



Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus *The Childish Generation*

Matthew 11:16-19 and Luke 7:31-35

Lesson 2

This parable begins with Jesus' words, *But to what shall I liken this generation?* The *generation* that Jesus was specifically referring to was the people living at the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. They had rejected John the Baptist and were also rejecting Jesus. The people had come to their own conclusions about John the Baptist and Jesus. In response, Jesus had come to conclusions about them.

OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 11:16-19 and Luke 7:31-35

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word (i.e. words used to refer to *Jesus, children, or house*).

Key words: *Lord* (Jesus), *children*, and the phrase *they* (or *you*) *say*.

- a. The contrasting word *but* is used three times (Matthew 11:16, 19 and Luke 7:35). Mark each time this word is used.
 - 1.) Choose one of the times this word is used, record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

2. Make a list of what the texts reveal about *this generation*. List only what is obvious. This is not the time to analyze or understand the meaning of this parable.

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What does it feel like to be misunderstood?
2. What attitudes or thinking can cause a person to quickly jump to the wrong conclusion about something or someone?
 - a. Why is this so dangerous, especially as it applies to actions of God?
3. What do you tend to be like when you are not satisfied?

THIS GENERATION: Read Matthew 11:16,17; Luke 7:31,32

1. This parable can be interpreted two different ways. We will look at both viewpoints as both are equally credible. First, the *children* could be John the Baptist and Jesus. Their companions would be the people who had rejected them. Considering this first interpretation, what did John the Baptist and Jesus first say to the people?
 - a. What was the people's response?
 - b. Secondly, what did they say to the people?
 - 1.) What was the people's response?

- c. John the Baptist tended to be more of a recluse, while Jesus was more social. The people rejected both. Jesus' reflected upon *this generation* at times other than this. What did He say?

Matthew 12:39/Mark 8:12

Matthew 12:41,42

Mark 9:19

- 1.) Using these verses, describe what angered Jesus about *this generation*.

- d. Contrary to the negative proclamations about *this generation*, what do the following verses say to us, as believers?

Philippians 2:15

1 Peter 2:9

- 1.) How do these verses comfort and encourage you?

2. The second interpretation, equally as credible as the first, interprets the *children* as the people of *this generation*. Their *companions* could be either their peers or *John the Baptist* and *Jesus*. *The children in the marketplace* were complaining that others would not play their games. *John the Baptist* and *Jesus* would not cater to their whims – so the *children* complained and rejected them. Or, they could simply represent spoiled, dissatisfied people. Given the possibilities of this second interpretation, in what ways is the *generation* Jesus referred to similar to today's generation?

MISPERCEPTIONS: Read Matthew 11:18,19 and Luke 7:33,34

1. *John came eating and drinking.* What did John eat and drink? see Matthew 3:4
 - a. *Locusts and honey* were not the cuisine of the day; nor was wearing clothes made of coarse, itchy camel's hair the fashion of the day; nor was the *wilderness* the place most people made their home (Matthew 3:1). What did the people say about John the Baptist? Matthew 11:18

2. What was John's message? see Matthew 3:2,3

3. *The Son of Man (Jesus) came eating and drinking.* Describe Jesus' manner of *eating and drinking* as recorded in Luke 5:29,30.
 - a. What did the people say about Jesus? Matthew 11:19

4. We have seen the conclusion drawn by the people about John the Baptist and Jesus. Now let's look at God's conclusion. According to Matthew 11:11, what did God (Jesus) say about John the Baptist?
 - a. According to Matthew 3:17, what did God say about Jesus?

 - b. Why do you think that *generation* and people today reject these truths and choose to arrive at their own conclusions about John the Baptist and Jesus?
 - 1.) What are some misperceptions people today believe about Jesus?

 - c. What are some truths about Jesus? Challenge: use Scripture to support your answer.
 - 1.) Why is it important to believe the right things about Jesus?

5. The *generation* of Jesus' day based their conclusions on what they saw on the surface. Why is this dangerous?
 - a. What can we do to catch ourselves when we are tempted to do the same thing?

CHILDREN OF THE WISE: Read Matthew 11:19 (last sentence) and Luke 7:35

1. *Wisdom is justified by her children.* The word *justified*, as it is used here, has the sense of "bringing out what that which a person is". Look up this portion of Matthew 11:19 in other translations. Record what one of them says.
 - a. How does another translation help you to understand what Jesus meant here?

2. *Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.* Proverbs 17:24 God reveals His *wisdom* to those who are truly seeking, but the fool misses what is right in front of him as he looks everywhere else. What have you discovered to be some mistakes you have made in looking for *wisdom* in the wrong places?

3. There is *fruit* in wisdom. The fact that John the Baptist's and Jesus' ministries were correct is shown by the results. What are the results of their ministries in your own life?

REVIEW:

1. John the Baptist's and Jesus' ministries required that the people change their thinking and their behavior. Why do challenges like this sometimes cause us to write them off as unnecessary, demanding, or not of God?

2. Jesus boldly rebuked *this generation*. What message do you want to hear from Him?
 - a. What will you do to be sure Jesus will one day call you *faithful* rather than *faithless*?

3. In what way has this lesson challenged you to be discerning about your conclusions?

*Who is wise?
Let him understand these things.
Who is prudent?
Let him know them.
For the ways of the Lord are right;
The righteous walk in them,
But transgressors stumble in them.
- Hosea 14:9*

Observation Worksheet

Matthew 11:16-19

"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, ¹⁷ and saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.' ¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

Luke 7:31-35

And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not weep.' ³³ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' ³⁵ But wisdom is justified by all her children."