

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

JESUS IS KING



Jesus and John the Baptist

Text: Matthew 11:1-19

1. John the Baptist has Doubts - Matthew 11:1-3

John 1:29-36 and other passages indicated that before this, John clearly recognized Jesus as the Messiah. John was given clear, visible, and miraculous evidence that Jesus was the Messiah!

It is not clear what caused his doubt. He might have misunderstood the ministry of the Messiah. Maybe he thought that if Jesus were really the Messiah, He would perform works connected with a political deliverance of Israel – or at least the deliverance of John, who was in prison.

Whatever the reason there was doubt. Doubt happens. When you doubt go to Jesus and that what John did.

2. Jesus Answers John - Matthew 11:4-6

Jesus wanted to assure both John and his disciples that He was the Messiah.

So Jesus reassured John but He also reminded them that His power would be displayed mostly in humble acts of service, meeting individual needs, and not in spectacular displays of political deliverance.

John's question could come off like this: "Jesus, why aren't You doing more?"

For the most part, the ministry Jesus was a dedicated perseverance in the doing of seemingly small things. The history of the Church shows that this is one of the lessons most difficult to learn.

Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me:

Jesus knew that the focus of His ministry was offensive to the expectation of the Jewish people, who longed for political deliverance from Roman domination.

But there was a blessing for those who were **not offended** because of the Messiah didn't come as the people expected.

3. Jesus speaks about John - Matthew 11:7-15

Jesus reminded them that John was God's chosen announcer of the Messiah, not a man-pleaser or a self-pleaser. He was in fact **more than a prophet**, because he alone had the ministry of serving as the Messiah's messenger. For that, he was the greatest of prophets and

the greatest of men (**Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist**).

This is he of whom it is written: Matthew noted that this ministry of the Messiah's forerunner was prophesied in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1.

He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he: Though John was great, he was not born again under the New Covenant. This is because he lived and died before the completion of Jesus' work at the cross and resurrection.

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force: Jesus' reference to **violence** refers to both the intensity of spiritual warfare surrounding the ministry of Jesus and His forerunner, and also to the intensity required to persevere in following God and His kingdom.

Luke 16:16 is a parallel passage and it says, **"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."**

The word presseth and the word violent have similar connotations in the greek and mean to crowd one self into.

The idea here is that the kingdom of heaven goes forward with great sacrifice and effort against the evil and darkness of the world. This who will be included press themselves into it like a person pressing into a crowd.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John: Jesus saw an era ending with John; **all the prophets and the law** anticipated John and his ministry as a forerunner.

Under the Old Covenant, every other prophet announced, “The Messiah is coming.” John alone had the privilege of saying, “The Messiah is here.”

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come: John may also be seen as Elijah, in a partial fulfillment of Malachi 4:5. John was not *actually* Elijah, but he served in the same spirit and power of Elijah, thus fulfilling his “office” (Luke 1:17).

Because John was Elijah in this symbolic sense, Jesus added “**if ye will receive it.**”

4. Nothing is good enough - Matthew 11:16-19

Jesus here considered the nature of His current **generation**, and how they were critical and uncertain in receiving God’s message and His messengers.

We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented: The idea is that those who have a heart to criticize will find something to criticize. Many people wouldn’t be pleased with *either* John or Jesus.

They refused to hear God’s voice in either form, the somber or the joyful, in judgment or in mercy. There was no pleasing them.

The truth is I don't know of a generation who has this tendency more than the current one. Today we are obsessed with perfection. Everything has to be just like we think it should be for us to give our blessing.

God uses usual and broken things to do His work. Obviously, God isn't going to contradict His Word in how He works but He will use some very usually station sand people to get the job done. Though God is perfect, He uses imperfection. God uses imperfection.

A friend of publicans and sinners: Jesus quoted the criticisms of others against Him. Though these words were meant to condemn, they have become wonderful. Jesus really is **a friend of... sinners**.

But wisdom is justified of her children: The wise man is proved to be wise by his wise actions (**her children**).

You can know something is of God when God uses it and there is fruit.. fruit that remains.

People might criticize John, but look at what he *did* – he led thousands of people into repentance, preparing the way for the Messiah. People might criticize Jesus, but look at what He *did* – taught and worked and loved and died like no one ever has.



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why did John doubt?
2. How you ever doubted? What caused you to doubt?
3. Does the answer of Jesus surprise you?
4. What does it mean to “not be offended in me (Jesus)”?
5. Why is there none greater born among women than John the Baptist?
6. Why is the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than John the Baptist?
7. How were the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus different?
8. What is the danger of constantly looking for perfection?
9. How is wisdom justified of her children? What does this phrase mean?