

John the Baptist Questions Jesus Luke 7:18-35

by David Servant

Jesus reassures John the Baptist and us that even the most insignificant person in the Kingdom of God will be greater than John, and that believers will do the same works Jesus has done, and even greater works.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3

Topics: "Doubt And Faith", "Kingdom Of God"

Description

David Servant preaches on John the Baptist's temporary doubts about Jesus being the Messiah, emphasizing how even great figures in the Bible faced doubts during adversity. Jesus responded to John by pointing to His authenticating miracles, showing that only the Messiah could perform such works. Despite John's doubts, Jesus called him the greatest man ever, highlighting that greatness comes from what God does through us. Jesus also mentioned that even the most insignificant person in the Kingdom of God will be greater than John, as believers will do the same works and even greater works than Jesus.

Transcript

While John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod (see Matthew 11:2), it was apparent that he began to doubt that Jesus actually was the Messiah, even though he had seen the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus at His baptism. Just as we often do, John began to battle doubts when he faced adversity. This shows us that John was an ordinary person like the rest of us.

Jesus replied to John's questions by speaking of His authenticating miracles. The blind, lame, deaf and leprous were being healed. Even the dead were being raised. Only the Messiah sent from God could do such things.

John's doubts may have also stemmed from his misunderstanding of God's Word, just as our misunderstanding of God's Word sometimes fuels our doubts. Perhaps John was expecting the Messiah to set up the long-awaited kingdom, as the Old Testament promised He would. John's problem is that he didn't sufficiently understand all that the Old Testament promised concerning the Messiah. With His reply, Jesus may have been pointing him back to Scripture, specifically to a messianic prophecy in the book of Isaiah. Jesus knew John realized that Isaiah 40:3 was a reference to his own ministry. John had once quoted it, explaining his identity to some Jewish priests: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, Æ" Prepare a straight pathway for the Lord's coming." In His reply to John, Jesus may very well have been

quoting from Isaiah 61:1, a passage that refers to the Messiah's healing and preaching ministry.

Although John experienced temporary doubts about Jesus, Jesus still called him the greatest man who ever lived. This indicated that John wasn't great because of anything he did, but because of what God did through him. He was chosen before conception in his mother's womb to be a prophet, a prophet who would prepare the way for the Messiah. His ministry had been foretold in the Old Testament. God made him into a bold, anointed preacher, and multitudes of people repented as a result.

The amazing thing that Jesus said is that "even the most insignificant person in the Kingdom of God" will be greater than John the Baptist. John was the greatest person who ever lived because of what God did through him, but every one of us will one day be able to rightly consider ourselves greater, because of what God will do through us in His kingdom! Wow! Perhaps it will be then that Jesus' amazing promise of John 14:12 will come to pass: "The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works..." John the Baptist never performed any miracles, but, speaking of His miracles (see John 14:12), Jesus said all believers would do the same works and even greater works! Can you imagine being used by God to heal the blind, lame and deaf, or raise someone from the dead? The Bible says that we will one day rule with Jesus for a thousand years over the whole earth, and perhaps it is then that we can look forward to being used by God so greatly!

Q. When we are tempted to doubt that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God, what would be the best way we could eradicate our doubts?

A. By re-examining the evidence for these facts in the Bible. God's Word builds faith within us.

Application: In the final part of today's reading, Jesus compared those who rejected Him to children arguing with one another, who, no matter what, can't be pleased. Jesus' enemies found fault with John the Baptist for his fasting and abstinence, and criticized Jesus for His feasting and drinking. It wasn't that they couldn't believe; it was that they didn't want to believe, and so they used any and every excuse they could think of to remain unbelieving and disobedient. As sad as it may seem, there are some people who will never be convinced to believe the gospel.

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