

“100 Proof!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. What does “Proof” mean when it refers to Whiskey? (& other distilled alcoholic beverages)
- 1.2. Story goes that in the very old days, whiskey was **“proved”** to be good whiskey (that is it had enough alcohol in it, and had not been watered down), by pouring some whiskey on some **gunpowder**. Touch a match to the powder, and if it ignited it was “proof” that it was good whiskey. **However**, if there was too much water in the whiskey, the powder would be too wet to ignite. Then you have proof that it’s not good whiskey.
 - 1.2.1. About 50% alcohol-water mixtures will allow gunpowder to **catch on fire**.
 - 1.2.2. **Thus** the **50% alcohol** became **100% proof** that it was good whiskey, which is why today it is called 100 proof whiskey.
- 1.3. **Proof:** A test or trial of something to establish whether it is **true**.
 - 1.3.1. We all desire **proof**. We need to know **“if it’s true”!** And that’s a good thing!
 - 1.3.2. Asking God for proofs doesn’t shake Him up at all! – **BUT!**...you must allow Him to answer different then you might expect!
- 1.4. **Ever been shook to the very foundation of your faith?**
 - 1.4.1. **Maybe it was a difficult question?** - About God, or His Word?
 - 1.4.2. **Maybe it was a very difficult life circumstance?** - A **death** of a loved one, a **bankruptcy**, a **boyfriend** that broke up with you, a **wife** that left you, a **child** that left the faith.
- 1.5. **Ever experience:** Doubt, despair, questions, hesitation, uncertainty, reservation, indecision, vacillation...**then you’re in good company Christian!**
 - 1.5.1. **Yes!...**now this is real, authentic, genuine Christianity...**100 Proof!**
- 1.6. **Title:** 100 Proof! **Outline:** Enough Proof! & Final Proof!

2. **ENOUGH PROOF! (18-30)**

- 2.1. **PERPLEXED!** (18-20)
- 2.2. The Prophets Pause!
 - 2.2.1. An outdoorsman, a child of the desert & of the wide-open spaces, now confined in a **dungeon cell** in the castle of Machaerus.¹
 - 2.2.1.1. John would find it **very easy** to get discouraged.
 - 2.2.2. **We today get discouraged in much better circumstances!**
- 2.3. John couldn’t understand Jesus ministry...so he wondered if another was to come.
 - 2.3.1. I thought he was coming to **Judge...not Save!**
 - 2.3.2. **Was he impatient with Christ’s quiet methods?**

¹ The Black Fortress, was built by Herod the Great in the gorge of Callirhoe, one of the wadies 9 miles east of the Dead Sea. Eastman’s dict.

- 2.4. But John does the most excellent thing anyone could do...he sent his little delegation *straight to Jesus for answers!*
- 2.4.1. Doubt should always be **brought direct to Him!**
- 2.4.2. Doubt if **hidden**, will fester; if **shared with others**, may spread.
- 2.4.3. Griffith Thomas, "God is not wounded by a reverent challenge."
 2.4.3.1. Ps.42:9(sons of Korah) "I will say to God my Rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"
 2.4.3.2. Ps.42:11 "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? (answer) **Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.**"
- 2.5. **ENLIGHTENED!** (21-23)
- 2.6. (21) 1st Jesus made the *dynamic duo* wait & watch!
- 2.7. (22) William Barclay said, John probably expected to hear, "My armies are massing. Caesarea, the headquarters of the Roman government, is about to fall. The **sinners** are being obliterated. And **judgment** has begun." He would have expected Jesus to say, "The **wrath of God** is on the march." but Jesus said, "The mercy of God is here." Let us remember that where pain is soothed and sorrow turned to joy, where suffering and death are vanquished, there is the kingdom of God. Jesus' answer was, "Go back and tell John that **the love of God is here.**"²
- 2.7.1. By Jesus' answer in vs.22, we see that John doubted **His work** not necessarily **Him!**
- 2.8. John did you over look the scriptures that spoke of My healing, delivering, & preaching in the OT?
- 2.8.1. Is.35:5,6 "Then the **eyes** of the blind shall be opened, And the **ears** of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the **lame** shall leap like a deer, And the **tongue** of the dumb sing."
- 2.8.2. Is.61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me to **preach good tidings to the poor;**"
- 2.8.3. Actually he gives them 6 works that fulfilled OT Messianic promises.
- 2.9. **Does Jesus ever look different to you?** (i.e. the way He is working in your life?)
- 2.10. Jesus said, the proof is in the **healing**; the proof is in the **delivering**; the proof is in the **raising**; the proof is in the **preaching!**
- 2.10.1. **Blind eyes** are seeing things they've never seen before; **Cripples** are leaping; **Lepers** once shut out of society now cleansed & restored to fellowship; **Ears** that have heard no song of a bird, or music, are listening; the **dead** are raised; Oh, & the spiritually **poor** who had no soul wealth have heard the Good News & are now rich towards God!³
- 2.10.2. **Tell John I am Master here!**

²The Gospel of Luke. 2000; William Barclay; The Daily study Bible series.

³G.Campbell Morgan; pg.97,98.

- 2.11. (23) **Offended** - The Lord's ways can often be very "stumbling"!
- 2.11.1. **David** was offended by God's **severity** (2 Sam.6:8)
 2.11.1.1. **And David became angry** because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah.
- 2.11.2. **Jonah** was offended by God's **mercy** (Jonah 4:1-3)
 2.11.2.1. **But it displeased** Jonah exceedingly, and he became **angry**.
- 2.11.3. **Martha** was offended by Christ's **delay** (John 11:21)
 2.11.3.1. "Lord, **if You had been here**, my brother would not have died."
- 2.12. **Much grace is needed** when the messengers come back saying: *Yes, it's Him!*" ... *"the One who can do anything!"* ... *"the One who has all power"*... *"but, didn't say a word about letting you out!"*
- 2.12.1. No explanation; faith nourished; prison doors left closed; & then the message, "**blessed is he who is not stumbled because of me**" – That is all!
- 2.12.2. Christ will **not explain** Himself, but instead He will **reveal** Himself, as He did to *David*, to *Jonah*, to *Martha*, & to *John*!⁴
- 2.13. **What have you expected** of the Christian faith that turned out to be different?
- 2.13.1. **Maybe you've learned: that as** Jesus didn't come to **judge**, so we aren't supposed to judge! - **that as** Jesus didn't come to **build religious walls**, so we aren't supposed to construct them either! - **that as** Jesus came to reach out to people, *to heal, to save, to bring hope, to care*...so ought we!
- 2.14. Our work of the Church is to alleviate human suffering as Christ did, but that is not our final work, nor our principle work.
- 2.14.1. We are to bring men into **living relationship w/God** so they might enjoy "*the franchise of eternity*"(Morgan)!
- 2.15. **APPROVED!** (24-30)
- 2.16. Jesus gives honor to His rugged, faithful, & fearless forerunner!
- 2.16.1. Such a great tribute to a man...who had doubts.
- 2.17. (24) **What did you go out to see? A fickle, vacillating, swaying character of a man?**
- 2.17.1. **Not John!** – He was a man immovable as a mighty tree!
- 2.17.2. He wasn't an unstable **Reed**, more like a sturdy **Cedar!**
- 2.18. (25) **What did you go out to see? Some soft effeminate soul, like the silk-clad attendees of the Royal Palace?**
- 2.18.1. **Not John!** – That locust eatin, camel hair wearin, manly man!
- 2.19. (26-28) **What did you go out to see? A Prophet!**
- 2.19.1. **Bingo!** - And **more than** a prophet! - Matter of fact the **greatest** prophet!
- 2.19.2. He was heralded as the highest!
- 2.20. (27) Jesus said John is the one the OT prophet Malachi wrote about.
- 2.20.1. Alfred Plummer said about John, "**The whole man was a sermon!**"

⁴ Griffith Thomas; pg.129

- 2.21. (28b) **But he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he – How?**
- 2.21.1. John was great, but even he did not know what **Calvary** would mean. Nor did he live to see it.
- 2.21.1.1. John marked a **dividing line** in history.
- 2.21.2. “Jesus had come; eternity had invaded time; heaven had invaded earth; God had arrived in Jesus; life could never be the same again.”⁵
- 2.21.3. **Therefore**, all who **come after** Jesus and who **receive him**, are of necessity granted a **greater blessing** than all who **went before**.
- 2.22. The humblest believer today has a much higher **position in Christ** than John had as a **prophet**.
- 2.22.1.1. **John** belonged to the old dispensation of Law.
- 2.22.1.2. **Believers today** are seated w/Christ in the heavenlies.
- 2.22.1.3. So, the **smallest diamond** is stronger than the **largest flint!**
- 2.22.1.3.1. **Ex:** My small diamond in my ring, vs. a large plate glass window!
- 2.23. (29) **Many Jews**(even Tax Collectors) repented at John’s preaching.
- 2.24. (30) **Wow!** Hear that statement? *“they rejected the will of God for themselves!”*
- 2.25. **The Pharisees** had **refused & ridiculed** John’s baptism & preaching of repentance.
- 2.25.1. Lord, save us from making shipwreck of our life, & bringing heartache & heartbreak to You!

3. **FINAL PROOF!** (31-35)

- 3.1. **THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THE GENERATION!** (31-34)
- 3.2. We also live in a very **unreasonable** generation!
- 3.2.1. One asked, “**What is the biggest problem in our nation – Ignorance or Apathy?**” To which came the response, “I don’t **know** & I don’t **care!**”
- 3.3. Here is a searching & scathing rebuke!
- 3.4. Christ likened their generation unto little children who wouldn’t play anything.
- 3.4.1. I remember playing with my 2 younger sisters growing up. We’d play **Gas Station** (prob too expensive to play today!) I’d pull up on my **red peddle tractor**, Jeanette would use the garden hose to pump pretend gas in.
- 3.4.2. But we all had a friend on the block that **didn’t** seem to want to play anything.
- 3.4.3. **Wanna ride bikes?** Too much energy! – **How about Monopoly?** Too long!
- 3.5. They complained about both **John’s austerity** & **Christ’s gentleness**.
- 3.5.1. **John** stayed in the desert as the eccentric; **so** they assumed a demon took his wits away!
- 3.5.2. **Jesus** came living the life of men & entering their activities; **so** they taunted Him with loving earth’s pleasures far too much.
- 3.5.3. **John’s** too rough, look at his clothes, what a fanatic!
- 3.5.4. **Jesus**, He’s too smooth! I’ve seen him at some parties you know! Did you hear, He hangs out with sinners?

⁵ *The Gospel of Luke*. 2000; William Barclay; The Daily study Bible series.

- 3.5.5. So they didn't like **serious John** nor **sociable Jesus!**
 3.5.5.1. Yet, despite their **differences**, their message was the **same!**
- 3.6. Well, the counterculture of love had been defined(ch.6)!
- 3.6.1. God chose the dangerous way of love, & we know love in the end will triumph!
- 3.6.2. God has made **many appeals** to mankind in history's past. All sorts of different *Patriarchs, Prophets, Kings, Priests, Apostles, & Messengers* have come, & yet were met with willful & childish discontent.
- 3.6.3. (Message) "John the Baptizer came **fasting** and you called him crazy. The Son of Man came **feasting** and you called him a lush. Opinion polls don't count for much, do they? The proof of the pudding is in the eating."
- 3.7. **FINAL PROOF!** (35)
- 3.8. "**The proof is in the pudding**" (or, The proof of the pudding is in the eating)
 [from *Don Quixote de la Mancha*]
- 3.8.1. "**Pudding**" actually meant: a portion of pig intestine, tied with a pudding stick at both ends, stuffed with all sorts of meat, fat, grain, & spices, a.k.a. "sausage".
- 3.8.2. You can't say whether it is good or not **until** you partake of it.
- 3.8.3. One really can't "**try on**" Christianity! - He says instead, **eat my body & drink my blood** to make His point!
- 3.8.4. The **results** vindicate the **method!**
- 3.9. **Do you get it?** Christian, you & I are **the proof!**
 3.9.1. We are to be "God's **Final Answer**"!
- 3.10. The renowned artist **Gustave Dore**(daw-ray) (1821–1883) lost his passport while traveling in Europe. When he came to a border crossing, he explained his predicament to one of the guards. Giving his name to the official, Dore hoped he would be recognized and allowed to pass. The guard, however, said that many people attempted to cross the border by claiming to be persons they were not. Dore insisted that he was the man he claimed to be. "All right," said the official, "we'll give you a test, and if you pass it we'll allow you to go through." Handing him a pencil and a sheet of paper, he told the artist to sketch several peasants standing nearby. Dore did it so quickly and skillfully that the guard was convinced he was indeed who he claimed to be. **His work confirmed his word!**⁶ (**Does yours?**)

⁶ Our Daily Bread, January 6, 1993