

Verse by Verse Matthew

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[0 : 00] And to geographically understand, he's north in Israel, up above the Sea of Galilee. And we see that a little bit later in the chapter by the cities that he upbraids in verse 21, Chorazin, and in verse 23, Capernaum.

And there's probably another one somewhere in there. I thought Bethsaida, maybe I'm missing it. But those are right on the north of the smaller Sea of Galilee, if you know the layout of the land.

And so that's where he's at, departing and teaching and preaching in their cities. In verse number 2, now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Now one thing to notice, John still has men that are following him. He still has disciples that have not turned or followed Jesus Christ. One place you see that John's disciples follow him, some of them.

But he's still got some that are taking care of him and coming before him. While he's in prison. And so he sends them to Jesus Christ and asks a question that is a little bit concerning.

[1 : 08] Or a little bit makes you say, no wait a minute. Didn't John baptize Jesus? Didn't he see the Spirit of God descend on him? Didn't he say that he's supposed to make him manifest to Israel?

Then how is it that John's asking for a reply from Christ if he's he that should come or not? That's an interesting thing.

And some people find this to be a problem in the Bible and say that this is obviously a book written by man. It's a mistake and they didn't cover all their bases. And they think they found something here. And on the surface it is a peculiar question.

But let's continue on. I think the passage gives us a little light when Christ responds. So Jesus answered and said unto them, that is the two disciples, Show John again those things which ye do hear and see.

Remember they're hearing him preach the gospel of the kingdom and see the signs and wonders. That's what got John's attention anyway. He heard the works of Christ from verse 2. Verse 5 says, The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear.

[2 : 12] The dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Now all those things that Christ is doing, they're all signs of the kingdom.

That he's prophecies of the coming kingdom. And he's saying, well you go tell them what you see and what you hear and what's going on. And that's evidence enough that I am the one that should come.

And so he says this statement in verse number 6. Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And there's a little key there I believe to the issue that John's having.

But before we mention that, go to chapter 13. Let's understand that word offended. That doesn't mean they have their feelings hurt. Because I said something about them that was true.

I think that word's pretty well misused nowadays. It's used right in a sense, but it's become so touchy. Everybody takes offense to everything.

[3 : 16] Chapter 13, verse number... I'm in the wrong spot here. I'll back up to verse 53.

It came to pass that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was coming to his own country, his own country where they know him, where he grew up. He taught them in their synagogues in so much that they were astonished and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brethren James, Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and his sisters? Are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet's not without honor, save in his own country and in his own house. Saying without the double negative that a prophet does not have any honor in his own household.

From his own brothers and sisters that know him. They don't think anything special about him. And his own house. They don't care. In verse 58 then he says, And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

[4 : 23] So it's this being offended in him is shown up in their unbelief. They're not believing on him. And there's the offense. To offend is to violate.

It's not to hurt feelings. But it's to transgress. You may be familiar with the terminology in James where he says, If you keep the whole law but offend in one point.

That means break the law or violate the law. Elsewhere Christ, when they ask him about tribute money, he says, Well, lest we offend them, go cast a hook into the sea.

And so offend doesn't mean hurt their feelings, but rather violate their laws or go against something that's right. That's not necessarily a clear definition of it.

It's used in the sense of laws. But in this case, there's no law necessary that they're being offended in. They're violating something though, aren't they? To be offended in him. And let's consider what is it that John's offended in from back in chapter 11.

[5 : 23] In John Sandals, if you could put yourself in his position, he separated himself from society. He was brought up in the wilderness by the Holy Spirit and got the light, the green light, to go preach and herald the kingdom as at hand.

His duty and calling in life was to be that forerunner. And so he does it. He follows God's will for his life and does it with rejection all around him, with men, soldiers.

He preached at kings. He preached at soldiers. He preached at the Pharisees. I mean, he stood up and preached to them. And did he have so many just flocking and following him or loving him or probably not?

But he knew that it wasn't his case. And John 3 said, he must increase and I must decrease. And so he knew the Lord Jesus Christ was his calling and lifting him up. And that's what he did.

And he did his duty. And now he's locked up in prison. This is the kingdom that I've been preaching about, is it? The kingdom of heaven's at hand and now I'm locked up in prison?

[6 : 25] And so I think the way John's a man, and you see that throughout all the prophets, it's a little bit of a comfort to see that prophets and great preachers in the scriptures at best are men.

And they still have emotions. They still have fears. They still have maybe just lack of confidence in things and lack of faith and confidence in the word of God at times.

They're still flesh and God remembers that they're flesh. Praise the Lord. But what gives for John? This is not the lot in life that he expected after fulfilling his duty and then eventually getting his head cut off.

So the way I see there is that Christ is just returning a mild rebuke, just a mild rebuke to John. But then what he follows this up with is one of the greatest things that anybody can ever say about a man.

So Christ is not bashing or burying John for what he's doing here, his lack of faith in the moment and considering his circumstances in prison. But Christ then returned something to John that nobody else deserved.

[7 : 37] In verse number 7, 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?

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in a soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? 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. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.

Now that's some pretty amazing statements. And Luke, oh, I'm not sure if it's, I think it's 7, he says there has not risen a greater prophet than John the Baptist, just to give context and clarify the statement.

Maybe you could say present company excluded, the Lord Jesus Christ. There hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. What went ye out into the wilderness to see?

[8 : 43] In verse 7 he asks if they went out to see a reed shaken with the wind, implying was he a sissy or a scaredy cat? Was he somebody with no spine? And the answer is obviously no.

That was not John at all, and everybody could bear witness to that. John was the man that preached to, like I said, kings and to a man that Herod, he told him he's sinning, and that was to his own demise.

I mean, he didn't have to do that, but he did, because John was no scaredy cat by any means. Yes, if he was, if they went out to see somebody that's clothed in soft raiment, implying somebody that's delicate and sensitive and grew up with a silver spoon in their mouth, speaking of they that wear soft clothing in king's houses.

And that wasn't John at all, was he? John was rugged, rough around the edges, to say the least. Did you go out to see a prophet? Christ answers his own question saying, yeah, that's what you went to see.

And no, not just any prophet, more than a prophet is who John the Baptist was. He wasn't just some prophet, a teacher and a preacher that gave the word of God. He was the very one that the prophets foretold of that would clear and prepare the way before the Messiah.

[9 : 58] That's who he was. What a special, special, special calling for John the Baptist. And he's in prison. And no doubt the people kind of forgot about John. And maybe don't even care.

They're not sending care packages to him. They're not praying for him. But he's probably out of their mind a little bit because they're following the Christ here. But Jesus Christ wants to let them know that that man there is the man.

As far as those that are born of women, he's the greatest prophet. And I preached a message to you about John the Baptist and some things about him, what made him so special some months back. And I find him a fascinating study.

He's a role model to me to see a man that's not intimidated, doesn't flinch, just preaches. And gives the truth. And I love that in a man, that character, that resolve.

That's a blessing. That's good to know that when God raises up a man to preach, you can still be a man. You don't have to get super soft and worry about tiptoeing around everybody and everything.

[11 : 00] In some cases you do. You've got to be sensitive. But in other cases, when it's the word of God and it's something you don't have the right to change or to alter or to downplay, John's a good example of that.

Just shoot straight. In verse number 10, here's an interesting statement. We're going to go somewhere here with this. He quotes the prophet here. He says, Now, I want to take the moment here.

We won't see it here in Matthew, but come to Mark chapter 2. Mark 1, I'm sorry. Mark 1, verse 2. Right at the beginning of Mark's gospel, he goes right to this statement about John the Baptist.

And he quotes this prophecy. But he also quotes another prophecy alongside with it. And you'll notice this. In verse 1, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in the prophets, plural.

Did you see that S? It's written in the prophets. Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Who wrote that? Malachi wrote that. Verse 3.

[12 : 15] The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make his path straight. Who wrote that? Isaiah wrote that. So we've got two different prophets and two different quotes from the prophets.

And Mark says, as it is written in the prophets. And just quotes one, quotes another, and moves on. Matthew didn't give us that, so we're going to Mark to show this. Now, I want to take the time and the opportunity here to point out a glaring mistake and error in the New International Version, among others.

Mark chapter 1, verse 1. And by the way, if you need to look it up, it's Malachi 3, and it's pretty easy to spot. And it's Isaiah 40, if you need to look for that, verse 3.

Mark chapter 1, verse 1. The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in Isaiah the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.

False. That's not Isaiah the prophet at all. Verse 3. A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord and make straight paths for him. There's Isaiah.

[13 : 23] So, there's an error in the text of this version, and many others, they're very much just like this, that instead of saying the prophets, like your King James Bible says in chapter 1, verse 2, and then giving two different prophets, this one gives the quote from Malachi and says Isaiah said it.

Is that a holy Bible? No. Number two, is that the work of the Holy Spirit? Not knowing his own work? No. Claiming that Isaiah said something Isaiah never said?

That's what it says, by Isaiah the prophet, singular. There's no other openings for anybody else to be speaking here. It is written in Isaiah the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.

He did not say that. That's a mistake. That's an error in the text of what they call a holy Bible. And I want to take a chance, because we hit something here, to take a shot at it, so that you see it, to know there's a problem.

If somebody has an NIV and thinks it's a holy Bible, there you can show them, that's an error in the text, which is unacceptable always. All right, come back to Matthew chapter 11.

[14 : 32] It's a big mistake. Actually, I want to show you this. Go to Malachi. I want to see that quote. Chapter 3. So, Malachi 3.

Now, Christ is speaking in Matthew 11, when he says, For this is he, speaking of John, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

John's the messenger, going before thy face, which shall prepare thy way, Christ's way, before thee.

All right, we're back in Malachi 3, and verse number 1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before, look at the next word, me.

He shall prepare the way before me. Who's the me? Well, it's God. It'd be the Lord Jehovah. And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.

[15 : 45] Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts, but who may abide the day of his coming? So, really in Malachi, and we're not going to get into this in detail, but there's a first coming and a second coming reference right there in both what we just read.

The John the Baptist reference is the first advent. When Jesus Christ comes, you prepare the way before me. And then the one coming to his temple, and the Lord of hosts, and the reference to the day of his coming, who may abide?

That's going to be second advent stuff. And so it's tricky reading through the Old Testament to know, without the light of the New Testament, to understand that the Messiah, he's going to do all this, right?

No, he's only going to do this much. And there's a reason for that. We'll see that here in Matthew in a moment, I think. That the thing could have just went all the way through. But because of the Jews' rejection of their Messiah, there's so many pauses.

Pause on that prophecy. Pause on that prophecy. Pause on that prophecy. He fulfilled partially. And because you wouldn't receive him, you're not going to get the second part of the fulfillment.

[16 : 50] And that's the case here in Malachi 3. But here's the real thing we're looking at today, is that he's going to prepare the way before me. So who is Jesus Christ then? Actually, who is John preparing the way before?

Before God. Job's witnesses are missing something on this. They don't believe Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is the one that came because John was fulfilling the way for Christ or preparing the way for Christ.

And there's more evidence just like that all over Isaiah's prophecies about the Messiah when he would come. It's God coming in the flesh. And so there's a good reference for you to show you that John was preparing the way for God and Jesus Christ was in fact God.

Or we've got a problem in our Bible too. So Matthew chapter 11 and verse number 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. Now first of all, what a commentary from the Son of God about a man. A man that forsook all.

[18 : 06] A man that fulfilled God's will for his life and devoting himself to his ministry and preaching. A very peculiar life that he lived, did he not?

As a Nazarene. As a separated man that wouldn't violate himself with what he ate and drank. And the company that he refused to keep. A very devoted man.

And his life, as we know it, was 100% about the ministry that God gave him. About the Lord Jesus Christ and preparing the way for him. And if you want to follow somebody, everybody likes to follow people on Twitter and everywhere else.

You can follow some of these guys in this book. And find out what they got to say. And find out why they said it. And see if you can like that for a little bit.

Because John the Baptist is somebody worth following. When the Bible says that there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist, that's coming off of the lips of Jesus Christ. It's something we ought to think about and pay attention to.

[19 : 07] He doesn't just throw that out on anybody. He's definitely not going to say it about me. I won't stand before him in the judgment seat and say, he's going to say, no way. But this guy, he said it about.

So there's something special about him. Concluding the verse here, notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Now, when we were in chapter 5, we saw this similar statement.

In chapter 5, verse 19, he referenced people being least and people being greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And he talks about their position and their standing in the kingdom, the future kingdom.

In 5, 19, whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

In this case here, he says that John, even though he was the greatest among those that are born of women, if you're least in the kingdom of heaven, you're greater than John the Baptist.

[20 : 09] Now, I profess, I openly profess that I'm uncertain about the entirety of that statement. It could have something to do with him saying about John being born of women and considering how Christ said to Nicodemus, you must be born again.

And so it could have something to do with that, referring to the kingdom, the future kingdom and that birth versus the physical birth that John received. I don't know. Whatever it is, it does seem to emphasize the greatness of the quality and position of being in the kingdom of heaven.

That is, John's the greatest prophet of all time, but if you get into the kingdom of heaven, your eyes are going to be opened. I have a feeling that there's a little bit of that in that statement as well, that you're going to be living, even if you're least in the kingdom of heaven, you're going to be living in a regenerated world.

You're going to be living in a place where God rules the world in righteousness and judgment and equity and peace. And the kingdom of heaven is going to be heaven on earth. Not going to have the opposition that John had.

You're going to have it good. You're going to have a future. In the future, these people are going to have resurrected bodies being in that kingdom of heaven. It's going to be next level stuff for anybody.

[21 : 34] But I can't say that that's all that he's getting at there. And there might be more to that statement I'm not sure about, and I'm not sure where to look when it comes to be the least in the kingdom of heaven beyond back in chapter 5.

So in verse number 12, he says, From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Again, it indicates here the physical nature of the kingdom.

As we've tried to declare and teach, this is not a spiritual kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is the physical, visible, earthly kingdom. And that's seen by the violent taking it by force.

For the Jews, their future is the kingdom of heaven, where one day there will be total rule over the world by God himself. But in the time being, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.

That is, suffereth or alloweth or is subject to violence. And in relation to, this is all relation to the Jews, by the way. This is a Jewish thing, a Jewish kingdom.

[22 : 41] And so currently speaking, the Jews are under Roman authority, and the violent have taken it by force. And there's religious leaders that are going to kill Christ and kill John, and those men that have heralded the kingdom of heaven.

And the thing's going to stop dead in its tracks. Right now, Rome is ruling over the kingdom of heaven, that is, the Jews, which I don't know if the right word is, but I kind of think of it as in a dormant state as far as what it's going to be.

It's being subdued, and the violent have taken it by force. But remember the Jews, remember, look back at chapter 8 of Matthew. Remember what the Jews are called in verse 12, the children of the kingdom.

They're the children of the kingdom. It's not a Gentile kingdom. It's Israel. It's God's people, promises made to Abraham and David and things that, covenants that God has established with them that he full well intends to bring to pass, but he's allowing some turmoil in the time being because of their rejection and disobedience to him, and he's perfectly legitimate and right in doing it.

But the kingdom of heaven, one day, as he's preaching, it's at hand. It's about to go. So God's about ready to make good on all his promises to you, but for the time being, it suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.

[24 : 10] Now, verse 13, for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, period. And if you will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Now, the ears to hear implying somebody, if anybody, few, I'm sure, fully capable of receiving the teaching here that God has some things set up that they're not even aware of, and he's working things on his own timetable in his own ways that they're just completely blinded to, I'm sure.

The law and the prophets prophesied until John, making John's coming out to Israel the end of the Old Testament in its, what's the word?

I wish I had a good word there, enforcement? No? The New Testament doesn't come into effect until the death of Christ. We know that from Hebrews. But the Old Testament set up through Moses and the law comes up to John, and John shows up preaching, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not.

No, John shows up preaching, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus Christ preaches that message. Christ's disciples preach that message all over Israel only.

[25 : 36] So, I don't have a good word to describe this John the Baptist time. It's this gospel's time, the ministry of Christ. Some have called it a, because they're making ready a people for the Lord, they've called it a readiness time.

I don't know if that's a great term or not. But it is a, an isolated time in God's dealing with Israel that's not technically falling under that old covenant through Moses.

Christ is, remember in chapters 5, 6, and 7, he's telling them, Moses said this, but I say this. And he gives them the kingdom doctrine, a different and more stern and strict look on what God's commands are.

So, there's a stop there at the end of, or at John's ministry. When he shows up, there's been a dead time. Remember, Malachi's the last Old Testament prophet. And there's been 400 years of nothing from God.

And then when God sends a man, John, God is doing something. And he's doing something, he's preparing, he's starting something new, which is for the Jew. And it's in line with the Old Testament prophecies.

[26 : 43] It's, this kingdom is coming. It's preparing itself. It's unfolding right in front of their eyes. And so Christ says, the law and the prophets prophesied until John. There's an ending.

And if you will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. What does that mean? Come back a few pages to Malachi again. Look at Malachi chapter 4. If you will receive it, that is John, John's preaching, then this is Elias, which was for to come.

So Elias is supposed to come. And that's a prophecy from Malachi, the last prophecy in their Old Testament. Verse 5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Now notice the prophecy connected to this statement. And he, Elijah, he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

So the ministry of Elijah's return is preparing the people. Now come to Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1.

[28 : 05] And this is an angel speaking to Zacharias in the temple. Describing to Zacharias what his miraculously born son, John, who was named by the angel, is going to do.

Verse number 15. The angel speaking to Zacharias, he said, For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. And that's a prophecy.

That's being applied to this boy, this child, and to the children, and the disobedient of wisdom, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. I think Zacharias knew exactly what those words were.

And he's like, what? This is the Messiah's forerunner? This is the one that's coming? He's coming in the spirit and power of Elias? This was Elias, which was for to come?

[29 : 12] So I would have missed that, just because I'm pretty clueless about stuff like this. But there he comes. There's God having something worked out in John the Baptist, bringing about, if they will receive it, is the condition.

If you will receive it, from verse 14 in chapter 11. If you will receive it, this is Elias, which is for to come. Well, what if we don't receive it?

Well, you made the wrong choice. And then John gets locked up in prison and dies, gets his head chopped off, and you never realize your kingdom, which was offered to you.

And so the way God sets this Bible up, or the way God, I shouldn't say the Bible, but it's recorded in the scripture, God's dealings with man, is God has things set up for man to make a choice. And there's a fork in the road, and man says, I'll go that way.

And God says, no, it's this way. Man says, no, we'll do it this way. So God says, okay, I have it set up that it's going to come out the same way. It's just, if you go that way, it's a lot harder for a road.

[30 : 13] You're going to be running into problems and going down and up and down and up and down and up and down and up. If you would have just stayed on this highway, it had taken you straight to the kingdom. And the way man chooses to go that way, God sets it up.

Prophecies say, this is what's going to happen. Man chooses the wrong thing, but he still ends up to come to pass the way God said it would. And God had it set up with John that he could have been Elijah had they received him.

All right. So verse 14, if you will receive it, this is Elias, which is for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Verse 16, but whereunto shall I liken this generation?

It is like unto children sitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows and saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced. We have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

[31 : 17] But wisdom is justified of her children. I think this passage has a little sarcastic flavor toward the critics of John and the critics of Christ. John was separated.

John was holy. That was prophesied. Right there we read it, how he would be set apart, and he was. And the people said, He has a devil. They found something to say against him.

So they said, He has a devil. But he was separated. Everybody knew that. Then Christ shows up, not being separated the way John was with that Nazarite vow. He came eating and drinking.

And so they take anything they can about him and put him over here and saying, He's a glutton. He's a wine-bibber. I mean, this guy's a drunk. And so they accused Jesus Christ and rejected him and slandered him.

And the statements are that way of, He was this and you called him that. I showed up this way. I showed up more along your lines. And then you called me this and that. But the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, he says at the end there, wisdom is justified of her children.

[32 : 25] And Luke, it says, of all her children. The truth is recognized and received by the people that are pure in heart. Let me see. Look at verse, look at chapter 5 and where is it at?

5.8. We'll give a little different twist to this thought of this verse. 5.8 says, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Now, I believe there's a literal statement to that. But consider the context of the people that are not pure in heart. They don't see that Jesus Christ is God and that He's their Messiah.

But somebody with a pure heart, as they were to have, and looking to receive the Word of God, when He shows up and gives it to them, they receive it. They drink it. And they partake of it. And they say, Praise the Lord.

This is the best we've ever had. And that's the case with Jesus Christ. Wisdom is justified of her children. And her children know what wisdom is. They've experienced it.

[33 : 32] And the case with these guys is they haven't. And they've rejected it. And they've stood in their pride. And they've tried to hold on to their positions. And so they've just mocked. And they've slandered the Lord Jesus Christ, a pure, never sinned God in the flesh.

And they rejected Him to His face. Then He begins to upbraid some cities. And toward the verse 20, we'll have to quit here a few minutes.

He begins to, seeing this kind of reaction, He began to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not.

So with no repentance, there's no kingdom. Instead, it's woe in verse 21. And it's judgment and hell.

Verse 21, Woe unto thee, Chorazin. Woe unto thee, Bethsaida. For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

[34 : 40] Those cities, Tyre and Sidon, back in Ezekiel, there are Baal worshiping cities. There's plenty of sin going on there. Well, Christ says, If I showed up to them, they'd have repented. But I came to you, and look what you treated me like.

But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. We've already commented on that a few chapters or weeks ago. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell.

Every time you see the word hell in the Bible, it's always literal. It's never figurative of some other place of bad stuff or a separation from God.

It's always literal. There's never a case, and you can never make a true case that hell is not literal. And we'll cover this when we get into chapter 13 for certain. Every time Christ says hell, he means hell the way we think of hell with fire and judgment.

For if the mighty works which were done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto 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.

[35 : 51] Now, yeah, Sodom, God's going to let them off a little bit easier than these Jews. But then again, if you're God, and as he tells in a parable, you send your prophets to them, and they stone them, and then you think, oh, they'll reverence my son, and you send your son, and they say, this is the heir.

Let's kill him, and it's ours. What do you think God's going to do in the parable? He said, I think it's 21. What do you think God's going to do to those servants?

Oh, he's going to let them have it. That's for sure. And that's exactly the case here of God sending his son to those Jews and them rejecting him. I want to find that statement I'm talking about now.

Yeah, it is 21. Look at Matthew 21. We'll close with this. The parable starts in verse 33. And consider these cities that he has threatened warning to.

And while we think of the Baal worshipers and the Sodomites as being filthy and vile and so deserving of God's judgment, this is God's hand reaching out to his own people that slap his hand and spit on him and say, we're going to kill you instead.

[37 : 17] Verse 33. Hear another parable. There is a certain householder which planted a vineyard and hedged it round about and digged a winepress in it and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen and went into a far country.

When the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that may receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took the servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first and they did unto them likewise.

But last of all, he sent unto them his son saying, they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said unto themselves, this is the heir. Let us kill him and let us seize upon his inheritance.

They caught him and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? When Jesus Christ comes back, what will he do to those cities in Israel is the question.

They say unto him, he will miserably destroy those wicked men and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen. Amen. Which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

[38 : 17] Jesus saith unto them, did you never read in the scriptures the stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing and it's marvelous in our eyes. Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

And whosoever shall fall on the stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever shall fall, grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and scribes heard, or the chief priests and Pharisees had heard these parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

And so they wanted to kill him. So that's the case. And that's why God's looking at these cities and saying, oh, it's going to be easier. I'll be a little lighter on those wicked Gentile cities and those ones that worshiped other gods even though I hate it.

And it moves me to anger and to judgment. But for you to reject my only begotten son and to say that you have a devil, I'm not going to let you off at all.

And that's the case with Israel. And how about before we close, let's make some application. You claim to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, right? And you claim to have the Spirit of God dwelling inside of you.

[39 : 29] And you believe that He can lead you and guide you into all truth and that you have a relationship with God, the Creator, your Father. But woe unto you if you grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed into the day of redemption.

And woe unto you if you quench the Spirit when He tries to work within you and move you. God looks at Gentiles and He looks at them and He sees some of their sin. He probably sees that there's some with some integrity in them and some morality.

And then I'm sure He looks at His own children, the ones that He put His Spirit within that convict them of righteousness, the ones that know their escaped hell, know the grace of God and sees the lifestyles that they live and how negligent they are to serving Jesus Christ or to their own scriptures or to having a fellowship with Him on a daily basis.

How they reject opportunities that He gives them to do something for Him. Here's a chance for you to serve me and they walk away from it. So I'd say woe unto you at the judgment seat of Christ.

I think it'd be a lot easier for that ignorant Christian, that one that didn't know anything. The Bible says, to whom much is given, much is required. And it's going to be a lot required of us who know the truth, who have good doctrine, who have a clean upbringing and all the opportunity in the world.

[40 : 48] He's not going to let us off either. Not so quick. You get a little light into the mindset of the judge when you see these passages. And it's not going to threaten you with hell.

You don't have to worry about that. We know our Bible doctrine. But you better understand the judge is going to put it on somebody who deserves to have it put on them. Amen. Let's close. Let's pray and then we'll close.

Father, please help us to be diligent in our walk with you, in our service for you. And Lord, I pray that you'd open our eyes to opportunities to serve you. And Lord, let us do it because we love you.

Let us do it because we fear you. Let us do it because you are God, because we're nothing but worthless sinners. We deserve the hell that we were earning and we don't deserve to know your son. But we thank you for your grace.

We thank you for the blood of Christ. Lord, help us to take something away from this passage this morning that will help us to serve you better. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's take a break. Let's take a break. Thank you.