



Portion:

## SCRIPTURES

- Matthew 11
- Luke 4:15-24
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Malachi 3:1-5

Title:

## PILLOWS OF DOUBT

- Knowing Y'shua
- Character
- Prophetic Facts
- Conclusion

*How long have you identified yourself as a believer, a child of God, a Christian? One month? One Year? Five years? Or, five minutes? I don't know that it really matters, because regardless of how long, undoubtedly you have had doubts. Someone or some thing, people and circumstances, have challenged your belief system—rattled your faith.*

*In Scripture, we see the very same doubts that show up in our own lives working even in the lives of the most steadfast of Bible characters. These doubts are often fueled by gossip or someone's personal opinion. What a shame it is to be influenced by another's wrong assessments, false reports or any form of gossip, when likely they gained their information from mostly erroneous assumptions, baseless allegations, and downtrodden misrepresentations. Taking cues from someone living in a world of unmet expectations, a person carrying their own bag of doubts, is unwise. And you can be sure they feel they are accurately portraying truth and reporting facts, when in reality they are just passing on bad information.*

*Today we witness the solid and steadfast John the Baptist, very likely acting on information that fluffed up pillows of doubt, causing him to question the very thing he had been preaching. The prophet sent by Yahweh to make the crooked paths straight—raised up to prepare the way for the King of kings and Lord of lords, had himself become rattled.*

*We often read today's passage and what immediately catches our attention is that John has sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if He is really the One, or should he look for another? Yes, John, the same John who proclaimed, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" was now asking, "Are you really the Lamb of God?" Bizarre, right? Yet, it happens all too often.*

*If we assess John's question, we might come to a few different conclusions. One is that John was changing course on Jesus altogether; He's not the coming Messiah. Another could be that he was just having some "doubts" based on frustration, or impatience, or discomfort. He was, after all, locked up in a nasty prison. It is also possible that he had hopes, as most Jews at the time, that the Messiah would be a powerful military figure, arriving to free Israel from their oppressive captors. Or, maybe he was simply afraid that his days were numbered, and he was just confirming that his certain death was for the right reason.*

*Setting aside the need to know exactly why, we must still conclude John doubted Jesus. It is also very likely he didn't get there on his own. He certainly had plenty of help from his own disciples who had their own erroneous conclusions that the coming Messiah would be a "warrior and reigning king." Their unmet expectations and wrong assumptions caused them to pass on bad information, casting pillows of doubt over John, not the best type on which to lay his imprisoned head, one soon to be separated from his shoulders.*

*Sadly enough, John did not get to see the fruits of his own ministry. And by and large, that too forms the bedrock of our very own pillows of doubt. Not tasting the fruit of your labor, or seeing an immediate return on your investment into the Kingdom of God, can be very destabilizing to your faith. Does this happen to you? Are you resting your head on such pillows—pillows of doubt? And worse yet, are those doubts being fueled by the baggage and bad information from fellow believers?*

*Today's section of scripture is packed with personal and prophetic subject matter. Jesus, as always, is so masterful at bringing His disciples to the place where they recognize the correct answer to the one question He asks that matters most to every human; "Who do YOU say that I am?"*

## **PROPHETIC SEED:**

When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. Now **when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ**, he sent word by his disciples Matthew 11:1-2 ESV

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the **one who doubts** is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:6 ESV

## PROPHETIC FRUIT:

And Jesus answered them, ***“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And **blessed is the one who is not offended by me.**”*** Matthew 11:5-6 ESV

And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*** And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

And he began to say to them, ***“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*** And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” And he said, ***“Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.”*** Luke 4:15-24 ESV

## KNOWING Y'SHUA

### 1. The Groundwork

#### A. Sent Ones

(1) This was their assignment...

(a) In order to properly understand Matthew 11, we need to begin by understanding what our Savior told His disciples to do when He sent them out to perform the work of the ministry.

1. ***These twelve Jesus sent out***, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at

hand.' **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.** You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. Matthew 10:5-15 ESV

(2) This is from where we are coming...

(a) Laying out this groundwork is important simply because Matthew 11 kicks off with these words...

1. **When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples,** he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. Matthew 11:1 ESV

(3) Jesus challenges His disciple to know who He is

(a) "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

1. Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "**But who do you say that I am?**" Matthew 16:14-15 ESV

## CHARACTER

### 2. Know the Facts

#### A. Challenging Someone's Character

(1) When challenging someone's character, be sure to know your facts are accurate—without any doubt!

(a) Are you the one?

1. But when John heard in the prison of the works of Christ, **he sent two** of his disciples. **Are you the one or shall we look for another?** Matthew 11:2-3 MKJV

(2) The Significance of Two

(a) The evidence of two witnesses...

1. "A single witness **shall not suffice against a person** for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the **evidence of two witnesses** or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. Deut 19:15
2. But if he does not listen, **take one or two others** along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. Matt 18:16
3. Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of **two or three witnesses**. 1 Timothy 5:19

(3) Why did John doubt Jesus being the "one"?

- (a) The majority of people in Israel were waiting for a king who would overthrow the current Roman rulership, one who would bring all nations under His obedience.
1. The **scepter shall not depart from Judah**, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and **to him shall be the obedience of the peoples**. Genesis 49:10 ESV
  2. I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, **"You are my Son; today I have begotten you**. Ask of me, and **I will make the nations your heritage**, and the ends of the earth your possession Psalms 2:7-8 ESV
  3. **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore**. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV
  4. A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, **until I make your enemies your footstool**." The LORD sends forth from Zion **your mighty scepter**. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Psalm 110:1-2 ESV

5. Behold, ***I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.*** And the ***Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming,*** says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For ***he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.*** He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. ***I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts*** Malachi 3:1-5 ESV

#### **B. Blessed for not being offended...**

(1) Offended by His claims and His works...

(a) Can you imagine being offended by Jesus? Of course you can!

1. Blessed is he ***who is not offended*** by me... Matthew 11:6 ESV

(2) Would you have missed the beginning of His ministry as well?

(a) More than a prophet...

1. I believe we would have, why? Because if John the Baptist as ***"more than a Prophet"*** only ***"saw in part and prophesied in part"*** we would have done the same. Even after having God's final revelation of Himself in our hands, we still have a difficult time fully understanding His plans and how He is using all things for His plans to come to fulfillment. If we are not laser focused on His character and how He is working on the earth as prophesied in His Scriptures, revealed to His people by the power of His Holy Spirit, we will also ***"see in part"***

### PROPHETIC FACTS

#### **3. Prophecy Fulfilled**

##### **A. His Messenger!**

(1) Prophetic Roles

(a) Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.

1. As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: **“What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’** Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Matthew 11:7-11 ESV

(2) John the baptist fulfills the role of the “one crying in the wilderness.

(a) **Prepare the way of the Lord;** make His paths straight”. However, his influence with his people went much further than Scripture tells us.

1. **Josephus of antiquities wrote— “Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God,** and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, **Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late.** Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of

Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, **and was there put to death.** Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him. Antiquities 18.5.2:116-119

## B. Doubting

(1) John the Baptist—a type of Moses...

(a) Parallels

1. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, “**Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?** See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” Luke 24:36-39 ESV

(2) Ask of Yahweh and He will give it...

(a) But, ask without doubting!

1. But let him ask in faith, **with no doubting**, for **the one who doubts** is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:6 ESV
2. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1 ESV
3. **Wait for the LORD**; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! Psalm 27:14 ESV

## CONCLUSION

### 4. Pillows of Doubt

#### A. Recap...

(1) In John 1:15 ESV... “(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me **ranks** before me, because he was before me.’”), the word “ranks” is used as if John is thinking in military terms. At the very least, in his mind, he was going to be involved with ushering in the Messiah’s Kingship.