

# How to Vindicate Wisdom

## Luke 7:31 - 35

Nutshell: People who don't live by God's Wisdom are going to find things wrong with the people who do.

I. Context: John the baptist's question to Jesus.

II. Text

Luke 7:31 "Therefore, to what shall I liken the men of this generation? And what are they like?"

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. The Messiah is born! A boyhood turning point, 1:5 – 2:52

III. **John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming**, 3:1 – 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21–38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: the FIRST MAN with absolute authority **in** Scriptures, and **over** angels/demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 – 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 – 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile into Himself

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 – 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 – 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33–39. NC: Law in ♥.

B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.

X. Picking the 12, 6:12-16; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19

XI. Jesus' teaching manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**

A. The Sermon on the Plain gives the *earthy* evidence of the *spiritual* traits in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5-7. Here, the poor are literal and the rich are their haters. But Christ's

disciples are to love their haters.

- B. Christ's disciples are to give generously, living by pity
- C. Only right teaching can produce right living, always convicting *self* first. Only building squarely, exclusively on Christ will survive the floodplains life is lived in.

## XII. Messiah & His Mission Portrayed in His Interactions

- A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1- 10
- B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17
- C. Recheck: **But is this ↑ the Messiah? Just a healer?** 18-23
  - 1. John very reasonably expected Christ to judge the world, as was prophesied
  - 2. Jesus answered by doing more healings, since healing would characterize this long Age we're in
  - 3. The **healings** looked forward to the **Cross**, the ultimate source of **ETERNAL HEALING** for the elect
- D. Jesus addressed the crowd's misperceptions of John: he was *not* essentially an odd, Spirit-moved man, an oddly-clothed man, nor just a prophet, 7:24-26
  - 1. No, John got to see firsthand what all the former prophets had only been able to foresee: Messiah, 27
  - 2. But greater still is anyone who will see Jesus as King on earth, 28
  - 3. The crowd (except the Pharisees and Scribes) had to admit Jesus was right about John (not meaning that they changed their basic tune), 29-30

- B. 7:31-35, Now Jesus changes gears a bit. He wants to make a clear analysis of that generation while speaking of John
  - 1. Jesus says that these people expected conformity. They expected John and Jesus to move in step with *their* criteria. Neither John nor Jesus did.

**Kid-speak:** What are we going to be thinking about from the Bible today? Jesus said that people expected Him to act a certain way, and if He didn't, then He was no good. But whom did Jesus want to please? Them? No, God.

- 2. Therefore, whatever John was or did, whatever Jesus was or did, it was deemed unacceptable. They would be categorized and treated accordingly.
- 3. But John and Jesus' standard was *real* Wisdom, not the

- counterfeit* wisdom of that generation
- a. Real Wisdom counted John and Jesus as her children. They operated under her authority, whether fasting or feasting.
  - b. Real Wisdom is a separating factor in any generation. Those who choose its approval snub their noses at Conventional Wisdom (but with good attitudes).

**Kid-speak:** What showed Jesus the right way to live? What in the Bible guided Jesus? **Wisdom.** What's the main book about Wisdom in the Bible? **Proverbs.** (Get a book, parent.)

- C. 7:31, Jesus asks two questions:
  1. What will I use as an illustration/comparison to accurately depict the men characteristic of that day?
  2. What *are* they actually like?
- D. Jesus, of course, already has His comparisons in mind. The questions were to FRAME His comparisons.
  1. The second question suggests that the men-of-the-day defied easy description: "What are they *actually* like?"
  2. Is Jesus saying that they were *childish*?
    - a. Not any more than other self-seeking people are childish. No, that is not His main point.
    - b. Nor is His point that they played games. Most aspects of adult life can be likened to various games.
  3. We have to reason backwards. Jesus' **specifics** were their calling John a demoniac for being somewhat austere and calling Jesus a libertine for attending banquets.
    - a. The **generalization** Jesus drew from this was that they were *going* to find something to criticize in those who didn't conform to their standards
    - b. The closest comparison, then, would be the set of children who control what games were played while their parents shopped
- E. The "**men of this generation**," (MotGen) then, were the men who gave that generation its 'name' or description. These men would have included anyone who *agreed with* the prevailing philosophies and attitudes.
  1. As much as the crowds welcomed Jesus' teaching as direct and accessible, there was still a point past which they were generally unwilling to venture: expulsion from the

synagogue, for instance, Jn 12:42

2. The crowds, therefore, mainly sided with the leaders. The crowds were “men of that generation” as well.
- F. NOTE that Jesus is comfortable defining people in terms of **groups** they are in
1. Sodom had greater and lesser deviants, but the least one was worthy of judgment. The group was judged.
  2. Jer 18, God defines whole *nations* in terms of what truly characterized *anyone* in the nation
    - a. There is something American about you or me (assuming citizenship) that makes us the same as every other American-
    - b. unless we’re like Lot in Sodom. Then God can protect us.

**Kid-speak:** Is God able to look at a whole country and say, “They’re bad”? Yes. But what if you’re in that country and you’re good? If bad things happen to the country, God won’t let those things take you away from Him.

3. Jesus was partly indicting, partly challenging His audience:
  - a. Could they see where they were MotGen?
  - b. Were they sufficiently His followers to separate from the consensus crowd
    - i. Easier to do on some points
    - ii. *Especially where I can loudly proclaim my nonalignment*
    - iii. Harder to do where it counts- which is always where we’re disinclined (God always finds that spot.)

**Luke 7:32** They are like children sitting in a market and calling to one another, and saying, We fluted to you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not weep.

G. “They are like”- so Jesus has His explanatory likeness

H. First similarity: “Children... calling to one another.”

1. They were “measuring themselves among themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves,” 2 Cor 10:12
2. And they were locked into that mentality (Tick tock, the

game is locked). In their minds, no one else mattered.

- I. Second similarity: John and Jesus were like the adults whom the children ignored in their games
  - 1. Of course, when parents called real children, the children's make-believe world vanished
  - 2. But the MotGen had invested *everything* in keeping up the fantasy
    - a. John and Jesus could call to *them*, but as long as they kept up their game, they could keep pretending that John and Jesus *weren't* the 'adults'- the ones really in charge
    - b. But, just like the real children, the MotGen actually *did* hear John and Jesus and were thus accountable

**Kid-speak:** Jesus said the people who didn't like Him were like kids playing a game, who made up rules just so they could say Jesus was Out.

- J. Third similarity: They were "sitting"
  - 1. Their games were still restricted by adult oversight! They weren't allowed to run as freely as they thought.
  - 2. Thus John and Jesus dealt in REALITY, which were the MotGen's boundaries, whether they acknowledged it or not
- K. The "market" in the analogy, then, is simply the best setting to illustrate both children and adults congregated, in which the children can form their own little 'society'
- L. Note that Jesus doesn't have the children at play. He only has their taunts afterwards.
  - 1. He thus characterizes the MotGen as basically ineffective: all talk
  - 2. They could commandeer people and events, but they would never be able to effect a permanent outcome
  - 3. They got rid of John. They would get rid of Jesus. Still, their agenda would not have succeeded.
- M. The taunt: they'd played a jig, but their playmates wouldn't dance. They tried pantomiming a funeral, but that didn't bring them into step either.
  - 1. See! You never did want to play! We tried our best! You're just poor playmates! You're disqualified!
  - 2. That's how the MotGen saw John and Jesus: uncooperative
    - a. But the cooperation was based on their agenda.
    - b. And, just as with children, those were the 'rules'

**Kid-speak:** The people thought John was too picky and Jesus was too wild. They said Jesus always got drunk, but they said that so they wouldn't have to listen to Him.

- N. Operating by Scriptures will bring us into *some* amount of (seeming) conformity with what the MotGen are about. We still have to work, buy, sell, dwell, etc.
1. It's that 5% (in their eyes) *difference* that raises their alarm
  2. "Hey, we're all playing nice here. Why do you have to go religious extremist on us?"
- O. Jesus' main point: They think they're in charge, and they won't be pleased until you show basic compliance.

**Luke 7:33** For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, He has a demon.

- P. Jesus says "you say." He's sees His audience as MotGen.
- Q. We didn't know just *how* odd they thought John was until this! Privately (though they wouldn't deny he was a prophet), they suspected demonic influence.
1. Because of his seeming asceticism.
    - a. "Not eating bread" is presented as true. It may mean *sparse* carbs.
    - b. The untrue part starts after "You say"
  2. Likewise, if you fast, as Jesus said His disciples would do, you'll be called nutty too

**Luke 7:34** The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, Behold, an eater-man [lit., a man, an eater] and a wine-drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

- R. Jesus came eating and drinking, meaning that He didn't restrict His diet as John did.
1. And what did they say? "Ol' Lunch-line Larry!"
  2. *Could* Jesus have overeaten? No. His Scriptural models would have included Agur in Prov 30:8, "God, tear for me my portion of bread."
  3. Similarly, if wine was a sin, Jesus would have denied drinking. What He denied was drunkenness.

- S. To bolster their case, the MotGen noted Jesus' occasional company at certain meals
1. Did Jesus 'hang out' with unrepentant sinners? Contrary to popular belief, no He did not.
    - a. He attended a salvation celebration meal with Matthew and Zacchaeus- tax collectors, at which their friends would have heard Christ speak
    - b. But He would have defied Scriptures to make unrepentant sinners his companions, Prov 13:20; 1 Cor 15:33

**Kid-speak:** What happens if you hang around bad people? *You'll get worse!* Did Jesus hang around bad people? No, but would He invite people to come hang around Him? Yes!

2. To witness to the unrepentant, you offer them a hand *out* of the mire, you don't jump in with them
- T. This is the fourth time "Son of Man" has occurred in Luke. This is Jesus' favorite name for Himself, borrowed from Ezekiel (90x +), perhaps indicating Israel's continued captivity.

**Luke 7:35** And Wisdom has been declared right by all of her children.

- U. That is, contrary to the wisdom and standards of the MotGen, *Real Wisdom* was "justified," or "declared right," or "vindicated" by the actions of all of those she had birthed
1. Specifically, *John* walked by Wisdom in his austerity
  2. But Wisdom owned *Jesus* as her own just as much, even though He was less austere

**Kid-speak:** Even though John and Jesus behaved differently, what showed them *both* how to live? **Wisdom.** What shows you and me how to live? **Wisdom.**

- V. Jesus is saying that true children of God answer to a different call. Wisdom is always making that call. (So do Righteousness, Mercy, etc., since they are all from God.)
1. Wisdom's children are God's children
  2. God's children therefore cannot answer a separate call
  3. The MotGen's expectations were a call that neither John,

- Jesus, nor *any* of Wisdom's children will answer
4. That's what make them Wisdom's children: they answer *her* call alone.
  5. Whose child are you?
- W. Why Wisdom? Wisdom best personifies the **breadth** of God's ways. None of God's other attributes or 'assistants' lack breadth, but in Wisdom, it is an operational feature.
- X. Jesus was inviting His audience to join Him in being children of Wisdom, making their aim to call *her* right, being willing to, in effect, call the MotGen wrong.
- V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless") Wisdom covers differing styles and modes.
- VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?**  
Do I have Wisdom's breadth?
- VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
I will learn Wisdom from Proverbs.
- VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
Wisdom is God's tool-bag we get to borrow (have).

Wrap-up: Prov 29:27 says, A wayward man *is* a revulsion to the righteous, and the upright-of-path *are* a revulsion to the immoral. ["Revulsion" = "Abomination" to God, etc.]

The MotGen admired John and Jesus in many ways, but at a core level, they could not accept Wisdom, whose foundation is the fear of God, Prov 9:10 (comp 1:7); Ps 111:10.

Wisdom will make you admirable in many ways, but God's fear will eventually create a dividing line that will make you unacceptable to the MotGen (who are basically the same in every generation).

If we become too used to being admired, we may wish to bend Wisdom to that end. But that only fits the definition of a "wayward" (root "twist, distort") man (Prov 29:27 above).