

Matthew 11

Jesus reassures the disciples of John the Baptist, rebukes several cities, rejoices in his Father's wisdom, and reveals that he is the only way to the Father.¹

My thanks to the Outline Bible for help with this outline.

- I. The Reassuring by the Savior (Matthew 11:1-19).
 - a. **John's request to Jesus** (Matthew 11:1-3): In a moment of doubt, the imprisoned Baptist sends a group of men to Jesus.
 - b. *Who they are* (Matthew 11:1-2): They are John's disciples.
 - c. *What they ask* (Matthew 11:3): John wants to know if Christ is really the Messiah.
- II. **John's reassurance by Jesus** (Matthew 11:4-19)
 - a. *The proof for John* (Matthew 11:4-6): They are to return and tell John concerning all the miracles they see Christ do.
 - b. *The praise of John* (Matthew 11:7-11): Jesus says John is one of history's greatest men!
 - c. *The prophet like John* (Matthew 11:12-15): Jesus compares John's ministry with that of Elijah.
 - d. *The prejudice against John* (Matthew 11:16-19): Jesus condemns his generation, who accuses John of being demon-possessed!²
- III. THE REBUKING BY THE SAVIOR (Matthew 11:20-24): Jesus denounces three Galilean cities.
 - a. **Korazin and Bethsaida** (Matthew 11:20-22)
 - i. *Their privilege* (Matthew 11:20-21a): He did many miracles among them.
 - ii. *Their pride* (Matthew 11:21b): They rejected him.
 - iii. *Their punishment* (Matthew 11:22): Wicked Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than they!
 - b. **Capernaum** (Matthew 11:23-24)
 - i. *Its privilege* (Matthew 11:23b): Identical to that of the above cities.
 - ii. *Its pride* (Matthew 11:23a): Identical to that of the above cities.
 - iii. *Its punishment* (Matthew 11:24): Wicked Sodom will be better off on the judgment day than Capernaum!³
- IV. The Rejoicing by the Savior (Matthew 11:25-26).
- V. The Revealing by the Savior (Matthew 11:27-30).
 - a. **The illumination** (Matthew 11:27): The believer can only know the Father through the Son.
 - b. **The invitation** (Matthew 11:28-30): Jesus invites the weary and burdened to find their rest in him.⁴

¹ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Mt 11.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Verse by verse:

Matthew 11

Jesus reassures the disciples of John the Baptist, rebukes several cities, rejoices in his Father's wisdom, and reveals that he is the only way to the Father.⁵

My thanks to the Outline Bible for help with this outline.

- I. The Reassuring by the Savior (Matthew 11:1-19).
 - a. **John's request to Jesus** (Matthew 11:1-3): In a moment of doubt, the imprisoned Baptist sends a group of men to Jesus.

Matthew 11:1-3 (NASB95)

John's Questions

- 1 *When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.*
- 2 *Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples*
- 3 *and said*
 - b. *Who they are* (Matthew 11:1-2): They are John's disciples.
 - c. Notice that this is all happening following Jesus's instructions.
 - d. It is more literally, "It came about when..."
 - e. It says that He had finished giving instructions to the 12 disciples.
 - f. So, the context is that in the previous chapter He had been sending out the 12 disciples and teaching them.
 - g. Now, Jesus leaves to teach and preach in their cities...
 - h. It is interesting that we see both of the words for "teach" and "preach." They are not the same. To teach is to give "instruction," and to "preach" is to "announce," or "proclaim."
 - i. What cities? Whose cities?
 - j. The ESV Study Bible says: **When Jesus had finished** signals the conclusion of the Mission Discourse (ch. 10) and provides a transition to the next section. **he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.** Jesus carried on his mission while the Twelve went on theirs (ch. 10).⁶
 - k. The IVP BBC NT helps: *Emissaries would often be sent to prepare people for the coming of a king or other important figure before his arrival. "Cities" is meant in a broad rather than a technical Greek sense: there is no indication that Jesus approached major cities like Sepphoris or Tiberias. Even most of the larger*

⁵ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Mt 11.

⁶ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1842.

- agricultural towns had fewer than three thousand inhabitants, and the Galilean countryside was full of villages.*⁷
- l. So we can see what He was doing and who He was teaching.
 - m. Verse 2 clues us into this section.
 - n. Verse 1 is more of a transition verse.
 - o. Moody: *Matthew 11:2 provides a transition with John the Baptist inquiring about **the works of Christ**. Chapters 4–10 emphasized the authority of Christ based upon His teaching and healing ministry, and beginning in chap. 11 the main theme revolves around how one should respond to Jesus.*⁸
 - p. Verse 2 tells us about John’s disciples.
 - q. Sproul sheds some light:
 - r. *It was during this time, **when Jesus was without His closest followers**, that John the Baptist sent two of his own disciples to ask Jesus a question. We are told that John “had heard in prison about the works of Christ.” Matthew does not explain whether these were the works Jesus did in this specific time or those He had been performing throughout His ministry. Notice, however, that Matthew did not say “the works of Jesus.” Rather, he spoke of “the works of Christ,” that is, the Messiah. Matthew had no doubt as to who Jesus was. However, John did. He wanted to know, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*⁹
 - s. Notice now John is in prison.
 - t. We have to fill in the gap that this is John the baptizer. Context helps us with that.
 - u. He is in prison, yet he does have contact with his disciples and sends them to Jesus.
 - v. So, we see that John has disciples as well. We know that from John chapter 1 as well.
 - w. *What they ask* (Matthew 11:3): John wants to know if Christ is really the Messiah.
 - x. John is having a weak moment.
 - y. IVP BBC NT: *John’s attitude here contrasts strikingly with 3:14. Some commentators have suggested that John is concerned about reports that Jesus has been touching the unclean (8:3; 9:20, 25); to this report Jesus replies with the results of those touches (11:5). More likely, John, like most of his contemporaries, is tempted to think of a kingdom bringer (3:11) or royal Messiah rather than a miracle worker, so Jesus vindicates his healing mission with a text about the blessings of the messianic era (11:5). **John’s disciples had probably traveled on the main road northward from Herod’s fortress Machaerus, where John was imprisoned, through Perea beside the Jordan, to cross into Galilee, where Jesus was teaching.***¹⁰

⁷ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 11:1.

chap. chapter

⁸ Michael G. Vanlaningham, [“Matthew,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1471.

⁹ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 334.

¹⁰ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 11:2–3.

- z. This should be somewhat encouraging. Even John the baptizer had doubts. In verse 11, Jesus will say that John was the greatest of those born of women.
- aa. Did you know that John was of the Old Testament line of prophets?
- bb. Swindoll shares:
- cc. *Doubts will arise because we are human. We are thinking horizontally*
- dd. *Doubts may temporarily disturb our relationship with God but they do not permanently destroy it*
- ee. *Special blessings await those who can live with lives inequities*
- ff. *If we choose to linger, we are on the road to cynicism.*
- gg. *Doubts will come, but they need not derail us. If we starve them it is a remarkable recovery. Again, If we linger on them, we are on the road to cynicism.*¹¹
- hh. **All the notes from a Tim Keller message are great:**
- ii. Tim Keller shares: *There are two things in the text that tells us why John was confused about the identity of Jesus. The first was because his life was going so badly. You notice it says he heard in prison.*
- jj. *John the Baptist had been the sensation of the nation. John the Baptist had been the star of the nation. Huge crowds, multitudes came out to hear him, and he had gotten up to a place essentially of great popular power, and he had denounced corruption in the government, but he went too far. Herod had thrown him into jail, thrown him into prison, and now his life was hanging by a thread, and he was irrelevant and forgotten because all the crowds had gone to Jesus.*¹²
- kk. *The second reason he was filled with doubts is a little more subtle, but why does Jesus say, "John, don't be offended" [verse 6]? See the last verse? Why does Jesus say to John, "John, don't be offended"? Clearly because Jesus understood that was John's problem.*¹³ Later, Keller writes about how clear Jesus was about being God, but then also shows how Jesus says, look at who I hang out with and what I do... No megalomaniac does that. Megalomaniacs hang out with people of status. Jesus did not do that.
- ll. As we look at this notice John does not say, "If you are the One, get me out of here!" No, he is asking if Jesus is the One.
- mm. Keller shares: *If you come with conditions, you don't really want to know who he is. You don't want to know. You're not open. John's question shows us you have to start by saying, "Are you the One?"*¹⁴
- nn. Based on verse 6 Keller shares: *The first thing Jesus says is, "You will not be able to know who I am and what I am and why I am who I am unless you feel my offensiveness." That's the first thing he says. You say, "Where does he say that?" Well, see, in verse 6, he says, "The only people who are blessed are those who find no offense."*

¹¹ Swindoll; Insight for Living; 05.19.2021

¹² Timothy J. Keller, [The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive](#) (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

- oo. *This is the weirdest beatitude there is, by the way, in the Bible. “Blessed is the one who doesn’t take offense with me.” Think about this with me for a moment. Would you just reflect? What Jesus is saying is, “The only people who have found the blessedness of Jesus are those who must have wrestled with my offensiveness. They must have felt my offensiveness.” See? That’s the only reason he would’ve said it this way.*¹⁵
 - pp. *Well, the claims of Christ are astonishing. At one point he says, “Before Abraham was, I am.” He claims to be eternally existent from the beginning. He claims the divine name. He says, “I will come back to judge the living and the dead, the heaven and the earth.” He takes and encourages people to worship him. In fact, it’s on every page.*¹⁶
 - qq. *John realized that if he’s the One, a relationship with him will be limitless in its commitment. John realizes that if Jesus is the One, if he’s not wicked or crazy ... you see, there’s no in between now ... it means Jesus can demand anything and he can give anything, that a relationship with this Messiah would be very different than with an inoffensive Messiah. A relationship with an offensive Messiah like this means that the relationship will be all-absorbing and limitless in the commitment.*¹⁷
 - rr. *Christian friends, do you realize that one of the reasons why we are not having Jesus as a transforming presence in our lives is because to some degree we make him inoffensive? We tame him. We don’t like to see how utterly we are dependent on his grace and how completely we need to obey him. We don’t feel his offensiveness, and therefore, we don’t marvel at him. We’re not experiencing the blessedness.*¹⁸
 - ss. *Sproul points out: Perhaps he thought along the same lines as most of the people of the nation—that the Messiah would be a mighty King who would get rid of the Romans and bring to pass a spiritual kingdom where God would reign, not Caesar. But Jesus was doing nothing of the sort. So, John wondered: “What’s going on out there? I thought the Lamb of God was going to bring the kingdom of God that I announced. If this is the kingdom of God, what am I doing here?”*¹⁹
- II. **John’s reassurance by Jesus** (Matthew 11:4–19)
- a. *The proof for John* (Matthew 11:4–6): They are to return and tell John concerning all the miracles they see Christ do.

Matthew 11:4–6 (NASB95)

- 4 *Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see:*
- 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.*
- 6 *“And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”*

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 335.

- b. So, Jesus now answers John.
- c. See verse 5
- d. Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 35:5, but He actually blends in multiple Old Testament prophecies to encourage their faith. See Isaiah 26:19; 29:18–19; 61:1.
- e. NET: *The following activities all paraphrase various OT descriptions of the time of promised salvation: Isa 35:5–6; 26:19; 29:18–19; 61:1. Jesus is answering not by acknowledging a title, but by pointing to the nature of his works, thus indicating the nature of the time.*²⁰
- f. The blind receive sight.
- g. The lame walk.
- h. The lepers are cleansed.
- i. The deaf hear.
- j. The dead are raised up.
- k. The “poor” have the good news preached to them.
- l. Notice how poor is specified.
- m. Verse 6: blessed is He who does not take offense at me.
- n. I already read what Tim Keller shared about that.
- o. How powerful that is!
- p. Are we offended by Jesus?
- q. IVP BBC NT: *Some commentators have suggested that John is concerned about reports that Jesus has been touching the unclean (8:3; 9:20, 25); to this report Jesus replies with the results of those touches (11:5). More likely, John, like most of his contemporaries, is tempted to think of a kingdom bringer (3:11) or royal Messiah rather than a miracle worker, so Jesus vindicates his healing mission with a text about the blessings of the messianic era (11:5). John’s disciples had probably traveled on the main road northward from Herod’s fortress Machaerus, where John was imprisoned, through Perea beside the Jordan, to cross into Galilee, where Jesus was teaching.*²¹
- r. Another source: *John the Baptist previously expressed faith in Jesus as **the Christ** (3:14; Jn 1:29–37; 3:22–30). John’s doubts here were likely the result of his prolonged imprisonment and his disappointment that a “baptism of fire” had not yet occurred (Mt 3:11–12). Jesus identified himself as the one anointed by the Spirit in Is 61:1–3. However, Is 61:1 promised that the anointed one would “proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to the prisoners.” John probably interpreted the prophecy literally and thus mistakenly expected a miraculous release from prison.*²²

²⁰ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 11:4.

²¹ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 11:2–3.

²² Charles L. Quarles, [“Matthew,”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1518.

- s. The ESV Study Bible about verse 6: *The beatitude is a mild rebuke; John and his disciples must be open to God's unfolding plan, even though Jesus' ministry did not exactly match their messianic expectations (see note on vv. 3–5).*²³
- t. Sproul:
 - u. *It almost sounds as if Jesus is a bit annoyed with the question and therefore a bit dismissive of it. He seems to have told the disciples of John to go back and tell him about the very kinds of works that were not meeting his expectations. However, I do not really think that is what Jesus was saying. Instead, I believe He was simply telling the two disciples, "Go back and tell John to read his Bible, and then see whether he is still in doubt about who I am."*²⁴
 - v. *The praise of John* (Matthew 11:7–11): Jesus says John is one of history's greatest men!

Matthew 11:7–11 (NASB95)

Jesus' Tribute to John

- 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?*
- 8 *"But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces!*
- 9 *"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.*
- 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.'
- 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.*

- w. Notice Jesus is speaking to the crowd.
- x. Jesus is talking behind John's back but in a positive way.
- y. Jesus asks questions that imply negative answers.
- z. Did you go out in the wilderness to see a reed shaken by the wind? Obviously, no.
- aa. Did you go out to see someone in soft clothing? Obviously, no.
- bb. Jesus says only people in king's palaces wear negative clothing.
- cc. In verse 9, Jesus asks a question that anticipates a positive answer. "Did you go out to see a prophet?" Yes, and John is more than a prophet.
- dd. In verse 10 Jesus quotes from Mal. 3:1 about John's role. John was a forerunner, a messenger, not a disciple.

²³ Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1842.

²⁴ Robert Charles Sproul, *Matthew*, St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 336.

- ee. Verse 11 is interesting: among those born of women... that is everyone, there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! But the one least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he... hmmm. What a paradox.
- ff. Sproul shares: [a reed shaken in the wind...] that is, someone who could be blown here and there with every wind of doctrine, a pious little clergyman with no backbone? The obvious answer was no, they had not gone to see such a non-spectacle...²⁵
- gg. Further about verse 11, *Think about what Jesus was saying. Of all the men who have ever lived—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah—not one of them was greater than John the Baptist. In fact, no one at all had ever surpassed John’s greatness since the world began. What a testimonial this was. I sometimes think that John the Baptist is the most underestimated person in the whole New Testament, if not in the whole Bible, but he certainly was not underestimated in Jesus’ opinion.*²⁶
- hh. ESV Study Bible: **Those born of women** is a Jewish idiom for ordinary human birth (cf. Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4), and Jesus implicitly contrasts this with the new birth into the kingdom of heaven. **no one greater.** John’s mission was uniquely privileged because he prepared the way for the Messiah and the kingdom. **greater than he.** But those in **the kingdom of heaven** have the greater privilege because they have actually entered the kingdom (in its new covenant reality) and become partakers in the new covenant through the blood of Christ. (On the salvation of believers in the OT, see Romans 4; see also notes on Matt. 22:31–32; Rom. 10:14–15; Heb. 11:4.)²⁷
- ii. The Reformation Study Bible: **The least in the kingdom are more privileged than John because they stand after the cross and resurrection and thus, having received the fullness of the Spirit and the revelation of Christ’s full ministry in the new age, they participate in what the prophets only saw from a distance (1 Pet. 1:10–12). Thus, the “least in the kingdom of heaven” is greater than John because they have received more revelation than any OT prophet, including John, the greatest prophet of the old age.**²⁸
- jj. IVP BBC NT: *This statement elevates Jesus’ disciples rather than demeans John (cf. 11:9–10). One may compare the early rabbinic saying that Johanan ben Zakkai, one of the most respected scholars of the first century, was the “least” of Hillel’s eighty disciples; this saying was not meant to diminish Johanan’s status but to increase that of his contemporaries. Calling John the “greatest” was a typically Jewish form of praise, which could be applied to more than one person at a time; rabbis, for instance, could in the same breath speak of both Joseph and Moses as the greatest figures of Israel’s history (in the Old Testament cf., e.g., 2 Kings 18:5; 23:25). Those*

²⁵ Ibid. 336.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1842.

²⁸ R. C. Sproul, ed., [The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version \(2015 Edition\)](#) (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 1690.

“born of women” was a familiar Old Testament and Jewish expression for humans (e.g., Job 14:1).²⁹

kk. *The prophet like John* (Matthew 11:12–15): Jesus compares John’s ministry with that of Elijah.

Matthew 11:12–15 (NASB95)

- 12 *“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.*
- 13 *“For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John.*
- 14 *“And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.*
- 15 *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

ll. Now, Jesus is speaking in a way about hardship and suffering.

mm. The Kingdom of God advances by “violence.” That is what this means.

nn. Moody: *Verse 12 is puzzling, but it probably should read, “The kingdom has violence done to it, and violent men are seeking to seize it.” The verb **suffers violence** could be middle voice (“The kingdom is forcefully advancing itself” or something like it) but is probably a true passive judging from the parallel expression **violent men take it** [“violently seize” it] **by force**. The verse indicates the spiritual battle the opponents were waging against John and later Jesus as these opponents discouraged people from following them.³⁰*

oo. Keller shares: *Bottom line, the kingdom of heaven means someone is coming to put everything straight, to make the world right again, to right all wrongs. Our fiction is full of talking about some golden age of the past, or some future age in which all the psychological, social, and physical problems are put straight and everyone is happy. Of course our fiction is full of talking about an age like that.³¹*

pp. Verse 13: all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. This would be the OT Law.

qq. John is Elijah... This means that he came in the 2 Kings 2:15 way of Elijah and Elisha: The same Spirit of the Lord was on Elisha as Elijah, much like John the Baptist

rr. Verse 15: we have ears... We are not dumb idols... We must listen.

ss. Keller shares: *Jesus says, “Look at John the Baptist. Because he got radicalized by the kingdom of heaven and that message, he’s an outsider. Anyone who wants the kingdom of God, anyone who wants to follow me, must be willing to take the scorn of other people.” It’s different. Some places Christians are just snubbed, other places Christians are just shot, but the principle is the same.³²*

²⁹ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 11:11.

³⁰ Michael G. Vanlaningham, [“Matthew,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1472.

³¹ Timothy J. Keller, [The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive](#) (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

³² *Ibid.*

- tt. Listen, John knew the Kingdom of God had come and he cried out like a wild man that the prophecies are true. Jesus is affirming him.
- uu. [in the movie Hook] Steven Spielberg has Maggie Smith playing an old, old Wendy, talking to Robin Williams, who's a grown-up Peter Pan who doesn't remember his past, and what does she say to him? "Peter, the stories are true." Maggie Smith, like Caiaphas, prophesied without knowing it. She said something that probably neither she nor Steven Spielberg realized. That's the gospel.³³
- vv. Do you know what it means to become a Christian? The message of John the Baptist was, "If you want to receive the kingdom of heaven, you must repent." In *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, Charlton Heston is the best John the Baptist I've ever seen on the screen. All he ever does is run around saying, "Repent!" Just before they take his head off you can hear him down the corridor. They don't show it to you. You can hear him off in the dungeon yelling, "Repent!" Whack!³⁴
- ww. ESV Study Bible: *That the kingdom has suffered violence (Gk. biazō) probably indicates opposition from the religious establishment, and the violent take it by force probably refers to the actions of specific evil people like Herod Antipas, who had arrested John.*³⁵
- xx. CSB: Jesus explained that John the Baptist fulfilled this role and that his ministry signaled the dawn of the day of the Lord. Malachi 4:3 promised that the day of the Lord would be a time when God's people "will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet." This signals that violent suppression of the kingdom will soon end (see note at Mt 11:12).³⁶
- yy. Sproul: With these words, Jesus acknowledged that the kingdom of God that John had proclaimed and that He Himself was preaching was already encountering violent opposition. The breakthrough of the kingdom had stirred up wickedness. The demonic realm was aroused. Attacks were happening. *After all, John had been violently seized and thrown into prison.* John was a prophet, God's channel of revelation, just as "the prophets and the law"—the Old Testament revelation—had been. But as Jesus elsewhere made clear, the religious establishment of Israel had always been intolerant of God's prophets (Matt. 23:37), so their treatment of John was no surprise.³⁷
- zz. *The prejudice against John* (Matthew 11:16–19): Jesus condemns his generation, who accuses John of being demon-possessed!³⁸

³³ Timothy J. Keller, [The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive](#) (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1842.

³⁶ Charles L. Quarles, "[Matthew](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1519.

³⁷ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 342.

³⁸ Ibid.

Matthew 11:16–19 (NASB95)

- 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,*
17 *and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’*
18 *“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’*
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.”*

aaa. In verse 16, Jesus begins with a question in order to prompt His teaching.

bbb. Children sitting in a market place...

ccc. They call out to other children...

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

eee. They criticized John who did not eat and drink... They criticized Jesus Who did...

fff. What is this?

ggg. The people were always dissatisfied.

hhh. We should allow the evidence to answer us. Jesus says, “wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

iii. This generation is John and Jesus’s generation.

jjj. Verse 2 of this chapter references the words of Christ, and then in verse 5.

kkk. ESV SB: *However, God’s **wisdom** (Gk. *sophia*) would be **justified** (vindicated) by the righteous fruit of John’s and Jesus’ life and ministry.*³⁹

lll. CSB: *In an ancient version of the game “Simon says,” if a designated child **played a pretend flute**, the other children were supposed to **dance**. If he **sang a lament**, they were supposed to **mourn**. However, like unresponsive children, Israel did not pay heed to the ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist. The reference to wisdom’s **deeds** parallels the reference to Messiah’s deeds (v. 2) and implies that Jesus’s claims were vindicated by the acts described in vv. 4–6. Between the time of the OT and the NT, Jewish interpreters elaborated on Pr 8:32–36 and taught that **wisdom was an eternal being who served as God’s agent in the creation of the world**. **By identifying himself with personified Wisdom, Jesus hinted that he is the eternal one through whom the Father created everything (Jn 1:3).**⁴⁰*

³⁹ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1843.

v. verse

vv. verses

OT Old Testament

NT New Testament

⁴⁰ Charles L. Quarles, [“Matthew,”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1519.

mmm.IVP BBC NT: Spoiled children who pretend to have weddings and funerals (one later game was called “bury the grasshopper”) stand for Jesus’ and John’s dissatisfied opponents; dissatisfied with other children who will not play either game, they are sad no matter what. The term for “mourn” here is “beat the breast,” a standard mourning custom in Jewish Palestine. Custom mandated that bystanders join in any bridal or funeral processions.⁴¹

nnn. Glutton and drunkard” was also a capital charge (Deut 21:20); hence this is a serious accusation.⁴²

ooo. Sproul: In a word, Jesus regarded that generation of Jews, and particularly the leaders, as childish.⁴³

ppp. To make His point, Jesus constructed an elaborate comparison based on a scene from everyday life. The marketplace was not only the place where people bought and sold things; it was where all of the social events took place. It was where funerals were conducted. It was where parties were held. It was also a playground for the children, for whenever people came together for commerce, they brought their children. These youngsters played games together while their parents were doing business, and sometimes their games involved music and singing. But Jesus imagined a scenario in which the children were unhappy and complaining because when they played their merry flutes, no one danced. Conversely, when they sang mournful songs, no one lamented. No one would listen to them and do what they asked, so the children were annoyed and dissatisfied.⁴⁴

qqq. John the Baptist came out of the wilderness as an ascetic, a person given to self-denial. The response of the people was to regard him as a lunatic, perhaps even a victim of demonic possession. They knew or should have known that the desert was the traditional meeting place between God and His prophets, and that John’s clothing and conduct were reminiscent of Elijah. Clearly he had all the characteristics of a prophet, the first in four hundred years. He was bringing them the Word of God. But instead of receiving him, they slandered him.

rrr. By contrast, Jesus was not an ascetic. He ate and drank in the normal fashion. He went to parties and attended dinners. In short, He did the things John the Baptist was criticized for not doing. **Still, the people were not satisfied**, and Jesus was accused of being overly fond of food and wine. In other words, He was regarded as a glutton and a drunkard. This, too, was slander, for Jesus was never drunk in His life. Plus, it was said that He fellowshiped with all the wrong people—tax collectors and sinners. He could not even please the people by the company He kept.

sss. **The problem was that the people’s expectations and preferences could not be satisfied.** I see this kind of thing sometimes following the Ligonier National Conference.

⁴¹ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 11:16–17.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Robert Charles Sproul, *Matthew*, St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 344.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 344-345.

We always ask people to fill out sheets to evaluate the conference and tell us what they liked and did not like. The staff reads every one of them. They take these comments very seriously and try to implement requested changes as they are planning the next conference. But sometimes they will end up with a stack of evaluation forms saying, "There was too much music," and another stack saying, "There was not enough music." How can they possibly fix that kind of disagreement? It cannot be done. It is impossible to completely satisfy every person who comes to a conference. In some way, the conference will fail to live up to their expectations and preferences.⁴⁵

ttt. [verse 19] **This is what James was saying when he wrote, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (2:24).** When people try to refute the doctrine of justification by faith alone, they rush to this verse. That is what the Roman Catholic Church did in the sixteenth century. Rome's scholars pointed to this verse to try to convince the Reformers that the Bible says we are justified by faith and works. However, when Paul speaks about justification in Romans, he is talking about how we are made right with God. James is speaking to a different situation. He asks: "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (2:14). He spends nearly a whole chapter answering the question with an emphatic no, showing that faith that does not yield works, faith without fruit, is a dead faith. The faith that justifies is a living faith that brings forth the fruit of obedience. That obedience does not save. But if it is not present, that is the clearest proof that faith is no faith at all. When James says a man is justified by works, he means that the man's works demonstrate or vindicate his faith.

uuu. **Jesus is speaking here about people who always have the wrong response to the Word of God. How do you respond to it? Do you embrace the whole counsel of God? Or do you come to the Bible as if it is a smorgasbord where you pick a little love, a little mercy, and a little grace, but you leave the wrath, the justice, and the holiness on the table? Is your God the Lord omnipotent who reigns, or is He an idol of your own making? Is the Savior you embrace the One who calls you to take up your cross and follow Him, or is He simply Jesus meek and mild, who will not ask anything of you? We need to have ears to hear the Word of God.**⁴⁶

III. THE REBUKING BY THE SAVIOR (Matthew 11:20–24): Jesus denounces three Galilean cities.

Matthew 11:20–24 (NASB95)

The Unrepenting Cities

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

⁴⁵ Ibid, 345–346.

⁴⁶ Robert Charles Sproul, *Matthew*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 346.

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

- a. **Korazin and Bethsaida (Matthew 11:20–22)**
- b. *Their privilege (Matthew 11:20–21a): He did many miracles among them.*
- c. *These cities had advantages.*
- d. *It says most of His miracles were done in these cities. Yet, they did not repent.*
- e. **They were indifferent. They were apathetic.**
- f. *There are not many miracles recorded in these cities, but at the end of John’s Gospel, he writes that more was done but not recorded (John 21:25).*
- g. *Miracles are about repentance.*
- h. *Sproul*
- i. *Jesus specifically addressed Chorazin and Bethsaida with oracles of woe. When we looked at the Beatitudes, I noted that prophetic utterances in biblical times were delivered through a literary device called the oracle, which was a divine pronouncement. There were positive oracles, or oracles of blessing, and there were negative oracles, or oracles of doom. The positive oracles, which promised good news, were prefaced by the word blessed. We saw examples of oracles of blessing in the Beatitudes, where Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit ... Blessed are those who mourn ... Blessed are the meek ...” and so on (Matt. 5:3–11). Those were prophetic statements, proclamations of God’s blessing on certain people. But the flip side of the oracle of blessing was the oracle of doom, the pronouncement of divine judgment on people. This type of oracle was preceded by the word woe.*
- j. *The prophetic literature of the Old Testament is replete with woes: “Woe to the wicked!” (Isa. 3:11); “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness” (Jer. 22:13); “Woe to the foolish prophets” (Ezek. 13:3); “Woe to you who are at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1); “Woe to those who devise iniquity” (Mic. 2:1); “Woe to him who covets evil gain” (Hab. 2:9); and “Woe to the worthless shepherd” (Zech. 11:17). But oracles of woe are not just an Old Testament feature. In the book of Revelation, John witnessed an angel crying, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth” (8:13). And, of course, we have the woes Jesus delivered against the Pharisees and the scribes. As we will see when we study Matthew 23, He pronounced a whole series of woes on these Jewish religious leaders.⁴⁷*

⁴⁷ Ibid, 349–350.

- k. *Chorazin* was a town of Galilee that was probably fairly small in contrast to *Bethsaida* and is otherwise unattested. *Bethsaida* was declared a *polis* by the tetrarch Herod Philip, sometime after A.D. 30.⁴⁸
- l. *Tyre and Sidon* are two other notorious OT cities (Isa 23; Jer 25:22; 47:4). The remark is a severe rebuke, in effect: “Even the sinners of the old era would have responded to the proclamation of the kingdom, unlike you!”⁴⁹
- m. Keller:
 - n. *Many crowds came to those cities.*
 - o. *They were amazed.*
 - p. *They were amazed at His miracles.*
 - q. *They were big cities.*
 - r. *But they did not repent.*
 - s. *They were amazed but did not repent. They liked Him, but they did not change their live (See Matt 11:26ff).*
 - t. *This is from Jesus.*
 - u. *Jesus knows all there is to know about God.*
 - v. *Jesus knows all.*
 - w. *No one knows the Son except the Father*
 - x. *Their equality is here (verse 27).*
 - y. *Salvation is by Jesus.*
 - z. ***Jesus came not to help people achieve their goals but to be their goals.***
 - aa. *He is the only way to approach God.*
 - bb. *Tyre and Sidon were better than Chorazin and Bethsaida because they at least liked Him.*
 - cc. *Jesus must be our savior and Lord.*
 - dd. *We must be spiritually a little child.*
 - ee. *Matt 11:25 Jesus uses a word for “little children.” A little child is totally dependent on the parent.*
 - ff. *Matt 11:25-27 is a circle. Christ's claims make us dependent on Him. We go from hiding from Him to being spiritual children.*
 - gg. ***We want to run to Matt 11:28 without going through Matt 11:27.***
 - hh. *Matt 11:25: Jesus is saying that God has hidden these things from these cities, and they will kill Him, and that is okay with Him.*
 - ii. *Doubt is welcome... let what Jesus says make you little children. We must make Him Lord. We can't be indifferent to Him.*⁵⁰
- jj. Piper:
 - kk. *Notice more observations (total of 5 see the others on other note):*
 1. *There will be a judgment day.*
 2. *Jesus knows what kind of influence will bring a people, and He decides whether to give it or not.*
 3. *Notice verse 20: He says if the mighty works were done... you would have repented long ago. This is also similar in verse 23. This is difficult when*

⁴⁸ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 11:21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Tim Keller message podcast. 12.09.2022

compared with 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and 2 Timothy 2:24-25, where we see that He May or may not grant repentance.

4. *In verses 22 and 25, we see degrees of punishment.*

5. *All punishment is not the same. See Luke 12:47-48.⁵¹*

ll. *Their pride (Matthew 11:21b): They rejected him.*

mm. *Their punishment (Matthew 11:22): Wicked Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than they!*

nn. *Judgment from Sproul:*

Here we encounter that subject which so often causes our hearing to shut down—judgment. Jesus said quite plainly that there is going to be a day of judgment. However, very few people take seriously the biblical teaching that a day is coming when God will judge the world—a day when God will judge individuals such as you and me.

One of my favorite hymns is “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me.” The final stanza reads:

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.¹

When you and I draw our last breaths on this planet, when our eyelids close for the last time on earth, we will soar to worlds unknown, and the first thing we will see is Christ seated on His throne of judgment. If we ever wanted to sing, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee,” it will be in that moment. If we are not hidden in Christ, clothed in His righteousness, that day of judgment will be absolute calamity. But so many people in this world are filled with conviction that they have nothing to fear from God. There is no fear of Him in their eyes. Their hearts have calluses, so they disregard the warning of the Son of God. This is what the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida did when Jesus came into their midst and showed He was the spokesman for God, the incarnate Word of God, by the blaze of miracles He performed.

*But Jesus did not simply affirm the day of judgment here. Many people assume that at death a person goes to heaven or hell, and that’s it. You are either in or out, and there is no difference in blessedness or woe from one person to another. **But notice that Jesus said to Chorazin and Bethsaida, “It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” Just as we have seen several times in Matthew already, Jesus here indicated that there are degrees of punishment in hell.***

I have talked to many men who fell into illicit relationships with women. Usually, the problem began with lust, and the men said to themselves, “Well, I have lusted after her, so I might as well go on.” I cannot fathom where this kind of thinking originates. When we come before the judgment seat of God, we will face the bar of perfect justice, and we will be convicted for every

⁵¹ Piper, Look at the Book, January 21, 2020: <https://youtu.be/yo9rZZ8hFqE>

¹ From the hymn “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me” by Augustus M. Toplady, 1776.

single sin we have committed in our lifetimes. It is certainly better to refrain from adultery even if lust has already occurred, for the punishment for two sins will be worse than the punishment for one.

Also, we will be judged according to the light we have received. Every time a sinner hears the Word of God and resists it, his judgment is greater. It is better for him to flee from the church and never come back, because then he will not have the light to make him more and more guilty. Of course, he also will not have the light he needs to go to heaven.

The Apostle Paul writes, “And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?” (Rom. 2:3). That is the greatest folly a human being can commit—to think that he will escape the judgment of God. How can he do it? Does he have a getaway car reserved at the pearly gates? Is he going to fool God and keep his sins hidden from Him? There is no way to escape. The judgment of God is absolutely unavoidable.

Paul goes on: “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds’ ” (vv. 4–6). People read this passage and say, “Oh, I thought we were justified by faith.” We are, but all our deeds will be judged. The person who is impenitent and does not have saving faith will be judged according to his sinful deeds. God will render “eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil” (vv. 7–9a).

We might be tempted to think that because Jesus pronounced woes on Chorazin and Bethsaida, He hated them. On the contrary, He loved them. That was why He told them to wake up. The day of salvation had dawned upon them and their Savior was in their midst. If the wicked people of Tyre and Sidon had seen what the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida had seen, they would have repented in abject humiliation.⁵²

oo. **Capernaum** (Matthew 11:23–24)

pp. *Capernaum* was a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, 680 ft (204 m) below sea level. It was a major trade and economic center in the North Galilean region.⁵³

qq. Sproul: *Of the three, we find by far the most references to Capernaum because that was where Peter resided and where Jesus made His headquarters for His Galilean ministry. However, the town of Chorazin is never mentioned in the Gospels except*

⁵² Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 350–352.

⁵³ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 11:22–23.

here and in a parallel passage (Luke 10:13–16), and Bethsaida is mentioned only a few times.⁵⁴

- i. *Its privilege* (Matthew 11:23b): Identical to that of the above cities.
 - ii. *Its pride* (Matthew 11:23a): Identical to that of the above cities.
 - iii. *Its punishment* (Matthew 11:24): Wicked Sodom will be better off on the judgment day than Capernaum!⁵⁵
 - iv. Capernaum will descend to hades.
- rr. ESV Study Bible: **Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum** were **the cities** in which most of Jesus' miracles were performed, and yet their occupants rejected Jesus' mission and remained unrepentant. Chorazin has been identified with Khirbet Karazeh, just northwest of Capernaum. **Tyre and Sidon** were Gentile cities in Phoenicia (see Mark 7:24) and were often the object of condemnation by OT prophets for their Baal worship and arrogant materialism. **Sodom** was the epitome of a "city of sin." Yet, Jesus says, even Sodom would have repented if it had witnessed his miracles and the reality of the kingdom.⁵⁶
- IV. The Rejoicing by the Savior (Matthew 11:25-26).

Matthew 11:25–26 (NASB95)

Come to Me

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.*

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

- a. Sproul: Jonathan Edwards, the great New England preacher of the eighteenth century, is most famous for his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." But that was not the sermon that catapulted Edwards into national prominence. Rather, it was an earlier sermon titled "A Divine and Supernatural Light." In that magnificent sermon, Edwards set forth the remarkable way in which God from heaven supernaturally enlightens our hearts and souls so as to bring us to see the sweetness and the excellence of Christ. Without that divine and supernatural light, no one would trust Christ. But again, God does not give it to all.⁵⁷
- b. *As we saw in the previous chapter, Jesus said Capernaum was "exalted to heaven" (v. 23), an apparent reference to pride and arrogance. Jesus' words in this prayer may*

⁵⁴ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 348.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1843.

⁵⁷ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 356.

*indicate that the Father withheld the revelation of His Son from the people of Capernaum because of that pride.*⁵⁸

- c. This is a theological statement.
- d. We have the Father's activity in verses 25-26 and the Son's in verse 27.
- e. It is about God's providence. It is about Him using His Divine omniscience.
- f. Jesus is praising the Father.
- g. He calls Him, Lord of Heaven and earth.
- h. Then He talks about God hiding certain things.
- i. Keller:
- j. *This is so powerful about Jesus. Tim Keller says don't say we are narrow about Jesus and the only way. No, you have an honest disagreement with God; just say that. Jesus came because we did not need another Buddha; our good works were not enough, and our spiritual disciplines were not enough.*
- k. *If you ask a religious person what makes them different, they will say their works.*
- l. *God's good pleasure is what makes us different.*
- m. *If a scientist says they have a cure for cancer, would we say they are being narrow? No, we would have first to do the research.*
- n. *If we say that Jesus is narrow, we must first do the research.*
- o. *If He said that He was God, He must have been crazy and wicked [or accurate].*
- p. *Jesus had just denounced people... Think about this for Him. He had always denounced with tears. Notice the difference between Matthew 11:24 and Matthew 11:25.*
- q. *The Gospel is not just the only thing that gets you into the Kingdom; the Gospel is the only way to face everything in life.*
- r. *In Matthew 11:25, Jesus praises God for His grace.*
- s. *Jesus was likely stressed confronting these cities and then turned to God for help. What do we do? Overeat...*
- t. *Boredom is forgetting that everything is grace.*
- u. *If we got what we deserve, we would not be here.*
- v. *Praising God for His grace transforms us psychologically and sociologically. We end up caring about the poor.*⁵⁹
- w. Piper:
- x. *Why did He say that [about not revealing to them]. It seems that that was their attitude. They must have been thinking that. They must have said that. They must have thought, "We have this great prophet here..." Jesus detected arrogance and that caused Him not to reveal things to them.*
- y. *Notice it says "The Father has hidden and revealed..." (verse 25) Then verse 27 "no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son reveals to Him."*⁶⁰
- z. ESV Study Bible:

⁵⁸ Ibid, 356.

⁵⁹ Keller podcast; 12.12.2022

⁶⁰ Piper, Look at the Book, January 25, 2020; <https://youtu.be/RK5QbwI2KUM>

- aa. *The message and activities of the kingdom of heaven, which require faith and humility to grasp. **wise and understanding**. Those who are wise in the world's eyes but are unrepentant and stubbornly refuse to accept the gospel. **little children**. Those who receive the gospel in simple faith (cf. 18:1–5).⁶¹*

V. The Revealing by the Savior (Matthew 11:27-30).

Matthew 11:27–30 (NASB95)

- 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.*
- 28 *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*
- 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.*
- 30 *“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

- a. **The illumination** (Matthew 11:27): The believer can only know the Father through the Son.

Piper: *how does the Father's revealing relate to the Son?*

no one knows the Son except the Father and anyone who the Father chooses to reveal Him. That is true.

The Father and the Son are in this together.

wider survey of how this works:

John 17:6

The Son manifests the Father's Name. This passage is all about the people being the Father's and given them to Jesus. The Son gives them back.

Matthew 16:16-17:

Peter had it revealed to him by the Father that Jesus is the Messiah.

John 1:14:

we have seen the Son's glory. Glory as the only Son from the Father. They saw but everyone does not see.

⁶¹ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1843.

1 Corinthians 4:6

God has shone in our hearts. The Father revealed this to Peter in Matthew 16:16-17

John 6:36-37: all that the Father gives will come to Him.

John 14:6-9:

Jesus says whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. If the true seeing happens (John 1:14 seeing) then seeing the Son is seeing the Father.

John 17:2-3:

God has given a people to Jesus and Jesus has authority and He gives them eternal life.

God has his elect (John 17:6), He gives them to the Son (John 17:6) by revealing the Son's glory (2 Corinthians 4:6; Matthew 16:16) and in that revealing they come to Jesus and in that revealing they see the Father and Jesus loses none (John 6:39).⁶²

- b. Sproul: *In his epistle to the Romans, Paul tells us that God has revealed Himself to all men by His creation (1:20), as I noted above. In their fallen state, men do not want anything to do with God. Nevertheless, the things they see in creation are clear evidences that there is a God; the knowledge of God gets through to everyone, and that is the universal basis for God's judgment on the guilt-laden human race. The fundamental sin of man is not that he does not know God, but that knowing God he refuses to honor Him as God (1:21). That is humanity's natural state. We know that God exists, but we do not honor Him.*⁶³
- c. ***The word that is translated as "knows" and "know" in this verse is in its intense form. That tells us that Jesus was saying something like this: "No one really knows the Son except the Father, and no one really knows the Father except the Son." In other words, He was saying that our knowledge of God, even as converted people, is infinitesimal. The knowledge that we gain of the things of God in this world, even if we study intently all of our days, is nothing compared to the depths and the riches of who God is in Himself eternally. To know the Son in His fullness is something only the Father (and the Holy Spirit, of course) can do. Likewise, only the Son (and the Spirit) can know the Father fully.***
- d. However, some human beings can come to know the Father: those "to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." We saw earlier that the Father conceals Jesus from some and

⁶² look at the Book, Piper, February 4, 2020; <https://youtu.be/KG5LQf21iCo>

⁶³ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 357.

reveals Him to others. Here Jesus said that He does the same for the Father. The Son makes the Father known, but not to all.⁶⁴

- e. **The invitation** (Matthew 11:28–30): Jesus invites the weary and burdened to find their rest in him.⁶⁵
- f. **This is the only time Jesus talks about His heart.**
- g. This is soul rest that Jesus offers.
- h. **Sproul:** *John Bunyan's magnificent allegory The Pilgrim's Progress, when Christian set out from the City of Destruction, he carried an enormous weight on his back that troubled him until he was able to lay it down at the cross. That baggage that was bearing him down was his guilt.*⁶⁶
- i. *The Bible sometimes uses that kind of yoke as a metaphor. For instance, we are told not to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers in marriage; that would be like putting two completely incompatible oxen together and expecting them to work as a team. Such an attempt is doomed to fail.*
- j. *However, Jesus was not talking about this kind of yoke. In ancient times, when a person carried a load, he might wear a yoke across his shoulders so he could carry his burden in a balanced fashion. Water was typically carried this way, with a bucket on each end of the yoke. That is the kind of yoke Jesus had in mind, and He promised such a yoke to everyone who came to Him. This yoke would make it easy for them to carry the burdens they could not carry without it.*
- k. *When we take this yoke, Jesus said, we learn from Him. Of course, the primary thing we learn from Him is Himself; He is both the Teacher and the lesson. Learning from Him means submitting to His authority and becoming His servant, as all disciples did. Paul understood that; his favorite self-designation in his letters is "bondservant of Jesus Christ." He was happy to be a slave of Christ, because the supreme irony is that until we become slaves of Christ, we do not know freedom. Our sin and guilt weigh us down and enslave us, but Jesus frees us from those burdens. He is a gentle and lowly Teacher who has the best interests of His students at heart.*
- l. *So, Jesus' yoke is easy compared to the yoke of slavery under which we labor as unforgiven sinners. His burden is light compared to the burden of guilt we carry.*⁶⁷

IVP BBC: *When a man carried a yoke he would carry it on his shoulders (cf., e.g., Jer 27:2); Judaism applied this image of subjection to obedience. Jewish people spoke of carrying the yoke of God's law and the yoke of his kingdom, which one accepted by acknowledging that God was one and by keeping his commandments. Matthew intends Jesus' words about rest as a contrast with Pharisaic sabbath rules in the following passage (12:1–14): the promise of "rest for your souls" comes from Jeremiah 6:16, where God promises to stay his wrath if the people turn to him instead of to the words of the false religious leaders (6:13–14, 20).*

⁶⁴ Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 357–358.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 359.

Greek literature praised meekness in the sense of gentleness and leniency but not in the sense of self-abasement; aristocrats disdained humility as a virtue, except for the lowly. Jesus, however, identifies with those of low social status, a value more prominent in Jewish piety.⁶⁸

m.

⁶⁸ Craig S. Keener, [*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 11:29–30.