

Introduction:

- In Matthew 11, Jesus resumes His mission: teaching and preaching in the towns of the region.
- John the Baptist is now in prison and hearing about all the Messiah is doing sends a delegation to ask Jesus a question: *"Are you the Messiah we have been expecting or should we keep looking for someone else?"* Mt 11:3 NLT
 - Have you noticed yet the number of questions that Matthew asks while writing his book?
 - When Matthew asks a question in his book, we should take note. His questions scream: "I am making an announcement! Please pay attention to what I am saying. I am now answering a bigger question than what appears!"
- What is the underlying question? Is Jesus really the Messiah?
- Jesus' answer to John. Jesus' appraisal of John. The people's response to Jesus and the consequence of rejecting Him.

I. Jesus' Answer to John

- A. Why is John uncertain? The simple fact that Jesus is not what he expected and this is puzzling.
 1. What was Jesus doing? Teaching, preaching, healing, driving out demons. Is this what a Messiah does? Very puzzling. "I thought Messiah would be more like..."
 2. What is His message of the kingdom? Beatitudes, parable of God's gracious rule, the anticipation of feasting in the kingdom of God.
 3. Where is the resonating thunder of judgment? Where is the rebuke of the wicked? Why all the power over demons and not wicked men? Why is he feasting with them? Why was Jesus doing nothing about His "Forerunner" rotting in Herod's jail?
 4. Could this possibly be the Messiah? To Matthew, Jesus answer is much more interesting than John's question. Or to say another way, "John's question only serves to point us to Jesus answer.
- B. Jesus Answer
 1. Tell him what you have heard and seen. *"Jesus told them, "Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor."* (Matthew 11:4-5, NLT) So he encourages them to listen and watch.
 2. The message. Jesus continues to cause the Word of God to live through His teaching. Is the same as John the Baptist, repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at near. His message is one of love, your life matters, you count to God. God wants a relationship with you.
 - a) vs 6 Jesus commends those who can accept the reality of God working without demanding of Him undue proof. It was Jesus way of reassuring John to believe and all of us as well.
 3. The ministry. Six things are happening (see Mt 11:4-5)

4. Jesus does not answer John's question. Rather Jesus' answers are the very things which, according to the prophets, would mark the breaking in of the Kingdom of God into the earth.
 - a) Is. 35:4-5
 - b) Is 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord is upon.
 - c) Jesus was assuring John according to the Word, which John would know, that He was not mistaken in his understanding of who Jesus is.
- C. Matthew asks the question which all of his readers may possibly be asking. Was Jesus really the Messiah. Jesus answers the question with the Word. "I am He!" Then the chapter begins a shift from Jesus' answer to John's question to the readers question of how does John fit into all of this? Jesus then gives his appraisal of John.

II. Jesus' Appraisal of John vs. 7-14

- A. John's credentials are also an answer to Matthew's question, "Are you the one?" Jesus begins to speak about John and asks, "What did you expect to find?"
 1. A weather vane that moves with the wind? No, he was like a rock that bowed to no one but God.
 2. A man in soft clothes? They would have laughed because John wore camel hair and ate locusts. He was not a pompous Pharisee.
 3. A prophet? Yes! That is exactly what you went out to see. His message caused the heart to burn because it was revelation to the spirit man. Yes! He was a thundering voice of judgment, calling the heart of man to awaken. Yes! He was a voice of heaven that pointed to Me.
 4. He was more than a prophet, because in Malachi 3, he was preparing the way for me! Turning hearts of fathers to children and children's hearts to Father...relationship with God!!!
- B. John is the greatest of all who have ever lived! Yet the one who is least/most insignificant in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than him.
 1. John was like Moses who viewed the promised land from the top of a mountain but never got to enter. John was literally one of those of Hebrews 11 who was able to see by faith and yet not receive what was promised.
 2. "Those who are least in the Kingdom of God are greater than John—greater not for what God does for what they do for God (In this John was unsurpassed) but for what God does for them." FF Bruce pp 114, *The Hard Sayings Of Jesus*.
 3. The imprisonment of John is a picture of verse 12. And will also serve to speak to his death later on. This is the violence of the confrontation of light with darkness. In spite of this 'temporary' set back of John the Baptist's imprisonment and execution it is literally the advancement of the Kingdom!!!

C. Verse 13: The Law, the prophets, and John all pointed to this time. Question: "Are you the messiah?" Matthew answers with a resounding YES!!!

III. The People's Appraisal of John and Jesus

A. Verse 15 "*If you have any ears to hear, listen.*" Another transition, that begins with the importance of not just hearing but responding to what is heard. The focus is on those who fail to respond to His message. (Now this is what John was looking to hear). Jesus sets up a parable of children in village life.

1. This generation is like children playing a game in the market square.
2. The point is that children were playing wedding and funeral and their friends will not play along.
3. Jesus and John are the pipers who declare the sound of heaven but the people are not responding. Then Jesus takes the parable to a serious place of application. Tyre and Sidon and Sodom.

B. Korazin and Bethsaida vs. Tyre and Sidon (Nineveh and Jonah-they repented).

C. Capernaum (a place of revelation) vs. Sodom (Sodom destroyed Capernaum does not stand a chance.)

Conclusion:

- Matthew closes chapter 11 by showing the favor those receive who receive Messiah.