

Theme: Even the strongest faith can be shaken when *our* expectations aren't met. Hence, we must turn them all over to Christ. Instead of meeting our faulty expectations he fulfills his plans - and does more than we could ask or imagine.

Background and Introduction:

- Our expectations betray us. Leave us disappointed.
- Three pieces that deal with expectations

I. The “Kingdom” Revealed vv.18-23

A. What John expected?

1. Swift judgment
 - John preached repentance & coming judgment
 - **Expects Jesus to bring it swiftly**; the reports are different
Doubt Creeps In!
2. “ Are you the One?” v.20
 - Jesus is sent from God! But is he the One?

B. What they saw

1. A Kingdom “preview” v.22 (Isaiah 35; 61:1,2)
2. Ministry far greater than they had anticipated!
3. A shared message
 - Calling sinners to repentance
 - With very different styles

C. What do we expect?

- 1. Believers?**
2. Skeptics/doubters?

NOTE: His ways are not our ways. Need to get that clear in our heads and hearts.

II. The Way Prepared vv.24-30

A. John was a true prophet

B. The greatest of all the prophets

1. Those born of woman?
 - Greater than Moses, Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekial, Elijah, Elisha?
 - Still belonged to the Old Testament sacrificial system

II. The Way Prepared (cont.)

C. Those Born of God? (28)

1. One Name above *all* others!
 - Jesus born of Mary, born of God!
2. The least in the Kingdom? Greater than John?
 - Greater knowledge
 - Greater blessing
 - Greater privilege (Hebrews 11:39,40)

D. Justifying God?

1. Some repented
 - God's judgments against sin are just
 - His demand for repentance is just
2. Some refused
 - They will "justify" themselves

III. A Childish Response – A Parable vv.31-35

A. A childish taunt

- We said "dance for us" – but he called us to repentance
- We said "mourn for the wicked" – but you came and ate with sinners

B. We will make our own rules!

- Everyone can play by them
- No expectation of judgment!

IV. The Way of Wisdom v.35

1. The wisdom of God is foolishness to many (1 Corinthians 1:23,24)
2. We cannot change the message that Jesus brought
3. Will the world see that same grace and truth in us that John's disciples saw?
4. The way of wisdom?
 - Let God and His Word shape our expectations –
 - So we see Jesus as he really is and not as I want him to be.