

John 3:26 = They thought they were in competition and losing business

What did John think about this? = *He must become greater; I must become less* - Understood his role

John 3:27-30 = His ministry of preparation was *complete* now that the Messiah has come

What did Jesus do when the Pharisees tried to pit Him against John?

John 4:1-3 = He went to minister in Galilee

### John Calls It As He Sees It (*Mark 6:17-20*)

How did John's warnings of God's wrath against evil get him in trouble?

Luke 3:18-20 = He rebuked Herod Antipas and was put in prison

Herod Antipas had visited his brother Philip in Rome and seduced Philip's wife Herodias while there

When he came home, he dismissed his wife, lured Herodias away and married her

How did John rebuke Herod Antipas?

Mark 6:17-18 = He said it was wrong to have taken his brother's wife

Did Herod imprison John because he was upset or just to silence a trouble-maker?

Mark 6:19 = Herodias was upset

They had the power to have John killed. Why didn't they just do it?

Mark 6:20 = John was too popular and obviously a man of God, liked to hear him

### John's End (*Mark 6:21-29*)

What happened while John was in prison?

Mark 6:21-25 = Herodias had her daughter ask for John's head

How did Herod respond to this request?

Mark 6:26-29 = He had John beheaded

Did it bother Herod later in life that he had killed a man of God?

Mark 6:14-16 = He thought Jesus was John returned from the dead

How curious was he about his theory?

Luke 23:5-9 = He was excited when he had the opportunity to meet Jesus

How did he react when he realized that Jesus wasn't the eloquent John come back?

Luke 23:11 = He mocked Him & returned Him to Pilate

### John's Impact (*Luke 7:18-19*)

How strong of an impact did John have on people's lives?

Acts 18:24-26 (19:1-7) = His disciples were active even 20 years later

What did John try to do when Jesus began His ministry?

John 1:35-37 = Send people to follow Jesus, not him

How did John try to push this point stronger as he neared death? = John knew, disciples needed to

Luke 7:18-19 = He sent his disciples find Jesus for themselves

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### What You See Is What You Get (Luke 7:20-23)

Were the disciples bold enough to actually ask this of Jesus?

Luke 7:20 = Yes

Still early in His ministry, how did Jesus reply to this question? = List on board

Luke 7:21-22 = He told them to decide for themselves based on the evidence

How would these disciples understand from this who Jesus was? = Check off on board

Isaiah 35:5-6 = Messianic prophesy: blind see, deaf hear, lame leap, mute shout

Isaiah 26:19 = *Your dead will live, their bodies will rise* (Isaiah 56:8 - gather outcasts)

Isaiah 61:1 (Luke 4:18-19) = *The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor*

How did Jesus warn them against doubts from misunderstanding what the Messiah would be?

Luke 7:23 = Don't fall away because I'm not the political king you expect

### What You Saw is Proof (Luke 7:24-35)

How did Jesus say that John pointed to Him and didn't just say what people wanted him to say?

Luke 7:24 = Uncommon message didn't bend with popular winds like a common reed

How did He show John wasn't trying to become rich and famous?

Luke 7:25 = Didn't dress fancy - clothes fit with his call to repentance

Why did John do what he did?

Luke 7:26-27 = He was on a mission from God to prepare the way for the Messiah

How important was John's ministry?

Luke 7:28a = Greatest ministry in all creation

How important did that make John in God's kingdom? = We have seen what John longed for

Luke 7:28b = John never got to see God's great love in Jesus' death and resurrection

Had everyone accepted and understood John's great work?

Luke 7:29-30 = Regular people accepted, church leaders rejected

Did the leaders reject John because he was too strange?

Luke 7:31-34 = No, they were like kids who reject anything that isn't their way

What is proof that John and Jesus were right and the leaders were wrong?

Luke 7:35 = The proof is in the results - the many believers

### Closing Prayer

### Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How have I set aside the trappings of this world in order to more effectively minister for Jesus?  
(*Matthew 3:1-4; 7:19-21; 10:37-39; Luke 1:80; 9:23-26; 18:18-30; John 12:25-26*)
2. How is the Spirit's fire evident in me?  
(*Luke 3:16; 12:49; Acts 2:1-4; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:17-32; 1 Thessalonians 5:19*)
3. How willing am I to suffer rejection for Jesus?  
(*Luke 7:33; 20:3-7; 1 Samuel 8:7; Matthew 5:10-12; Mark 10:28-30; Luke 10:16; John 15:20-21*)
4. Under what circumstances would I be willing to be jailed or even killed for the sake of Jesus?  
(*Mark 6:17-18, 27; Luke 3:19-20; 22:38; John 11:16; Acts 5:17-32; 7:54-8:4; Romans 5:6-8*)
5. Who, specifically, have I pointed or led to Jesus?  
(*Luke 7:18-19; John 1:19-27, 29-34, 35-37, 41, 45; 12:20-22; Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7, 8-10*)