

# Matthew 11:1-19

## “The King Identified”

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In seasons of great blessings, we can neglect God, but in difficult seasons we can doubt God and struggle in our faith. Discover how to follow Jesus even when you struggle in your faith.

#### Discussion Qs

1. What are some of the circumstances that can cause godly people to question their faith in Christ?
2. How can people’s expectations of Jesus cause them to lose trust in who He is?
3. Describe a time in your life that you struggled in your faith.
4. Have people in the group (or the leader) research some of the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah and how they were fulfilled by Jesus. Discuss. How does this impact your faith?

**Subject: John the Baptist struggles in his faith**

**Object: Follow Jesus even when you struggle in your faith**

#### I. Jesus is the Messiah [1-6]

**A. Jesus knows that godly people can struggle in their faith [1-3]** 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.<sup>2</sup> And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

Jesus has sent the disciples on their 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey, and then goes to teach and proclaim the gospel in the cities of the Galilee where the disciples lived [1]. About one year earlier, Herod had imprisoned John the Baptist [2]. John heard of Jesus works and sends two of his disciples to Jesus [2]. John’s disciples ask, **Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?** [i.e. are you the Messiah?].

**1. John earlier bore witness that Jesus was the Messiah [Jn. 1:29, Matt. 3]**

**2. Difficult circumstances can cause doubt:** John had been in prison: difficult, depressing season.

**3. Our expectations can cause doubt:** John had proclaimed a message urging people to repent & proclaimed God's coming judgment. Many have been disappointed that Messiah had not yet judged the wicked, and thus he remained in prison.

**What are some of the circumstances that can cause godly people to question their faith?**

**B. Jesus provides the evidence that He is Messiah to strengthen our faith [4-6]** Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> *The 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.*<sup>6</sup> And **blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**" Jesus doesn't answer the question "Yes" or "No" because then it would simply be His declaration. But He wants us to know He is Messiah based on the evidence.

**1. The works of Jesus confirm his identity as the Christ [4-5] the things which you hear and see:** <sup>5</sup> *The 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.*

**a. Fulfilled prophecy: Is. 61:1, 29:18, 35:4-6** [Note: all the Isaiah passages deal with coming judgment. Thus Jesus addresses the delay in judgment].

**i. Fulfilled prophecy is evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus is the Messiah**

**C. Jesus blesses those who believe and are not offended because of Him [6]** And **blessed is he who is not offended because of Me:** blessed: great joy, happy, content

**1. You will be content in Christ when you trust Him even when your expectations are not met.**

a. Jewish desire for a Messiah to overthrow Roman oppression immediately.

b. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, and has promised to build His church, promise to return to bring forth judgment, and has delayed to allow as many as possible to repent.

**II. John the Baptist was the messenger [7-19]**

**A. John was the messenger sent to prepare the way for the Messiah [7-10]** As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup> But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> For this is *he* of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You: Jesus addresses the multitudes after John's disciples depart. He wants them to know John's role as the forerunner.

**1. John was commended by Jesus despite his temporary struggles of his faith:** John was a godly rugged man who wore a camel hair poncho and leather belt like Elijah [Matt. 3:4, 1Ki. 19:19].

**2. John was more than a prophet [9]** All prophets were God's messengers to His people, but John was also the subject of prophecy [10]

**3. John was the one sent to herald the Messiah [10] [Mal. 3:1]** Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You: John signaled the coming of Messiah

## **Jn. 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**

**a. prepare Your way before You:** Ancient times the road was made smooth and obstacles removed to prepare the way for the king to travel and for the people to receive their Sovereign  
i. John opened the way and then got out of the way [Jn. 3:30]

### **B. John was the greatest of the Old Testament [OT] prophets [11-15]**

<sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. <sup>14</sup> And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

#### **1. John was the greatest of the OT prophets because he was Messiah’s forerunner**

**a.** Cf. Unlike Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, John performed no miracles

#### **2. John was great but all New Testament [NT] believers are greater [11]**

**a.** John pointed to Messiah prior to the cross, and the Holy Spirit was upon him from the womb, but NT believers have the Spirit within them (born again). Born of God vs. **born of women [11]**

#### **3. John ushered in the One who would fulfill the law and prophets despite opposition [12-13]**

**a.** Despite opposition [12] John fulfilled the work of the OT prophets [13] for Jesus brings the NT

#### **4. John came in the spirit of Elijah [14-15] [Lu. 1:17] [Mal.4:5]**

**a.** Mal. 4:5 foretells that Elijah would come before the Lord [Literally fulfilled before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming (Rev. 11). John was not Elijah [Jn. 1:21]. John’s ministry would have fulfilled if Jesus rec’d. [17:12]

## **III. The response to the Messiah and the messenger [16-19]**

**A. Some people were critical of the Messiah and the messenger: But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,**

<sup>17</sup> and saying: ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.’ <sup>18</sup> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ <sup>19</sup> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’

#### **1. Some people are critical of the messenger regardless of the messenger’s style**

They were critical of John’s piety that he did not drink alcohol or eat pleasant food and they said he was too extreme (had a demon) [18] They are critical of Jesus that he did drink alcohol or eat pleasant food and falsely accuse Him of gluttony and drunkenness. And they were upset that Jesus befriended sinners [19].

#### **2. Rejection of all messengers relates to rejection of the message and the One who sent it.**

**B. Wise people are recognized by their wise response to Jesus and John’s message [19]**

**But wisdom is justified by her children.**

**1. Since John was the forerunner then you need to receive His message [the gospel]**

**a. Jn. 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**

**b. Mt. 3:2 Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand**

**c. Jn. 1:32 Those who heard John followed Jesus**