

# OVERCOMING DOUBT



**THE ONLY SURE WAY TO OVERCOME  
DOUBT IS TO PLACE YOUR FAITH IN THE  
WORD OF GOD AND DEPEND ON THAT  
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No one is immune to doubt. It can and does happen to us all. You've just got to know how to handle it when it comes. Even the greatest men and women of God recorded in the Bible had to deal with doubt. Jesus said of John the Baptist, "**Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist**" (Matthew 11:11).

That means John was greater in the sight of Jesus than Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, or any Old Testament character you can name. Yet John doubted the most important thing of all by questioning whether Jesus was really the Christ.

John the Baptist had been cast into prison for criticizing Herod about marrying his brother's wife, an incestuous relationship. He had been there sometime between six months and two years and became so discouraged that he asked two of his disciples to go to Jesus and ask Him if He really was the Christ. It's easy to read that and not think much about it, but the truth is, it was nothing but unbelief on the part of John the Baptist.

Think about who John was. He was separated unto God and filled with the Holy Spirit while he was still in the womb. It is believed he lived in the desert near the Dead Sea with the Essens, the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were a people who were super-legalistic who dogmatically practiced many rituals of self denial. He certainly had not lived what we would call an easy life. John was separated and focused on his purpose.

His entire life was committed to preparing the way for the Christ. He spent thirty years preparing for a ministry that would only last six short months. John is the one who saw Jesus and said, "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). The anointing on his life had to be exceptionally powerful because his ministry defied logic. Thousands of people from many nations came to the middle of nowhere to hear this man preach, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And God had revealed to him that through a visible sign from heaven he would know who the Christ was. He would see the Spirit of God descending upon the Messiah in bodily shape as a dove. That came to pass when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.

At that time, John was absolutely certain that Jesus was the Christ. He had zero doubt. He was so adamant about it that he said "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" in John 1:34. In Luke 3:16 he said, "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." And in John 3:30 he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

However, after being imprisoned for a period of time, he began to doubt. This says a number of things, but an important one is the fact that anyone can doubt. How did Jesus respond to John's doubt? Well, He certainly didn't respond the way most of us do. He told John's disciples to go back and tell him of the miracles they had witnessed and that John would be blessed if he would just believe. That's it. Jesus didn't try and make John feel better by letting him know He understood his pain or by making a few complimentary comments. Jesus reserved those comments till after John's disciples left (Luke 7:24-28).

This puzzled me for many years. Why didn't Jesus say these things about John the Baptist in the hearing of John's disciples so they could have brought him that word? It seemed to me like that would have helped John more than just telling him to look at the miracles, and he'll be blessed if he believes.

Years after I first had these questions, I was reading from Isaiah 35 and came across the passage that says, "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 an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:5-6).

It suddenly struck me that this was exactly the answer that Jesus gave to John's messengers. Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 11:4-6, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 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. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

Jesus performed all the miracles Isaiah prophesied He would do and threw in the healing of a leper and raising someone from the dead just for good measure. What Jesus did was He perfectly fulfilled the prophecy about Himself and then referred John the Baptist back to that word. Jesus reminded John of the

scriptures, to deal with his doubts. That's Jesus' method of dealing with our doubts.

Many of us have Bibles lying around gathering dust. Some of us even carry one. But when we're struggling with unbelief, we don't want a scripture; we want something tangible, something emotional that we can feel. We would rather have Jesus just put His arm around us and say something about how everything will be all right. That would make us feel better. But overcoming doubt isn't just about feeling better; it's about getting back into faith that only comes from the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Jesus sent the Word back with John's disciples. He knew this would stir up John's spirit to overcome the doubt. Peter understood this about faith when he wrote about it in **II Peter 1:12-15**, which says, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."

Peter was stating how important it was for his words to be received, as they were, in truth, the Word of God (I Thessalonians 2:13). To prove to them that these were not just fables he made up, Peter refers to the time they were with Jesus on the mountain. They saw Jesus shine as the brightness of the sun. The Shekinah glory cloud of God overshadowed them all and they heard an audible voice out of heaven say, "This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Mark 9:7). They also saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. That is pretty impressive!

But Peter went on to say in **II Peter 1:19**, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." What could possibly be more sure than all these supernatural signs? Peter gives that answer in the next verse when he talks about the Scriptures (II Pet. 1:20). The Scriptures are more sure and more faith building and doubt destroying than seeing Jesus transfigured or hearing an audible voice from heaven. Hallelujah!

The only sure way to overcome doubt is to place your faith in the Word of God and depend on that more sure word of

prophecy. Don't allow your five senses to dominate your thinking. You must come to a place to where God's Word is more real to you than anything you can see, taste, hear, smell, or feel. When you're in doubt, refer back to the Word of God just the way Jesus told John the Baptist to do. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word.

There are only two times recorded in the Bible when Jesus marveled at anything. Once He marveled at the people's great unbelief (Mark 6:6) and in Matthew 8:10 He marveled at a Gentile soldier's great faith. A faith that made Jesus marvel is worth examining. What was different about it? The number one difference was what the centurion said,

**"But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." (Matthew 8:8-9)**

The centurion had a faith that was in God's Word alone. He didn't have to have Jesus come to his house and wave His hand over the sick servant. If Jesus would just give him a word, that was all he needed.

Contrast this centurion's faith with the little faith of Thomas, who was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. The first time the risen Christ appeared to His disciples, Thomas wasn't present. The other ten disciples told Thomas that Jesus was resurrected, but it was eight more days before Jesus appeared to His disciples with Thomas present.

**"But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25)**

Jesus walked up to Thomas and told him to put his finger into the print of the nails and thrust his hand into Jesus' side and to not be faithless but believing. Thomas fell on his knees and confessed Jesus as his Lord and God.

**"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29)**

Jesus placed a greater blessing on those who believe without seeing than those who believe because they have seen. In other words, there is a greater anointing on believing the Word than believing signs and wonders. Don't get me wrong. I believe in signs and wonders. Jesus used them like a bell to draw people unto Himself and so should we. But the ultimate, the more sure word of prophecy, is the Word of God. There is a greater blessing on just believing God's Word than there is on believing because of supernatural events. Those who are looking for miracles to confirm their faith will fail when the strong battles of unbelief come. We have to get our faith so rooted in God's Word alone that we can withstand a hurricane.

The reason Jesus didn't try to make John feel better with a few kind words, an emotional touch, was not because He didn't care. He cared for John so much that He gave John His best — the Word of God. That's how Jesus dealt with own His temptations (Matthew 4), and that was and still is God's best way for us to deal with our temptations to not believe.

Maybe there's a reason the Lord hasn't used an emotional touch to deliver you from unbelief. Maybe it's because He loves you so much that He's trying to help you operate in the highest form of faith — faith that takes Him at His Word. If the least of the saints today are greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11), surely the Lord is wanting us to operate on at least the same level in which He dealt with John's unbelief.

**Who is it that is victorious over [that conquers] the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on that fact]. I John 5:5 (Amplified Bible)**