



*The Rock is a Youth
Ministry of Ascension
Lutheran Church*

Way Back to Leadership, Mr. Peabody

Based on John 1:6-42, Matt 11:7-11

Mr. Peabody: **Mattias**
Sherman: **Matt S.**
John: **Matt W.**
Trophy Wife: **Kelli**
Announcer: **Toby**
Press Girl 1: **Allee**
Press Girl 2: **Peri**
Press Girl 3: **Annee**
Disciple 1: **Ryan**
Disciple 2: **Michael**
Jesus: **Toby**

Setting: *A parody of the "Improbable History" short from the old "Rocky & Bullwinkle Show." Peabody & Sherman set their "Way Back" Time Machine for the year 26 a.d. to be present when John the Baptist introduces the ministry of Jesus. Mr. Peabody is on stage at the start with the "Way Back" Machine. Sherman is in background trying to pick up a box that he keeps kicking out of reach whenever he bends to pick it up.*

Peabody: Hello. Happy New Year! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mr. Peabody. And I assume you know what your name is. As you may recall from my television show, I'm the only Dog with a Ph.D. from Harvard, and the designer of the Way Back Time Machine. *(Looks at Sherman, sitting there looking confused and scratching his head.)* Oh, and that's my boy, Sherman. Here, Sherman, come here!

Sherman: *(Sherman runs over to Mr. Peabody.)* Hi, Mr. Peabody!

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- Peabody: Sit, Sherman. (*Sherman sits.*) Shake hands, Sherman. (*Sherman shakes hands.*) Good boy Sherman! (*Hands him a treat.*) Every dog should have a boy!
- Sherman: Shall I set the Way Back Machine, Mr. Peabody?
- Peabody: Please do, Sherman, for the year 26 a.d.
- Sherman: And the place?
- Peabody: The River Jordan, where we'll meet John the Baptist. (*Pause, as Peabody and Sherman walk through the time machine.*) And just like that, in the flash of an eye, Sherman and I were transported to the shores of the Jordan River. In front of us was...(*looks around*)...Say, this doesn't look like the shores of the Jordan River. This looks like a nice building in Jerusalem.
- Sherman: Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Peabody, I must have accidentally left the machine turned to the "What Could Have Been" mode.
- Peabody: Very well, then. Here we are in Jerusalem.
- Announcer: (*Loudly.*) Now appearing live at the Desert Sands Resort Hotel for a special three week engagement after his tour of the near east, Rome, Greece, and the sub-continent, John the Baptist (*Applause.*)
- John: And if you only believe and have faith, there'll be a bagel in every pot and a chariot in every stable. You see, God wants us all to be very, very successful.
- Press Girls: John, John, John...
- John: Please, now you know the rules.
- Press Girls: Rabbi Zachariahson, Rabbi Zachariahson!
- John: Yes, Hellen?
- Press Girl 1: People have been asking, who are you?

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- Press Girl 2: Are you Elijah?
- John: Well, if you believe it, in a sense I am.
- Press Girl 3: Are you the Prophet Moses?
- John: Well, Moses introduced the law, but my job is to introduce something even greater.
- Press Girl 1: People have pointed to your fine clothes (*John looks at his clothes*), your trophy wife (*wife smiles*), the fine home you live in, your dining at the finest 5 star restaurants, and the standing-room only crowds you draw to your resort hotel.
- John: Oh, you mean the Desert Sands Resort Hotel, looking over a simulated Jordan River?
- Press Girl 2: Yeah, the one with the fountains that spray water 300 feet into the air to synchronized music.
- John: Oh, you must mean my baptismal spa. Yes, yes, get to the point. You know I have a busy schedule.
- Press Girl 3: Well, they wonder how it is you can afford to live so...so...well. Yeah, so well?
- John: I am the voice of one calling in the desert..
- Press Girl 1: But your resort is in Jerusalem?
- John: Ah, yes, but it is called "The Desert Sands Resort Hotel". So technically I am the voice of one calling in the desert, "Make straight the way for the Lord."
- Press Girl 2: Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?
- John: You know, that's a very good question, and I'll have my people get back with your people on that just as soon as I can. Got to go now...my limo is waiting and someone very important is coming by tomorrow for a baptism. (*John exits stage to change.*)

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Sherman: Hold it, Mr. Peabody. This guy doesn't look or sound anything like the guy I pictured from reading about John the Baptist in the Bible.

Peabody: Well, as you so aptly pointed out at the start, Sherman, that is because you inadvertently had the dial on the Way Back Time Machine adjusted to the "What Could Have Been" mode.

Sherman: Mr. Peabody, I don't understand.

Peabody: That's why you're the boy and I'm the dog, Sherman. You see, what we just witnessed is the way most natural men would have behaved had they been placed in John's position.

Sherman: Is that why this John the Baptist had fine clothes instead of camel's hair, lived in a palatial resort in Jerusalem instead of the desert, ate prime rib instead of locusts and honey, and had a trophy wife (*John's wife smiles and says "Thank You"*)?

Peabody: Precisely, Sherman. Now, let's try this again. Come now, Sherman, back into the Way Back Machine. We have no time to lose before the Lord arrives.

Sherman: Yeah, if Jesus arrives and finds John acting like this, he's likely to....

Peabody: Hmm, I hate to think about it, Sherman. (*Pause. Speaks to audience.*) So, Sherman and I quickly darted back through the "Way Back Time Machine", reset the dial for the "Way It Was" mode, and re-entered first century Palestine.

Sherman: Now this looks more like it, Mr. Peabody. (Jesus, stands in distance as John, Disciples, and crowd stand by the river.

John: Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

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- Disciple 1: But teacher, who is that?
- John: This is the one I meant when I said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." The reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.
- Disciple 2: Isn't he the one you baptized the other day?
- John: Yes, and I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.
- Disciple 1: Doves! I hate it when birds bug us when we're at the river.
- John: No, not a dove. The SPIRIT came down on him LIKE A DOVE. And God had told me that "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit."
- Disciple 2: I still don't get it.
- John: I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God. *(Two disciples walk after Jesus.)*
- Sherman: Who were those two Men, Mr. Peabody?
- Peabody: Oh, they were probably Andrew and John, disciples of John who became some of the first disciples of Jesus.
- Sherman: I don't get it, Mr. Peabody.
- Peabody: What's that, Sherman?
- Sherman: So John just let his disciples wander off and follow Jesus?
- Peabody: Oh, he not only let them wander off. He measured his success on getting people to follow Jesus. In fact, to make Jesus known was his primary focus.
- Sherman: You know something, Mr. Peabody?

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- Peabody: What's that, Sherman?
- Sherman: That first guy we saw—the other John—now he was more like what a lot of us like to see in leaders. He had all the trappings of success and leadership. You know: good looks, fine clothes, fine food, fine stuff, and lots of money.
- Sherman: He was hugely popular with everyone, and was very skilled at getting people to follow him.
- Peabody: Whom do you think Jesus would have seen as the better leader Sherman?
- Sherman: Gee, I don't know, can the Way Back machine help us find the answer to that?
- Peabody: In fact, it can, Sherman. For months after the episode we just watched, as John spent his last days in a jail prior to an unjust execution, Jesus knew his disciples were thinking just as you, Sherman: was John really a successful leader?
- Sherman: So what did he say, Mr. Peabody?
- Peabody: Observe, Sherman:
- Girl 1: Jesus, what do you think about John?
- Jesus: What did you go out into the desert to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.
- Jesus: I tell you the truth: Among those born of women, there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
- Sherman: Gee, Mr. Peabody. I'm sure glad God picked the right guy to be the forerunner of Christ.

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Peabody: And that last thing that Jesus said, Sherman, reminds us that he didn't stop with picking John. He continues to choose people to point the way of Christ to the world, even today.

Sherman: Gee, just like I chose you, Mr. Peabody.

Peabody: Just like I chose you, Sherman!