

Matthew 11

The Twelve Sent

Mat 11:1 When Jesus had finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

- Obviously, at that time these weren't the only disciples of Jesus since after He sent the twelve out He also "appointed [another] seventy" that He "sent... on ahead of Him, two by two, into every town and place where He Himself was about to go" (*Lk 10:1*). As He told the twelve... "you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." (*Mat 10:23*). According to *1 Cor 15:6*, there were "more than five hundred brothers at one time" that "He appeared to" after His resurrection "even though some [above that number had already] fallen asleep".

Mat 11:2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to Him, "Are You the One Who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by Me."

- John, like Jesus' apostles when they asked Him "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (*Act 1:6*), would have been expecting an earthly, physical kingdom which would have returned Israel to her former status as a world power. Since that hadn't happened yet he may have begun to question his understanding of what he and Christ were preaching concerning the kingdom being "at hand" (*Mat 3:2; 4:17*). Inquiring of Jesus, John sent more than one of his own disciples but not to be mistaken for the two who left him to follow Jesus before his being imprisoned by Herod. One of them was "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother" (*Jn 1:40-41*) who (*speaking of Peter*) was not a disciple of John. The other one was not so named.
- John's disciples saw the miracles that Jesus performed (*this would have been after the wedding feast in Cana- Jn 2:11*) as proof of His Deity and of the nature of the kingdom they had both proclaimed. John hadn't witnessed the miracles being performed by Jesus. Such miracles were unheard of "that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind" (*Jn 9:32*). This, then, was all he needed to know, i.e. his (*as Paul later said*) "preaching [was not] in vain" (*1 Cor 15:14*).
- "not offended by Me" - Anyone who did not *stumble* at the idea of a descendant of David in the form of a "carpenter's son" (*Mat 13:55*) being the prophesied Messiah would be rewarded for correctly interpreting the Scriptures concerning Him (*unlike the scribes Jesus often berated since they of all people should have known better*). This would have been the conclusion Jesus needed John to reach in case his being anxious about the kingdom's arrival might have caused him to question his own role in being the one who heralded the Messiah.

Mat 11:7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a

prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.'

- Jesus explained to His audience, while John's disciples were leaving, the prophecies that were written about John, the one who would "prepare" His way (*Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1*). John's mission was to prepare the hearts of the Jews to receive the fulfillment of O.T. prophesy that concerned Jesus (*Lk 24:44*), the answer they hadn't been expecting, and were thus offended that a "carpenter's son" (*Mat 13:55*), Whom they had known in their midst, could be the Messiah. But even Jesus wasn't successful with the stiff-necked elites (*among which were the scribes*), explaining what they should have known, when He told them how He was the prophesied fulfillment of the Isaiah scroll He had read from in *Lk 4:21*. He went on to explain here how John was no pushover which was evidenced by his not easily being "shaken by the wind" or by his rough clothing, calling him (*v. 11*) Israel's last "prophet". And yet he was "more than [any] prophet" they had heard of, since John was the one who not only prophesied the coming of the Messiah but was the one blessed to introduce Him as the "Lamb of God" (*Jn 1:29*) Who became "the Author of life, Whom God raised from the dead" (*Act 3:15*).

Mat 11:11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

- All people born have been "born of women" so Jesus used such a statement to place an emphasis on John that set him above everyone else because of his status as the herald of Christ's arrival. "Yet", showed that such importance paled in comparison to "the one who is least in the kingdom of Heaven". John lived and died under the Old Covenant since Jesus hadn't, at that time, ascended to the "right hand of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven" (*Heb 8:1*), which meant that the church hadn't been established (*Jn 14:2-3*) before John's death. And not that John would be remembered as being any less important in history's scheme of redemption either. Jesus' statement had more to do with the importance of being in the kingdom than what they felt about John's "baptism of repentance" by which they did not "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Act 2:38; 19:2-4*).

But things changed after Pentecost when the "living waters [flowed] out of Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea" (*Zec 14:8*). This is the same "living water" (*Holy Spirit*) Jesus referred to when speaking to the woman at the well (*Jn 4:10*) and what was given to the "souls under the altar" in *Rev 6:9*, thus covering those who lived under the Law of Moses and all the way back to Abel (*Mat 23:35*) and those forward to Christ's return after the "thousand [year reign]" (*Rev 20:7*). Since John began to preach the kingdom there were many energetic people who came in droves to crowd John by force to enter it; he was so convincing of "a kingdom that shall never be destroyed" (*Dan 2:44*) but that had yet to be established at the time, even though he himself had not quite understood the nature of it. Jesus referred to John as "Elijah who is to come", yet John denied he was Elijah in the flesh (*Jn 1:21*). Jesus' quote from *Mal 4:5* referenced John as Elijah because he fulfilled the prophesy as being that of "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (*Mat 3:3*) which was specifically aimed at those who had the ability and desire to understand.

Mat 11:16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 17 "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

- This mob of people who flocked to John had a skewed understanding, thinking of the kingdom of Heaven that John declared as to that of an earthly realm, one that would protect them from all other nations (*including their present occupier, Rome*). It was not what they had expected or demanded. They were fickle and couldn't be satisfied no matter what. On the other hand, those of wisdom and understanding followed (*and obeyed*) the message, being *rendered innocent* by it.

Mat 11:20 Then He began to denounce the cities where most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to Heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

- These would have been the cities Jesus followed His disciples through (10:5, 23) and that would have witnessed the miracles that Christ bestowed on the twelve as evidence of His authority. But because of their lack of repentance (*which was required to enter the kingdom He and His disciples proclaimed*) Jesus stated that "It would be more bearable on the day of judgment" for the famed cities of ill repute that did not receive such good news during their time of notoriety under the Old Covenant. This statement also helps us in understanding the varying degrees of punishment that will exist in Hell (Lk 12:48).

Mat 11:25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

Mat 21:16 and they said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read (Ps 8:2), "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise'?"

1Co 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

- "knows"- Gk.1921- *become fully acquainted with*. Like Father like Son as Jesus told Philip in Jn 14:9-11. To reveal Himself to His chosen few was the same as revealing the Father to them.

Mat 11:28 Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** 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. **30** For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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June 5, 2017*

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