

## Episode #747 Matthew 11 Part 1-The Questioning of John

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. In Matthew 10, the Lord was commissioning His twelve disciples for a mission on which He was sending them. He assured them of their value with God. He had not come to bring unity but division between those who believed in Him and those who did not. He wanted them to take up a cross, not a beautiful thing but a sign of humiliation and a terrible burden, and follow Him no matter what the cost. Today we conclude His instructions to them.

III. The Lord brings division. Matthew 10:34-39.

A. Verse 39. “Life” is the Greek for “soul,” *psuche*. This could be the life or martyrdom, but the soul is the seat of emotions and desires, and can speak of those comforts and pleasures that satisfy those emotions and desires. Many speak today of finding yourself. Yet here the Lord speaks of losing yourself for His sake.

IV. Receiving a disciple. Matthew 10:40-42.

A. Verse 40. The Lord already spoke of receiving them in Matthew 10:14. This expands on that statement. The Lord spoke this to the twelve, and repeated it to the seventy in Luke 10:16. Their position was such that to receive them was to receive Him, and to receive Him was to receive Him Who commissioned Him with authority (*apostello*).

B. Verse 41. “In the name” means in the character of a prophet, because he is a prophet. Receiving a prophet because one hopes to buy or sell from him, etc., would not count. This one receives him simply because he is a prophet. To receive God’s messengers is to partake in the blessings God will bestow on that messenger. To receive the righteous simply because he is righteous and for no other reason or other benefit.

C. Verse 42. This explains Matthew 25:31-46. The least of these is the least of His disciples. It is not speaking of the poor, the homeless, the destitute, the children, etc. These were little men with no standing anywhere and no great place in society. Yet these belonged to the Lord and were identified with Him, His little ones. “Assuredly” is “Amen I say to you,” the Lord’s strong affirmation. “By no means” is the two Greek words for “no” *ou me*, the strongest possible Greek “no.”

V. The Questioning of John. Matthew 11:1-6.

A. Matthew 11:1. After giving them directives, He departs without the twelve. We have no record of how long they were gone or what they accomplished.

B. Verse 2. The first we have heard of John’s imprisonment in Matthew, since 4:12 is mistranslated, as we explained there. John sends (*pempo*) this private delegation to the Lord. Bullinger says the texts read *dia*, through, not *duo*, two. He believes this was a different, later sending than Luke 7:19-24. There, it was His healing of the widow’s son of Nain that inspired John to send. That was before the call of the twelve, this after. John might well have sent again, not having gotten a clear answer.

C. Verse 3. John was a prophet, but did not fully know the mind of God in this matter. Some think he may have had the idea of Messiah Ben-Joseph versus Messiah Ben-David in mind. John had rebuked Herod, as he ought to have done, and Herod put him in prison. Yet the Lord did nothing about it and did nothing to attain John’s release. If Jesus is the Messiah, then why is John allowed to languish in prison?

D. Verse 4. The Lord’s answer is to tell John about His miracles.

E. Verse 5. Six evidences of Who the Lord is. The thought seems to be that the One Who has power to do this would have the power to release John from prison if that was the will of God at this time. This verse is simple in pattern, not really accurately repeatable in English: blind seeing “and” lame walking, lepers cleansed “and” deaf hearing, dead raised “and” poor evangelized. No articles, per *The Companion Bible* showing not ALL the blind were seeing, etc. These were the miracles predicted of Christ. Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1. Notice that He refers directly to the verse that speaks of the opening of prison. It is as if He challenges John: “You are right. I am doing everything said of the Messiah except freeing prisoners. What will you do about it?”

VI. Conclusion: To receive the Lord’s representatives is to receive the Lord. They do not walk the earth today, but we can receive His written representative, the Word of God He has given us. John was puzzled that the Lord did not rescue him from prison, as he expected. The Lord showed him the proofs of His Messiahship, but made him no promise of deliverance, and indeed he was never delivered. Are we willing to accept it when the Lord does not give us the deliverance we wish for or even demand? Are we ready to wait for His time and suffer hardship now? That was His lesson to John, and it should be a lesson for each of us as well.