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John the Baptist Questions Jesus
Matthew 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35 and 16:16

John the Baptist questions Jesus DIG: How might prison have given rise to Yochanan's doubts? Does Jesus answer John with promises or with evidence? Why? How might John, who knew the TaNaKh well, reply to Yeshua's reply (see Isaiah 35:5-6, 61:1)? What encouragement does the Lord give Yochanan? What does the Good Shepherd say about the Baptizer? How did John fulfill prophecy? In what way did he exhibit faith? In what way is the New Covenant believer greater than Yochanan? Who did Messiah compare to children?

REFLECT: When did you come to the place in your own spiritual pilgrimage when you knew Yeshua was the One for you? How did you come to that understanding? What difference has it made? In those periods of discouragement and doubt, what most renews your courage and faith? In what specific way can you be an encouragment to someone in your church or messianic synagogue leadership? In your family? Among your friends? If you could ask Jesus about a decision you are facing, what would it be?

John had been in **the dungeons** of Machaerus for two long years. The old fort was located in a hot and desolate region five miles east and fifteen miles south of the northern end of the Dead Sea. It is hard to imagine anyplace more remote or desolate, situated in the middle of the desert, high atop a mountain. The dank **cells** are carved into the rocky hillside, and, in fact, some are nothing more than caves. The floors, ceiling, and walls are impenetrable rock. There are no windows in **his** cell; the only light comes through small slits in the thick wooden door. It is a place of solitude and silence, damp and chill, where hope is hard to maintain through month after month of sleeping on the ground and where one's skin grows pale from never feeling the warmth of sunlight. The living hell of **the prison** had been preying on **John's** mind and **he** started doubting if **Yeshua** really was **the Messiah**.[620]

John's own **disciples** were reporting **Jesus'** activities to **him**. They told **the**

Immerser that the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees were not responding well to **Christ's** message. Not only that, **John** did not understand that **Jesus** would come first as the Passover Lamb to be sacrificed, and then come again as **the Lion of the Tribe of Judah** to rule **(Rev 5:5)**. **He** would come first as **Yeshua** ben Joseph, then return later as **Yeshua** ben David. **He** had probably expected, like many other traditional Jews of **his** time, that **the Meshiach** would instantly bring the promised redemption to Israel. So, out of these negative circumstances, and the fact that **John** had been in **prison** for quite some time, **he** started having doubts about the reality of the claims of **Christ**.



With **Jesus** not ushering **the Messianic Kingdom** immediately, and with such intense opposition, it was understandable how even **Yochanan** could have some doubts. **When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent two of his disciples to ask Him, "Are You the Expected One, or should we look for someone else" (Mattityahu 11:2-3; Luke 7:18-20 NASB)?** Along with **Branch**, **ben David**, **King of kings**, and other titles, **the Expected One** was a common name for **the Meshiach**. Every Jew of **Yeshua's** day would have known that to ask if **He** were **the Expected One** was to ask if **He** were **the Messiah**. **John** had already announced **Jesus** as **the Messiah**, and addressed **Him** as **the Lamb of God**, baptized **Him** in the Jordan River, and declared in all humility: **He must become greater; I must become less (John 3:30).** But, the events (or lack of them) caused **his** mind or emotions to put a cloud of doubt over **his** belief. **The herald** was not asking for information, but confirmation. **He** believed, but **his** faith had weakened. **John** came to **Jesus** through **his** disciples, saying, like the father of the boy **the Prince of Life** cleansed of an evil spirit: **I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief (Mark 9:24).**

In **John's** experience, and the experience of countless believers after **him**, doubt

might better be described as bewilderment or confusion. **His** doubt was the doubt of a believer. **He** was not questioning the truthfulness of **God's** Word as revealed to **him** in the TaNaKh or at the baptism of **Yeshua**. **He** was, rather, uncertain about **his** understanding of those truths. Nearly all the Gospel references to doubt pertain to believers rather than to unbelievers; and the kind of questioning **Yochanan** experienced concerning the identity of **Christ** can only occur in the life of a believer. In the transitional time, before the written revelation of the B'rit Chadashah, there were many things that seemed unclear and needed clarification.

It should be reassuring to us that even a man of **John's** spiritual distinction and gifts was subject to doubt and confusion. **From Yochanan's situation we can see that the four reasons that caused him to doubt are the same reasons that can cause us to doubt.**[621]

The first cause for doubt is difficult circumstances. Humanly speaking the career of **Yochanan the Baptizer** ended in disaster. **He** had been courageous, holy, loyal, selfless and committed in **his** service to **God**. **He** had done exactly what **ADONAI** told **him** to do. **He** had been filled with **the Ruach** from birth and had lived **his** entire life under a Nazarite vow. But now, **he** could not help by wonder if prison, shame, physical torment, and loneliness were **his** rewards. **John** knew the TaNaKh well, but, when left alone with **his** own thoughts, terrible questions rose in that murky **dungeon**. Like serpents that crept out of its walls, they would uncoil and raise their heads with terrible hissing. It must have been beyond depressing for **him** to think that the single purpose for which **he** had dedicated **his** whole life was a failure.

When a believer has faithfully and sacrificially served **Christ** for many years and then experiences tragedy, perhaps even a series of tragedies, it is difficult not to wonder about **God's** love and justice. When a child is lost to death or to unbelief, a husband or wife dies or leaves, cancer strikes a loved one, we are tempted to ask, "**Lord**, where are **You** now when I really need **You**? Why have you let this happen to me? Why don't **You** help?" But, if we dwell on such thoughts, the Adversary magnifies them and tries to use them to undermine our trust and confidence in **ADONAI**. Except for when we willingly continue in sin, we are never so vulnerable to doubting **God's** goodness and truth and believing Satan's lies as when we are suffering. Difficult circumstances are painful and trying, but, our response should be the same as **John's** – going to **the Lord** and asking **Him** to quell or doubts **(James 1:2-12)**.[622]

The second reason for confusion is incomplete revelation. Although **John** had **heard about the deeds of the Messiah**, **his** information was secondhand and not complete. **He** had been in prison for a year; but, even while **Jesus** was preaching, **Yochanan** had no direct contact with **Him** after **His** baptism. If **Yeshua's** own talmidim failed to understand **Him** and exhibited **little faith** after being with **Him** for three years, it's easy to grasp how **John** could also have doubts. Like the prophets of the TaNaKh, **the Forerunner** did not experience the full truth about **Christ** that **he** was sent to declare **(First Peter 1:10-11)**. The information that **John's disciples** brought back to him was still not firsthand.

Many believers today also doubt certain truths about **God** because of incomplete information, because they have inadequate knowledge or understanding of **His** Word. The believer who is immersed in **Scripture** has no reason to stumble. When **ADONAI** is allowed to speak through **His** Word, doubt vanishes like mist in the darkness like mist in the sunlight. **Jesus** responded to the doubts of two **disciples** on the Emmaus road by **explaining to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself (Luke 24:25-32).** We all need the continual truth of **His** Word to protect us from doubt and to dispel confusion when it comes. The Bereans were noble-minded and **received the message with great eagerness** because they **examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17:11).**[623]

The third source of confusion is worldly influence. Most Jews expected **the Messiah** to free Israel from her bondage, which at that time was under Rome. **He** obviously couldn't establish **His** own Kingdom of justice and righteousness without first dealing with the pagan, unjust and cruel Romans. **Jesus**, however, had done nothing to oppose Rome, either in words or actions. **Yeshua's** own apostles had some of those same misconceptions. They constantly had doubts about **the Master** because **He** didn't fit their preconceived ideas. Even after **His** resurrection they still expected **Him** to establish **His** earthly Kingdom **(Acts 1:6)**. All of them had been victimized by what people around them thought **He** should be.

People today, including some believers, doubt and are confused about the plan of **God** for the same reason. Their minds are so full of the ideas of people around them that they fail to understand the plan of **ADONAI**. We constantly hear people ask, "If **Christ** loves everybody so much, why do children die and people starve and get diseased and become crippled? If **God** is a **God** of justice, why is there so much corruption and injustice in the world? Why do so many good people have it so bad and so many bad people have it so good? If **God** is so loving and merciful, why does

He send people to hell? If **God** is so powerful and false religions are so evil, why doesn't **He** just wipe out those imposters?" Because **the Lord** does not fit their preconceived ideas of what **He** should be like, people are confused, often times indignant, and sometimes even blasphemous.[624]

The fourth root of doubt is unfulfilled expectations. The fact that **Yochanan** instructed **his disciples** to ask, "**Or should we look for someone else?"** seems to indicate that **John's** expectations about **the Messiah** had not been met. Under the direction of **the Ruach**, **Yochanan** had boldly proclaimed: **I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Mt 3:11-12). John** knew that what **he** preached was true, and **he** knew that **Christ** was the one about whom **he** preached; yet **Jesus** had done none of those things. **He** saw no divine intervention, no judgment, and no execution of justice. **Jesus** did not avenge the righteous. **He** did not even defend **Himself** against **His** accusers.

It has always been hard for believers to understand why **the LORD** allows so many of **His** children to suffer and allow so many wicked, ungodly people to prosper (see **Psalm 37** and**73**). It was especially hard for **John the Baptizer**. For one thing, he had a deep devotion to righteousness and was called by **ADONAI** to preach repentance and judgment. More than that, **he** was called to proclaim the coming of **the Expected One** who would execute that judgment – which **he** thought would begin shortly, if not immediately, after **the Meshiach** appeared on the scene. Believers today sometimes get excited about **the Lord's** imminent return; but, when many years pass and **He** does not come, their hope, along with their dedication, often fizzles out. Some scoffers will even say: **Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation (Second Peter 3:4).**[625]

Thus, when **Yochanan's disciples** asked **Jesus** if **He** was **the Expected One,** that **at that very time He cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind (Luke 7:21).**

Weeks passed. The journey from Machaerus to Galilee was just four days. **John** prayed as **he** waited patiently for a response from **the Nazarene**. Finally, **he** heard **his disciples** at **his cell** door. **They** had returned with a very specific

message from **Yeshua**. **John** could hardly contain **himself**. What did **He** say? **They** answered: **Jesus** told us to **go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor (Mattityahu 11:4-5** and **Luke 7:22).** This was no scolding, but a loving confirmation of **His** true identity (see the commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click GI – The Three Messianic Miracles**). The purpose of **Christ's** miracles was to authenticate **His** messianic claims (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ En – Four Drastic Changes in Christ's Ministry**).

To this, **Yeshua** added a tender rebuke for **John's** benefit: **Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of Me (Mattityahu 11:6; Luke 7:23).** It was as if **He** were saying to **the Herald**, "Don't doubt if you want to have the blessing of **My** joy and peace." The warning did not take away from **Messiah's** esteem for **Yochanan**, as **His** testimony immediately showed. When **John** died, **he** did not have all **his** questions answered and neither will we. **He** still must have wondered when **the Savior of Sinners** would usher in **His** Kingdom, judge the wicked, and usher in **His** long awaited reign of righteousness. But, he no longer had any doubts about who **Yeshua** was, or about **His** goodness, justice, sovereignty or wisdom. **He** was content to leave everything **he** didn't understand in **the Lord's** hands, which is the secret of being **blessed** and not **stumbling**.

After John's disciples left, the Lord began to speak to the crowd about Yochanan. He asked several probing questions of the crowd in order to illustrate the vital message of **the Immerser**. **What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind?** The **reed** to which **Jesus** referred was common along Near Eastern riverbanks, including those of the Jordan where **John** baptized. They were light and flexible, waving back and forth with every breeze. But, **the Baptizer** wasn't like that – **he** never wavered. **If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces (Matthew 11:7-8; Luke 7:24-25).** The soft **man dressed in fine clothes** would not live in the wilderness as **John** did **(Mattityahu 3:4)**. **His** life-style was a testimony against self-indulgence and self-centeredness. Both physically and symbolically **he** dressed, ate, and lived far apart from the hypocrisy and corruption of pharisaic Judaism in Jerusalem. **He** was not interested in the ease or approval of the world.

Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? The answer to that question was clearly **yes**. **The Forerunner** had developed a large and dedicated following and

most people did indeed consider **him** to be **a prophet (Matthew 14:5, 21:26).** The prophetic office began with Moshe and extended until the Babylonian captivity, after which for 400 years Isra'el had not prophet until **John the Baptist**. **He** was the valedictorian of the prophets, the most dynamic, articulate, confrontational, and powerful spokesman **ADONAI** had ever called. As the last **prophet**, **Yochanan** would not only announce **the Expected One** was coming but that **He** had arrived. **Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet (Matthew 11:9; Luke 7:26).**

This is the one about whom it is written, "I will send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You" (Mattityahu 11:10; Luke 7:27). Malachi said it this way: **I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His Temple; the messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD of heaven's** angelic **armies (Malachi 3:1).** The quote here introduces a passage that explicitly states that **Elijah the prophet** will precede the coming day of the Lord, that is, the Day of Judgment **(Malachi 4:5)**. **Judaism expects Elijah – who never died but was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind in a fiery chariot (Second Kings 2:11) – to precede the Messiah.** In fact, Jews have a place set for **him** at every Passover Seder to welcome **him** home.

Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11a). What was **Jesus** saying? Was **the Immerser** greater than Abraham? Moses? and David? **Yes!** We do not have a record of **John's** entire ministry because the four Gospels focus on **the Messiah** and not **His forerunner**. We know that **Yochanan** had tremendous influence not only in the Land, but also outside the Land. In **Acts**, Paul runs into a group of men who were **disciples** of **John**. They had not even heard that **Jesus** had come on the scene **(Acts 19:1-7)**. In fact, there are villages in present day Syria that speak Aramaic that still consider **the Baptizer** their **prophet**. So, **he** had a much greater influence than someone merely reading the Gospels would realize. But, then **Jesus** gives us what seems to be a contradictory statement.

He declared: **Yet whoever is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he (Mt 11:11b; Lk7:28).** While **John** is the greatest of the prophets, **the least of** those in the B'rit Chadashah will be greater than **he** was **(Mt 16:18-19)**. This tells us that the position of being **in Christ (Eph 1:3-9)** is greater than the position of being the righteous of the TaNaKh before the birth of the Church (see the commentary on **Acts An – Peter Speaks to the Shavu'ot Crowd**). Thus, **the least** New Covenant believer is even greater than **John the Baptist**.

Jesus said: **From the** time that **John the Immerser** had started **his** ministry **until now** (which had been a relatively brief period of time, perhaps eighteen months)**, the kingdom of Heaven has been subjected to violent** opposition **(Mt 11:12).** There had **been** be an intense spiritual battle over the heart and soul of Isra'el as **the Meshiach** was ready to appear. **John** generated conflict wherever **he** went, because **his** message upset the status quo, so **the Kingdom** moved steadily through the godless, sinful worldly system that opposed it.

All of **God's** previous revelation culminated with **the Herald**, **for all the Prophets and the Torah prophesied until John (Matthew 11:13; Luke 16:16a). John** was part of **the Torah and all the Prophets**, yet he is also the beginning of the gospel. You might say **he** has one foot in the TaNaKh and one foot in the B'rit Chadashah.

But, **since that time, the Good News of the kingdom of God,** which is has not come, **is being preached** directly, first by **the forerunner (Mattityahu 3:1-2) and** now by **Yeshua (Mattityahu 4:17; Mark 1:15)**, with the result that **everyone is forcing their way into it (Luke 16:16b)**. This emphasizes the passionate decision one must make in order to enter **the Kingdom**. Therefore, **John the Baptist** was a transitional figure between the age of promise and the age of fulfillment. **He** was the last of **the prophets**, and the Dispensation of the Torah ended with **him**. Then we have another statement about **John the Baptist** and **Elijah**.

Previously, **Jesus** said that **John** had come in the spirit and the power of **Elijah**. But **John**, while freely admitting that **he** was the one who prepared the way for **the Lord**, **he** vigorously denied that **he** was **Elijah (John 1:21-23).** But, now **Jesus** said: **And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. The Lord** was making the point that *if* **the Messiah** was accepted as King, and *if* **the Kingdom** were received, *then* **John** would have fulfilled **Elijah's** function to restore all things: **See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful Day of ADONAI comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come** during the Great Tribulation **and strike the Land with a curse (Malachi 4:5-6). But**, since **the** messianic **Kingdom** was rejected, **John** did *not* fulfill **Elijah's** function. As a result, **Elijah himself** will someday return to fulfill that function (see my commentary on **Revelation Bw – See, I Will Send You the Prophet Elijah Before That Great and Dreadful Day of the LORD Comes**). **Whoever has ears, let them hear (Matthew 11:14-15).**

That did not mean, however, that **John's** ministry was a failure. **He** prepared people to accept **the Messiah** once **He** was known. Those who were baptized by **Yochanan** were making a commitment to believe in whosoever **John** pointed out as **the Messiah**. **John** was successful in this. **All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John (Luke 7:29).** The common people who had believed in **John's** message had no trouble in believing in **Jesus** as **the Meshiach**.

But the Jewish leadership, **the Pharisees and the Torah-teachers,** had **rejected John's** message and **God's purpose for themselves.** We know this **because the Immerser had not baptized them (Luke 7:30).** So, by rejecting **John's baptism** of repentance **they** rejected **God's purpose for them** and the nation of Isra'el.[626]

Jesus characterized the **Pharisees** who had rejected **John** as **children. He went on to say: To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? The rabbis used many expressions to introduce an illustration, analogy or story, such as "To what is the matter like?" or "How can I illustrate this point?" Those** who refused to believe in the Good News covered **their** unbelief with criticism. **So, in that rabbinic tradition, Yeshua illustrated His** point by saying: **They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others (Mt 11:16; Lk 7:31-32a)? They** were **like** rebellious **children** that insisted on having **their** own way.

The marketplace was a central area of cities or towns where people shopped or socialized. On certain days of the week, farmers, craftsmen and merchants brought their produce or merchandise to sell. **Children** played while **their** parents bought, sold, or visited. Two games, "wedding" and "funeral" were particularly popular. Since weddings and funerals were two of the major social events, **children** liked to mimic them. Weddings included festive music and **dancing**, and when **the children** played "the wedding game" **they** expected everyone to **dance** when the imaginary **flute** was **played**, just like the grownups did at a real wedding. Likewise, when they played "the funeral game" they expected everyone to **mourn** when the imaginary **dirge** was played, just like the paid **mourners** did at a real funeral.

But, there were always the rebellious **ones**, who refused to go along with the rest of **the children**. **We made happy music, but you wouldn't dance! We made sad music, but you wouldn't cry"(Matthew 11:17; Luke 7:32 CJB).** If the

game was “wedding,” **they** wanted to play “funeral;” if the game was “funeral,” **they** wanted to play “wedding.” Nothing the other **children** did could satisfy **them**. **They** were complainers who ruined everything. There is never enough proof for unbelief.

Jesus applied **the first illustration** to the response of the nation to **John the Baptist**. **For** when **Yochanan came neither eating nor drinking wine they** said: **He has a demon (Matthew 11:18; Luke 7:33).** To pharisaic Judaism, **John’s** lifestyle was like a funeral. **He** grated against **their** immoral nerves, so in the final analysis **they** killed **him**. **They** tolerated **him** for a while, but **he** would not let **them** sit on the fence and be neutral bystanders. Thus, when **they** had to choose, **they** chose not to believe **him**. Instead of accepting **the Herald’s** rebuke of **their** sinfulness, **they** rebuked **his** righteousness. **Demon** possession was **the given reason** that **John** was rejected; however, **the real reason** for **his** rejection was because **he** had rejected pharisaic Judaism and **the Oral Law** (see **Ei – the Oral Law**). W**hat happened to the herald will happen to the King.**

Messiah applied **the second illustration** to the response of **the Pharisees** to **Himself**. Unlike **John**, fasting or abstaining from wine did not characterize **Jesus’** lifestyle. In fact, in contrast to **Yochanan’s** ascetic life-style, **Yeshua** fully participated in all the normal social activities. Yet **He** would be rejected on the same grounds as **John**, that of **demon possession** (see **Ek – It is only by Beelzebub, the Prince of demons, That this Fellow Drives Out Demons**). **The Lord** lived in the wedding mode **(Mattityahu 9:14-15)** and said: **The Son of Man, came eating and drinking. The Pharisees and the Torah-teachers**, however, were quick to exaggerate **Christ’s** normal activities, charging **Him** with being **a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19a; Luke 7:34).**

First, the wine **Jesus** and most other Jews drank was made by boiling fresh grape juice down to heavy syrup in order to prevent it from spoiling and to simplify its storage. Water would be added as needed to a small amount of the syrup to make the “wine.” It was nonalcoholic, and even when allowed to ferment it was not intoxicating because it was mostly water. Thus, **He** was not **a drunkard**.

Second, yes, **He** was **a friend of tax collectors and sinners**, but not in the sense that **the Pharisees** meant. **They** tried to imply that because **Jesus** associated with **tax collectors and sinners** that **He** also shared in **their sin**. Nothing could have been further from the truth. **He** did not participate in **their sinful** lifestyle, on the

contrary, offered **them** deliverance from it (see **Cp – The Calling of Matthew**).

Yeshua's statement culminates in the statement that despite the rejection of **John** and **Jesus** by pharisaic Judaism, **wisdom is proved right by all her children (Matthew 11:19b; Luke 7:35). Wisdom**, here, is personified and corresponds to **God's** way. **The children of God's wisdom** are contrasted with **the children of this generation (Mattityahu 11:16; Luke 7:31). The children of God's wisdom** will be clearly seen by **their** spiritual fruit **(Galatians 5:13-26)**, and **the** rebellious **children of this second illustration**, pharisaic Judaism, who did not respond, will also clearly be seen by **their** lack of spiritual fruit.[627]

How sad it is that there are some who cling to their own righteousness so tightly that they are closed to the grace of **ADONAI**. **Yeshua** came to deliver the Good News of salvation to all men and women. The gospels are full of accounts of people who sought out **the Lord** and placed their faith in **Him**. None were disappointed. However, **Messiah** did not limit **Himself** to those who sought **Him**. When **He** encountered a widow having to bury **her** only son, **the Man of sorrows and Himself acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3)** was filled with **compassion** (see **Eb – Jesus Raises a Widow's Son**). **Jesus went up and touched the coffin they were carrying him on and the miracle-working Rabbi** brought the boy back to life.

All that is required to receive grace from **Ha'Shem** is that we listen and trust in **Him**. If we will do that, **He** does the rest. **God** will provide evidence of **His** grace by seeing that we bear fruit. **The Lord** enlists those who hear **His** voice. And those who listen closely succeed beyond their abilities because of the power of **His** grace.

We can take heart in knowing that **the Suffering Servant** seeks out everyone – even those ignored by the powerful and the wealthy. **He** never discriminated, but offered **His** mercy and grace to everyone. Even today, **ADONAI** desires to touch those around us. The hope of the Good News is for them. If we listen to **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**, **He** will show us how to share the Gospel with our friends, neighbors, and family members. And, **the Lord** will pour out **His** mercy and grace to those who listen and believe – for **His** faithfulness is not dependent upon *our* righteousness, but upon ***His*** righteousness and unconditional love.

*Thank, **You**, **Father**, for giving us **Your Son**. Because **He** is faithful to us, we need never despair of **Your** love. Help us to trust in the power of your grace to flow*

*through us to everyone around us. Amen, **He** is faithful.*[628]