

## Luke 7: Doubting Believers

- ↳ **Luke 7:18-20;** Doubting believers seems like an oxymoron, but it is something we all suffer from eventually. The facts are there are a lot of famous doubting believers throughout the Bible: Moses, Gideon, Elijah, Jeremiah, and the apostles.
  - ↳ In fact, every time doubt arises in the gospels it's always associated with a believer. In fact, doubt is the struggle to believe.
  - ↳ Don't confuse it with the Pharisees' position; theirs' was committed unbelief. They never struggled to believe; they wrote Jesus off from the beginning. Doubt is common among believers; it's not acceptable. We can't just say ok and move on; we have to address it.
  - ↳ **Mark 9:24;** Believers struggle with doubt, and the guy who illustrates this for us the best is probably the most unlikely doubter of all, John the Baptist.
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### 1. Luke 7:18-20; How could John be a doubter?

- ✓ How with all that was going for him could he doubt? Very simply, John was human, and human stuff happened to him; the same human stuff that happens to us and causes doubts.

### 2. Causes of doubt.

- 1) **Personal Tragedy.** He's in a horrible dungeon, Fort Machairus on the northeast side of the Dead Sea. He is isolated, lonely, sick, underfed, and mistreated; a place where doubt grows.
    - ✓ He is not out seeing or hearing Jesus himself and has to rely on second
    - ✓ hand information. Even with all the amazing things he had experienced, a year or more in that situation started messing with his mind.
    - ✓ Nobody sits by and plans for the worst; there's a part of us that thinks we deserve better when we have served faithfully. Our flesh takes those things and uses it to drive a wedge between us and our Savior.
    - ✓ He does the right thing with his doubts; he goes straight to the Savior with it. One of the worst things we can do with doubt is just hold onto it and keep it to ourselves as if Jesus doesn't already know what we are thinking. "I believe Lord, help my unbelief," a great prayer.
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- 2) **Wrong Expectations.** John was a student of the Old Testament and as such he was a hell fire preacher. He suffered from similar expectations to the rest of Bible believing Jews; that the Messiah would immediately bring about the judgment and there would be no period of grace. Typically, the Bible believing Jew had no concept of a dying Messiah who would pay for sins and bring a period of grace that we know as the Age of the Church.
    - ✓ Lack of understanding created wrong expectations; wrong expectations created doubt. John had no New Testament nor even an audience with the Savior so he could not be corrected from his misinformation.
    - ✓ John didn't have that luxury of the New Testament or being able to talk to the Savior, but you do! Part of doubt is almost always related to poor information leading to wrong expectations.
    - ✓ Go to the Word to dispel doubt. When you go to the Word of God, you understand the purposes of God and the plan of God, and doubt is dissipated.
    - ✓ We have the mind of Christ; it is contained in His Word. There is no doubt in that mind; we have to go and read and meditate on that Word until we think like Him.
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3) **Popular Influence.** John was a solid Bible guy, but he was still victimized by popular thought. The Jewish community had created the false image of what the Messiah would be and do; the main proponents of this were the Pharisees.

- ✓ Jesus didn't live up to their expectations and threw out their idea of righteousness and imposed His own. John was no Pharisee, but it's impossible to live in a culture where the main thinking is wrong, and not somehow be somewhat influenced by it.
- ✓ All His followers went into a state of depression when Jesus died; they should have been rejoicing due primarily to popular influences. Think about how powerful the influence of popular thought was when Jesus tells His disciples He's going to die, Peter rebukes Him!
- ✓ We have lots of inaccurate popular influences in Christian culture today promising health, wealth, property, and success; there are no promises in the Scriptures to that effect. People who preach and teach that stuff are programming people for doubt.

**You have a view of God's plan that isn't God's plan? You will be infected with doubt sooner or later. Take your doubts to the Savior; quench your doubts with the truth.**

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