

Look, Look, Look!

Scripture Reading: Matthew 11:1-6

According to Matthew 11:2, John the Baptist was in prison. Some think that John was discouraged and doubting, when he sent two disciples to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah, or if they should keep looking for another. It is very unlikely that John was doubting the very thing for which he had dedicated his life. He had the witness from God's Spirit while he was still in the womb (Luke 1:39-44). God's Spirit bore witness again, at Christ's baptism (John 1:19-34 cp. Matthew 3:13-17). John 3:22-36 makes it crystal-clear that John the Baptist was certain that Jesus was and is the Christ. So, what was John doing, sending disciples over to question Jesus?

John 3:30 reveals the agenda that John the Baptist had in his ministry: *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* His purpose in life was to point people to Christ and not draw attention to himself (John 1:29-30; 10:41-42). John was not here to create his own following. He came to prepare people to follow Christ (Isaiah 40:3-5; Mark 1:1-8). From the beginning, John was sending disciples to follow Jesus. One of them was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother (John 1:35-40). Therefore, it should be understood that when John was in prison, he was not doubting, but directing. He probably knew that his earthly ministry was ending. His disciples would need to know what to do after his decease. It was time to direct his disciples to move on and follow Jesus. They needed to see, first-hand, the power and truth of who Jesus was and is.

Let's consider how we should be looking today:

Look to Christ as the only way of salvation and life – John 14:6

The question, *"Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?"* (Matthew 11:3 - NKJV) is something that every person needs to consider. What you think of Jesus Christ is the most important thing about you (Matthew 16:13-18; John 3:36; 8:23-24; I John 5:12). That people were looking for the Messiah tells us that God had spoken of Him specifically in the Old Testament. This question was / is vital (Deuteronomy 18:15,18-19; Psalm 2:1-12; John 5:45-47).

John 3:14-18 points us to a story found in Numbers 21:4-9. Because the children of Israel complained and grumbled a lot, God sent fiery serpents among them. Deadly bites were killing many people. People inquired of Moses for help. God instructed Moses to set up a brass serpent on a pole. Whoever would look at the brass serpent would not die. They would be healed. It took pure simple faith to do this. The message then was *"Look and Live."* The message now is *"Look to Jesus Christ and live – receive eternal life and never perish!"*

See John 6:37-40. Christ will give eternal life to those who *"see"* Him (Greek = *"to view attentively, carefully noting detail; to survey"*). This leads us to our next *"Look."*

Look only to Christ to receive strength and guidance – Hebrews 12:1-3

Translations vary in their wording, but all of them tell us to only be looking at Jesus – to concentrate on Him, focus on Him. To look anywhere else will cause distraction and weaken us. The Greek word describes this “look” as *“turning away from looking at one thing so as to look upon something else.”* Consider that sense of direction when reading Colossians 3:1-3 cp. Acts 26:13-18; Romans 12:2; Galatians 6:14.

The first “Look” was to secure forgiveness and eternal life through the new birth. This second “Look” is a steady gaze, with the eyes of faith, in order to be sanctified / set apart for God’s use. We will become more like Jesus when we turn from other worldly distractions and focus on Jesus Christ. Our steady gaze will involve the use of Scripture, where we behold the glory of the Lord and are changed / transformed into the same image of Christ – slowly, from glory to glory (II Corinthians 3:18). Perhaps this steady gaze can be illustrated by what happened to Peter in Matthew 14:22-33.

The theme of “seeing” Jesus with our mind’s eye is also found in Hebrews 2:9. The Greek word for “see / behold” means *“to examine, to observe and discover, to contemplate, to discern and understand.”* Let’s examine Hebrews 2:5-18 to discover what will happen when we “see” Jesus:

Hebrews 2:5 – Christ is found to be superior to the nature and work of angels. See Hebrews 1:1-14.

Hebrews 2:6-9 – Psalm 8:4-6 is applied to Christ, who became a man and was made lower than the angels. Later He was elevated to the highest position, crowned with glory, because He had tasted death for everyone (i.e., everyone who believes cp. I Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:11-12).

Hebrews 2:10-15 – Jesus became as one of us. He suffered and was tempted, yet without sin. He fulfilled all things so that He could be qualified to be our Savior / *“the captain of our salvation”* and defeat Satan (II Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:13-15).

Hebrews 2:16-18 – Jesus also is qualified to be our merciful and faithful high priest. Because He was a man, He compassionately understands. This draws us to him so that we can get grace to help us in time of weakness and of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Looking unto Jesus with a steady gaze of devotion and with diligent study will transform us into conformity with Christ. We will also be drawn to Him for help when we are weak and tempted. See Philippians 3:10 cp. I John 1:6 – 2:1.