

Matthew 11 – Growing Rejection

Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the growing opposition to Jesus' message, which ties in with the sermon on mission and its prediction of persecution.

Chapter 11 presents doubts about Jesus coming from the very person who was supposed to witness to him - John the Baptist. After answering John's doubt, the Lord then speaks to the crowd and reminds them of John's prestige and his place in biblical prophecy in preparation for Christ. He criticises how poorly the people responded to John's message, as well as his own. He then strongly rebukes the cities where he has spent a lot of his time for not repenting. Finally, he acknowledges the divine purpose of God in his rejection, as well as his reception, and makes a heart-searching and wide reaching invitation for people to come unto him.

Outline

VV1-19 Jesus and John the Baptist

VV1-6 John questions if Jesus is the Christ

VV7-15 Jesus authenticates John

VV16-19 Jesus rebukes the people's response to himself and John

VV20-24 Jesus condemns the cities in which he has worked

VV25-30 Jesus prays to the Father, and calls to the people

VV1-19 Jesus and John the Baptist

VV1-6 John questions if Jesus is the Christ

Matthew introduces us to this section on the opposition to Jesus in a dramatic way. The man who should have had must confidence in Jesus' claims is found doubting, probably because he is suffering in prison wondering where the kingdom is that he believed was coming.

VV7-15 Jesus authenticates John

John's doubts do not nullify his ministry. Jesus will reassure the crowd that he was not just another prophet, but he himself was prophesied by Malachi as the messenger who would come ahead of the Lord.

VV16-19 Jesus rebukes the people's response to himself and John

John and Jesus preached the same message, but the character of the message was different. John's was a solemn call to repentance before the judgement of God come. But Jesus comes announcing the kingdom has arrived and demonstrating his power to bring blessing to a fallen world.

But the people have been discontent with both, like children refusing to play any game at all. Instead, they have criticised the approach of both John and Jesus, perhaps as an excuse for not responding.

VV20-24 Jesus condemns the cities in which he has worked

Matthew has not recorded much of Jesus ministry in these cities, though he has summarized it. But the charge is very severe. They have been given more than anyone because of the presence of Christ and his miracles. But they have neglected and rejected the call to repent.

VV25-30 Jesus prays to the Father and Calls the People

God is wise in his dealings, and rejection is no sign of his weakness. Jesus affirms that God's design is that people should know the Father through the Son.

Despite the neglect and rejection that is growing, Jesus cries passionately for people to come to him, offering a greater salvation than people could have anticipated.