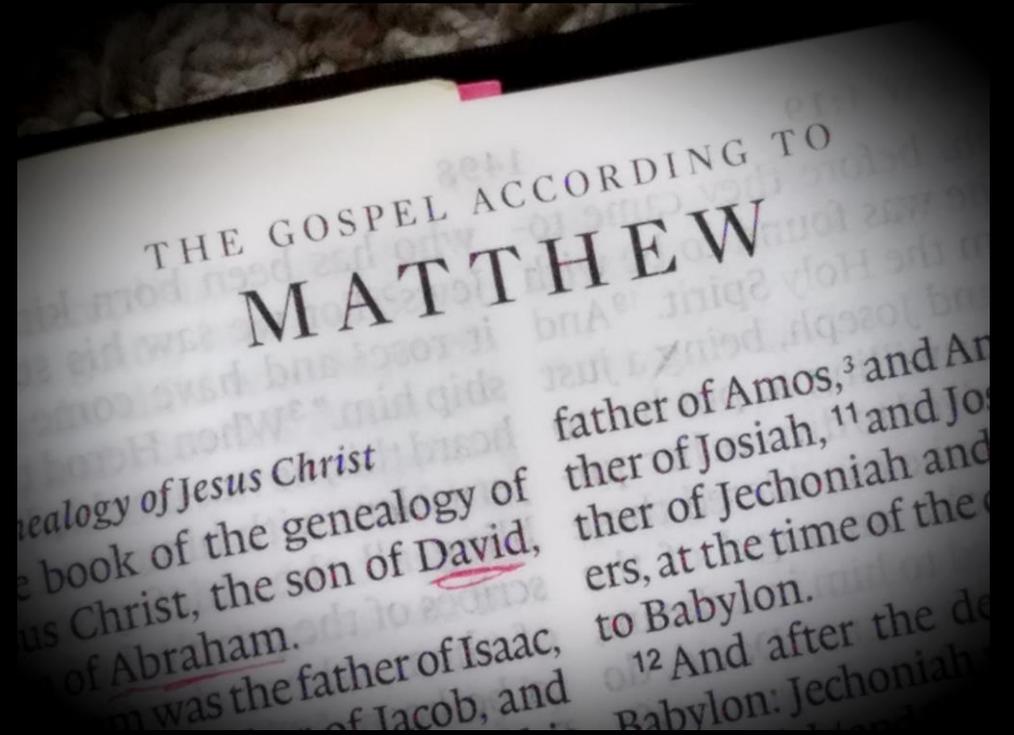


# Verse by Verse

## Matthew 11



Previously in Matthew

# Previously in Matthew

- In **Matthew 1 – 2**, Matthew introduced us to Jesus.
- In **Matthew 3 – 4**, we saw the ministry of John the Baptist.
- In **Matthew 5 – 7**, we looked at the Sermon on the Mount.
- In **Matthew 8 – 9**, we saw numerous miracles of Jesus.
- In **Matthew 10**, Jesus sent out the disciples for the first time.
- In **Matthew 11**, we see that opposition is beginning.

# Matthew 11 Introduction

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- After the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 AD, the atmosphere remained tense for many years.
- The Roman Emperor Hadrian suppressed Jewish religion and culture.
- Governor Quintus Tineius Rufus of Judea was a tyrant hated by the Jews.
- Enter Simon Bar Kochba.



Simon Bar Kochba, died 135AD

# Matthew 11 Introduction

- He led a political, military and religious revolt against Rome.
- It lasted from 132 – 136 AD and at first it looked successful.
- Many at the time considered Simon Bar Kochba to be the Messiah.
- He was probably the closest match to the messianic expectations of the time.



Simon Bar Kochba, died 136AD

# Matthew 11 Introduction

- In the end, Rome squashed his revolt.
- It remains unclear, but Bar Kochba probably died in battle against Rome.
- Jewish political aspirations died along with him.
- (The Christian movement with Jesus, its unlikely Messiah, was already growing.)



Simon Bar Kochba, died 136AD

Is this the Jesus we wanted?

# Is this the Jesus we wanted?

- Simon Bar Kochba seemed most like what the Jews of that day wanted in a Messiah.
- He turned out not to be the one, but the church continued to grow both before and after Bar Kochba.
- **Matthew 11** confronts us with the difference between the real Jesus and the Jesus we may have wanted.

# Is this the Jesus we wanted?

- Even John the Baptist will need to have his doubts or misgivings about Jesus quieted while he sits in prison.
- The cities in which Jesus carried out his ministry remained unrepentant, unsatisfied with the Christ that came to them.
- They rejected both Jesus and John despite their extreme differences in personality.

# Matthew 11    Key Verses

# Matthew 11 Key Verses

- Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

# Matthew 11 Outline

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1. Jesus and John 11:1-19
2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24
3. Come to Me 11:25-30

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:2 John heard in prison
- John was imprisoned by Herod.
- Matthew tells that story in **Matthew 14**, so stick with us and we will get to it in a few weeks.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:2 John heard in prison
- John was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but he was now probably confused by his circumstances.
- Herod imprisoning a good and godly man did not fit his picture of the Messiah's coming.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:2 John heard in prison
- Jewish expectations varied, but most wanted a king in the spirit of David to rule them and free them from Rome.
- Simon Bar Kochba would have been a welcome sight.
- Jesus was nothing of the sort.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:7-15 Jesus explains what he thinks of John.
- 11:10 See Malachi 3:1. God is speaking. (Jesus is God.)
- You won't find a better example of goodness and godliness anywhere than John the Baptist.
- But starting with him, the people, especially the rulers, began to oppose God's servants.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:14 if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah
- Overall, they were not willing to accept John or Jesus.
- Many believe the literal Elijah will appear before the return of Jesus Christ.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:16-28 Jesus and John were very different kinds of spiritual leaders.
- John was rough and wild looking, lived in the wilderness, and delivered a mainly harsh message.
- Jesus was more ordinary and mingled among the people wherever they were.
- He also worked various healings and miracles – things that John never did at all.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

- 11:16-19 As Jesus points out, most people didn't respond well to either Jesus or John.
- When John criticized their behavior, they rejected him.
- When Jesus tried to be their friend, they rejected him.
- Their problem wasn't the messengers but the message.
- Both called for true repentance and turning to God.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

## Dealing with Doubt:

- There is a massive difference between the doubts of the saint and the doubts of the skeptic.
- The skeptic will never be happy with the God of the Bible.
- This person will take any reason they can find to reject the gospel of a Savior that will save them from their sins.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

## Dealing with Doubt:

- John ask his questions from the standpoint of faith, but still needed reassurance.
- Most of us, I hope, are much like him.
- We deal with the doubts of the saint.
- We come to Christ by faith, but the Christian life we get is not what always what we hoped it would be.

# 1. Jesus and John 11:1-19

## Dealing with Doubt:

- When Jesus disappoints us, we have to ask ourselves what we are going to do.
- John remained faithful though he had real questions.
- Many others rejected Jesus completely, even though he carried out his ministry right before their eyes.

## 2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24

## 2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24

- 11:21, 23 Chorazin ... Bethsaida, Capernaum
- These cities in which Jesus ministered are all at the north end of the Sea of Galilee.
- He compares them to ancient pagan cities that experienced God's judgment.

## 2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24

- 11:21-22 Tyre, Sidon
- These were cities in modern day Lebanon.
- Ezekiel 28 is a good example of the prophecies against Tyre and Sidon.
- In it the king of Tyre is compared to an “anointed guardian cherub” who fell – and sounds a lot like the devil.

## 2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24

- 11:23-24 Sodom
- The judgment against Sodom in **Genesis 19** is well known.
- In **Ezekiel 16**, God compares the pride and wickedness of Sodom to the pride of Jerusalem, which also fell.

## 2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24

- 11:23-24 Sodom
- Jewish literature around the time of Christ spoke of the lewdness of Sodom in detail.
- This reminded the Jews (and early Christians) how they needed to somehow separate themselves from the world.

## 2. Unrepentant Cities 11:20-24

- Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were now rejecting Jesus, their only hope.
- It will not help in the day of judgment to say that we are not as bad as this person or that, this culture or that.
- What will matter is whether we have received forgiveness for our own sins by trusting in Jesus Christ.
- Please do not turn him away.

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

- 11:25-27 We come to Christ in humility not in pride.
- A fascinating field of research has opened up in academic circles call the **Cognitive Science of Religion**.
- One of the points being made is that children naturally accept religious beliefs.
- In other words, we have to be “**taught out of**” our capacity to believe in order to become skeptics.

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

- 11:28-30 Now for our Key Verses.
- All of us have probably taken on more than we can handle in some areas of life – which leaves us “heavy laden.”
- Further, we disappoint others and we disappoint ourselves.
- Also, things just don’t work out as we plan – whether through our own fault or not.

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

- 11:28-30 Now for our Key Verses.
- What do we do with all this burden, this guilt, this difficulty and disappointment?
- We give it to Jesus.
- We then “take his yoke upon us” and learn from him.

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30



Oxen in a Yoke

Photo from the Kosmos Society of  
Harvard University

See:

<https://kosmosociety.chs.harvard.edu/?p=6878>

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

- There is no question that life involves service.
- There is a question, however, as to whether we are serving ourselves, in which case we will be serving alone.
- Jesus invites us to come and serve alongside him.
- His yoke is easy and his burden is light.

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

- Many of our troubles may be because we are looking for a Jesus that fulfills our personal expectations.
- This Jesus most likely never really existed.
- We want a Bar Kochba sort of Messiah that will win battles that God may or may not be asking us to fight.

### 3. Come to Me 11:25-30

- The real Jesus invites us to come to him and learn – in other words, to become his disciples.
- The very word **disciple** means “a learner.”
- His work is a form of rest.

# Matthew 11    What We Just Read

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1. Jesus and John            11:1-19
2. Unrepentant Cities        11:20-24
3. Come to Me                11:25-30

# Matthew 11    Dealing with Doubt

# Matthew 11    Dealing with Doubt

- There is a massive difference between the doubts of the saint and the doubts of the skeptic.
- Like John the Baptist, the difficulties of life may make us question our beliefs.
- What if we do not get the Jesus we initially wanted?

# Matthew 11    Dealing with Doubt

- The right answer, of course, is to take the real Jesus over our made up assumptions about him.
- The difference between the Jesus we want and the real one may be as big as the difference between us and God.
- It is the real Jesus that invites us to himself.

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# Matthew 11    A Prayer

# Matthew 11    A Prayer

- Dear Lord Jesus,
- Today I am feeling especially weak in my labors and I sense that I need your rest. It is not merely a physical rest that I am in need of, but a spiritual rest for my soul. Help me not to let my burdens get the best of me, but rather help me to share them with you. Help me to experience your rest, the spiritual rest that only you can give.

# Matthew 11    A Prayer

- I desire to learn from you, Lord Jesus. Teach me what it is to be gentle and lowly in heart just as you are. It is precisely in this lowliness that I am reminded I was not meant to bear these burdens alone.
- You invite me to serve alongside you. Just as two oxen were joined by their yoke, I desire to be joined with you. It is then and only then that I will not be heavy laden in my service. Again, help me to experience your rest, the rest that only you can give.

# Matthew 11    A Prayer

- Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. How different this is from the yoke and the burden of the world. Elsewhere you said that apart from you, we can do nothing. How true that is, and how clear it is that laboring alone, without you, is foolish. Please take my work, my labors, my heavy burdens upon yourself and place your yoke upon me.
- Help me, Jesus, to experience the work that is actually rest when I labor together with you. There is really no other way for me to effectively serve.
- Amen.