

Lesson Eleven—Matthew 11

Follow Me—For Who I Am

Introduction

By nature we all want to fashion God into our own molds. We want God to act according to how we think God should act. We want a kingdom that suits our wants and needs.

The Jews of Jesus' day were no different. They had their own self-made ideas of what kind of kingdom the Son of David would set up for them.

In chapters 11 to 13, Matthew shows us the struggle between Jesus as he actually came into this world and the kind of Messiah many of the Jews anticipated.

11:1-6 John wonders if Jesus is the Messiah

Verse 2 Compare how John pictured Jesus in chapter 3, verses 11 and 12 with what Jesus was actually doing. In what sense can we justify John's question?

Verses 4-6 In what sense is John's question a product of his sinful human weakness? How does Jesus respond to John's question?

11:7-19 A warning to the Jews: You did not accept John, and you are in danger of not accepting me

Verses 7-10 Jesus points out to the Jews that they did in fact recognize that John was a prophet sent from God. They did not go to see him because of his earthly grandeur, but because of his austerity and his message.

What unique role did John the Baptist play in God's plan of salvation?

Verse 11 In regard to abilities, wisdom, and purpose, how do all other people compare with John?

Compared with John as a man, however, what can we say about the person who is least in the kingdom of God?

Verse 12 What role did John play in causing the kingdom of God to forcefully advance? (See also verse 14, which is a reference to Malachi 4:5,6.)

The last phrase of this verse tells us that forceful men were laying hold on the kingdom. How does this fact help us understand why the present kingdom of God is not as glorious as we might think it should be?

Verses 16-19 Interpret each line of the saying in verse 17.

- “We played the flute for you,”
- “and you did not dance;”
- “we sang a dirge,”
- “and you did not mourn.”

What song do you think the people of Jesus’ day would have liked to dance to?

What songs do the following groups want to dance to today: liberals, charismatics, many Evangelicals, Roman Catholics?

If people are truly wise, what song will they dance to?

11:20-24 Jesus rebukes the Jews’ unbelief

See 1 Corinthians 1:22. Jews demand miraculous signs, but are they ever convinced by them?

Why will it be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for the cities in which Jesus performed miracles?

11:25-30 Through the gospel message God’s elect come to faith

This section contains three thoughts that the servant in the kingdom of God must always bear in mind. Before you study this section, read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

Verses 25,26 Why does God hide the truths of the kingdom from the wise and learned?

Who are the little children to whom he reveals these truths?

Verse 27 Are any of us by nature the little children who are receptive to the gospel? Why does anyone come to faith?

Verses 28-30 To whom does Jesus' gospel invitation go out?

Read Luke 11:46. How does Jesus' yoke differ from that of the teachers of the law?

Summary

At one point even John was not sure about Jesus. The people of his day shared his doubt, but to a much greater degree. Jesus warned the Jews not to look for a different kingdom than the one God wants to give them. Nor should we.

God's message of grace is for all, but it's only by his grace that anyone comes to faith. Those who do receive rest for their souls.

For next time

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 12 several times.