

August 15

Stumbling over the Stumbling Stone

“The messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, he comes!” says Yahweh of Armies. “But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire” – Malachi 3:1-2

[Luke 7:18-33, Perea and Capernaum]
The disciples of John told him in the prison about all these things. John, calling to himself two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, “Are you the one who is coming, or should we look for another?” When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptizer has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?’”

In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and to many who were blind he gave sight. Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard: that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. Blessed is he who finds no occasion for stumbling in me.”

When John’s messengers had departed, he began to tell the multitudes about John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are gorgeously dressed, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way before you.’
[Malachi 3:1]

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“For most certainly I tell you, among those who are born of women there is not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptizer, yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater

than he.

From the days of John the Baptizer until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. If you are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they declared God to be just, having been baptized with John’s baptism. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God, not being baptized by him themselves.

“To what then will I liken the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace, and call one to another, saying, ‘We piped to you, and you didn’t dance. We mourned, and you didn’t weep.’ For John the Baptizer came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard; a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Wisdom is justified by all her children.” [Matthew 11:2-19]

1. How do you think John reacted to Jesus’ answer? How did the Pharisees react to John?
2. Have you stumbled over Jesus’ actions? Did they make others think you were foolish?
3. Jesus, I want to be a fool to the world so I can be wise in you, help me not to stumble...