



World Christian Fellowship

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Christian – Doubt?

Matthew 11:1-6

Matthew's gospel answers the essential question facing men.

Who is Jesus Christ?

Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has told us who Jesus Christ is.

He has presented Him as the Son of God, God incarnate, the King, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ, the Saviour of Israel, and the Saviour of the world.

Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the living Lord, the Son of God.

Matthew has tapped every effective witness to the claims of Christ.

Chapter 1, begin with the testimony of the genealogy and ancestry that points to Christ as Messiah.

The testimony of the virgin birth, He was uniquely conceived by the Holy Spirit without a human father.

Chapter 2, Christ fulfils the Old Testament predictions in detail.

Chapter 3 is the testimony of the forerunner John the Baptist. A prophet of God, a man filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, says, "This is the Messiah."

The testimony of God the Father, who at the baptism of Christ said, "This is My beloved Son."

Chapter 4, the testimony of power as Jesus Himself defeats the arch enemy of God, Satan.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the testimony of His words.

The truthfulness, the power, and the authority of what He said verifying His claim.

Chapters 8-9, the testimony of His works. Healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, forgiving sin, all testifying of His deity.

Chapter 10, the testimony of His disciples. They were so convinced that He was the Christ that they were willing to pay the dearest price of loyalty to Him, death itself.

Matthew has laid out all this tremendous evidence.

All of these have been called into the courtroom to testify that Jesus is the Christ.

Chapters 11 and 12, he has a new purpose in mind.

Based upon all this testimony, what is the reaction of those who have heard and seen?

Matthew deals with that in chapters 11 and 12.

He lists for us the various kinds of reactions to the claims of Christ.

These chapters are filled with very common reactions to these claims of Christ, which were true then and are true today as much as they were then.

Matthew 11:1-15 deals with Doubt.

Matthew 11:16-19 deals with criticism.

Matthew 11:20-24 deals with indifference.

Matthew 12:1-21 deals with rejection.

Matthew 12:22-23 deals with amazement.

Matthew 12:24-37 deals with blasphemy.

Matthew 12:38-45 deals with fascination.

All the negative responses:

- Doubt,
- Criticism,
- Indifference,
- Amazement,
- Rejection,
- Blasphemy, and

➤ Fascination.

Unique response all its own, although there's some overlapping as well.

Matthew 11:25-30 deals with faith.

Matthew 12:46-50 deals with right response.

We will be able to see the varying responses that are just as true today as they were then where people are coming from when they react to Jesus Christ.

The first response that he deals with is the response of doubt.

Matthew 11:1-6, *Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.*

²And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

⁴Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

Very important.

When the New Testament talks about doubt, whether you are talking in the gospels or the epistles, it primarily focuses in on believers.

You must believe something before you can doubt it.

You must be committed to it before you would begin to question it, so that doubt is pointed up as the unique problem of the believer.

There's only one time in the gospels when it refers to unbelievers in reference to doubt, and when it does, it uses a word that means 'to keep in suspense.' It is a term that is nowhere else used in the New Testament. The normal terms that surround the concept of doubt are used of believers.

Doubt is something that occurs in the life of a believer.

Matthew 11:11, *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

The greatest man that ever lived up until his time had doubts, then we can be a little comforted, can we not, when we doubt?

So, doubt is basically a problem encountered by believers.

Jesus said to His disciples, *“Oh you of little faith.”*
An occasion, *“How long will you doubt?”* he said.

They had committed themselves to Him.

They had believed, but their belief, from time to time, hit some snags that made them doubt.

Matthew 21:21, *So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done.*

Jesus had to continually remind them not to doubt.

Matthew 28:17, *When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.*

There are several passages in which the doubt of the disciples is discussed.

Luke 12:29, *“And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.*

He says to them don't doubt.

1 Timothy 2:8, *I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;*

James 1:6, *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

So, doubt is a matter that belongs in the life of a believer. But we are not so shocked when we see the one who is the illustration of doubt being none other than John the Baptist.

V 1, *Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.*

Jesus had taught them, He had trained them, He had prepared them to go out into the world and represent Him. He knew that, ultimately, they would be sent out, empowered by the Holy Spirit, after His ascension, and the whole building of the church would depend upon their availability and their ministry.

He had invested the time in them, and now they were ready for their first training mission, their first short-term training exercise.

After chapter 10, He sent them out, and they were to go and to carry on the things that He had stated to them.

At the end of **Matthew chapter 9**, He had said, “Pray with Me that the Lord will send forth laborers.”

They prayed,

They became the labourers, and

They are sent on their first mission.

He does His ministry too. It reveals His leadership. It also reveals His great heart for the work.

“To teach and to preach.”

Matthew 4:23, *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.*

Matthew 9:35, *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

Teaching and Preaching. They are different.

The synagogue was a place where the Scripture was read and expounded. The synagogue's main feature was to read and give a detailed exposition of Scripture.

Lord would go into the synagogue, and He would take the occasion to speak and He would take the Old Testament and give them the meaning of the Old Testament and apply it to Himself.

He was an expository teacher.

He was also a preacher.

The word means "to proclaim." He would go from the synagogue to the streets and the hillsides, and the highways and the byways and the corners and anywhere, and He would preach and proclaim His Kingdom.

Jesus continued doing this. We may also assume, based on verse 5, that He continued the miracles of healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, and forgiving sin.

Lord goes on about His work. He is alone now. The Twelve are gone, they are out on their first mission.

V 2-3, *And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples³ and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*

He is approached by two disciples of John the Baptist. Because John had heard in his prison about the works of Christ, so he sends these disciples to ask, *“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*

John was the forerunner of Christ, the one who announced His coming.

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

John 1:19-20, *Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”*

John 1:33-37, *I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’³⁴ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”³⁵ Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he*

said, *“Behold the Lamb of God!”* ³⁷*The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

John 3:30, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

John had already known Christ, he had already pointed to Christ, he had already baptized Christ. He had affirmed that he believed in Christ.

But there were certain things that caused him to doubt.

So, he sends these two to say, *“Is this the Messiah, or are we looking for somebody else?”*

It reflects his doubt, even though he had affirmed his belief, even though he had known about Christ.

Jesus is at the north end of the Sea of Galilee, has called Matthew to follow him. Matthew has gathered together a lot of sinners for a feast.

Matthew 9:14, *Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”*

The disciples of John were sort of tracking Jesus. John was in prison, and he needed a report on how things were going and so some of his disciples would follow Jesus around.

They got involved in the conversation.

Luke 7:11-17. Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain

Jesus raises from the dead the son of the widow of Nain. He touches the casket, verse 14, and He says, “Arise,” and the dead son sat up, began to speak. He turned him over to his mother. A great fear came on them all and they glorified God.

Luke 7:17-18, *And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region. ¹⁸Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.*

The disciples of John were hanging around the crowds and watching what Jesus was doing, because it was utterly important to John to fulfil his task as the one who announced the Messiah.

John wanted to be sure that the one whom he had announced was indeed the Messiah. So, his disciples stayed close to Jesus, as well as to John.

Though John was a prisoner, he had access. They could come and see him. Some disciples of John didn't stay very close to him, because in Acts 19, we meet some of his disciples who never even knew about Jesus.

He had a lot of followers. The whole city and the whole country was coming out to John the Baptist, so he had many followers. The ones who stayed very close to him and worked very closely with him, he dispatched to follow this Jesus around to be sure that he was right.

There were some reasons for him to doubt.

“Are you The Coming One?”

The Coming One is a title for the Messiah.

It is a Messianic title, like The Branch, The Seed of David, the King of kings, the Prince of Peace, the Coming One.

It is one of the most common titles for the Messiah.

It is used in **Matthew, Mark, Luke 5:26, and in John.**

It is used in the epistles.

It was first introduced in **Psalm 40:7**, *Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.*

Psalm 118:26, *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.*

The Messiah is called The Coming One.

Matthew 3:11, *I indeed baptize you with water unto 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 fire.*

The Coming One is the term John used to refer to the Messiah.

Mark 1:6-7, *Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.*

Luke 3:16, *John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

Hebrews 10:37, *"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

The Messiah is called The Coming One.

The first question: *"Are you the Messiah, the One promised?"*

The second question: *"Or do we look for another?"*

John had doubt.

To deal with his doubt Where did he go?

To the Lord.

Some might say that John didn't believe.

No, that's not true.

The form of the question implies that he believed but he was having some perplexity. He is saying, *"Should I continue to believe what I believe, or should I believe something else?"*

The very fact that he would ask Jesus to answer this indicates that he hadn't lost his faith in Jesus, or he never would have gone to Him for assurance.

John went to the Lord. His faith had found a difficulty, a perplexity. So, we do!

John believed, he preached, he expected the Messiah to fulfil the promises, he had baptized Him, he had pointed to Him, he pronounced that He was the Messiah, and yet, he was confused.

We shouldn't be too surprised because he didn't really know everything. Even though some of the things he predicted from his own mouth were from God, there were so many things

that he didn't know that sometimes, he had a difficulty interpreting what he did know.

1 Peter 1:10-11, *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,¹¹ searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

The prophets studied their own writings to figure out what they were saying because they couldn't figure out the exact person, or the exact time.

Exactly that was John's problem. He wanted to be sure it was the right person at the right time and so he sent two disciples.

Jesus answered them.

V 4, *Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:⁵The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

Jesus knew they had been around for a while, and they would have seen a lot, and reported it.

Luke 7 records the same incident.

Luke 7: 20-22, *When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' " ²¹And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. ²²Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

What did Jesus do?

He did a whole plethora of personal miracles and said, "Here, these are for John. Now go tell him."

Not second hand, He just let the power fly, and then said, "Now you saw it all, you heard it all. Go tell him."

Clearly, those are the credentials of the Messiah.

V 6, *"And blessed is the whosoever shall not be offended because by Me."*

What does He mean by that?

It is a gentle rebuke, a gentle warning.

If you want to be blessed, then don't stumble over me. Don't doubt.

It was a trap. In it was a crooked stick, and the bait was on the crooked stick.

If you want to be blessed, don't allow anything I do or anything I say to lure you into the trap of doubt and make you stumble.

Don't doubt, because if you doubt you won't be blessed.

Blessed is the man who doesn't doubt. and blessed is the man who trusts. It's a tender rebuke.

Matthew 11:7-15, Jesus gives the greatest testimonial to anybody He ever gave in His whole life, written in Scripture and tells us that this was the greatest man who had ever lived up until his time.

Comforting to know a man as great as this can doubt?

Even when he doubts, his greatness is instantly reaffirmed.

The praise which follows shows that his doubt did not lessen our Lord's esteem for him.

Why did John doubt, and why was he perplexed?

Why we have times in our lives when we doubt God?

1. Difficult circumstances.

Difficult circumstances tend to make us doubt.

Humanly speaking, the career of John the Baptist had ended in disaster. John was this fiery, dramatic, dynamic, confrontive, bold, courageous man who preached exactly what needed to be preached to whom it needed to be said when it needed to be said and never had any fear. Bold, powerful, aggressive. When he saw sin, he rebuked it, and rebuked it in the person he saw it in.

Resulted in his being imprisoned.

Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, had paid a visit to his brother in Rome. When Herod went to see his brother, he took a liking to his brother's wife, so he seduced her. When he returned home, he proceeded to divorce his own wife and then steal his brother's wife, whom he had seduced, and take her as his new wife.

John the Baptist heard about that. He did not write an anonymous article. He went in front of public view, in the face of Herod Antipas, and told him he was a rotten, vile sinner who was an adulterer and gave him the whole line right to his face, which didn't go over real big with Herod, who proceeded immediately to throw him in prison. He would have killed him, except he was afraid of the people, because the people thought he was a prophet.

Not just any prison. Five miles east of the northern tip of the Dead Sea, fifteen miles south was an old, Herodian palace that had been turned into a fortress.

The name of it was **Machaerus**.

In the bottom of it was a pit, a dark, stifling, stuffy, hot dungeon in the middle of that bleak desert. That's where he put John. **Eighteen months** John had been in the limelight, a free spirit in the wilderness, preaching, teaching, and proclaiming.

The whole country was coming to John, and he was in the middle of the action, and the crowds were there. The excitement was there. For over one year, he has been in the blackness of a stifling pit without any fresh air. Modern times is called **Kiryat Mukawir**.

John was the child of the desert. All his life, he had lived in the wide-open spaces, with the clean wind on his face and the spacious vault of the sky for his roof.

Now, he was confined within the four narrow walls of an underground dungeon. For a man like John, who had probably never lived in a house, this must have been an agony.

He was a prophet of God. He was a great, holy, faithful, selfless, loyal prophet. He had done exactly what God told him to do, and he had done it well.

He had announced the glorious coming of the Messiah, who would make all things right and set up His Kingdom.

He was even a close relative to the Lord.

He had been filled with the Spirit since the time he was in his mother's womb.

He had taken the Nazarite vow, the highest level of spiritual commitment possible.

Was this his reward?

Doubt comes from our inability to deal with negative circumstances, trials.

If You are the God of all comfort,

If You're the Christ that cares,

why am I going through this?

I have been faithful.

Isaiah 61:1-2, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,*

And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

The Messiah came, He would free the prisoners and set loose the captives?

Luke 4:18-19, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

What is going on here?

This isn't the way it's supposed to be.

Our doubts come like John's doubts.

We convince ourselves that we belong to the Lord, and the Lord is going to care for us.

When something goes wrong, we really begin to doubt.

We lose a child to death, or we lose a child to unbelief, or we lose a husband or a wife, or a mother or a father, or a dear friend.

Or somebody gets cancer or has a heart attack, or a child is struck by a car and crippled for life.

We begin to say, "God, is this what it's supposed to be like when You care and love us?"

If everything doesn't go the way it should go, we wonder if God loves us and fall easily into doubt.

Once we start thinking that way, Satan gets behind and just starts shoving.

In our selfishness, ignorance, and failure to see the whole plan of God, and in our constant problem of getting tied down to this passing world, we doubt God.

We doubt that He cares and loves us.

We lose our job or something like that, and we just start questioning God.

John doubted because of difficult circumstances, and I understand that.

But you know what he did. he did the right thing with his doubt. he went immediately to the Lord.

That's the place to go if you have doubt over those kinds of things, go to the Lord.

John had begun to stumble.

He was offended.

But he asked the Lord to help him deal with his doubt.

He sent these two, and said in effect, “Lord, would you help me?”

The Lord was glad to respond, and even said, “Blessedness can come if you will just trust me, even in the midst of mystifying circumstances.”

Paul was in prison in Philippians 4, but Paul didn’t doubt.

Philippians 4:4-6, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

Paul got tuned in to the Lord.

- I know how to be abased and how to abound.
- I know how to have everything and have nothing.
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and have the confidence that my God shall supply all my needs.

Negative circumstances are tough, but all they need to do is drive us to the Lord, who will respond to those struggles by replacing our doubt with faith.

What did Jesus say?

V 5, *“You tell John that the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached.”*

What is that list of people?

All the hurting, broken, crippled, crumbled people.

Jesus is saying, “John, if you think I don’t care about the people who are hurting, take a look at the kind of people I touch,”

“I care. John, this is only a preview of coming attractions in the Kingdom.”

John’s circumstances never got any better. They got worse. He got his head chopped off.

Doubt comes from difficult circumstances, but that only gives us an opportunity to exercise faith.

Faith, when it is exercised, gets stronger.

Someday, you will be delivered. Maybe not in this world, but in the next.

2. Worldly influences.

V 2, And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples

John had heard about the works of Christ, and this confused him.

Why?

Because the things Christ was doing did not parallel what the people thought the Messiah should do.

The people all thought that when the Messiah came, He would first knock off the Romans. Wipe out all the Romans, get them out here, give Israel back her land.

Secondly, free food, instant welfare state.

John 6, when Jesus fed the multitude on the side of the hill, they tried to make Him a king in the same chapter – health, wealth, and instant happiness, bliss.

All the wrongs are made right, everything would be as it ought to be immediately. The existing expectation, and doubt is caused by worldly influence.

John had become a victim of the thinking of his day. Isn't it supposed to be this way?

Is Jesus supposed to be walking around, meek, and lowly, nothing much going on that changed the environment?

The wrongs are still wrong, the injustices are still there, the sin is everywhere.

John had become victimized by the thinking of the people around him.

Similarly same problem with the disciples as well.

The disciples were forever fighting doubts about Jesus because they had these current expectations of the Messiah, and Jesus didn't live up to them.

Acts 1:6, *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

Jesus says to them for the numerous times earlier and again He tells them.

You still are asking the same dumb question. It's not for you to know.

Even after all those years of being with them, He says to them.

John 14:9, *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me*

has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

They had these confused concepts that came from the world around them.

The Jews believed that when the Messiah came, before He got here, there would be a long succession of other guys who would come. It's a whole bunch of people would come, and the Messiah would be the final one.

That's why, in Matthew 16, Jesus asked the disciples the question.

Matthew 16:13-16, *When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

What did that reflect?

That reflected the current Jewish thinking that there was going to be this long string of people coming.

First would be Elijah, then Jeremiah, then a bunch of prophets, then that prophet of Deuteronomy 18.

Finally, the Messiah would come.

When Jesus did not do what John thought He should be doing, John began to think, “Maybe He’s back up a few people, He’s somebody else.”

John asks, *“Are you Him, or do we look for somebody else? Where are you in the line?”*

So, he was even affected by that misinformation. The Jews expected the Messiah to be a certain thing, and it wasn’t turning out that way and there was confusion.

Matthew 16:21-23, *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. ²²Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” ²³But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”*

They never understood it.

They were all sitting around the night Jesus was going to be betrayed and taken to be executed, arguing about who was

going to get to sit on the thrones in the highest point of the Kingdom.

The Lord was talking about dying.

When the Lord was taken prisoner, Peter was so totally disillusioned that he went out immediately and three times he denied Jesus.

- It didn't make any sense to Peter at all.
- It didn't make any sense to Thomas.
- It didn't make any sense to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

They had all become victimized by what the people around them thought He should be.

John 10:24-25, *Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.*

They weren't even on His frequency. He was saying it over and over, but their expectation was so different that they couldn't hear what He was saying.

We face the same causes for doubt today.

We doubt because we are perplexed by the plan of God.

The world imposes that on us.

Have you ever heard this question?

If God is a God of love, why is the world so messed up?

If Christ loves everyone so much, how come children die?

If God is so loving, then why people starve?

If God is so powerful then why does people get disease, and there's war and death?

If your God is such a God of love, why doesn't He make things right in this world?

Why is there so much injustice?

If your God is so loving and your Christ is so loving, how come he is going to send all those people to Hell?

They say, "We will tell you what kind of Christ we want. If yours fits, then we will believe."

We cannot become victimized by that, can we, or we will begin to doubt.

Our answer, "I don't know. Why doesn't God do something? If there's a God, how come there so many false religions? If He wants everyone to love Him, and He's so powerful, why doesn't He wipe out the false religions and we will all believe?"

When you start letting the world dictate to you what God's going to be and what God's going to do, and what Christ is going to be and what He is going to do, you are going to look at the Bible and you' ae going to wonder, be perplexed.

- The world does not know God.
- The world does not know God's plan.
- The world does not know Christ.

They do not understand who He is.

1 Corinthians 2:14, *“The natural man does not understand the things of God.”*

If you begin to let the world force you to think that Christ must be who they say He must be, then you are going to start doubting.

Again, the solution is to go to Him.

What do you find when you go?

V 4- 5, *Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

What do you mean by that?

Can't you see I am the one who will make things right?

I am reaching out to the poor,

I am reversing disease,

I am reversing death.

Can't you see it?"

It's limited, however, because of the unbelief and sin of the world. Can't you see that I am the one who is going to make it right.

I have the power to make it right.

I have the power to reverse the curse?

Someday He will in his Kingdom. These are previews of coming attractions, a taste of what He will do in the future.

Luke 17:20-21, *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."*

He says to John, "I can do all that.

I can stop the disease,

I can give resurrection life to the dead,

I can touch the poor,

I can preach good news to hurting people.

It is going to be right.

Just trust Me for the right timing."

Then He adds the Beatitude here, the “be blessed by not doubting.”

Negative circumstances make us doubt, but we don’t have to doubt.

We don’t have to doubt worldly influence because of worldly influences either.

3. Incomplete revelation.

V 2, And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples.

John had heard about Jesus, and he had heard what was going on. John’s disciples had come back and said they had seen this and seen that.

But he really doubted because he didn’t have the opportunity for a first-hand look.

There is a sense of legitimate doubt here.

He didn’t have the opportunity, like Peter said, to be an eyewitness of His majesty. He didn’t have the opportunity, as John, to handle Him with his hands.

1 John 1:1, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—*

He didn't even have a sure word of Scripture, as we have.

He didn't have a complete revelation.

There was a lot missing, and he was getting some stuff second-hand there.

John says, "I need some first-hand information."

The Lord said, "you need some first-hand information, I will give you some."

Remember Luke 7. Right there, on the spot, Jesus did massive miracles and said, "These are for John! These are John's miracles, now take them to him and tell him."

The Lord filled in that space where he needed a more complete revelation.

How does this relate to us?

Do you know why a lot of people doubt?

Not only because of negative circumstances and worldly influences, but a lot of people doubt because they just don't understand God's revelation.

You have got to know the facts.

He says, *“Go tell John the blind receives their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached.”*

Give him the revelation, and the manifestation.

Tell him what I have done.

I would promise to you that your doubt is erased as you daily expose yourself to the revelation of God.

Let God speak through His Word. That spells the end of doubt.

What dispels the doubt was the revelation of Himself in the Scripture.

We all need a first-hand manifestation of the living Christ to dispel doubt, and it comes through the pages of Holy Scripture.

The Bereans were more noble, because they searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

He gave them the evidence.

4. Unfulfilled expectations.

V 3, *“Ask Him if we are looking for somebody else. Do we look for another?”*

Only because He hasn't fulfilled my expectations.

When John preached about Christ, do you know what he said?

Matthew 3:11-12, *I indeed baptize you with water unto 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 fire. ¹²His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

John said, “The Messiah is coming in holy judgment.”

That was his message.

That's always, always, always, he was preaching, “Repent, repent, repent, repent.”

You would better get your life right because the Messiah is coming. The implication if you are life wasn't right then you are going to regret it.

He was preaching the Messiah was coming to judge.
He expected the Messiah to land with brass feet blazing in fire.
He expected the Messiah to come blasting evil things with divine thunderbolts.

Here comes Jesus and he collects a little group of twelve totally inept characters, meekly wanders around through Galilee. John just can't figure it out.

Jesus was on a mission of mercy, and John's was a message of judgment.
John was waiting for the fury and the fire and the flame and the wrath.

When are You going to blast Your enemies?

He sounds like David.

Psalm 9, Psalm 10, Psalm 35, Psalm 52, Psalm 58.

All those psalms where David asked God to do in His enemies.

He sounds like the people under the altar in Revelation 6.

Revelation 6:10, *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

Unfulfilled expectations.

Impatience can lead to doubt.

We expect divine intervention, and it doesn't happen.

You expect God to do something.

How long can you let that somebody in your life who is a wretched, evil, vile person, and they seem to prosper all the time?

How long God?

Can you do something?

This doesn't seem to fit.

Or maybe you have been looking for the Second Coming so long, you just sort of gave up.

Some people have been looking for the Rapture so long, they figure it will never come.

Do you think the Lord will come any minute?

2 Peter 3:3-4, *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

Watch Jesus' answer.

If you are worried about whether I am going to come and set up the Kingdom, *“The blind receives their sight, the lame walk the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached.”*

Why does He say that?

Those are all signs of the Kingdom.

For in the Kingdom, all disease is eliminated.

For in the Kingdom, there will be a lessening of the power of death.

For in the Kingdom, the world will hear the Gospel.

These were all signs of the Kingdom.

Isaiah 35, “In the Kingdom, it says the blind and the deaf and the dumb and the lame,” –

Isaiah 61 – “the poor will all be healed and have the Gospel preached to them.

Those are Kingdom promises, Isaiah 35, and Isaiah 61.

John, if it’s your Kingdom expectation that’s causing you doubt, look again at these things. These are all the marks of the Kingdom. You are seeing them in a preview.

It will come. So don’t let anyone catch you in the trap of doubt, or you will lose your blessing.

- If you doubt because of difficult circumstances, look at His works. They prove He cares for a people in difficulty.
- If you doubt because of worldly influence, look at His works. He is in control, and someday will show it fully.
- If you doubt because of incomplete revelation, then look at His works and study them and read them and see who He is.
- If you doubt because of unfulfilled expectation, look for these are all the previews of what He will do in the Kingdom.
- If He could do them then, He proves Himself to be the one who can do them in the Kingdom.

Do you want to know the best part of this story?

John had his doubt removed by the Lord's answer.

How do we know?

Matthew 14:10-12, *So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. ¹¹And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹²Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*

Why did they go and tell Jesus?

Because Jesus was the most important person.

Because they believed in Jesus.

Why did they believe in Jesus?

Because John believed in Jesus.

Because John had made them to believe in Jesus.

The fact that they went immediately to Jesus is indicative that John was satisfied with the answer that he got.

Jesus fit into their lives.

Jesus fit into plan because He fit into John's plan.

Now, we all doubt.

2 Timothy 2:13, *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. says, "If we doubt, if we believe not, He abides faithful. He cannot deny Himself."*

When you doubt, God will be faithful.

If you doubt, you are not going to lose your relationship to the Lord.

He will be faithful.

He can't deny Himself.

He has affirmed that you are His child, and He will hold on. Knowing that, you can have the confidence and you can go to God with your doubt, and He will give you the answer you need.

Luke 12:29, *“Neither be of a doubtful mind.”*

Conclusion

Do you remember the story of the two disciples as they walked along the road to Emmaus, shortly after Jesus had been crucified?

Luke 24.

Notice the "disappointment" they felt over Jesus.

Without their knowing it, Jesus had risen from the dead in victory, but their eyes were restrained, and they didn't know that He had come alongside the road bodily and walked with them.

They were mourning His death. As they strolled along, this fellow traveller Jesus Himself asked them why they were so sad. They were astonished at the question.

Luke 24:19-24, *And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the*

people,²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.²⁴ And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

Think of the disappointment they expressed.

They said, "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel." They like so many of that day were expecting Jesus to be the conquering, victorious Messiah that the Jewish people were hoping for and had long been expecting.

They were looking for Him to be a mighty military and political leader one who would overthrow the Roman government and bring a victorious end to their occupation of the land. Who would then take up His rightful upon the throne of King David and restore the earthly kingdom of Israel to its former glory and majesty.

Instead, what happened?

Jesus, the One upon whom they had pinned their hopes was crucified on a humiliating Roman cross like a common criminal.

All their expectations of Him were abruptly cut short.

Clearly, they still loved Him but just as clearly, they were disappointed in their hopes of Him.

Yet ironically there He was alive, walking along and chatting with them!

As we read on, we find that He even rebukes them for misunderstanding the situation as it really was.

Luke 24:25-27, *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

They were disappointed with Jesus, you see, because He hadn't fulfilled the expectations that they had for Him.

Yet, He rebuked them for not having the right expectations, and for not believing what the Scriptures had said WOULD happen to Him!

So, Jesus began speaking to them from the writings of Moses and on throughout the rest of the Scriptures.

Jesus proved to them that, in dying on the cross, He fulfilled everything that the Scriptures promised concerning the Messiah.

The Bible tells us that their hearts burned within them as He opened the Scriptures to them.

I believe that they began to see that the problem wasn't with Him but with them!

They had not believed what the Scriptures had said concerning Him and so they had come to expect Him to do things that He had never promised He would do.

When He didn't do what they expected Him to do, they were disappointed with Him.

What humility of heart they must have experienced when they finally came to understand this, and to repent of their misunderstanding!

What joy must have been theirs when He revealed Himself to them, and they realized that He truly had done what He had promised - and more!

What even greater joy still and what glorious hope!