A question was recently asked by one of our readers:

> "Praise the Lord, servant of God. Thank you for your work in ministry. I wanted to ask about John the Baptist. He is the one who baptized Jesus, and testified that he saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and remain on Him. God Himself had told him, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.' John even affirmed that the one coming after him was greater than him and existed before him. So why, then, when he was in prison, did he send his disciples to ask Jesus, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' (Matthew 11:3). Did he begin to doubt what he had previously testified?"

Answer:

This is a thoughtful and important question.

It is human nature that when God gives us a promise or

revelation, we often begin to form our own assumptions and expectations about *how* and *when* that promise will come to pass. These expectations are usually shaped by our understanding, desires, or even cultural assumptions—not necessarily by God's actual plan or timing.

So when God's plan unfolds differently from how we imagined, our faith can be shaken, not because God was unfaithful, but because we let our expectations overshadow His truth.

This seems to be what happened to John the Baptist. It's not that John stopped believing what he had seen and heard. He was absolutely convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. In John 1:32-34 (NIV), John says:

> "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him... I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

John had divine confirmation. But like many Jews of his time, John likely expected the Messiah to bring immediate judgment and

political deliverance, to come wielding a winnowing fork—separating the wheat from the chaff, gathering the righteous, and destroying the wicked (Matthew 3:12). He preached boldly about this coming judgment.

But what he witnessed instead was Jesus moving in gentleness and grace, healing the sick, forgiving sinners, and even being rejected by many—not leading a political revolution or executing divine justice on the Roman oppressors.

So, when John found himself imprisoned by Herod for speaking the truth (see Matthew 14:3-4), and Jesus had not yet brought the kind of kingdom he expected, John's confidence was tested. In his moment of isolation and suffering, he sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matthew 11:3). This wasn't necessarily a crisis of faith, but a longing for reassurance, a search for clarity amid confusion.

Jesus didn't rebuke John for this. Instead, He responded by pointing to the evidence of His works:

> "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor." *(Matthew 11:4–5, NIV)*

These were direct fulfillments of Messianic prophecies like Isaiah 35:5-6 and Isaiah 61:1. Jesus was affirming: *Yes, I am the One—but My mission is unfolding according to God's timing and purpose, not human expectations.*

Application:

Even today, many believers face the same temptation John did: We receive a promise from God and start imagining how it will come to pass. Then, when reality unfolds differently, we question whether we really heard from God at all.

For example, a woman might receive a prophetic word that she will have three children within five years. Instead of simply trusting God's faithfulness, she might begin to calculate: *"I'll have the first in year one, the second in year three, and the last in year five."* But what if nothing happens in the first four years? Doubt begins to creep in. She might wonder, *"Did God really speak to*

me? Was it just my imagination? Did I do something wrong?" And some end up abandoning the promise altogether.

But suppose God had planned for her to conceive triplets in the fifth year. Her timing was wrong—not God's.

The problem wasn't the promise, but her expectations. We often confuse God's silence or slowness with absence. Yet God is always working—even when we can't see it (see Habakkuk 2:3: *"Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."*)

Conclusion:

John's story teaches us a powerful truth: We must hold tightly to God's promises, but loosely to our expectations of how they'll be fulfilled. Let God's Word shape your faith, not your assumptions.

> "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."
> — *Matthew 11:6 (NIV)*

May we learn to trust God’s character even when His ways confuse us, and may we believe His promises without reshaping them into our own image.

God bless you.

JIUNGE NA GROUP LETU LA WHATSAPP HAPA >> WHATSAPP GROUP….

Share on: