

THE GREATNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST  
(Matthew 11:7-15)

- I. John's Exemplary CHARACTER (Matt. 11:7-8)
  - A. Overcame WEAKNESS (cf. vv. 2-3)
    1. He ADMITTED his CONFUSION
    2. He ASKED the right QUESTIONS
    3. He ACCEPTED the CONFIRMATION
  - B. Remained steadfast in CONVICTION (v. 7)
    1. He was not SWAYED by OPPOSITION
    2. He STOOD FIRM under PRESSURE (cf. v. 2)
  - C. Practiced consistent SELF-DENIAL (v. 8)
    1. He demonstrated DEDICATION to the LORD by taking a LIFELONG Nazirite VOW (Lk. 1:15; cf. Judg. 13:7; 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11)
      - a. Was not to EARN MERIT FROM the Lord
      - b. Was to AID MINISTRY FOR the Lord
    2. He was not TEMPTED by COMFORTS
    3. He was not INTERESTED in POPULARITY
    4. He CONFRONTED those in POWER (cf. 14:3-4)

II. John's Extraordinary MINISTRY (Matt. 11:9-11)

- A. The FIRST PROPHET in over 400 years
- B. The FULFILLMENT of PROPHECY (Mal 3:1)
- C. The FORERUNNER of CHRIST
  - 1. He was the GREATEST YET of all HUMANITY
  - 2. But the LEAST in the KINGDOM is GREATER than JOHN
    - a. Broader UNDERSTANDING of Christ's WORK
    - b. Closer RELATIONSHIP in Christ's KINGDOM

III. John's Exalted POSITION (Matt. 11:12-15)

- A. The CULMINATION of the prophets of the COMING KINGDOM
  - 1. It has begun to ADVANCE FORCEFULLY
  - 2. It was being OPPOSED VIOLENTLY
- B. The CRIER who introduced the COMING KING
  - 1. If Israel BELIEVED, he was the prophesied return of ELIJAH (cf. Mal. 4:5-6)
  - [2. If they REFUSED, the kingdom in its FULNESS would come LATER, announced by ANOTHER]