

A Question from John, the Baptist

Matthew 11:2-6; Luke 7:18-23

Introduction:

- Do you ever have moments of doubt? When you doubt something you know to be completely true?
- Our passage today includes such a situation with John, the Baptist
- This passage is one of hope and optimism – a hope that we must use to crush any fear and doubt

Body:

I. John, the Baptist

A. John's Role

1. Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 4:5f
2. Why was there a need for John, the Baptist?
3. After 400 years of no prophecy from God...John was a reminder, a warning bell

B. John's Preaching – Matthew 3:1-12 (and parallels)

C. John's Situation

1. In Matthew 4:12 we read the he is in prison
2. In Matthew 11:2, he sends messengers from prison
3. In Matthew 14:1-12, we find out why he was there

II. John's Question

A. Verse 3 – “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

B. Didn't John know the answer to this question?

1. John 1:29 (cf. 1:36) – “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!”
2. The baptism of Jesus – John 1:32-34 (cf. Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21f)

C. Why did John ask this question?

1. “He was expecting Jesus to be more political and militant” – but John seemed to understand that this was a spiritual revolution, not national

2. Some say that John did this for his disciples – but Jesus’ response it to John, not the disciple
 3. John asked this question because HE WAS IN PRISON!!! He was probably thinking about a passage like Isaiah 61:1-3a
- D. John didn’t know the full plan of God and in a time of unknown crisis, he needed confirmation, he need to be reassured that Jesus was who John thought he was
- III. Jesus’ Response
- A. “Go and tell John what you hear and see” – I like the way Luke records this – Luke 7:21-22
- B. How is this an answer to John’s question?
1. Because this type of activity was prophesied in the Old Testament
 2. Isaiah 29:18
 3. Isaiah 35:4-6
- C. But notice the last thing Jesus says – this is a beatitude...v 6
1. The word “offended” is the Greek term *skandalizo*, which means to cause to stumble
 2. John’s current situation was a preview to the Apostles of what they would face
 3. And in the face of such persecution...the temptation is to remove what is causing it, to give up Jesus, that would be a stumbling block
 4. Just a few verses earlier in 10:32-33, Jesus says something similar
- D. Jesus response to John’s question is, “Scripture is being fulfilled...don’t lose faith!”

Conclusion:

- We’re going to go through a lot in life...there may be times of doubt
- Jesus Himself warned that it wouldn’t be easy – Matthew 10:34-39
- This is the reason behind the Hebrew letter – 10:39 – “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”
- Hebrews 12:12 – “Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your week knees.”
- But we need to trust in God and never give up!

- John simply needed some encouragement – we all do – that is why we spend time together. That is why we have mid-week bible studies. That is why we spend time together.
- The world will beat us down. We may feel trapped. We may feel like everything is falling apart.
- But we must remember that God's will will be accomplished.
- God will win – how David Hartsell watches Alabama football