**Jesus and John the Baptist**

**A Bible Story From**

**Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 7:18-35**

**Bible Story Number: 2010260**

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**Jesus and John the Baptist**

**Bible Story**

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**Background**

John the Baptist had already baptized Jesus. He recognized Jesus as the Messiah and made it known by saying, “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, HCSB). This event occurred later in the life and ministry of Jesus. John wanted his followers to know that Jesus was the Messiah.

John was in prison. Herod put John in prison because John confronted Herod about his relationship with Herodias, Herod’s brother’s wife, and all the evil things Herod had done. (Luke 3:19-20)

**Story from the Bible**

**Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 7:18-35**

This is what the Bible says.

Jesus had been teaching his followers. He was traveling to the towns in Galilee, preaching and teaching.

John the Baptist was in prison. He heard about what Jesus was doing. He sent two of his followers to Jesus. He told them to ask Jesus, “Are you the Messiah (the one who is coming) or should we expect someone else?”

Jesus did not give a direct answer. Instead, he told them: “Go back to John and report what you see and hear: The blind can see, the crippled can walk, those with leprosy are healed, the deaf can now hear, the dead are raised and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” Jesus also said, “Blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of me.”

As John’s followers were leaving, Jesus talked to the crowd about John. He asked them why they went into the wilderness. He asked if they went just to see a reed swaying in the wind. And, if not, what were they looking for?

He asked if they were looking for a man dressed in fine clothes. He said, “Of course not, you would look for a person in fine clothes in a king’s palace.”

He went on, “What did you go out to see? A prophet? Of course you did, and more than a prophet.” He told them that John was the one written about in the Old Testament, where it says, “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.”

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest man ever born. Yet, he told them, whoever is the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John.

Jesus told them that John the Baptist was the prophet that was promised, the new Elijah. He told them, “Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Jesus compared the religious leaders to children playing childish games. He told them that they complained that John didn’t eat or drink and they called him a demon. Yet, they also complained that Jesus (the Son of Man) was a friend of tax collectors and sinners because he did eat and drink. But, he said, “Wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* Why do you think John sent his followers to Jesus?
* How did Jesus respond to the question, “Are you the Messiah (the one who is coming) or should we expect someone else?”
* Why do you think Jesus asked the crowd about their reason for going into the wilderness to see John the Baptist?
* What did Jesus say about John the Baptist?
* What did Jesus mean when he called John the new Elijah?
* What was the meaning of Jesus’ comparison of the religious leaders to children in the market?
* What does this teach us about God?
* What should we do in response to this teaching?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.