

Matthew 11:1-10: When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. ² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

Intro: We've been studying Jesus' instructions to His twelve apostles before He sent them out on their mission to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom & heal the sick, just as He did. Last week, we saw Jesus focus on the suffering of division in the family, the high cost & commitment of following Him, but also the great reward. Today, we see Jesus go on to teach & preach, & we see that John the Baptist has doubts & questions about the true identity of Jesus. Jesus tells John **Who He is**, the Messiah, the very LORD & God that John prepared the way for.

1. Jesus Went On Teaching And Preaching

Matthew 11:1: When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

a. Teaching and preaching God's Word was central to the ministry of Jesus Christ: This is why it's central to us! This is why Bible study is central to us! This is why reading our Bibles is central to us. We are following Jesus!

Mark 1:32-38: That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, & cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed & went out to a desolate place, & there he prayed. And Simon & those who were with him searched for him, & they found him & said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

b. Jesus led by example: Jesus did the very things He was sending His apostles out to do. "Do as I say, not as I do": not with Jesus! We are to do as He says & do as He does, because He does it all & says it all, perfectly!

2. John The Baptist's Question From Prison

Matthew 11:2-3: Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of **the Christ**, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you **the one who is to come**, or shall we look for another?"

a. John was in prison: Matt. 14:3-4: For Herod had seized John & bound him & put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

b. Matthew calls Jesus "the Christ": This is not Jesus' last name. This is a title: Jesus the anointed one (the Messiah, the Savior, the Prophet, Priest, And King)

WLC 42: Why was our Mediator called Christ? A. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his Church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

c. John heard about the deeds of the Christ: John heard about Jesus' preaching; His cleansing lepers; His healing many; His calming of the storm; His casting out demons; His raising the dead; His making the blind to see!

d. John had great knowledge of who Jesus was: Matthew 3:11: I baptize you with water for repentance, but **he who is coming** after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

John 1:29: The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **John witnessed Jesus' baptism!**

e. John didn't have the full picture: Matt 3:13-15: Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, & do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

Matthew 9:14-15: Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

f. John sent his disciples with a question: V. 3: "Are you the **one who is to come**, or shall we look for another?"

g. John knew where to go when he had doubts: Jesus! "To Whom else shall we go?!"

h. John asked about the one who is to come: Isaiah 59:20: a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD.

Commentator: "The Coming One" was an expression used by early Christians for the Messiah.

i. Why did John ask this question?

1) Wrong answer: Augustine, Luther, Calvin J. C. Ryle: John didn't ask for himself but for his disciples.

2) John expected the Messiah to bring a measure of judgment: Matthew 3:12: His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

Where Jesus reads a portion of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4, He leaves out the end part about judgment: **Isaiah 61:2:** and the day of vengeance of our God; John expected Jesus to come to both redeem and judge the first time!

Jesus will come again to judge! Revelation 19:11-16: Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Are you ready?) **GOSPEL!**

3) John faced some really hard circumstances: He was in prison, his life was in danger, & eventually he would lose his life in that prison. "If Jesus really is the One, why am I still in prison?" We know God does jail breaks!

D. A. Carson: It was all right to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, still storms, preach righteousness, and announce the kingdom; but where was the judgment? Had the corruptions and cruelties of Caesar been abruptly shut down? Had the hypocritical temple leaders been banished? Had the disgusting corruptions of Herod Antipas been confronted? Why was he, John the Baptist, languishing in the stifling heat of the prison at Machaerus fortress for challenging the morals of Herod, while Jesus, the alleged Messiah, did nothing about this injustice?

j. Hard circumstances in life can tempt us not to trust God's Word: Gideon; Elijah: **1 Kings 19:4:** But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

Dan Doriani: Pastor lost his lost son in 20s, left the faith; people don't want to give up sin; Intellectual questions.

Are there reasons in your own life that you doubt God & His Word & His truthfulness & His love & goodness?

Brian Davis: Don't assume that because your plan isn't happening, God's plan isn't happening. **(Joseph!)**

Romans 8:35-39: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

k. Even the greatest men struggle with doubt: Mark 9:24: I believe; help my unbelief!

Dan Doriani: Abraham shows that the faithful consider difficult facts but do not let them overwhelm us. The posture of faith enabled him to endure even when the facts were problematic. On the other hand, the Pharisees saw miracle after miracle, but demanded even more signs. Jesus refused, saying a wicked & adulterous generation demands a sign. A comparison of Abraham & the Pharisees reveals that the crucial difference lies in the heart. Believers have doubts, but we take our doubts to God. Skeptics seem to be searching for the truth, but there will never be enough evidence to satisfy them. The lesson is clear: Like John, we should take our doubts & fears to Jesus, for he will answer.

3. Jesus' Answer To John: "I Am The One!"

Matthew 11:4-6: And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

a. Jesus reminds John that He is the One Who is doing what the Old Testament Scriptures say the Messiah will do: Isaiah 35:4-6: Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, **your God will come** with vengeance, with the recompense of God. **He will come & save you.**" ⁵ Then **the eyes of the blind shall be opened, & the ears of the deaf unstopped;** ⁶ then shall **the lame man leap like a deer, & the tongue of the mute sing for joy . . .**

Jesus, Isaiah 61: Luke 4:16-21: he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. & as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, & he stood up to read. & the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll & found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives & recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." & he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. & the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. & he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

And even more, Jesus told John: the dead are raised!

b. Notice that Jesus gives John evidence: It is not wrong to have faith based on evidence! But you will not believe the evidence unless God grants you faith!

Luke 16:27-31: And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house - ²⁸ for I have five brothers - so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' ²⁹ But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

c. V. 6: Blessed is the one who is not offended by me: John, don't be offended that things are happening the way you think they should happen. Don't be offended if I'm not doing exactly what you expected. Don't be offended if I'm not working on your timetable. Don't be offended if I'm choosing not to rescue you and avenge all right now.

Brian Davis: God will never apologize to anyone for anything because He's that good and that perfect. Do you think God could ever do anything to you that would offend you? Think of Job!

Brian Davis: Let's be most offended by our own sin!

Sometimes you are offended, and you shouldn't be offended. You are too easily offended, and you being offended is your sin problem, not the other person's problem you think offended you, or when God's truth offends you.

Sometimes, you deserve to be offended. **Daniel Doriani:** We should also pause when Scripture offends us. Does Scripture question a treasured opinion? A harbored sin? Jesus probes all our opinions because he needs to dismantle some of them. (We hate it when God destroys our idols – it's often painful!)

d. You are blessed if you are not offended: You have the favor and smile of God upon you & His joy in you!

4. Jesus Defends John The Baptist By Asking Rhetorical Questions

Matthew 11:7-10: As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

a. You did not go out to see a reed shaken by the wind: John was not a weak man who had no backbone. John had convictions. John was strong in his faith. John confronted kings and leaders with God's truth!

D. A. Carson: John was not tossed about in his judgment by the winds of public opinion or private suffering.

Ephesians 4:14: [that] we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

b. You did not go out to see a man dressed in soft clothing: Effeminate/King's houses; Camel Hair/Sacrifice

Craig Keener: John's sacrificial lifestyle proved that he was a truly a servant of God . . . John was no pampered prince or court prophet who might be tempted to prophesy for hire . . . He had nothing to gain from his prophesying except the approval of his God. (John was not a prosperity gospel preacher!)

c. You went out to see a prophet: John spoke for God. John spoke the words of God.

d. You went out to see more than a prophet: V. 10: This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

Al Mohler: John is the prophet prophets prophesied about! He's the fulfillment of prophecy about Jesus!

The Bible never records John doing any miracles! The Bible never records John speaking in tongues! John is so great because Jesus is so great, and John is the one prophet who got to announce – “Here He is!”

D. A. Carson: By citing Malachi, Jesus has shown in what way John the Baptist is greater than a prophet: he is greater in that he alone of all the prophets was the forerunner who prepared the way for Yahweh-Jesus and personally pointed him out.

e. Jesus is God: John the Baptist came preparing the way of the LORD.

Malachi 3:1: Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

Jesus is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world through His utter rejection (beating, spitting, hitting, and mocking), & brutal death on that cross where He bore God’s wrath, but then He rose up from the dead!

Christ Is Messiah Come And See
And Hear His Deeds And Bow Your Knee
The Blind Receive Their Sight With Glee
The Lame Can Walk And Jump For Thee
Lepers Are Cleansed, Diseases Flee
The Deaf Can Hear And So Can We
Know The Dead Are Raised And Free
The Poor Are Made To Hear His Plea
It’s All Good News, He Is The Key
To Blessedness For All Who See
And Aren’t Offended By This Me
Who Is The LORD The One In Three
And Three In One Who’s Come To Be
Our Savior Died Upon That Tree
And Bore God’s Wrath To Hell’s Degree
Then Rose To Life It’s God’s Decree
Repent And Trust With God Agree
Christ Is The One John Did Foresee
The Lamb Of God Our Guarantee
Because Of His Biography
Glory’s Over Earth And Sea
He’s Everlasting Jubilee!