

Matthew 11 - Rejection of the Kingdom by the People of Israel

II. Rejection of the King (Matt 11:1—12:50)

- (1) Unbelief of John the Baptist (11:1-15)
- (2) Unbelief of the cities (11:16-31)

Matthew 11

II. Rejection of the King (Matt 11:1—12:50)

- (1) Unbelief of John the Baptist (11:1-15)

1 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

1 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.

1 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he left there to teach and preach in their home towns.

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

- Matthew had no concern for recording what happened when the Twelve went out having received Jesus' instructions. He passed over their ministry in silence and resumed narration of Jesus' ministry.

— Jesus' ministry to Israel of teaching, preaching and healing dominates 4:17-11:1

The Opposition to the King

Matthew introduced the King of the Jews, demonstrated His authority, and explained His manifestation to Israel. Matthew then recorded Israel's opposition to Him and rejection of Him. Matt 11-13 record Israel's rejection of her Messiah and its consequences. Opposition continued to build, but Jesus announced new revelation in view of hardened unbelief.

Matthew has carefully presented the credentials of the King: His genealogy, His birth, His baptism, His temptation, His righteous doctrine, and His supernatural power. Israel heard the message of the nearness of the kingdom from John the Baptist, the King Himself, and His disciples. Great miracles have authenticated the call to repentance. Now, Israel must make a decision.

Evidences of Israel's Rejection of Jesus (Matt 11:2-30)

Rejection of John the Baptist (Matt 11:2-15; Cf. Luke 7:19-28)

2 Now while in prison, John heard about the **works** of **Christ**, and he sent word by his disciples,

2 Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples

2 Now when John heard in prison about the activities of the Messiah, he sent a message by his disciples

2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

- John the Baptist was in prison in the fortress of Machaerus (east of the Dead Sea)

because he had courageously denounced the adulterous marriage of Herod Antipas and Herodias (Luke 3:19-20).

— John heard about Jesus' works and ministry while he was in prison

- "...works" - includes Jesus' teaching and all of His activities, not just His miracles

- "...Christ" - the only place in Matthew's gospel where "Christ" standing alone is used referring to Jesus

- It seems that the Jewish leaders would have opposed Herod and sought to free John, but they did nothing

3 and said to Him, "Are You the **ComingOne**, or are we to look for someone else?"

3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

3 and asked him, "Are you the Coming One, or should we wait for someone else?"

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

- Even John the Baptist had doubts about whether Jesus was really the promised Messiah, and even further doubts that He was bringing in the kingdom

— John's doubts point to the misconception of Israel as to the program of the Messiah and His method. John was not feeling the "kingdom love" spoken of in the OT, as he sat in prison.

— John had heard of the works of Jesus (v2), and they certainly appeared to be Messianic. However, Jesus did not suddenly assert His authority and judge people as John probably thought He would (Matt 3:10-12).

— It was because of this misconception that John began to doubt. His doubts may have also been raised because he was in prison, a place that was incongruous for the herald of the King.

— John was a godly man raised in a godly home. His mother, Elizabeth, knew that Jesus was Lord while Jesus was still in His mother Mary's womb (Luke 1:39–45). Surely John grew up with this information, and Jesus' status as Messiah was confirmed to him when he saw God's Spirit descend on Jesus at Jesus's baptism (Luke 3:22). If anyone should have been sure of Jesus's identity, it would have been John the Baptist.

- "...Coming One," a messianic title (Ps 40:7; 118:26; Is 59:20)
- John had previously announced Jesus as the Coming One (3:11), but Jesus did not quite fit John's ideas of what Messiah would do. He was bringing blessing to many, but judgment to no one (Cf. 3:10-12).

- 4 Jesus answered and said to them, **"Go and report to John what you hear and see:**
- 4 Jesus answered and said to them, **"Go and report to John what you hear and see:**
- 4 Jesus answered them, **"Go and tell John what you hear and observe:**
- 4 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:**
 - Jesus sent a summary of His ministry back to John
 - Jesus could have scolded John for his stunning lack of faith (especially considering his upbringing, Cf. notes on v3), but instead, Jesus provided John with evidence, in the form of His miracles
 - He used language from Isaiah's prophecies to assure His forerunner that He really was the Messiah (Is 35:5-6; 61:1; Cf. Is 26:19; 29:18-19)
 - It is interesting that each of the Isaiah passages contain a reference to judgment. Thus, Jesus assured John that He was the Coming One, and implied that He would fulfill the judgment prophecies, through He had not done so yet.

5 ***those who are BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and those who limp walk, those with leprosy are cleansed and those who are deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.***

5 ***the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.***

5 ***the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the destitute hear the good news.***

5 ***The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.***

6 ***And blessed is any person who does not take offense at Me."***

6 ***And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."***

6 ***How blessed is anyone who is not offended by me!"***

6 ***And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.***

- This beatitude may be an illusion to Is 8:13-14

— That passage contained a gentle warning against allowing Jesus' ministry to become an obstacle of belief and a reason for rejecting Jesus

- It assumes that John and his disciples began well, but it warned them against reading the evidence of Jesus' miracles incorrectly
- The beatitude commends those who believe God is working without demanding undue proof (Cf. John 20:29)

If John the Baptist had an erroneous concept of the kingdom, this would have been a logical time for Jesus to correct it. But He did no such thing.

John the Baptist

In Matt 11:2-6 John had been imprisoned and sent his own disciples to ask Jesus if He was the one who was to come, or should they expect someone else. Some commentators say John was having a crisis of faith and wanted Jesus to reassure him. I don't believe this for one second. John had the Holy Spirit and had known before he was even born who Jesus was (Luke 1:39-45). I believe John, who knew his death was near, wanted his disciples to be sure Jesus was the one, so they would transfer their allegiance to Him.

Also, John had spent time among the Essenes who believed in two Messiahs; a Suffering Servant and a Conquering King. In the Greek language Matt 11:2 can read, "Are you the only one who was to come, or should we also expect another, different from you?" He could have been reassuring his own disciples that the Essenes were wrong and that there would only be one Messiah.

In response Jesus listed miracles the Essenes attributed to both Messiahs, and reminded John's disciples He had done all of them. His final statement in Matt 11:6 was a benediction upon those who would believe that He was the one and only Messiah spoken of in their Scriptures.

- 7 As these *disciples of John* were going away, Jesus began speaking to the crowds about John: **"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"**
- 7 As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, **"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"**
- 7 As they were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. **"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"**
- 7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, **What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?**
 - John had borne witness to Jesus; now, Jesus was bearing witness to John. In doing so, Jesus pointed to Himself as the Person who would bring in the kingdom.
 - "...A reed shaken by the wind?" - represents a person easily swayed by public opinion or circumstances

8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in **soft clothing**? Those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' palaces!

8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in **soft clothing**? Those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' palaces!

8 Really, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? See, those who wear fancy clothes live in kings' houses.

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

- "...soft *clothing*" - *malakos*, fancy or effeminate clothes

- In His reply, Jesus was allaying public suspicion that John's question arose from vacillating character or undisciplined weakness. John's question did not come from deficient character, but from misunderstanding of Jesus' ministry. Jesus was defending John.

- John's appearance (a garment of camel hair) and lifestyle (a diet of locusts, 3:4), like Elijah's (Cf. 2 Kings 1:8; Zech 13:4), were not impressive to sophisticated Jews. However God intended for his appearance to be a rebuke to the luxurious materialism of the royal family and the Pharisees and priests

— Many of the common people, however, did respond to his powerful preaching (3:5-6; 11:12; 21:26)

9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and *one who is* more than a prophet.

9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

9 Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and even more than a prophet!

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

- People had gone out to the wilderness to hear John because they believed he was a prophet. Jesus affirmed that title for John.

— John was the first true prophet from God in ~400 years. However, he was a bit unusual. He was a spokesman from and for God, but he was also the fulfillment of prophecy himself. He was the one predicted to prepare for Messiah's ministry.

10 This is the one about whom it is written: 'BEHOLD, I AM SENDING MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'

10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

10 This is the man about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

- Quoting Mal 3:1, an allusion to Ex 23:20

— The changes Jesus made in His quotation had the effect of making Yahweh address Messiah (Cf. Ps 110:1). This harmonizes with the spirit of Malachi's context (Mal 4:5-6).

— By quoting this passage, Jesus was affirming His identity as Messiah

— Jesus viewed John as potentially fulfilling the prophecy about Elijah. Whether or not John really would have fulfilled it depended on Israel's acceptance of her Messiah then (v14)

— In either case, John fulfilled the spirit of the prophecy because he came in the spirit and power of Elijah

11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

11 I tell all of you with certainty, among those born of women no one has appeared who is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least important person in the kingdom from heaven is greater than he.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

- Wow! What does *that* mean? He is suggesting that John the Baptist is the end of an era, and there is a new era just begun (Cf. Luke 16:16).

- Jesus did not mean that John would fail to participate in the kingdom. All true prophets will be in it (Luke 13:28). He was simply contrasting participants and announcers of the kingdom.

— John, at that time, only anticipated the kingdom, whereas participants will be *in* it, thus "greater"

— The fact that John the Baptist was not yet in the kingdom of heaven places the kingdom as still future to that time

12 And **from the days of John the Baptist until now** the kingdom of heaven has been **treated violently**, and violent men **take it by force**.

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.

12 "From the days of John the Baptist until the present, the kingdom from heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people have been attacking it,

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

- Kingdom Now theologians interpret this verse as the kingdom, which is present spiritually, is suffering violence. Thus, an "already" form of the kingdom must have been present during Christ's ministry, otherwise it couldn't be resisted violently.

— If the kingdom was present, how could it be rejected? What is being rejected and suffering violence is Israel's rejection of the offer of the kingdom.

— "...from the days of John the Baptist until now" - these verses record Jesus' description of the kingdom from when John began to minister until the time He spoke these words

— "...treated violently" - *biadzo*, has been enduring violent force; it's in the passive voice, implying something negative was being done to the kingdom by evil men

— It is clear that Jesus is declaring that the religious leaders of Israel are doing harm to the kingdom. They were trying to bring in the kingdom in their own, carnal way, while refusing to accept God's way that John and Jesus announced (Cf. Matt 23:13).

— Referring to the parallel passage (Luke 16:16), it is clear that what is suffering violence is not the kingdom itself (because it's not here), but rather than *proclamation* of the kingdom, the kingdom message

— John and Jesus both eventually died at the hands of these violent men

— "...take it by force" - *harpazo*, indicates a violent snatching

— "it" - the kingdom of heaven is what is being seized

— They also snatched ("took by force") the kingdom from the people by rejecting, and eventually crucifying, the Messiah (Cf. Matt 23:13)

Kingdom Now scholars contend that the kingdom had to be present in order for it to be resisted so strenuously. But is it possible for the kingdom to suffer violence without being present? An answer can be found in the parallel passage (Luke 16:16), which says, "The Law and the Prophets were *proclaimed* until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." Here, the emphasis is on the proclamation of the kingdom. Thus, what is actually being rejected is the *proclamation* of the kingdom or the *message* of the kingdom, rather than any present manifestation of the kingdom.

This interpretation finds support in the verses following Matt 11:12 where Christ equates the hardness of His generation to His message to children not pleased with the asceticism of John nor the ministry of Christ (Matt 11:16-19).

13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

13 For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

13 because the Law and all the Prophets prophesied up to the time of John.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

- Jesus described the imminent kingdom as in grave danger because of His enemies. The OT had predicted the Messiah "until John," but when John began his ministry, the time of fulfillment began.

14 And **if** you are willing to accept *it*, John himself is Elijah who was to come.

14 And if you are willing to accept *it*, John himself is Elijah who was to come.

14 If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

- This is one of the clearest passages that show the kingdom was being offered to Israel at this time. The coming of the Kingdom was contingent upon one thing: Israel receiving it by genuine repentance.

— If Israel had received the Kingdom, then John the Baptist would have fulfilled the function of Elijah and would have accomplished the ministry of restoration.

— But, the kingdom was rejected, thus John the Baptist did not fulfill the function of Elijah. Thus, Elijah is yet to come to accomplish the work of restoration.

— "...if" - *ei*, conditional; assumes for the sake of argument that they would receive it

— Assuming they would, John would fulfill Malachi's prophecy about Elijah being the Messiah's forerunner (Mal 4:5-6)

- Jesus never said that John was Elijah. That depended on Israel's repenting and accepting Jesus as Messiah.

— John fulfilled Is 40:3 and Mal 3:1, prophecies about Messiah's forerunner, but not Mal 4:5-6, the prophecy about the forerunner turning people's hearts toward God, since Israel rejected Jesus.

— See [The Coming Kingdom 47 The Kingdom Has Come Upon You \(Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20\)](#) for a list of **8 Proofs for the Offer of the Kingdom Framework**.

Amillennialists and Progressive Dispensationalists believe that this kingdom began with Jesus' preaching. They interpret the conditional statement in v14 as follows:

- Jesus was acknowledging that it was difficult to accept the fact that John was the fulfillment of the prophecies about Elijah
- They interpret "it" as referring to Jesus' statement about John rather than the kingdom
 - Since both antecedents are in the context, the interpretation hinges on one's conclusion about the timing of the kingdom: at the beginning of Jesus' ministry or still future

In view of OT prophecies about the kingdom and how Matthew presented Jesus' concept of the kingdom, the timing is obviously future. Jesus viewed the messianic kingdom as future and earthly, not present and spiritual. Today, God rules over His own, however this is a heavenly rule. The OT prophets predicted that Messiah would rule on the earth. This earthly rule of God over His own is still future. This is the kingdom that John announced, and Jesus offered, to Israel.

15 The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.

15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

15 Let the person who has ears listen!

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

- This verse serves to underline and boldface the great significance of what Jesus just stated

(2) Unbelief of the cities (11:16-31) (Cf. Luke 7:29-35)

16 "But to what shall I compare **this generation?** It is like **children** sitting in the marketplaces, who call out to the other *children*,

16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other *children*,

16 "To what can I compare the people living today? They're like little children who sit in the marketplaces and shout to each other,

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

- In this passage, Jesus described the Jews' reaction to John and Himself more fully, to clarify their opposition

- "...this generation" - the Jews to whom He offered the kingdom; refers to 1st century Israel

- "...children" - Jesus used children to illustrate the childish reaction of most of His adult contemporaries (religious leaders)

17 and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a song of mourning, and you did not mourn.'

17 and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

17 'A wedding song we played for you, the dance you all did scorn. A woeful dirge we chanted, too, but then you would not mourn.'

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

- His point was that people found fault with whatever Jesus did; whatever music was played, the people were not happy
- He did not behave or teach in harmony with what they wanted Him to do, or as they expected that Messiah would do. His concept of the kingdom was different from theirs. They wanted a King who would fit into their traditional understanding of the Messiah. Consequently, they rejected Him.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!'

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!'

18 Because John didn't come eating or drinking, yet people say, 'He has a demon!'

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

- When John the Baptist offered the kingdom, they said they couldn't accept the offer because John was poor and uneducated

- Even though John lived an ascetic life, as some of the OT prophets did, most of the Jews rejected him and even accused him of demon possession

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' And yet **wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.**

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Absolved from every act of sin, is wisdom by her kith and kin."

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

- When Jesus came, with the same message as John but a different style, they accused Him of being a glutton and drunkard

— Jesus ate and drank with "sinners," and many criticized Him for lack of moderation and concluded He despised the Law

— If they had understood John, they would have understood Jesus

- Jesus concluded with a proverb that justified John's and His lifestyles:

— The Jews criticized both John and Jesus for the way they lived. Jesus' point was that the good deeds that they did vindicated their choices to live as they did.

— Who could justifiably criticize them, since they went about doing good?

- "...wisdom is vindicated by her deeds" - Jesus' point is that it doesn't matter how the offer of the kingdom was extended to 1st century Israel, they would've turned it down no matter what

— Jesus point was that no matter who or how someone came to Israel with the offer of the kingdom, they would reject it. They would find something wrong with the presentation, the person delivering it, or the manner in which it was delivered.

Rejection at Chorazin, Bethsaida & Capernaum (Cf. Luke 10:12-15)

20 Then He began to **reprimand** the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.

20 Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.

20 Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had taken place, because they didn't repent.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

— "...reprimand" - *oneidizein*, reproach, denounce; a strong word that conveys deep indignation (Cf. 5:11; 27:44)

— Jesus did not denounce these cities because they actively opposed His ministry; He did so because the residents refused to repent, in spite of the many miracles He and His disciples performed there (3:2; 4:17)

21 "Woe to you, **Chorazin!** Woe to you, **Bethsaida!** For if the **miracles** that occurred in you had occurred in **Tyre and Sidon**, they would have repented long ago in **sackcloth and ashes**.

21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

21 "How terrible it will be for you, Chorazin! How terrible it will be for you, Bethsaida! Because if the miracles that happened in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

— "Woe" - can announce doom or mean "pity"; both ideas are conveyed here

— "...Chorazin" - two miles northwest of Capernaum

— "...Bethsaida" - this Bethsaida was probably the one on the NE coast of the Sea of Galilee, east of the Jordan River (Cf. Mark 6:45; 8:22; Luke 9:10; John 1:44; 12:21)

— Both Chorazin and Bethsaida are NT cities

— "...miracles" - *dunamis*, one of four Greek words used in the Gospels to describe Jesus' miracles (see note below)

- "...Tyre and Sidon" - on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel; OT cities
- The OT prophets often denounced these cities for their Baal worship
- "...sackcloth and ashes" - common ancient clothing indicating severe mourning

22 Nevertheless I say to you, it will be **more tolerable** for Tyre and Sidon on *the day of judgment* than for you.

22 Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the day of judgment* than for you.

22 Indeed I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on Judgment Day than for you!

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

— "...more tolerable" - speaks to degrees of judgment for unbelievers (Cf. John 19:11; Rev 20:13); see note on v24

- Why worse for Chorazin and Bethsaida? As God, Jesus knew what the people of Tyre and Sidon would have done, had they received the amount of witness the Jewish cities had shunned.

— It also indicates that the reception of special revelation is a privilege, not a right

— To whom much is given, much will be required (Cf. Luke 12:48). Chorazin and Bethsaida will have a greater judgment than Tyre and Sidon because they were given greater light but did not respond.

23 And you, **Capernaum**, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! For if the miracles that occurred in you had occurred in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

23 And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.

23 "And you, Capernaum! You won't be lifted up to heaven, will you? You'll go down to Hell! Because if the miracles that happened in you had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

— "...Capernaum" - Jesus' home base; He performed many miracles there, 5 of the 10 recorded in this section of Matthew (4:13; 8:5-17; 9:2-8,18-33)

- Each of these cities rejected Jesus and His ministry by their indifference. The citizens followed Him and appreciated His healing ministry, but they did not respond to His

message.

— They took an inactive interest in His miracles and teaching, but His good works never touched their hearts and His doctrine produced no change in their lives

24 Nevertheless I say to you that it will be **more tolerable** for the land of **Sodom** on *the day of judgment, than for you.*"

24 Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the day of judgment, than for you.*"

24 Indeed I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you!"

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

— "...more tolerable" – just as their are decrees of sin (John 19:11), there are degrees of punishment in hell (Cf. Luke 12:47-48; Rom 1:20-2:16; Heb 10:28-29). To whom much is given, much will be required (Cf. Luke 12:48).

— When Christ judges at the Great White Throne, He will take into account the opportunity people had (see note on John 19:11)

— In the example in this passage, the OT cities will receive less judgment than the NT cities because they did not have the level of revelation that the NT cities had. The OT cities never experienced Jesus' divine presence or saw Jesus' healings, signs or miracles.

— "...Sodom" – infamous for its wickedness (Cf. 10:15)

It was not just the hard-hearted religious leaders who did not accept their King, but the majority of the common people rejected Him as well.

The King's Invitation to the Repentant

This invitation is a sign of Israel's rejection of her King, since with it, Jesus invited those who had believed in Him to separate from unbelieving Israel and to follow Him. In v20-24, Jesus addressed the condemned; in v25-30, he spoke to those who accepted Him.

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden **these things** from *the wise and intelligent*, and have revealed them to **infants**.

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden **these things** from *the wise and intelligent* and have revealed them to infants.

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden **these things** from wise and intelligent people and have revealed them to infants.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

- "...these things" - refers to the significance of Jesus' miracles, the imminence of the kingdom, and the implications of Jesus' teaching

- "...wise and intelligent" - self-sufficient Jews who rejected Jesus because they felt no need for what He offered

- "...infants" - the dependent who received Jesus' teaching as needy individuals

— Israel was not humble, but proud; consequently she could not understand the things Jesus revealed to her

It was God's good pleasure to hide truth from some and reveal it to others. This may make God appear arbitrary and unfair, however Scripture reveals that God owes man nothing. God is not unjust because He hides truth from some while revealing it to others. Hiding things from some is an evidence of God's judgment, not his justice. That He extends mercy to any is amazing. That He extends it to those who are inadequate and totally dependent is even more incredible. Furthermore, because he hides truth from those who reject it, means that He shows mercy to them because he will judge all people by their response to the truth they have.

26 Yes, Father, for this way was well pleasing in Your sight.

26 Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

26 Yes, Father, because this is what was pleasing to you.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

- Jesus delighted in the fact that His Father revealed and concealed truth as He did. Jesus delighted in whatever God did; His disciples should do the same.

27 All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son determines to reveal *Him*.

27 All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

27 All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one fully knows the Son except the Father, and no one fully knows the Father except the Son and the person to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son

will reveal him.

- Another claim by Jesus that He is the Son of God
- He claimed to be the exclusive revealer of God's message that the "babes" received
- Jesus has authority over those to whom He reveals God the Father

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

28 "Come to me, all of you who are weary and loaded down with burdens, and I will give you rest.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- This invitation recalls Jer 31:25, where Yahweh offered His people "rest" in the New Covenant

— "...weary" - those who have struggled long and toiled hard

— Implies toil; refers to the weary search for truth and relief from a troubled conscience

— "...burdened" - those who stagger under excessive burdens

— Implies endurance; refers to the heavy load of observances that give no relief, and perhaps the sorrow of life, which are crushing apart from the consolations of a true faith

Jesus, the revealer of God, invites those who feel their need for help that they cannot obtain by themselves, to come to Him. Israel's religious leaders had loaded the people with unscriptural burdens that were too heavy to bear (Cf. Matt 23:4). The "rest" involves kingdom rest (Cf. Heb 4), but it is a present reality too.

Throughout Israel's history, God held out the promise of rest if His people would trust and obey Him. The Promised Land was to be the scene of this rest. However, when Israel entered Canaan under Joshua's leadership, she enjoyed rest there only partially due to limited trust and obedience. As Israel's history progressed, she lost much rest through disobedience. Now Jesus, as her Messiah, promised that the rest she had longed for for centuries could be hers—if she humbly came to Him. He provided this rest for anyone in Israel who came to Him in humble trust. He will provide this rest for Israel in the future in the Promised Land. This will take place when He returns to earth to establish His kingdom.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

29 Place my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest for your souls,

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

- "...yoke" - a metaphor for the discipline of discipleship; supposed to curb the will and bring one under control
- It is the "yoke" of discipleship, not of the Mosaic Law
- Discipleship involves assimilating what He reveals, not just imitating Him or learning from His experience
- Jesus quotes from Jer 6:16, a passage that pointed to Him

30 For My yoke is comfortable, and My **burden is light.**"

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

30 because my yoke is pleasant, and my burden is light."

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

- "...burden is light" - compared to the loads of Israel's religious leaders imposed on their disciples