

Introduction: In *Matthew 11:1* once again we see Jesus setting the example...note the importance of teaching and preaching...
II Timothy 4:1-5

I. John's Imprisonment vs 2

A. *Jesus' Previous Warnings are Relevant...*

B. *John is in Prison because He Preached the Truth without Compromise... Matthew 3:1-3; 4:12 cf. 14:3-5*

Observation:

II. John's Doubt vs. 2, 3

A. *We Might ask; How is it possible for this Faithful Prophet to Doubt? John 1:29; Matthew 3:14...*

1. Some would say that John didn't doubt but his disciples doubted...
2. Truth is John was a man... (*see James 5:17*)

B. *The Best of Christians may in fact doubt...*

1. Note John's doubt seemed to be linked to Jesus' miracles...
2. Remember John's understanding and focus...

a. The Old Testament prophets often spoke of the coming "fire of judgment..." *Malachi 3:2; Isaiah 33:14*

b. In the same way this was John's focus and message... *Matthew 3:7-12 cf. Luke 3:7-9*

"What John the Baptist could not understand clearly was that the fire of which he spoke would fall upon the Messiah Himself, in the judgment dereliction of the cross." Sinclair Ferguson i.e. Luke 12:49-50

3. John missed:

a. The reality that the first and second coming of Jesus would be separated...

Observation: 1. We should be thankful for the delay...this "Day of Grace..."

2. This helps us to understand much of the Bible... *i.e. Luke 9:51-56*

3. The Answer to John's doubt is a glorious one...

b. He also missed other things of the Gospel... vs. 4, 5

III. Jesus' Encouragement to John... vs. 4-6

A. "Faith Comes by Hearing..."

B. *Jesus' Message is one of Fulfillment...* vs. 4-5 cf. *Isaiah 35:5-6 cf. 61:1*

Observation:

C. *A Negative Beatitude Announced...* vs. 6

1. The day of vengeance is future... *i.e. Isaiah 61: ff...*
2. Christ's character must permeate the ordained means which the servants of Christ are to take up... *II Corinthians 10:1 & I Thessalonians 2:7*
3. The Gospel is truly a message of peace... *Romans 5:1*
4. Don't be offended by Christ...

Applications:

1. John was not wrong...there is a day of judgment coming...
2. Take your doubts to Christ...don't stew on them or ignore them...
3. Call Him Lord!