

11:7

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 the Baptist is low and feeling it and he sends two disciples to Jesus and says, "Jesus, are you the one that is supposed to be coming or should we keep looking?" Jesus gives them some things out of Isaiah 35 to take back to John the Baptist, not John the apostle. “Were you looking for a bruised reed that has broken,” in other words?

11:8

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Are you looking for cute little tight jeans on John? **Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet?** “Yeah, you found one. **Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.** He's quoting Malachi and so then you understand why the Elijah reference happens in verse 14.

11:11

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. Well, that is really saying something, isn't it? There has never been a greater man born than John the Baptist, yet the one who is the smallest in the kingdom is better than John? Now, think that through: there is no one greater that has been born than John until the kingdom and then the smallest in the kingdom is greater than the greatest among men. That's what it says, right? Incidentally, you might notice that the word translated "least" in the King James, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven," is the same word translated "little ones" in chapter 10, verse 42 so we have a connector there. Verse 42 of chapter 10, "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones," unto the least of these, "a cup of cold water."

We're not given full window into this thing called the kingdom of heaven but whatever it is, it's big time because whoever is the puny, paltry, unimportant one in the kingdom is far more important in the eyes of God than the greatest among the children of men. So heaven knows your address if you're one of his. You might not rank very high among men but you can't get any higher than you. That's phenomenal. That's a comfort. There will be a time when you won't win the popularity contest. There will be a time when you aren't selected for promotion. You will be the person that will have to deal with realities that you're not the greatest among those who are born of women. Oh, but you are greater than the greatest of those born of women. That's phenomenal.

11:12

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Or “the violent are pressing into it.”

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. “Prophets and law” or “law and prophets” is shorthand for the “Old Testament.” **All the prophets and the law prophesied until John.** Now, that could be taken in a couple of different ways: it could be that it's saying that the Old Testament spoke of John up until John but I don't think it means that because the Old Testament speaks of those things happening after John as well so it is probably saying that John is the last Old Testament prophet which makes sense considering he's not in the kingdom, verse 11.

We understand from this passage that John the Baptist is apparently not in the kingdom, whatever that is. I'm not saying he won't be, I'm saying at this time he's not and apparently whatever the kingdom is, the law and the prophets prophesied of it up and until and through John. So while I understand that you're in the New Testament as far as books in the Bible are concerned, it starts in Matthew, the New Testament itself does not begin until the crucifixion. Hebrews 9:17 Says that the covenant takes force with the death of a testator. the New Testament begins at the crucifixion so that means that John is the last Old Testament prophet. It should also tell you that the thief on the cross is probably the last Old Testament convert because he died before Jesus.

11:14

If you will receive it. "It" is in italics which means that it is implied and the translators think that you should put it there, no pun intended. But apparently Jesus is saying, "If you will receive this, this is Elijah, who was to come." Why is Elijah mentioned in such close proximity to verse 10? Because Malachi 3 is quoted in Matthew 11:10 and Malachi 4 promises Elijah. And Jesus seems to be saying, "If you'll receive what the law and prophets said about the kingdom, John is your fulfillment of the Elijah promise." It's conditional.

11:15

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. It's interesting, I think, that we're having to be told that. It's as if sometimes we think that it's enough to simply hear and Jesus says it's somehow possible to hear and not hear.

11:16

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children Notice, please, who is being indicted in this warning: "this generation" that is being indicted as children. Jesus is saying, "Let me tell you who is acting like a bunch of kids: this generation." Jesus has a lot to say about that generation. Now, how many generations could you say have had Jesus, God in the flesh, performing miracles? Just one. Jesus says, "Let me tell you what this generation is like: they're **like children sitting in the markets, calling to one another, their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced.** In other words, "we were happy and you weren't and we're really upset about it that you won't mirror us. Be like us. Then they say, **we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.** So this generation is really strange. "They want me to rejoice when they do and they want me to weep when they do, but they're like kids. They rejoice and weep over the wrong things. Their priorities are completely misplaced. They put things on the list of importance in the wrong order of importance." "Mourned" in verse 17 is the idea of a dirge. We have danced like there is new life and we have mourned like there has been a funeral and you won't play our game.

11:18

For John came neither eating nor drinking, "so he didn't party like you wanted him to, and you say, 'He had a devil.'"

11:19

The Son of man came eating and drinking. "He rejoiced with you and didn't mourn when you wanted him," and **you say, he's a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.** "So you are upset because John won't rejoice with you and you're upset because I won't mourn with you. Neither John nor I can win. You want Elijah the prophet and if you would have received his message, he would have been Elijah the prophet but you've rejected both the prophet and the Messiah." Incidentally, I think it's interesting to note that in the latter days when the Jews are going to be under great onslaught from the beast, he's going to have a false prophet who calls fire out of heaven. The false Christ will have a false Elijah to suit the Jewish people.

Wisdom is justified of her children. "I'll tell you what: if you want to know if I'm from God, just look at my fruit and you'll declare me 'righteous' and you'll declare my wisdom 'righteous.'"

11:20

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done. This probably goes back to verse 1 after he gets done giving the disciples orders.

*11:1 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.***

So I really don't know how much time has elapsed between verse 1 and verse 20 but apparently it was long enough because Jesus begins scolding the cities. Maybe a year. Maybe months.

because they repented not. What an interesting demand that the Son of Man brings to people. He requires that they repent. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action. It's interesting that you have

promise of a kingdom coming. In chapter 3, John the Baptist comes preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Why would you repent? Because a King is coming. Matthew 4: Jesus says that men should repent and he preaches the Gospel of the kingdom in every way. These are in context one of another. Then in chapter 11 we have this kingdom talk of verse 11 and then he says in verse 20, **they repented not.**

When a King is coming, we ought to make ourselves ready for the King and Jesus said that these cities did not do it. Whatever they needed to change to be ready for the King, they failed to do it. Notice the main fruit that showed that they failed to do it was the fact that they rejected the message of the King's messenger.

11:21

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! Woe unto you. It's like Jesus is saying, "I brought you blessing but you have desired woe." A "woe" is a distress signal. You are about to receive the thumping of your life. Why? Because you didn't repent. Who has woe? That generation. Why? Because they looked at the prophet and the King and said, "Because you didn't dance when we wanted dancers and you didn't mourn when we wanted mourners, we don't want you." I wonder with over $\frac{3}{4}$ of America claiming to be Christian, I wonder what kind of king they would like? I wonder what kind of prophets they would like? Maybe they would like a king that guarantees them heaven but requires nothing of them. Maybe they would like a king that requires no suffering and no cross, only benefits and entitlements. I wonder what heaven's King requires of us.

if the mighty works, which were done in you, Chorazin and Bethsaida, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And if you'll read the history of Tyre and Sidon, they were wiped out. They were rebuilt in intertestamental period since their destruction, but they were destroyed in relative short amount of time (unlike Sodom), never to have been rebuilt.

Chorazin and Bethsaida are towns, Jerome from the fifth century says, that were within miles of Capernaum and Capernaum, you might remember, is all chapter 8 and 9. Most of what happens in chapter 8 and 9 happens in Capernaum. Think about this now: when we read **And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.** So he's naming three towns that are within really close location, proximity to each other—all around the Sea of Galilee and he says, "You have great distress coming upon you." Why? Because there were millions on the earth but not everyone had Jesus and the prophet. There were thousands of towns on the earth but only but a relative few had Jesus and the prophet. There were hundreds of towns in Israel probably but only a few were named. Think about the density, the tightly packed targeting of Jesus' ministry when he can reference Tyre and Sidon which are in present day Lebanon and say, "They never got what you're getting." Think about it when he can reference Sodom—basically south Palestine and say they were there. He can talk about towns that were within 100 miles and he says, "They would have changed."

We're told that Tyre and Sidon would have repented **in sackcloth and ashes.** They would have torn their clothes and dumped dirt on their head to show their lowliness and their humility and really their self-contempt. If they would have seen what you all see and he says, "in the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable." Get that. He doesn't say it will be tolerable for any of them, it says it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon. Oh, our God is to be dreaded. It is fearful to fall into his hands, Hebrews 12 says. He is a burning fire, and at the same time, mysteriously, in the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for those who have had less to think about.

The day of judgment could be and in the context I believe it is, based on the language of verse 16, this generation, I do believe we're still talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. I think context requires it. I don't think that you have to believe that to get the purpose of the passage, for indeed, at the great white throne judgment, Revelation 20, there are books opened and the dead are judged according to their works. Now, we know you don't go to heaven or hell based on your works; you go based on what Jesus worked on the cross. Somehow it is the same lake of fire for those who die unconverted, yes, but somehow more tolerable for those who had less light in the night.

The dream. What an absurd dream. Dare to dream. It's not a book written by a president, it's a great commission. We've been given the commission and the tools to take the Gospel to places where it has never been heard and I say to you that if we're not careful, one day we will stand before the Lord, not in danger of hell fire but in simple application of this passage. He will look at the 2015 Bereans and say, "I say unto this generation, if the money that was in your pockets was the money in the pockets of the third world, the world would have been evangelized 700 years ago. It will be more tolerable for the loss of rewards at the judgment seat of Christ than for people like us." O God help us to see who we are.

11:23

And thou, Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. How are they exalted to heaven? By the way, this sounds an awful lot like Isaiah 14:12

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! thou which didst weaken the nations!
You are brought down to Sheol,*

Capernaum, you sound so demonic. You sound so Satanic, Capernaum. How is it that you can sound so Satanic? How is it? How are you exalted to heaven? Well, I don't know anyone else on the globe that can say, "We had the King of kings anchor his ministry here for three years." Think about that.

What a level of responsibility to say, "The Son of God based his ministry in this town for 3 1/3 years and, Capernaum, you were pretty important." How important? Important enough apparently that in Matthew 8 there were Centurions stationed there because one of their servants was healed by the Lord. Important enough apparently, that they could have tax collectors there. Matthew was converted there in Matthew 9. Apparently they were mighty prosperous and important.

They might have been considered exalted and Jesus said, "You're poor. You're dirt poor. You're brought down to hell, the land of the dead." Why? He says, **if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.** See that the Spirit of God is one that says, "Israel, you have a real dilemma and here's the dilemma: you are not urgent about anything."

How do I know they were not urgent? Because Jesus had to remind them they were in a battle. Verse 12, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Why is he saying that if he didn't need to say it? The fact is he did need to say it because there are people that weren't aware of the fact that there was a mighty struggle happening for the kingdom.

I think another reason we know that they are not very urgent is because in verses 11 through 14, Jesus has to tell them that all history is watching. I mean, he says in verse 13, "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." Please understand what Jesus is saying.

Israel is not urgent and how do I know? They had no right to rule according to Rome. Why wouldn't they have wanted a kingdom? And yet they still had a level of frivolity. They wanted people to dance with them. They had a level of pettiness and they whined when no one danced with them. The small things matter a lot.

11:20-24.

Well, how will Israel pay? By the way, I wish I could limit it just to this generation but unfortunately Israel said something incredibly crazy in Matthew 26, Matthew 27. They said, "His blood be on us and our children." As pro-Israel as I am, you need to understand that much of what they've endured is because of the prayers of that generation as they handed over the only begotten Son of God to the Romans to crucify. So how will they pay? They will pay by missing the kingdom, verse 11. How will they pay? They will pay by suffering more than previous generations.