

# Luke 7:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

## Analysis

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Jesus's rhetorical questions about John defend his forerunner's character: 'What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?' The reed (Greek 'kalamon') symbolizes weakness and vacillation—swaying with every breeze of opinion. John was anything but—his uncompromising preaching offended both religious leaders and political authorities. The question 'A man clothed in soft raiment?' contrasts John's rough camel-hair garment with royal luxury. John lived ascetically, not seeking comfort or patronage. Reformed theology values prophetic boldness that speaks truth regardless of consequences. Jeremiah was called to be 'a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls' (Jeremiah 1:18). True ministers prioritize divine approval over human applause.

## Historical Context

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John's imprisonment raised questions about his ministry. Some wondered if his harsh treatment indicated God's displeasure. Jesus's defense vindicated John—his suffering resulted from faithfulness, not failure. Herod imprisoned John for denouncing his unlawful marriage (Luke 3:19-20). John could have avoided persecution through silence or compromise, but prophetic calling demanded truth-telling. Early church faced similar pressures—conform to avoid persecution or maintain integrity despite cost. Church history records how compromise undermines witness while persecution purifies it. Modern application includes resisting cultural pressure to soften biblical truth to avoid offense.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does John's example challenge Christians to prioritize truth over comfort or popularity?
2. What is the difference between appropriate cultural sensitivity and sinful compromise?
3. How should ministers balance speaking prophetically with pastoral gentleness?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἀπελθόντων	δὲ	τῶν	ἄγγέλων	Ἰωάννου	ἤρξατο	
were departed	And	G3588	when the messengers	John	he began	
G565	G1161		G32	G2491	G756	
λέγειν	πρὸς	τοὺς	ὄχλους	περὶ	Ἰωάννου	Τί
to speak	unto	G3588	the people	concerning	John	What
G3004	G4314		G3793	G4012	G2491	G5101
ἐξεληλύθατε	εἰς	τὴν	ἔρημον	θεάσασθαι	κάλαμον	ὑπὸ
went ye out	into	G3588	the wilderness	for to see	A reed	with
G1831	G1519		G2048	G2300	G2563	G5259
ἀνέμου	σαλευόμενον					
the wind	shaken					
G417	G4531					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ephesians 4:14** (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

**Luke 3:2** (References John): Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

**Luke 1:80** (Parallel theme): And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

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