

Matthew 11:1-19

"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

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.

- We see that our lord and saviour was always busy doing the work of the Father, never idle.
- He went preaching in the cities around Capernaum in Galilee. (Map)
- He never once asked His disciples to do something that He was not willing to do Himself.

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

3 and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

Why was John in prison? Herod Antipas of Galilee had paid a visit to his brother in Rome. During that visit he seduced his brother's wife. He came home again, and dismissed his own wife, and married the sister-in-law whom he had lured away from her husband. Publicly and sternly John rebuked Herod. It was never safe to rebuke an eastern despot; Herod took his revenge; and John was thrown into the dungeons of the fortress of Machaerus down in the mountains near the Dead Sea."

- ***"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"***
Why was John doubting if Jesus was the Messiah?
- **Was he discouraged because he was in prison?**
- **Or did he have other expectations from Christ?**
- ***Matt hew 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.***
- ***12 "His 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 like most of the Jews had a certain expectation of the "coming one". They were all tired of The Roman occupation and oppression and were expecting the Messiah to end their reign.**
- **John had read Malachi 3:3 and 4:1 which talked about the purifying and purging. Was he misinterpreting its time frame and meaning?**
- **John imagined that Jesus was going to bring judgement upon the Romans immediately. Even great prophets do get it wrong sometimes.**
- **Some historians believe that Matthew was highlighting the doubt and rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and he began with John the Baptist doubt.**
- **John's disciples, were still following John who was merely the one pointing the way to the Christ.**
- **John should have sent them away, to follow Jesus.**
- **It also goes to show us that not everyone called a disciple is necessarily a follower of Christ.**

4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

5 "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.

- In other words, my works attest to whom I am. I have done all the above.

6 "And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

- Blessed is he who I'm not a stumbling block to. Blessed is he who accepts and does not reject my acts and my words.

Isaiah 8:13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.

- ***14 He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.***

7 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?"

- The area where John was baptising was full of reeds. Christ was essentially asking them if they had gone to see and listen to a man whose gospel was weak and corrupted. Swayed by what the people wanted to hear.
- John was the wind swaying the reeds.

8 "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

- Did you go out to see a true prophet with rough clothing doing God's work, eating wild food or did you go out to see a king (like Herod Antipas), with white and gold designer suits?

9 "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

10 "For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

- John the Baptist was more than a prophet, according to Christ, because he is the only prophet other than Jesus whose coming was prophesied about. *Malachi 3:1*.
- John had testified about Jesus all his life but now Jesus was also testifying about John.
- Even though John's flesh was weakened with doubt and misinterpretation, his spiritual character was still intact. Jesus was defending John's spiritual integrity and character.

11 "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist;

- John was great because he was the chosen front runner, the Angelos, the herald, the one preparing the way for the king, the only prophet prophesied about.

But he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

- But ultimately, entering the kingdom of heaven is the key goal.
- John's qualifications on earth are of no consequence if he does not enter, or lead you to the kingdom.
- Anyone already in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist right now.
- I'm the way to the kingdom of heaven but not John the Baptist. *John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*
- According to some scholars, John right then belonged to the laws and the prophets. He was bound by a time that was coming to an end and would end with him. He would be the last prophet of his kind. His true greatness would be seen in the time to come, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence John came to preach about the coming Messiah and the kingdom of heaven. He received a lot of opposition which led to his imprisonment.

- Violence (Biazomai) or forceful advancement
- Before John there had not been any opposition towards the kingdom. It all started with John.
- The devil and his evil agents were trying to snatch the kingdom away from people's hearts.

And the violent take it by force.

- But the forceful men, the faithful, the fearless and unapologetic like John the Baptist were advancing it, no matter what the consequences were.

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

- John was the last prophet of that kind seen in the Old Testament. John was the ultimate and the last of his kind.

14 "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

- John came in the spirit of Elijah. Fearless, alone in his task and with powerful words. ***Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.***
- ***Luke 1:17 "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."***

15 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

16 ¶ "But to what shall I liken this generation (the Jewish people)? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,

17 "and saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.'

- According to Matthew Henry, Jesus compared the Jewish people to their little children who imitated weddings and funerals. They imitated what grownups

did but it was not real or serious. Likewise, the Pharisees and the scribes were false imitators of what John and Jesus were doing but their actions would lead to nowhere, just like children's games.

- He says that Jesus may have also been comparing the Pharisees and scribes to children to humble them.

18 "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'

- John the Baptist did not conform to their ways so they tried to make him look bad by claiming that he was possessed by a demon.

19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking (socialising and fellowshiping), and they say, 'Look, a glutton (lover of food) and a winebibber (a lover of wine and drunkenness), a friend of tax collectors and sinners (the worst of the worst)!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

- [***New International Version***](#)

...but wisdom is proved right by her deeds.

- ***American Standard Version***

And wisdom is justified by her works.

- ***Mt 7:16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"***

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

- ***In other words, the foolishness of the Jews who rejected John and Jesus and murdered both of them, is proved by their evil and worthless deeds.***

Conclusion

"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

The Jews had the privilege of having John the Baptist and later, Jesus Christ preach to them about repentance and the kingdom of heaven. But they rejected and murdered both because they refused to let go of their lusts and fleshly desires and expectations of who the messiah ought to have been. Are our expectation of Christ correct and biblical today? Are we embracing Him, His word and the true conviction and repentance that comes with it? Or are we looking for another who will meet our fleshly lusts/ desires and expectations?