

Matthew 11:2-15 (CSB)

2 Now when John heard in prison what the Christ was doing, he sent a message through his disciples

3 and asked him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

4 Jesus replied to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news,

6 and blessed is the one who isn’t offended by me.”

7 As these men were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind?

8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those who wear soft clothes are in royal palaces.

9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

10 This is the one about whom it is written: See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.

11 “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been suffering violence, and the violent have been seizing it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if you’re willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come.

15 Let anyone who has ears listen.

I. John the Baptist seeks assurance

- a. Some believe that John was a Zealot who expected Messiah to be an immediate political ruler, or at least that he would validate and visit John in jail
- b. Others believe that John is seeking assurance for his followers
- c. In any case, the questions are seeking assurance for *someone*
- d. Regardless of who this was for, there is assurance being sought because things are not going as they would be expected to – nor do they for us!

- i. Expectations that our life will be materially bountiful and prosperous
 - ii. Expectations that our life will be free from sickness or injury
 - iii. Expectations that our life will be free from sorrow or grief
- II. God can handle our questions but is not obligated to answer in the way we think
 - a. Sometimes God does answer directly (Habakkuk)
 - b. Sometimes God does not answer at all (Job)
 - c. Sometimes God does not answer directly (Elijah, this instance)
 - i. Jesus is going to tie John to Elijah for other reasons, but notice 1 Kings 19:9b-18 (summarize backstory)
 - ii. Just as God doesn't give Elijah a straight answer, he doesn't give John a straight answer (Matthew 11:4-5)
 - d. We also have questions, circumstances and things that we don't understand
 - i. God doesn't always answer the way we want
 - 1. This is because He is God and He knows the end from the beginning
 - 2. If he answered the way we wanted all the time, we'd be God instead!
 - 3. God is patient and lets things play out for his maximum glory and our maximum good
 - ii. God sometimes does give us a straight answer
- III. God's response is one that will bring the person back to the point
 - i. Elijah is reminded that he is not alone
 - ii. John is reminded that his life was not wasted
 - iii. God's answer to his children's questions always directs them back to what he is doing!
 - 1. Jesus points John and his followers back to what the Scriptures testified about Messiah
 - a. These miracles were a sign of God's presence (Is. 35:5-6)

b. Preaching the gospel to the poor was a sign of the Messiah (Is. 61:1)

2. Jesus assures the others about John

a. This answers any questions about potential weakness or character flaws revealed by John's question

b. This also gives honor to whom honor is due

3. Jesus uses this instance, and indeed many others, to preach the Gospel!

a. This instance

b. John 11 (Martha and Lazarus), second example

iv. John was placing his burden on Jesus, as should we

1. 1 Pt. 5:7

2. Phil. 4:6-7

IV. THE GOSPEL IS THE MISSION, AND GOD USES ALL KINDS OF SITUATIONS TO BRING IT TO THOSE WHO WILL HEAR

V. APPLYING

a. As an unbeliever, you may have questions, but God wants your faith.

b. As a Christian, you may have questions, but God will use them to grow your faith.

c. As a Christian, am I taking my questions to God for assurance? Or am I allowing them to fuel doubt?

d. Am I looking for what God is doing despite my circumstances and giving praise to Him for it?