

STUDY THREE | MATTHEW 11:1-30

KNOWN & UNKNOWN

OVERVIEW

The chapter is a presentation of the gospel. Vv 1-15 begin with the essential question of ‘Who is Jesus?’ by the John the Baptist. Vv 16-24 underline the urgent need to escape judgment and enter the Kingdom through repentance. Vv 25-30 issue an invitation to enter into new life with Jesus and enjoy the blessings of the rest for the soul he provides. So *Inquiry*, *Indictment* and *Invitation* become the summary of Matthew 11.

INQUIRY | VERSES 1-15

The chapter opens with a reminder of the purpose of Jesus’ ministry: teaching and preaching (Mark 1:38). John the Baptist was placed in prison at the commencement of Jesus’ ministry (see Matt 4:12). Though he had identified Jesus at his baptism (Matt 3:14) it seems the seeds of doubt have been sown even for the greatest of all the prophets (Matt 11:11). Jesus’ response in vv 4-6 refers to the age of renewal predicted by Isaiah (35:5-6) now having arrived, the age of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 4:17).

Vv 7-15 outline the ministry of John the Baptist, identifying him as the greatest and last of the prophets (v 13) before the Messiah’s arrival (v 10 cf. Mal 3:1). John is Malachi’s ‘Elijah’ who will preach the news of judgment and salvation in preparation for the coming of the Christ (Mal 4:5). None the less John’s uncertainty about Jesus place him below the ‘least in the kingdom of heaven’ (v 11) underlining that anything short of entry into the kingdom of heaven will not suffice. We must truly grasp the identity of its appointed king and respond in repentance. The violent who have been causing harm to the Kingdom appear to be a reference to the suffering John and Jesus have and will endure at the hands of their opponents.

INDICTMENT | VERSES 16-24

Jesus moves from the John to the generation to which he has come (v 16). In parable-like terms he refers to the people of God in his own day as those who ‘wanted to call the tune’ and in doing so rejected and perverted the message of both John and Jesus (vv 18-19). The judgment is then focused on the local

‘COME UNTO ME’

JANUARY 31

MATT 10:1-31 WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

FEBRUARY 7

MATT 10:32-42 THE UNDIVIDED DISCIPLE

FEBRUARY 14

MATT 11:1-30 KNOWN & UNKNOWN

FEBRUARY 21

MATT 12:1-14 LORD OF THE SABBATH

FEBRUARY 28

MATT 12:15-37 THE TOUGH & TENDER SERVANT

MARCH 7

MATT 12:38-50 WHO ARE MY FAMILY?

MARCH 14

MATT 13:1-23 THE SOWER & THE SEEDS

MARCH 21

MATT 13:24-43 THE WEEDS, THE SEED & THE YEAST

MARCH 28

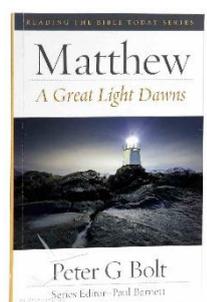
MATT 13:44-58 THE TREASURE, THE PEARL & THE NET

RESOURCE

A GREAT LIGHT DAWNS

PETER BOLT

(READING THE BIBLE TODAY)



towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum who are placed under greater culpability than Tyre, Sidon and Sodom! Their failure to repent after witnessing the works of Jesus expresses a hardheartedness that invokes the most serious of indictments from Jesus. Repentance is a serious matter and turning to Christ is the only means by which a person can escape the day of judgment (v 24).

INVITATION | VERSES 25-30

Consistent with the biblical pattern that salvation follows judgment, seen most clearly in the work of the cross, Jesus moves to explain how entry to the kingdom is only made possible by the grace of God. The Father chooses to reveal himself through the Son and only through the Son (v 27; John 14:6), and only to those who come to him in total dependence (v 25). Self-sufficiency is the barrier to Kingdom life but Jesus graciously opens the door through the invitation of v 28.

The revelation of the Father through the Son issues an invitation to a people burdened and weary, presumably by the regulatory and legalistic religious demands of Israel's leadership (see the Sabbath discussion to follow). The yoke that couples oxen together signifies the blessing of union with Christ which believers receive when they come to him. Jesus' gentleness and humility make the yoke a benefit – easy and light - rather than a burden. Matthew 11 concludes with the enduring and comforting promise of Christ's presence in the lives of all who enter the kingdom of heaven.

GETTING STARTED

1. Would you describe your coming to know Jesus as an *invitation* or a *revelation*?

INTO THE TEXT

READ VERSES 1-15

2. John the Baptist begins with the question of ‘Who is Jesus?’ in v 3. Reading Isaiah 35, what was Jesus announcing had arrived in vv 4-7 that would answer John’s question?
3. How can John be the greatest of all the prophets and at the same time less than ‘the least in the kingdom of heaven’? What does this tell you about the key to entering the kingdom?

READ VERSES 16-30

4. Why does Jesus make the comparison of vv 16-17 and what is the impact on the ministry of John and Jesus (see also v 12)?
5. Would you consider our generation different from the one Jesus spoke to?
6. The invitation of vv 28-30 is made possible by what act of grace explained in v 27?
7. What does this tell us about how we enter the kingdom of heaven (vv 25-26)?

TAKEAWAY

8. Is there a difference between *rejecting* the message of Jesus and *opposing* the message of Jesus?
9. Pray for those you know who don’t know Jesus, that the Father might reveal him to them.