Subject: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by james on Mon, 05 Apr 2010 14:14:53 GMT
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In Matthew chapter 3 we see where John was baptizing at the Jordan and Jesus came to him to be baptized. John recognized Him as who He was and didn't want to baptize Jesus because he (John) didn't feel worthy; but he did.

But just a couple of years later when John was in prison (chapter 11) he sent a couple of 'his' disciples to Jesus to question if He was 'He that should come'. Had John begin to doubt? Why was he questioning Jesus? Was it because things weren't 'happening' as he had envisioned? Was John looking for a 'present King', ruling over Israel and overthrowing their enemies? Had he grown discouraged while in prison and begun to doubt?

Anyone have any thoughts about this? We know John was a prophet, and we know he knew who Jesus was, after all Elisabeth(John's mother) and Mary were cousins.

Does verse 11 of chapter 11 take on a different meaning (or shed a different light) with this in mind? "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Why would Jesus say this? In effect, He's saying that even someone like me and you will be considered 'greater' than John the Baptist in heaven...Wow! Is that because he, John, hadn't received The Baptism of The Holy Spirit? Why? How could Jesus say that?

Thoughts?

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by william on Tue, 06 Apr 2010 19:19:43 GMT
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On Mon, 5 Apr 2010, James wrote:

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> --

I don't have a definitive answer but after doing some reading there seems to be two main viewpoints. 1) That John had indeed become doubtful after being thrown into a depressing situation, i.e. prison, and 2) John had simply sent some doubting disciples so that they could hear and see for themselves the validity of Jesus' Messiahship.

The second view, while it keeps us from attributing doubt to this eminent prophet, does have to explain why Jesus, in His answer, speaks directly to John... Matt 11:4-6 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, 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. And blessed is [he], whosoever shall not be offended in me.

While this is not conclusive proof that it wasn't John's disciples who were needing assurance it does seem to indicate that the answer was directed to John and not the disciples.

Note also that Jesus didn't give a simple yes or no answer. He could have simply said, "Yes, I am He", but He forces them to make up their own minds by using the evidence that they could both see and hear, and then convey that information to John.

The other view has merits but a couple of sub points needs to be considered before we think badly of John.

1) Even if he was beginning to doubt it wouldn't be any worse that Peter's own denial of Christ which happened after he had witnessed some of

the greatest miracles on earth. He saw with his own eyes the healing of the sick, the casting out of demons, (he had even done these things himself) and the raising of the dead. Others who were used mightily of God had on occasion doubted the things that they had experienced, Moses, Gideon, Elijah, Jeremiah, are just a few. The Bible never hides the imperfections of those who were mightily used of God.

2) John was the one who called Jesus both the Lamb of God and the Son of God:

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

John 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

These three statements are very powerful in that most were looking for a Messiah that would become the ruling King of Israel. By his words, John indicates that he believed that the Messiah was to be the sin-bearer.
Now I have heard it said, and I apologize that I cannot find the reference just now, that some of the Rabbis were so confused about the two aspects of the Messiah's work presented to them in the OT (compare the suffering servant/sin-bearer of Is 53), that they actually believed that there would be two Messiahs. If this is true it wouldn't be out of the realm of possibility that the question was an attempt to find out whether or not Jesus was the Messiah King that was to restore the kingdom to Israel.

Remember that Jesus' own disciples didn't understand the sin-bearer part of His ministry until after the resurrection.

To summarize: it is possible that John recognized the spiritual work of Jesus' ministry as the suffering servant/Lamb of God, but didn't see Him as the physical King that would sit on the throne of David while Jesus' disciples (and many others) saw Him as the coming King and failed to see the sin-bearer aspects of His work (until after the resurrection, of course.)

If this is true then it would be rather hard to judge John more harshly than we would judge the rest of the disciples (or for that matter all the people) who were merely expecting that Jesus had come to sit on the throne

of David.

Your thoughts?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by james on Tue, 06 Apr 2010 23:42:07 GMT
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What captured my imagination was the fact that I've probably read this hundreds of times and not once did it ever cross my mind that John the Baptism might have had doubts or waivered in his faith. We know about Peter(and those you mentioned) but never have I hear a message/sermon/teaching that explored this possibility concerning John. Nor how Jesus said almost anyone and everyone would be 'greater' that John in the kingdom of heaven...

Peter messed up big time and even still was declared to be the first Pope...Opps, wrong theology, that was taken from the wrong folder. Seriously, God knew Peter was going to deny Jesus three times, yet He gave him(Peter), the revelation that Jesus was THE CHRIST, The SON of The LIVING GOD.

Just something I'd never thought of or seen as a possiblity(doesn't change my view on John's ministry and place as great Prophet). And thought also it was a subject we could ALL discuss on the forum...I guess I'm the eternal optimist. Much love to everyone, even if ya don't join in the conversations.

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by james on Tue, 26 Oct 2010 16:12:51 GMT
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OK, I have something else to run by you, we know John (The Apostle)knew what Jesus looked like, right? so why did Jesus have to describe who He was in Revelation chapter one? Was it because Jesus was in His glorified body and John didn't recognize Him?(my opinion) John describes Him as dressed in a garment down to His feet and girded about with a golden band, with His hair white like wool and snow, and eyes like fire. Feet as fine brass, and His voice like

many waters. A sharp two-edged sword came out of His mouth and His countenance was like the sun shining.

John fell at His feet as if he was dead and Jesus touched him and told him to not be afraid...then told him, John, who He was. It seems Jesus kept it kinda formal(in my words), instead of saying something like, 'It's me John', or 'don't you recognize me?'.

Just something I was wondering about as I read...I mean, he was on the island of Patmos because of his testimony of Jesus Christ; and it WAS The Lord's Day, and he was 'in the spirit'...yet he didn't recognize Jesus.

Would we? Will we? Will it take faith to recognize Him? Is that what He meant when He asked would He find faith when He returned?

I conclude that after this visit from Jesus, if there were possibly any doubts with John(I don't think so), they were erased.

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by JWBTI on Wed, 27 Oct 2010 20:33:58 GMT
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Paul wrote: 1 Cor 13:12
12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Maybe this explains what John was experiencing.
He knew in part and saw in part as he walked daily with Jesus in the flesh, but when
Jesus was revealed to him in His full Glory in the Spirit by way of the Vision.
God took the veil off his eyes and revealed Jesus totally to him.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.
1 Cor 13:10 (KJV)

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by JWBTI on Wed, 27 Oct 2010 23:19:45 GMT
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Another thought:

Will we know Jesus by sight or
By His Voice ?

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
John 10:27 (KJV)

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,
11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:
18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.
Rev 1:17-18 (KJV)

Weâ€™ve never seen Jesus ! How will we know Him ? How do we know Him Now?

By His Word, thru the Holy Spiritâ€¦â€¦His Voice to us !

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by james on Thu, 28 Oct 2010 02:08:16 GMT
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JWBTI wrote on Wed, 27 October 2010 18:19

Weâ€™ve never seen Jesus ! How will we know Him ? How do we know Him Now?

By His Word, thru the Holy Spiritâ€¦â€¦His Voice to us !

Good point, I was just thinking out loud. I was putting myself in John's place(trying to imagine what it must have been like), how he had been the 'beloved' disciple, walking daily with Jesus for three years, seeing Him crucified and then risen from the grave. And then have Him appear to him on the Isle of Patmos in all His Glory...No wonder he fell down as dead.

I have more that I'd like to discuss, but I think it needs to be in a different thread...more about the messages to the seven churches, their meanings?

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by Mark L on Sun, 31 Oct 2010 15:40:48 GMT
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John knew what Jesus looked like, right? so why did Jesus have to describe who He was in Revelation chapter one

I think the answer is vs 17. He was just completely overwhelmed. Jesus in describing himself and saying who he is was speaking to us.

As far as the issue of John the baptist. I think he was just flat out depressed. In a deep black hole and wondering. Thinking here I am. Probably not going to live much longer. Was it all worth it? Being spiritual like he was he did exactly the right thing. Sent some disciples to ask Jesus. The answer probably lifted him up. At which point he let go and let circumstances come to take him off to the Lord.

I don't recommend anyone get depressed but it appears to be a natural condition at times. I'm sure there was times Jesus wondered. What am I doing here? Is it worth it? Its so easy for us see these guys as super spiritual and living on a higher spiritual plane when the truth is they were the same as us. Jesus included.

Obviously depression can be demonic deep and debilitating. It's like a deep black hole with no hope. But I also think it is just a natural feeling at times.

Ps 42 has been on mind the last few weeks. The whole psalm deals with depression but especially these vs.

Why are you cast down O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in god for I shall yet praise him
For the help of his countenance.

The answer to natural depression is to hold fast to hope and remind yourself there is hope.
Evidently Peter had this happen to him as well because he said in 1 Peter 4/18

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to him in doing good as to a faithful creator.

This is speaking to more of an issue than depression and doubting but the principal is the same.

Also Moulder said.

Note also that Jesus didn't give a simple yes or no answer. He could have simply said, "Yes, I am He", but He forces them to make up their own minds by using the evidence that they could both see and hear, and then convey that information to John.

That's a very good point

Subject: Re: Did John the Baptist have doubts?
Posted by lesjude on Mon, 31 Oct 2011 13:57:03 GMT
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John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. See Luke 1:39-45.
John had the revelation of who Jesus was/is. Matt 3:13-17 and John 1:29-37. The question is why did he not follow Jesus as the 2 disciples? Why did he speak truth to a man (Herod) who Jesus called a fox and would not even speak to? I will add that Herod was of the line of Esau and that line had (and still is) tried to destroy the seed of Christ all through the Bible. That spirit works with the spirit of one world 'everything' to destroy believers today. See Luke 23:6-12.
First, John had the revelation but decided he did not like it as it did not fit his agenda of an earthly king. He chose not to humble himself and become as a "little child" to follow Jesus, listen and find out what Jesus intended. An example is today's "dominion theologists" and a lot of other folks to numerous to mention.
John latched on to the nearest thing to a potential king (Herod) and began casting "pearls before swine". (Read the latest biography of Billy Graham if you want a modern example.) The result of John not humbling himself and getting involved in politics, which Jesus warned His disciples NOT to do, resulted in John losing the revelation he had. See Matthew 11. Note that Jesus answered him with the word. Pride that he could 'get it done' by getting involved in politics, casting pearls before swine had dire consequences. NOTHING has changed. By the way that was the Jezebel spirit that killed John. Do not wonder why 'she' has so much to say in today's churches, the same reasons. This is one reason the church has lost the revelation of who Jesus is, what He said to do, and HOW he said to do it. See Matthew 10:7-8 and Mark 16:15-18.
I will also add that how Christians think they should 'help' Israel by the same means is another BIG reason for loss of revelation of the same things. Please note that Israel is UNREGENERATE. The Bible is VERY specific as what believers should do in their regard.