

verse 6 — — *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.* The Greek word for offend is *scandalizo*. It comes from the noun *scandalon* (“scandal”).

Apparently John stumbled over the fact that Jesus seemed to be making no effort to set up His Messianic kingdom. John the Baptist had proclaimed: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (3:2). John knew the nation of Israel was ripe for judgment, and he expected the Messiah to judge His people. What he could not realize was the first coming of Christ was in grace and mercy. Judgment must await His second coming.

It is certainly not surprising that the prophet, locked up in prison, would be struggling with serious questions.

INSERT OF SEVENTEENTH STUDY ON MATTHEW 11:2-6

John actually questioned whether or not the Man he proclaimed as the Lamb of God was in reality the Messiah. He had also been affected by the popular opinion the Messiah would lead the Jews in throwing off the Roman yoke.

The prophet was languishing or pining away in prison, evidently tempted to be discouraged and disillusioned. He had meekly declared: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). He had assumed that Jesus would fulfill the expected role of the Messiah, destroying the foreign oppressor (Rome) and freeing His people from bondage. But this was exactly what Jesus was not doing.

The question John asked through His disciples was literally: “Are You the coming One, Or are we waiting for another?” In other words, Are You really the Messiah?

Instead of giving a categorical or clear-cut answer, Jesus bade the disciples go back to John and report what they had seen and heard. His healing of the blind and lame (5) was a fulfilling of the Messianic role as described in Isa. 35:5-6). But the climax was the preaching of the gospel to the poor. (cf. Isa. 61:1). The Greek says: “the poor are being evangelized”. That was His main credential.

A little hint to John’s problem is suggested in