Pg 1

John Part 2

Are you struggling with doubts in the middle of painful circumstances?

So did John the Baptist.

As he sat in Herod’s prison waiting a likely execution,

John was afflicted with doubts about Jesus.

Matthew 11:3 NIV

to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

This was a surprising question coming from John the Baptist.

Remember that day, when Jesus approached him at the Jordan near Bethany,

Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit

John shouted: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Then with awe and trembling hands he baptized his Lord.

Then John saw the Spirit descend in the form of a dove and remain on Jesus.

That day had also marked the beginning of the end of his ministry.

John 3:30 “He Must Increase, But I Must Decrease”

Pg 2

With great humility John began to redirect his followers to follow Jesus.

Now he sits in a filthy prison.

John had expected this.

Prophets who rebuke sinful kings usually do not fare well.

Now Herodias wants him dead.

John could see no reason why she would be denied her wish.

What John hadn’t expected was to be tormented by such oppressive doubts about the Messiah .

Since that day on the Jordan, John had not doubted that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the chosen one

But now alone in this dark, putrid cell being assaulted by horrible, accusing thoughts.

What if he had been wrong?

There had been many false prophets in Israel.

What made him so sure that he wasn’t one also?

What if he had led thousands astray?

There had been false messiahs before.

What if Jesus was just another one on the list?

Pg 3

So far Jesus’ ministry was not exactly what John had always imagined the Messiah’s would look like.

Could this imprisonment be God’s judgment?

John felt as if God had left him and the devil himself had taken his place.

He tried to recall all the prophecies written in the scrolls and the signs and wonders that Jesus performed

All the crowds following,

These had seemed so clear to him before.

But now in prison it was difficult to even think straight.

Doubts attacked his mine continuously

The thought of being executed for the sake of righteousness and justice he could bear.

But he could not bear the thought that he might have been wrong about Jesus.

His one earthly task was to prepare the way of the coming of the Messiah .

If he had gotten that wrong, his entire ministry and his life, was all in vain.

But even with his doubts, there remained in John a deep, unshakable trust in Jesus.

Pg 4

Jesus would tell him the truth.

He just needed to hear it from him once more .

So he sent two of his closest disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

Jesus was familiar with John’s sorrows and grief and

Familiar with the satanic storms that attack the saints when they are weak, alone and vulnerable.

Jesus loved John.

So Jesus invited John’s faithful friends to sit near him as he healed and delivered

Then he turned to them and said

, “Tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

John would recognize Isaiah’s prophecy in those words.

Isaiah 35:5

5Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

6Then the lame will leap like a deer,

And

Pg 5

Isaiah 61: 1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

This promise would bring the peace John needed to sustain him for the few difficult days he had remaining.

Out of love for his friend, Jesus did not include his additional job description by Isaiah “proclaim liberty to the captives or release from darkness for the prisoners.”

John would understand.

He was not getting out of this prison alive. He would not be released

The next we hear about John, his head is being carried in on a platter during a celebration in the palace

In this age, even the strongest saints experience times of deep darkness.

None of us are spared sorrow or satanic attacks.

Most of us will suffer some agonizing affliction at some point or points in our lives

Most of us will experience seasons when we feel as if we’ve been abandoned.

Pg 6

I have watched many of my Godly friends die

And many of us will die hard difficult painful deaths.

The Savior does not break the bruised reed or snuff out the smoldering wick.

He hears our pleas for help and is patient with our doubts.

He does not condemn us.

Jesus has fully paid completely for any sin that is exposed in our pain and suffering.

Jesus does not always answer with the speed we desire,

nor is his answer always the deliverance we hope for.

But he will always send the help that is needed.

His definition of help…..

His grace will always be sufficient for those who trust him.