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| <b>Series:</b><br>Help My Unbelief  | <b>Reference:</b><br>Matthew 16:20-23 | <b>Title:</b><br>Expectations | <b>Date:</b><br>02.13.2022 |
| <b>Website Writeup:</b>   |                                       |                               |                            |
| We can become doubtful when God doesn't meet our expectations. But God wants to change our limited view of Him. We will let God change our perspective & expectations in order to walk with Him well. |                                       |                               |                            |

## COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

I watched an old silent comedy skit. Man meets thin & beautiful woman. Have dinner. She eats salad motioning she has to stay thin. Which happens over & over in little vignettes of their dating life. Wedding day comes & at the reception the wife begins to eat like a Sumo wrestler. By the end of the reception she's gained 100 lbs. & is chasing her hubby down the street as he tries to get away. Expectations...

In our relationships we often have expectations of the other person & how that relationship should work. The hardest part of life is when expectations aren't met. Paul Tripp describes the brokenness of our marriages when we come with unrealistic expectations. He states, we put a false impression forward until the ring's on the finger. From that point on one can't hide their true self & we live lives of regret because the person we married wasn't the person we thought. We blame the other. Ask a person what's wrong with their marriage - they point to their spouses faults, not their own. Rarely do they speak of issues within their own heart. Never asking where are my expectations misplaced? What do I bring to this relationship which makes it not work?

We can become doubtful of God when He doesn't meet our expectations. But God wants to change our limited view of Him. As obedient followers we must let God change our perspective & expectations of Himself.

Turn with me to p669 in your pew Bibles to Matthew 16:20-23 where we find Peter with some wrong expectations of Jesus & Jesus corrects him as a result. Matthew 16:20-23 says...*Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. <sup>21</sup>From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem & suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests & the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed & on the third day be raised to life. <sup>22</sup>Peter took him aside & began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" <sup>23</sup>Jesus turned & said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."*

Wrong expectations concerning Jesus are expressed all throughout His ministry, as well as in weak theologies today. We see it here with Peter. Peter's expectation of Jesus as Messiah was quite different than that for which He actually came. In the minds of His followers, and many others surrounding Him, He was to be the militaristic ruler freeing His people from bondage, establishing an earthly kingdom. But that wasn't Jesus...

Peter's reaction is somewhat admirable. He wants to protect Jesus, even if from Himself! In Peter's mind, these things couldn't happen to the Messiah, it would be inappropriate & wrong! And remember, Peter had gotten it right just before this in v15... "*...what about you?*" he asked. "*Who do you say I am?*" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, "*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*" <sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, "*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh & blood, but by my Father in heaven.*" So, in one conversation Jesus has both lauded Peter & rebuked him at the same time. He sees Jesus as Messiah, but doesn't see the Messiah clearly yet.

A fundamental phrase in the life of a Christian is that we have a *relationship with God*. Like Peter we acknowledge Jesus as God, but sometimes we bring our own expectations to the relationship. We want Him to rescue us from every difficulty, placate us when we're angry, overlook sin, never judge & make all things work to our favor...but it's not about us, Jesus came for greater purposes beyond felt need & faulty expectation. Like any relationship, we often view others through a set of values carved by experiences & the voices which have formed us. Some faulty. *Part of sanctification, as we call it, is to allow the Holy Spirit, coupled with the Word of God, to convict us when we're conforming to the patterns of this world & to instead be transformed in the renewing of our minds as living sacrifices (Ro 12:1-2). A process by which God must break down the schematic we've created in how we 'think' He should operate. Since when God doesn't perform the way we think He should, we become frustrated & doubt His loyalty to us.*

Like kids playing house where inevitably one child will say, "You're not doing it right! Do this! Say this!" The disciples did this to Jesus. Jesus was constantly challenging the disciples' expectations of what God was going to do in the world. Jesus was telling His disciples He'd go to Jerusalem, be tortured, die & rise again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (Mt 16:21). And Peter, thinking he knows best says this can't happen. Jesus says...'*Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.*'" Peter has an expectation of the Messiah, and Jesus brings doubt to that expectation, so Peter says, "You're not doing it right!" But Peter's mind wasn't set on God's desire or perspective - he only saw his.

Trying to thwart God's plan for Jesus is the role of the devil, not a disciple, hence, Christ's reply. Jesus isn't accusing Peter of literal demon possession, but is dramatically indicating that the perspective Peter represents, even unwittingly, is the same as Satan's. Peter's no longer acting like the foundation block of the church, rather a stumbling block. Reflecting the viewpoint of unredeemed humanity rather than God's will.

*This is why old's better than new & we approach intellectual, emotional & moral doubt as Believers, not Skeptics. Church tradition & longstanding doctrinal beliefs shouldn't be thrown out or reinterpreted because they don't fit our modern narrative. The Church has agreed on these for centuries. They're set in place after long exploration of the Scriptures & we stand in agreement on them. But sadly, many now reinterpret Scripture to the detriment of humanity.*

And spiritual letdown happens through poor theology. A friend of mine's mother died due to her belief in Christian Science which kept her from seeking medical treatment. Christian Science is a false metaphysical religion which reinterprets the Bible to stress the importance of using mind & words to bring healing to the body. Deviation from orthodoxy has dire effects in life, even to death at times.

But we let Jesus be Jesus as presented in the Scriptures. He constantly had to distinguish between the nature of God's kingdom & the role of the Messiah. For Second Temple Jews, the Messiah was a military king who'd vanquish Rome & establish His national kingdom. Throughout the ministry of Jesus, the disciples repeatedly tried to align Him with this expectation. When Peter cut off the soldier's ear & Jesus then healed the soldier in the garden of Gethsemane, that was a surprise (Lk 22:51; John 18:10-11)! Even just before Jesus ascended to heaven, His disciples were asking if He was going to set up His kingdom (Ac 1:6). But Jesus told them to wait for the Holy Spirit, and they'd be His witnesses to the world (Ac 1:7-8). Jesus wasn't concerned about setting up powerful political kingdoms. We often do the same in aligning ourselves with certain political agendas disregarding God's call to be witnesses & living sacrifices in the world.

In many ways Jesus confounded expectations of the people of His day. To understand the expectations people held of the Messiah author/speaker Jean Jones outlines four faulty expectations of those of His time. What follows are largely her words...

**Firstly, Jesus's kingdom was not of this world.** Messiah & Christ are synonymous titles coming from the Davidic line meaning 'Anointed One'. God interrupted David's dynasty when the kings stopped submitting to God as the King of kings. But the prophets who announced the exile which ended their reign also announced God would bring the exiles back & would send a new king descended from David. This king would rule forever as stated in Isaiah 9:7...*Of the greatness of his government & peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne & over his kingdom, establishing & upholding it with justice & righteousness from that time on & forever.*

Most Jews expected a Messiah to lead a revolt against Rome & establish an earthly kingdom at once. By Jesus's day, the exiles had long ago returned, but the promised Messiah hadn't appeared. Instead, Rome ruled. *Jesus fulfilled some prophecies about the Messiah in His first coming.* He identified himself as Messiah (John 4:25-26). He was descended from David & was born in Bethlehem. He also performed signs which were expected in the age of Messianic rule - such as healings, and sent word to John the Baptist this was evidence He was the Messiah (Is 35:5-6; Mt 11:4-5; Lk 5:24; 18:42). He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey colt as the people welcomed Him as Messiah in fulfillment of prophecy (Zech 9:9; Mt 21:4-9). And because of this, Jesus's disciples expected him to establish an earthly kingdom immediately.

That's why they asked him...*"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* (Ac 1:6). It's also why John the Baptist was confused when Jesus didn't rescue him from prison (Mt 11:2-3).

*Jesus didn't fulfill all prophecies about the Messiah in His first coming. He didn't establish an earthly kingdom. Instead, He said... "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). He resisted their desire for him to be king in that way. He explained the kingdom of God was going to be of a different type in Luke 17:20-21 when He said... "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."*

*And Jesus will fulfill remaining prophecies in the future. He rules at the Father's right hand now (Eph 1:20-21). He'll return "on the clouds of heaven" & will gather His servants "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Dn 7:13-14; Mt 24:30-31). God will make a new heaven & earth, and the new Jerusalem will descend on it (Rev 21:1-2). The "throne of God & of the Lamb" will be there & Jesus's servants will reign with him "forever & ever" (Rev 22:3-5).*

**Secondly, Jesus was both Messiah & the Prophet like Moses.** In the first century, Jews desired the fulfillment of prophecy about both a Messiah & a Prophet like Moses. That's why when Jesus began teaching & performing miraculous signs, "some of the people said, 'This really is the Prophet.' Others said, 'This is the Christ'" (John 7:40-41). The expectation of a prophet like Moses comes from Deut 18:15,17-19 where it says...*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen... And the LORD said to me, "... I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him."*

*Jesus gave many signs He was the prophet like Moses. Moses turned water to blood, Jesus turned water to wine. Like Moses, Jesus commanded the sea & it obeyed. With Moses, the people ate manna which miraculously appeared in the wilderness; with Jesus, the people ate bread & fish that miraculously multiplied in the wilderness. But some Jewish leaders desired neither a Messiah nor a Prophet. The Jewish leadership were from two competing Jewish sects, Sadducees & Pharisees. The Sadducees aristocratic & wealthy priests who wanted good relations with Rome to retain power. They hoped for neither a Messiah nor a resurrection, partly because they held the five books of Moses in higher regard than other OT books. And Jesus presented problems for priests.*

*First, Moses had had authority over the High Priest. So, if a prophet like Moses appeared, the Sadducees would have to give up authority & status. This was apparent when Jesus drove money changers & sellers out of the Temple, thus challenging the priests' authority to run it as they desired (Mk 11:15-18). Second, they wanted to prevent anyone claiming to be a Messiah from gaining followers lest Rome quell a rebellion & the Sadducees' power. Many Jewish leaders expected a Messiah submissive to them in spiritual matters.*

The rest were Pharisees who wanted a warrior king to lead a revolt against Rome, but who also would be submissive to them in spiritual matters. They taught, the Messiah & Prophet to be two different people. The Pharisees had a set of rules they used to interpret how the Law of Moses should be applied. For example, their rules described what could & couldn't be done on the Sabbath. The problem for them was Moses had been the ultimate authority for how to apply the Law, so a prophet like Moses might threaten their authority. And that's what happened...Jesus rejected the Pharisees' authority to interpret the Law of Moses. When Jesus healed people, the Pharisees told Him to stop doing so on the Sabbath. Jesus told them their reasoning was bad & continued healing. He also pointed out they rejected God's commands in favor of their rules, which He disparaged as "tradition of men" (Mk 7:8-13). This incensed the Pharisees & convinced most of them He couldn't be the Messiah.

But the crowds embraced Jesus as both Messiah & Prophet. That's why they declared him "the Prophet who is to come into the world," then attempted to make him king (John 6:13-14). But ruling on earth wasn't part of Jesus's immediate plan. Still, when large crowds started following Jesus because of His miracles, the Jewish leaders feared they'd lose their power as we see in John 11:47-48 when they said...*"What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come & take away both our place & our nation."* The Sadducees didn't care that Jesus rejected the Pharisees' traditions - they did too. But they cared a lot about losing their waning political power.

**Thirdly, the Messiah was the Suffering Servant.** Isaiah prophesied about a righteous, Suffering Servant. But no one thought the Messiah & the Suffering Servant could be the same person because the Messiah was supposed to rule forever, while the Suffering Servant had to die as seen in Is 53:9...*And they made his grave with the wicked & with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

They couldn't see how the Messiah who was supposed to save Israel from Rome & establish an everlasting kingdom could also be the Suffering Servant who dies. That's why when Jesus told His disciples He'd suffer, be killed & on the third day be raised, Peter rebuked Him & said this would never happen (Mt 16:21-22). That's also why when Jesus told the crowd He'd be lifted up from the earth, they surmised He was speaking of death & replied...*"We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?"* (John 12:34).

But Isaiah gave clues the Suffering Servant was the Messiah. Four Servant Songs in Isaiah 42:1-9, 49:1-12, 50:4-9 & 52:13-53:12 proclaim the coming of a righteous, Suffering Servant. All hinting of similarities between the Suffering Servant & the Messiah. Both would be anointed by God's Spirit (Is 11:2; 42:1); bring justice (Is 9:7; 42:1; Jer 23:5); be righteous (Is 42:6; 53:11; Jer 23:5); make others righteous (Is 53:11; 61:3; Jer 33:15-16); bring peace (Is 9:6-7; 53:5; Ez 34:24-25); participate in bringing Israel back to God (Is 49:5; Jer 23:3-5); and be part of a new covenant (Is 42:6; Ez 34:24-25).



Jesus did fulfill prophecies about the Suffering Servant in being crucified with the wicked & buried in a rich man's tomb (Is 53:8-9 cf. Lk 23:32-33,50-53). But the next two verses in Isaiah 53:10-11 reveal something remarkable... *“Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him & cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring & prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup>After he has suffered, he will see the light of life & be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”* So, although the Suffering Servant dies, He'll come back to life. Which means because Jesus conquered death as the Suffering Servant, He reigns as Messiah forever.

**Fourthly, the Prophet was also the Suffering Servant.** Moses was an archetype of Jesus. But Jesus was not merely a prophet speaking God's words, He was the Word who was God (John 1:1). Isaiah's prophecies about the Suffering Servant show the Servant had similarities with, but was superior to Moses. The Lord God gave the first covenant through Moses, but He gave the Suffering Servant as the New Covenant (Is 42:6-7). The Suffering Servant fulfilled everything the sacrificial system, put in place by Moses, could not fully do (Is 53:5-6). He was the light for the nations which Israel failed to become under the Law of Moses (Is 49:6). And as Suffering Servant, Jesus died, arose & atoned for people's sin as Moses wanted to do, but could not (Ex 32:30; Is 53:12).

So, the Jews expected the promised Messiah to lead a revolt on earth, but Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world. They thought the Messiah, the prophet like Moses, and the Suffering Servant to be three different people & Jesus demonstrated He's all three. Because He's the Suffering Servant who died & rose again, He is Messiah King who will reign forever in the new heaven & earth. As the Suffering Servant, Jesus fulfilled all to which Moses & the sacrificial system pointed. And because the Suffering Servant bore our iniquities, we can become God's children & live in His kingdom with Him eternally.

There was a lot of confusion as to what the Messiah would be then as they defined Him through their cultural moment. We also tend to define Him through the same lens. We must ask ourselves, is our relationship with God about Him meeting all our expectations? And when He doesn't, do we doubt? Or, is our relationship with God about Him shaping our desires, perspectives & understanding of life to His will & learning to trust Him?

We can't let false expectations of Jesus form doubt & hamstring His work in & through us. As Francis Chan once said, “When I disagree with something in the Scriptures, I assume I am wrong.” Then I move forward as a Believer who has more to learn, rather than a Skeptic who simply wants to reinterpret Jesus because my world has caused me to doubt who He actually is.