

10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Now I don't know if you've thought about it, but apparently there is a sense in which the body can be destroyed in hell. That's unusual, if you think this through for just a moment. Typically we believe if a person dies in this life they go to heaven or hell, but there are two words that are typically translated hell in the King James Bible. One of them is *Hades* and it is the place to which everyone goes who is unsaved. Luke 16:23; the rich man died and in hell, *Hades*, he lifted up his eyes. There is another Greek word that is also translated hell and it is used here and it is the Greek word *Gehenna*. Two different "hells," and there is a difference. One is the place that sinners go to now when they die. The other is the place where sinners go to after the resurrection and the great white throne judgment—two different Greek words. One of them the body cannot go to. One of them the body definitely goes to and this is the one it's speaking of.

10:29

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

10:31

Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

10:36

And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

11:2

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, Now the first question I have is how did John get there? It'd be nice if Matthew told us. And he did (See 14:1 and following which tell us how John found himself in prison while also telling us that he was dead by chapter 14).¹

And said unto Him, Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Best I can tell, John is the only one who saw the dove descend upon Jesus at His baptism. Best I can tell, John is the only one that heard the voice out of heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." John the Baptist heard the voice out of heaven. He saw heaven open, heard the voice out of heaven, heard the voice of God saying, "This is the Son of God and I am pleased with Him." John the Baptist saw the Holy

¹ More can be seen in my commentary on Mark (in chapter 6).

Spirit come down and anoint Jesus. Jesus, for all intents and purposes, on a timeline, becomes the Christ. I'm not saying He became perfect there, I'm not saying He became the Son of God there, I'm saying that He was anointed right there with the Holy Spirit in front of John the Baptist. So, I'm having a hard time believing that John the Baptist is asking this question. The Jews are expecting a Messiah. Well, let's remember what John saw. John saw Jesus being declared as the Messiah. And now John apparently is asking, "Are You the One that we're supposed to be expecting or should we keep looking?"

I've heard a lot of people say, "Well, this wouldn't be John doubting. He's probably wanting the disciples to ask for their benefit." I suppose the problem with that is it's not the natural reading of the passage. John the Baptist is in prison. He's in prison for doing right. He's in prison for doing right in the name of God. And he's in prison after he himself declares he is the voice of one crying in the wilderness. John the Baptist knows he's the fulfillment of Isaiah 40, knows Jesus is the Son of God, or at least that's what he observed...and here he is sending two of his disciples saying, "Are you the One that's supposed to come or should we keep looking?" Wow. And then Jesus gives an answer.

11:4

Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: And you may not get the idea from Matthew, but you certainly would if you looked at the parallel in Luke, Jesus, with them watching, does many other works. The two disciples of John the Baptist are now going to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears and experience what Jesus says in verse 4: **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.** Why is Jesus using this language? Because Jesus knows that John the Baptist is expecting something:

*Isaiah 35:1 The **wilderness** and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the **desert** shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

Where was John baptizing? The wilderness. Where did Jesus go to be tempted? The wilderness,

35:2 shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you.

What are some of the signs that that is about to happen?

*35:5 Then the **eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.** Then shall **the lame man leap as a hart**, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion. And everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Jesus sends the disciples of John the Baptist back to John the Baptist with signs that He is the Christ. Why are these things being included in chapters 8, 9, and 10 of Matthew? Because Jesus needed to confirm in chapter 11 verse 5 that He did them. He did everything that Isaiah 35 talks about, so if that's true...Why is John now a little bit disenfranchised about the whole idea?

Because there are no ransomed of the Lord returning to Jerusalem (Isaiah 35:10). Surely you can see that if you were John the Baptist, and you are the forerunner, and you see Jesus and all these signs are happening, then why am I in prison? And why is Jerusalem still being ruled by a bunch of thug Romans? That would take someone who is convinced that Jesus was the Christ and maybe make them wonder.

*Isaiah 61:1 **The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me**; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek....*

When did the Spirit of the Lord come upon Jesus? At His baptism.

*He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives. 2 **to proclaim** the acceptable year of the LORD, and **the day of vengeance of our God**; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified.*

John the Baptist is in prison, and God is not bringing vengeance. We wonder, “what is John doubting?” Hopefully you can see that John is doubting. Isaiah 35, Isaiah 61, is a lot like looking at two mountain ranges separated by an apparent valley that cannot be seen from the observer’s perspective. And John the Baptist can see what’s happening in the first but Jesus is not bringing vengeance. And I’ve read a lot of people that say, “Well the ‘day of vengeance’ in Isaiah 61:2 is talking about AD 70.” Ok. Well, if it is talking about AD 70, let’s at least admit that there’s still a 40-year separation that would cause John the Baptist to doubt in his prison.

*Isaiah 8:13 Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and **let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread**. 14 And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall **stumble**, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*

Isaiah 8:13 sounds a lot like Matthew 10:28 while Isaiah 8:14 sounds a lot like Matthew 11:6. Clearly Matthew 10:28 through Matthew 11:6 are foretold in Isaiah 8.

Then, we see that Matthew 10:41 we have promise to those who support a prophet followed by the trial of a man (in these opening verses of chapter 11) who everybody knows is a prophet (John). And you have a very inhospitable nation in Israel. And where is their prophet? He’s in prison. So we’re not surprised.

The forerunner of Jesus is wondering if He is really the Messiah or should they keep looking.

11:7

As they departed (the two disciples), **Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?** “Were you looking for some limp-wristed sweetheart out there? You didn’t find him, did you?”

11:8

What went you out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? That is an effeminate term. On purpose, Jesus is sort of making fun of their expectation. “Were you looking for a dude with matching purse and pumps?”

No, He says at the end of the verse, **They belong in a palace**. Now that’s funny.

11:9

What were you looking for? A prophet? “Well, you found more than that, didn’t you?”

Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before thee. You see, while John is wondering if Jesus is who He says He is; while his disciples are bringing back word of what they saw, Jesus is not doubting what He said about John. Bless the Lord. Let me say it again. John is doubting what God says about Jesus but Jesus is not doubting what God said about John.

11:11

Truly, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Well that doesn't sound like a failure. John feels like a failure. Maybe John should have known better. Maybe John should have allowed for there to be distance between phrases of fulfillment in Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61. Whether he should have or not, he's feeling mighty low in the prison. And Jesus says, "In case you are wondering, multitude, whether or not I think differently of John, let Me tell you what I think of him. There's never been a greater man born." Phenomenal.

Then I see legitimate questions being asked and I don't see Jesus getting angry. I'm afraid that I might have. "After all I've done for you, John. After all you've seen, John. After all you heard, John. You're going to doubt me?" But Jesus is not only patient, He's incredibly persistent. I mean think about what Jesus did at that moment. He invited the disciples of John with Him and did works in front of them, for them to take to John.

But I must say there's something even more striking than that. In verse 6 Jesus says, "Blessed is he that is not offended in Me. Blessed is that person that doesn't trip over Me. Blessed is the person that doesn't stumble upon the hard days of following Me. You are incredibly blessed." Now I must tell you I would have probably sent a card. "Cheer up. It'll get better. Thanks for being a good friend." And I would probably have included a Psalm. Jesus tells these two disciples, "You tell John to get up and keep walking. Blessed is he who does not trip and stay down. Happy is the one who does not allow dark times to keep him on his hind end." Apparently it's possible for you to walk in faith even in a cell because that is exactly what Jesus is requiring the discouraged John the Baptist to do. Does Jesus offer a patient hand up? Yes, and a persistent shove in the back.