

When the kingdom of God appears to fail
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Introduction: Can the kingdom of God fail?

A. Jesus made it very clear that it cannot! (**Mt 16:18**)

1. The Hadean world will not hold those within its gates.
2. The kingdom of God has God's authority behind it. (**Mt 28:28-20**)
3. God has plainly said it would never fail. (**Isa 9:6-7**)

“Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there will be no end*”

B. Our problem is one of identifying and seeing God's kingdom.

1. Jesus warned about looking at the wrong things. (**Lk 17:20-21**)
2. Some were so confident they knew the kingdom that they could not conceive of a people or a city failing.
3. John the Baptist strongly taught them where the kingdom of God was and where it was not! (**Mt 3:9-10**)
4. The people of Jeremiah's day were to learn a horrible lesson. (**Jer 7:4, 8-11**)
5. Many have done this with the name “churches of Christ.” What really is the “church of Christ?”

I. John the Baptist had a time of doubt

A. John expressed doubt in the identity of Jesus. (**Lk 7:19-20**)

1. Our first reaction might be one of disappointment.
2. What had John already seen and confessed?
 - a. At the baptism of Christ. (**Mk 1:10-11; Jn 1:32-33**)
 - b. He expressed his conviction to the future disciples of Jesus. (**Jn 1:35-37**)
 - c. In spite of all the preaching he did, there was still a time for doubt!

B. There are two possible reasons for John's doubt.

1. Jesus had not done what John expected.
 - a. What did John say the Messiah would be like? (**Mt 3:11-12**)
 - b. Why had Jesus not purge out the wicked Jews and done away with the Romans? John may have harbored a misconception about the nature of The kingdom!
 - c. We often misunderstand the working of God, especially His timing.
2. John was in prison and likely both isolated and discouraged.
 - a. Any man who is isolated and suffering, depression and doubt will come.
 - b. The great prophet Elijah knew this feeling! (**1 Kgs 19:10, 14, 18**)
 - c. Given the right circumstances it could be you or me!

II. Habakkuk had a time of doubt

A. Habakkuk, a prophet of God had such doubts. (**Hab 1:1-4**)

1. Did God see Judah's wickedness? Indifference?
2. Why does God not act? Good people are losing the battle!
3. Be careful when you seek such answers. God had a plan. Ex. “God does not see what I am going through, He does not see the hardship”

B. God's answer was not what Habakkuk wanted to hear. (**Hab 1:5-11**)

1. It is important to know that God knows what he is doing.
 2. The Babylonians were very evil. God was going to use them.
 3. They would make a great slaughter of the people and never give God credit.
 4. We need to now that some people are beyond repentance. God knows!
- C. Habakkuk now has a greater problem.
1. Have you ever had a problem that started out bad and then grew worse?
 2. How could God use such a wicked people? (**Hab 1:12-13**)
 3. The destruction would be great! They were going to use three kinds of nets. Nothing much would be left. They would then worship their net. (**Hab 1:14-17**)
 4. "How could God allow this to happen?"

III. Occasions of doubt in church history

- A. The aftermath of a great apostasy. (**2 Thess 2:2-4**)
1. You cannot imagine what it would be like to rebuild! (Ex. Daniel, Nebraska)
 2. What will Auburn, Al be like in 200 years?
- B. Personal disappointments of men and local churches.
1. Men's actions may cause others to quit. They should not! (**Mk 9:42; 14:27**)
 2. Jesus tried to prepare them about the nature of the kingdom. (**Jn 16:1**)
 3. How many have quit after a church split?
 4. Some have identifies a human movement with God's kingdom. (Ex. The Boston Movement)

IV How to deal with the disappointments that will come

- A. John sought more information from Jesus! (**Lk 7:19-20**)
1. Always take your doubts to the Lord! This is exactly what prayer is for!
 2. Jesus removes John's doubt by scripture. (**Lk 7:21-23**)
 - a. Jesus refers to two OT prophecies. (**Isa 35:3-6, 61:1**)
 - b. Can you see John hearing of these things and recalling the scripture and saying "That's right, He is the Messiah!" His momentary doubts are erased!
- B. While Habakkuk has a time of struggle, he has resolved that and give God the praise. (**Hab 3:1-2**)
1. We too must not sit on the sidelines fuming very long.
 2. We cannot fight God. God knows best.
- C. God was doing the very best for His people. (**Hab 3:13**)
1. All of history stands because of what God wants for His people.
 2. When we give up our faith we pervert the purpose for the whole universe.
- D. Lessons for us during times of doubt.
1. Learn how to renew your faith from a study of God's word. (**1 Pt 3:15**)
 2. Do not let doubts linger! Go to God and to spiritual men for help.
 3. Always express yourself, including your doubts, to God in prayer!
 4. Always distinguish between the actions of men and that of God.
 5. Deal quickly with sin in your life. Most of our doubts lie here. (**Lk 8:14; Rev 3:1-2**)

Conclusion: Do you know the certain success of God's people? (**Rom 8:28; Rev 6:10-11**)