

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

July 14, 2019

“Doubts Due to Expectations”

8:00 ~ Service - Communion is for all Christians

9:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school

10:30 ~ Service with the King's Kid's - Communion is for all Christians

NEWS

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

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1) What is significant about verse 1 on what follows?

2) Did John doubt?

3) Why do we doubt?

MATTHEW 11:1-3 ~ ¹NASB When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities. ²Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to Him, “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?”

Verse 1 emphasizes that Jesus _____ doing what He had already been doing.

Jesus was travelling around northern Palestine. That name goes back more than _____ years to Egyptian Peleset, into Greek Παλαιστίνη (Pä-lī-stē-nā), into Latin Paleastina, and into English Palestine.

His primary activity was teaching and preaching, which is really _____ thing.

Jesus' teaching/preaching was _____, and even though He backed His Message with _____, it was shocking to religious Jews. Unable to accept His Words, they dismissed His miracles as the demonic. They were opposed from the _____ and their opposition was growing.

For those who wanted a violent _____ of the establishment, patience with His _____ travelling ministry was wearing thin.

Even those who were less radical politically and militarily were getting _____.

John the Baptist was languishing in captivity at Machaerus, getting _____ from his disciples, which were _____ at best. (Matthew 9:14).

John's doubt had everything to do with his _____. He was impatient because he had expected quicker results. Beyond a real doubt there is also the possibility that John was trying to _____ Jesus.

Everyone agreed that the Messiah would overthrow the world-order and bring heaven to earth, but instead Jesus was walking around in circles and talking about _____.

MATTHEW 11:4-6 ~ ^{4NASB} Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive 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. ⁶“And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”

“Jesus answered.” Christianity is a familial love relationship enabled by trust. It requires true _____, not mindless acquiescence.

Christianity is Truth and so there is no _____ of legitimate questions, cares and concerns.

Answering the question _____ would have accomplished nothing. The only thing that would have gotten everyone on board, would have been to start acting the way they expected the Messiah to act.

Jesus quickly mentioned six things that He was doing. All were things that Isaiah _____ that God’s Messiah would do. The three most striking are the...

First:

Fifth:

Sixth:

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Even so, what Jesus was doing still fell far short of all the things that the Messiah was _____ to do. It was a legitimate concern.

The real problem is that it was _____ for one individual to do all the things at the same time.

Verse 6 is a wide-open rhetorical statement, so Jesus' point stood then and stands _____, don't let your preconceived ideas and opinions be your ruin.

It is a beatitude of attitude. The person who will be blessed is the person who is able to hold their own opinions about Jesus, as less than Who Jesus reveals Himself to be.

The "Take offence," is σκανδαλίζω (skän-dä-lē-dzō), meaning to be repulsed by something or _____ to the point that you fall away.

Jesus said and did some scandalous things... What are you going to do about it?

What will you do with the True Jesus?

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 11a ~ 071419

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship



Matthew 11:1-3 ~ 1NASB When Jesus had finished

giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities. 2Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3and said to Him, “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?”

People often think that verse 1, should be the close of chapter 10, or at least, standing alone as a transitional verse between chapters 10 and 11. While there’s some truth in both, it is better, grammatically and contextually, to take it together with the passage going forward.

That way it emphasizes that Jesus resumed doing what Jesus had already been doing before sending the 12.

The first half of this chapter has to do with doubts surfacing and growing stronger about Jesus as the Messiah, due to what He was still doing, more to the point, due to what He was still failing to do, by continuing to do what He had already been doing He wasn’t doing what they expected Him to do.

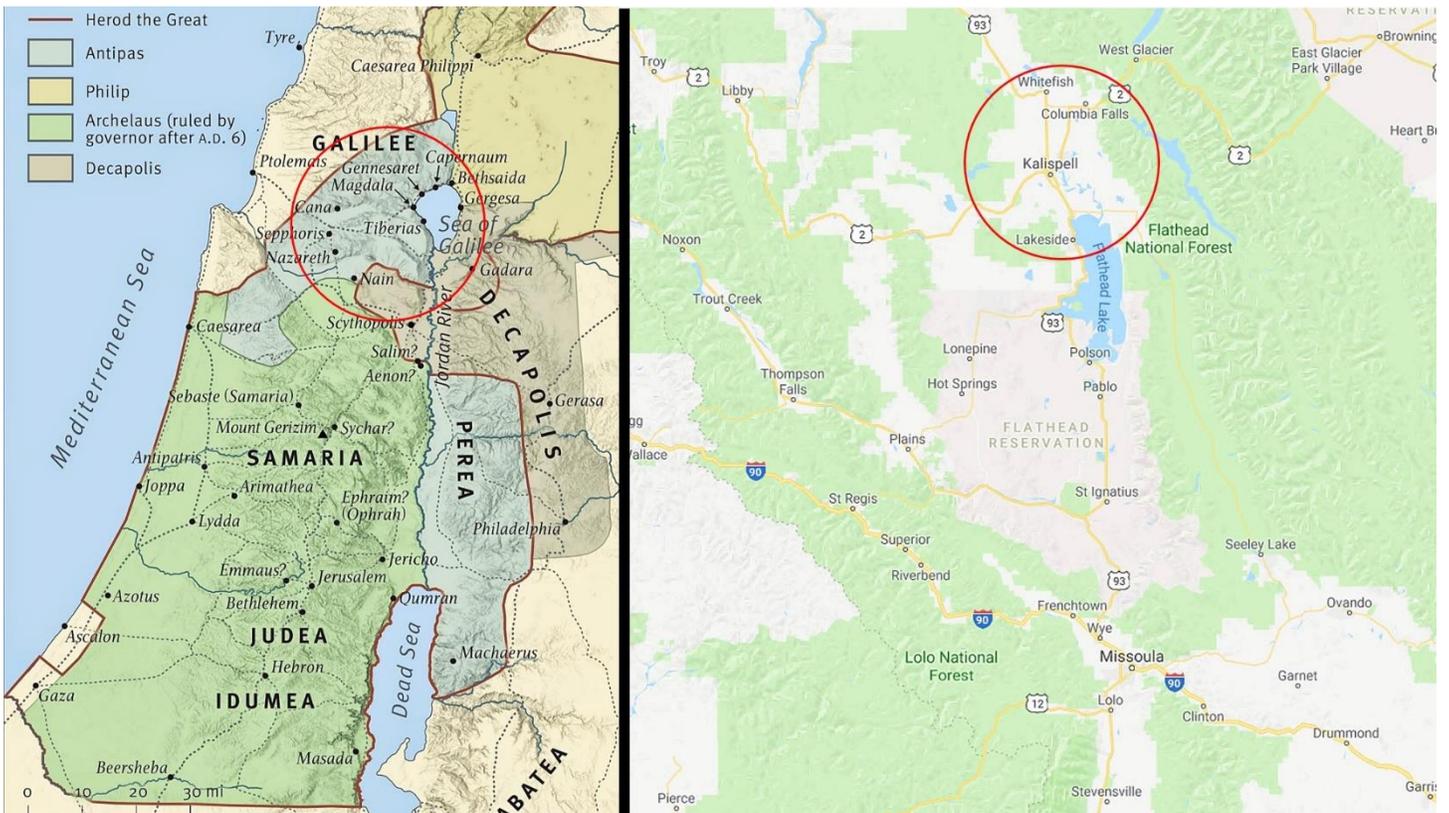
Jesus had been travelling around teaching and performing miracles. While most people back then thought that was great, to them it was merely a precursor to the main event.

They were anticipating far greater things from Him. Some were no doubt already wondering when the overthrow and replacement of evil system would begin in earnest. How much longer was Jesus going to wander around preparing? When would the Kingdom of Heaven be made fully manifest?

All of chapter 10 was devoted to Jesus commissioning 12 guys to do the same things that He had been doing. He was passing the torch to them. Good, they could do that bit, and free Jesus up, to lead the revolt, or call down the Angel army, or whatever was needed to get the show on the road. Now, we're ready for some action!

Instead, once finished instructing the 12, Jesus went right back to doing the exact same thing He had been doing and the exact same thing He had commissioned the guys to do. Because of that, people, even people following Him, were beginning to lose patience.

He had not been acting like the Messiah they envisioned, but there was real hope that things would get on track. Now, Jesus simply went back to acting unlike the Messiah they had hoped for...



Jesus was travelling around the northern reaches of Palestine. Some people get wigged out about that name because of the current Palestinians, but they got their name from the area, not the other way around.

That name for the region goes back more than 3,000 years to the Egyptian Peleset, transliterated into Greek

as Παλαιστίνη (Pä-lī-stē-nā), to Latin Paleastina, and then to English Palestine.

It may have been a reference to the land of the Philistines or perhaps, like with the Palestinians, it was the name of the area long before and the people who lived there became known as the Philistines.

In any event, Jesus was restricting His movements at that time to northeastern Galilee and the surrounding area.

In order to reach more of the common people Jesus travelled around a relatively small geographical area and His primary activity was teaching and preaching, which as I've mentioned before is really one thing intertwined.

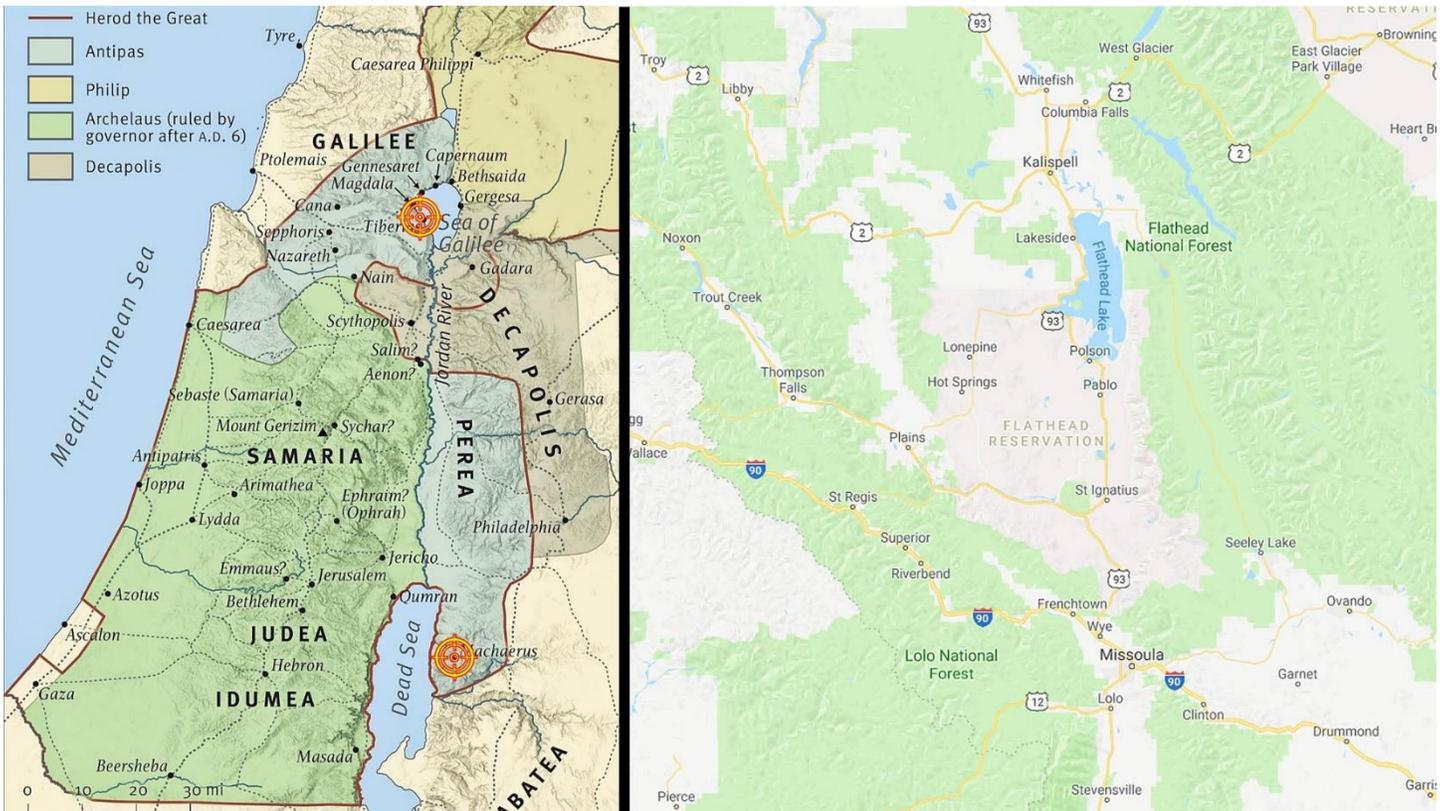
Remember that teaching without the exhortation to apply the teaching has no effect. There is no purpose, other than filling someone's head with information. Likewise, preaching without teaching, is just revving up the crowd without correct content, it has no structure, no consistency, no footing, no foundation. It's nothing more than emotionalism.

As we've seen, Jesus' teaching/preaching was radical. It was unlike anything the studied Jews had ever heard before. It was frankly shocking to them, but He backed up His radical new Message with miracles.

Those unable to accept His Words, dismissed His miracles as the work of the Devil. They were opposed from the start and their opposition was growing.

For those who wanted a radical overthrow of the establishment, patience with His continued travelling, teaching, preaching and miracles, was wearing thin.

Even those who were less radical politically and militarily were getting impatient. As I said, they all wanted to know, when would the Kingdom come? How long was Jesus just going to keep doing the same things He had been doing and the same things He just sent the 12 to do... When was this thing going to take off?



John the Baptist had been arrested and we know from contemporary sources that Herod Antipas had him locked up in the dungeon at his winter palace Machaerus. Here on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. Tiberias was his summer palace.



John was languishing in prison with a very uncertain future was getting reports from his disciples about Jesus' activity.

The reporters were at the least skeptical. Remember, it was some of John's disciples who came to Jesus and disapprovingly questioned Him as to why He and His disciples did not do the extra fasting that they and the Pharisees did (Matthew 9:14).

Jesus certainly wasn't like the Sadducees or the Pharisees, He wasn't anything like the Zealots. He wasn't like the Essenes, nor was He like John the Baptist. He didn't fit in any category of expectation.

Part of which, was freeing the captives. John had already been a captive, rotting in jail for some time. Where was His release? Why wasn't Jesus lifting a finger to rescue him?



John's doubt had everything to do with his expectation. He was impatient because he had expected quicker results. He began to wonder if Jesus was, like him, just another herald of the Messiah to come. Perhaps a more powerful forerunner than he, but another forerunner, nonetheless.

What should John tell his impatient, disgruntled disciples? While some of John's disciples left him to Jesus, obviously not all had done so... Why was John still allowing people to follow him, instead of Jesus?

Beyond a real question, or a serious doubt there is also the possibility that John was trying to prod Jesus into

getting on with it. Some think that was part of Judas' motivation for selling out Jesus - creating a situation that would force the issue.

Don't we do that sometimes? Don't we try to prod God to get moving on something as though He's asleep at the wheel. Come on Lord are you going to act, times getting short here... Oh right, thanks for reminding Me, I guess I do need to pay attention and get on the ball rolling.

What's wrong with us that we would presume to tell God what needs to happen and when it needs to be done.

Anyway, everyone agreed that the Messiah would overthrow the world-order and call down heaven on earth, but instead Jesus was walking around in circles and talking about persecution. His followers were expecting an easy victory and Jesus was telling them that both He, and them, would suffer tremendous loss.

John's question was as simple as it seems and was the same question everyone wanted to ask... Jesus, You are not acting like the Messiah we were all expecting

so, are you the Messiah, or is He yet to be revealed?
What's going on?



Matthew 11:4-6 ~ 4NASBJesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5the blind receive 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. 6“And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”

“Jesus answered.” Stop right there for a moment.

“Jesus answered.” Think about that. He didn't dismiss the doubt, ignore the prodding, repudiate the impetuous query, disavow the lack of faith, or condemn

the blasphemous nature of the question. “Jesus answered.”

What I love about that, is that our allegiance to God through Christ, is not a blind subservience to a tyrannical autocrat that is born out of terror. Our devotion is predicated on a familial interpersonal bond and the love relationship enabled by trust. It requires true faith, not mindless, unquestioning acquiescence.

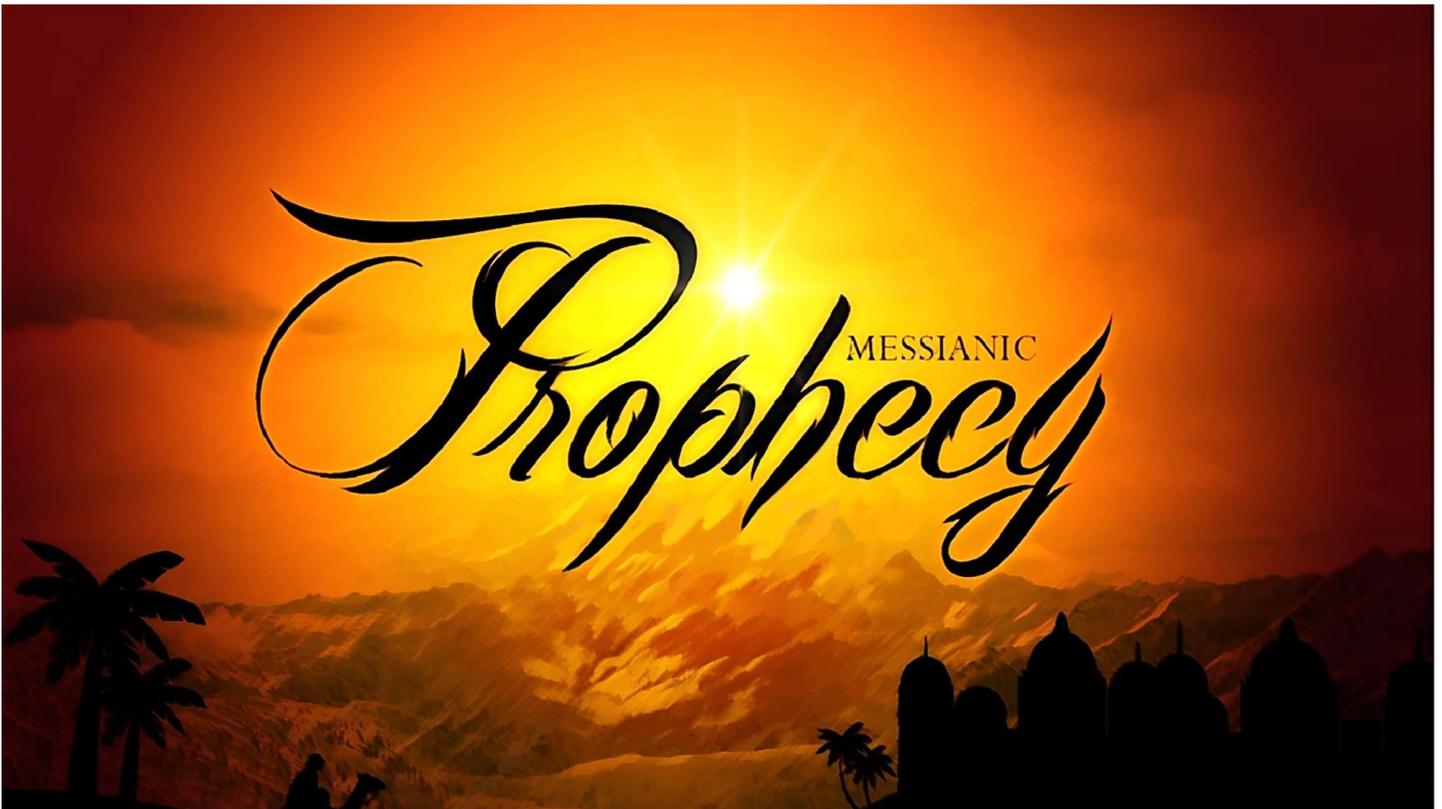
Christianity is Truth and so there is no fear of legitimate questions, cares and concerns. God can handle our questions and even our doubts as long as we take them to Him transparently and listen to His answer sincerely. Be honest with God and He will be honest with you - if you have an open heart to what He says, you will hear His answer.



Even though He answered, it wasn't the answer anyone was expecting. That's almost always the way it goes. They expected a yes, or no. More than that, I'm certain they were hoping for an answer through a call to action. Grab your torches, grab your pitchforks, we're storming the castle tonight!

Jesus, ever the teacher, didn't simply answer the question. Simple answers to such questions have no real effect. If Jesus had simply said, I AM the Messiah, people would have had to take His word for it and since they were already doubting Him, how in the world would that be definitive? Answering the question directly would have accomplished nothing.

The only thing that would have gotten everyone enthusiastically on board, would have been to instantly act the way they expected the Messiah to act. Jesus wasn't going to do that either.



Since Jesus knew the reason, they didn't fully trust Him was because He wasn't acting like the Messiah they expected, He tried to teach them that it was their expectation of the Messiah that was faulty, not Him.

Jesus quickly mentioned 6 things that He was doing. Anyone interested in the Messiah would have easily recognized all 6 as being things that, through the

prophet Isaiah, God promised that His Messiah would do.

The three most striking of the 6 are the first one, because it is listed first, next the raising of the dead, because it is, well, raising the dead in a non-zombie way, and then the last one, because it is last, and is what lingers in the mind.

The first one. Jesus gave sight to the blind. Sometimes we overlook the significance of that. Psalm 146:8 says “The Lord (Yahweh, the One True God) opens the eyes of the blind,” and Isaiah 35:5 says “The eyes of the blind will be opened” by the Messiah and Isaiah 61:1, says that through the Messiah there will be “Recovery of sight to the blind.”

We know Jesus gave sight to many blind people... Some say it was the most common miracle He performed. Here’s what you may not know. No one in the entire Bible, cover-to-cover, besides Jesus, ever did that. Jesus is the only one who ever gave a blind person sight.

The Old Covenant repeatedly said that such a thing was done by God Himself and would be a feature of

the ministry of His Messiah. No one else accomplished even one such granting of sight and Jesus did it frequently. Paul's temporary condition in Damascus is not even remotely the same thing.

Of course, raising people from the dead, while amazing, is not unique to Jesus. Elijah, Elisha and later Peter and Paul would all be instruments through whom God would raise the dead, but Jesus is the only one to raise multiple people and the only one to ever raise Himself from the dead and in so doing destroy the power of death itself (John 2:19, 10:17&18).

The last one is highlighted in Greek - Jesus preached the Great News to those who were dismissed by the religious people of the day. He took the time and care to teach and exhort those marginalized, ignored and repudiated, by the holier-than-thou types.

Again, just as the Messiah was prophesied to do in the Old Testament (Isaiah 61:1). All 6 of the things were specifically things the Messiah was prophesied to do. While that is true, those six things along with the other things Jesus had been doing that He didn't mention still fell far short of all the things that the Messiah was prophesied to do. It was a legitimate concern.

Of course, the real problem is that it is impossible for one individual to do all the things prophesied in the Old Testament within the same timeframe.

Jesus was trying to show them that He was in fact fulfilling Messianic Scripture, but He was doing it systematically. One thing at a time, which was the only way it could have been done, if anyone had bothered to think about it.

It would be rather difficult to overthrow the oppressors and establish the Kingdom of God on earth as the perfect ruler for all time and simultaneously suffer and die as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. The problem they had, was Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies they cared about least.

They were interested in His teaching and preaching, at least the little they could understand, but talking only goes so far with folks looking for action. They were intrigued by His miracles, but they wanted more than that. They probably saw His Suffering Servant role as a necessary initial element and liked that it made Him approachable, but it was time to be king. In John 6:15, it says, 15NASBSo Jesus, perceiving that they were

intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

I think Jesus' point was essentially that He would get around to fulfilling the Messianic prophecies the people were most concerned about, after He fulfilled the ones requiring His death as a sin offering.

The part of the prophecies they were less enthusiastic about was the part that mattered most. Jesus the Messiah was on the earth to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to people spiritually - eternally. How infinitely better is that, than overthrowing a corrupt political system?

Jesus threw the ball back into their court... What they needed to focus on was the Messianic prophecies Jesus was fulfilling, not the ones He would fulfill later.



Of course, we are all impatient, especially when it's something important that is taking longer than we expected.

Jesus basically said to John and his disciples, to all the other people listening to Him at that time, to all the people around the globe throughout the ages - what do you think - Am I the Messiah, or do you need to look elsewhere for a Messiah that's a better fit for you?

Verse 6 is a wide-open rhetorical statement and so Jesus' point stood then and stands forever, don't let your preconceived ideas and opinions be your ruin.

That's precisely the meaning of verse 6. Technically Jesus' wide-open rhetorical statement is framed as a beatitude of attitude. No, I'm not trying to emulate Jesse Jackson. It is a beatitude of attitude because blessed is the person who has the right attitude.

The person who will be blessed is the person who is able to hold their own opinions about Jesus, as less than Who Jesus reveals Himself to be.

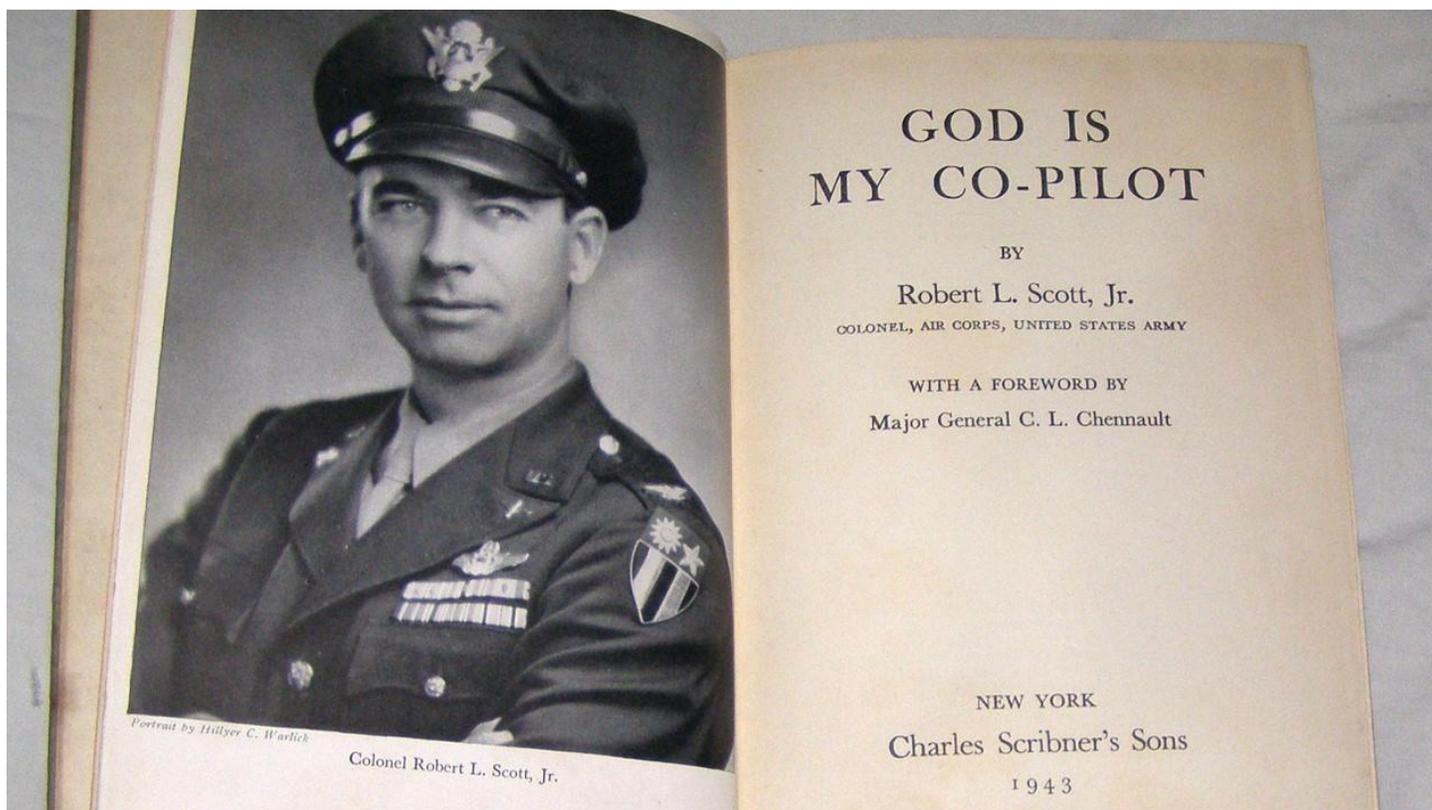
Most people have their opinions as little idols and they put them up on the altar of their heart and worship them there. A blessed person has an attitude that God is greater than their opinions.

“Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.” The “Take offence,” is σκανδαλίζω (skän-dä-lē-dzō), from which we get our word scandalized. It means to be repulsed by something or someone to the point that you back away, lose interest, depart and so it means to fall away, in the sense of not accepting, or refusing to believe.

Jesus said and did some scandalous things... What are you going to do about it? The blessed person reorients themselves, bending to Christ, accepting Him

for who He is, rather than trying to mold Him into Whom they expect Him to be.

Realize that we do that. We are often disturbed by the things Jesus does, the things He seems to put on the back burner and especially with His seemingly slow progress.



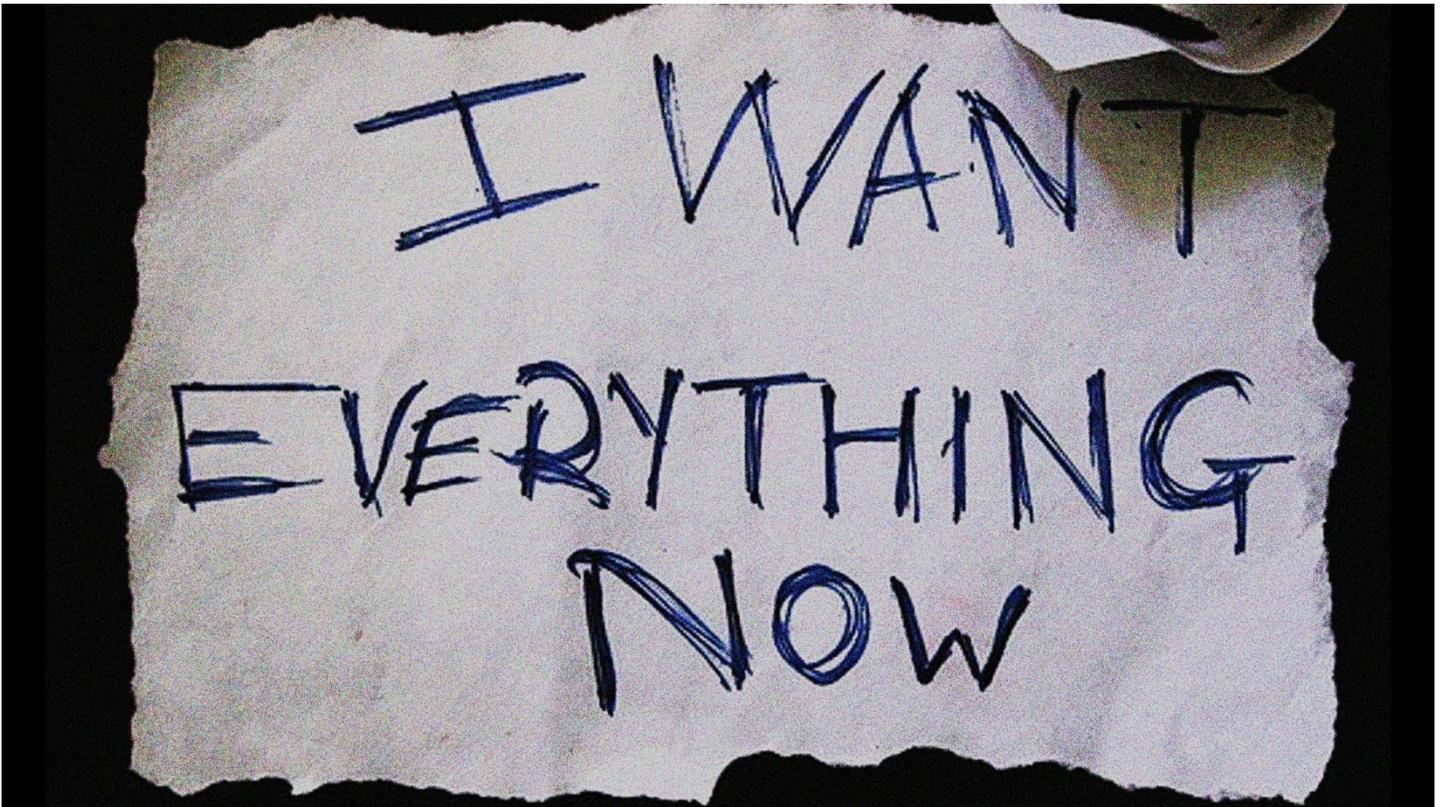
Will you let Jesus be Jesus? Will you let Him be the Lord of your life, or will you retain that role and use Him as some kind of assistant? There used to be a bumper sticker that was popular - it was based on a book. It said, "God is my copilot." My friends, if God is your copilot it means you still see yourself as the captain.

If you're the captain, you're not going to be satisfied with Jesus as your assistant - trust me - it will never work that way.

It really boils down to unmet expectations. We've talked about it before. Anytime I have an expectation of how I think a thing should go and it fails to play out that way, I get irritated, disillusioned, upset, angry.

As I have said before, "Never fall in love you're your plans."

Often it is about timing - it's about things not moving at the pace I have in mind. That leads to impatience. As impatient as John's disciples, and perhaps John himself, were getting, it's nothing to how impatient we are today.



We are the culture of instant gratification. You can't drive from here to Hutton Ranch without narrowly avoiding an accident, or two, or several, all because drivers are so impatient. Cutting each other off, racing through red lights, failing to stop at stop signs and greatly exceeding the speed limit all to save 43 seconds.

Impatience with God demonstrates a lack of trust. Anytime we become impatient with a leader, or leaders, it is because we don't trust the way they are leading. We don't trust them. We think we know better.

Typically, people who distrust their leaders, do not have access to all the information the leaders have, nor are they as qualified, educated, or experienced as the leaders are, nor have they spent nearly as much time thinking about, discussing and working the problem as the leaders have, and yet, with less information, less qualifications and less effort they are completely comfortable judging their leaders as incompetent and so they impatiently resist their direction.

It's bad enough when we do it to human leaders, when we do it to God, not only is it a sin, it is self-defeating. What do we hope to gain?

Will you trust God? Will you trust Him when He seems to be messing the whole thing up?

Can you patiently trust God as He conforms you to Christ? Can you patiently trust God as He conforms those around you to Christ?

We, like John and his disciples, like the religious leaders, like the revolutionary Zealots, like the everyday people impacted by Jesus, we are, all of us, always focused on what God isn't doing, instead of on what He is doing.

It never seems to occur to us that He knows what He's doing. We never seem to realize that God is systematically working in each person precisely in the order that things need to transpire for the greatest possible good.

Won't we trust Him - won't we prove that we do, by being patient with the way He orchestrates things in our life and in the lives of those around us?



1) As I said, we are impatient with God due to a fundamental lack of trust. If you think about it we could say it is demonstrated by a lack of "Faithfulness."

A lack of trust, a lack of belief, a lack of faith - that's the opposite of "Faithfulness." It is itself due to a lack of being at "Peace" with God and our circumstances. That lack of "Peace" is due to a lack of Biblical "Joy," which itself, is a demeanor of contentment born out of the knowledge that God has everything under control, He knows what He's doing and it's all going to be Good.

Knowing that is trusting Him and trusting Him makes being impatient with Him impossible... And around, and around, we go.



2) We are impatient with peers and that is due to a

fundamental lack of perception. We perceive them differently than we perceive ourselves. While we want grace and forgiveness for our transgressions, we want justice for theirs.

It is a lack of “Kindness.” Think about the word for a moment. Kind is alike. Biblical “Kindness,” is a disposition that recognizes yourself in others. Recognizes God working in them, just like He’s working in you. Recognizes that He’s no more done with them, than He is with you.

The disposition of “Kindness” produces the activity of Biblical “Goodness.” Only God is Good with a capital “G.” Through His Spirit we can see others through His eyes and when we do we can be patient with them, which is being “Good” to them.

Instead of being irritated by a peer that is holding you back you can say, wow, my brother or sister is struggling with this thing. Well, thank God, that thing is easy for me... God must have made it easy for me because He wants me to help them.

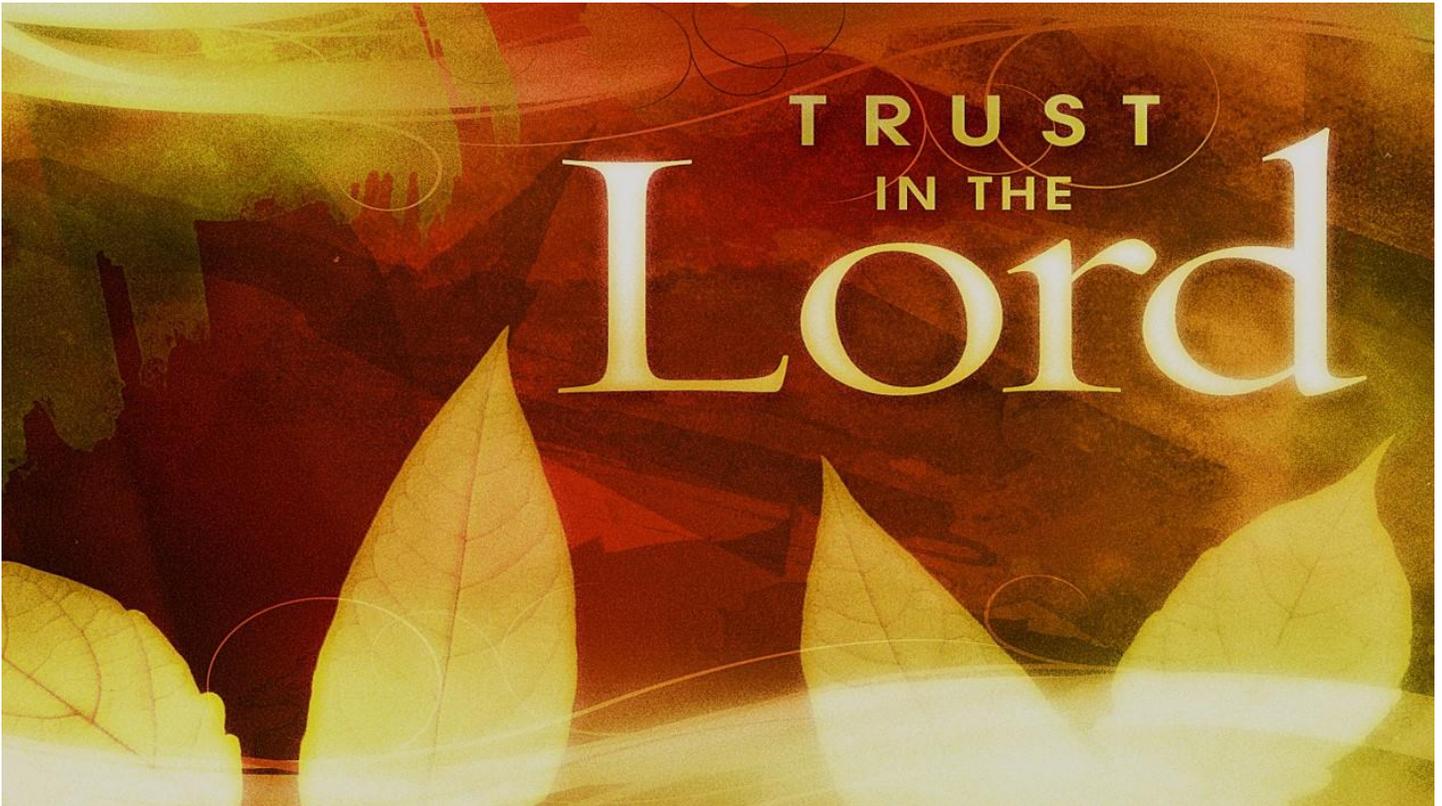
And next time, when I am struggling with something, perhaps that will be the very thing that is so easy for them that they can help me.



3) We are impatient with those less mature than us due to a fundamental lack of “Gentleness.” Biblical “Gentleness” is being benevolent, patient and accommodating to someone weaker. It is like a busy and important person stopping to help a child tie their shoe.

Once, may be easy, helping the same child over and over can get tedious. It is such “Gentleness,” that it results in “Self-control.” Instead of losing “Patience,” I’ll

exhibit a little “Self-control,” and show you additional “Gentleness.”



1) When we are impatient with God, and with those that He appoints over us, we demonstrate a lack of trust, which is synonymous with a lack of “Joy,” which is itself synonymous with a lack of “Love.”

2) When we are impatient with our fellows, our peers, our brothers and sisters in Christ we demonstrate a lack of demonstrated “Kindness,” which is called “Goodness,” which is synonymous with a lack of “Love.”

3) When we are impatient with the “Little ones,” the younger, weaker, smaller “Children of God,” we demonstrate a lack of “Gentleness and self-control,” which is synonymous with a lack of “Love” (Galatians 5:22&23).

Beyond, Jesus not being the magical Genie of the Lamp we desire - beyond Him not doing the things we want Him to do in the timing we think they should be done, there is the general issue of Him being Him.

Will you accept the Savior for Who He truly is? Will you accept the Salvation God provided in the way He provided it?

All the other issues are just noise. People want to make it about homosexuality, about having to change their lifestyle or change their friends or change their community. They want to bog down in philosophical questions about evil in the world and eternal damnation afterward. People make it about everything else, but it really comes down to this...

What will you do with the True Jesus?