

Episode #749 Matthew 11 Part 3-Elijah to Come

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 11, the Lord answered John’s questioning if He was the One they were looking for by His miracles. Then He taught that John was not just a prophet, but the messenger before His face or presence. He was the greatest of those born of women, though the least in the kingdom of the heavens will be greater than John. The kingdom of the heavens needed to be grasped by forceful men. Today, He continues his teaching about John.

III. The Lord’s Teaching About John. Matthew 11:7-19.

- A. Verse 13. Prophecy is not just foretelling the future. It is telling the word of God. The law did this from the time it was given.
- B. Verse 14. Never forget John’s own emphatic statement regarding himself in John 1:21. The correct way of interpreting Scripture is not to put two passages in the ring, have them fight it out, and raise the hand and declare the winner the passage you prefer. Malachi 4:5-6 tells us Elijah’s future mission. He is to prepare the way for the second coming of the Lord. We know that John, while he was not Elijah, came in the spirit and power of Elijah, Luke 1:17. If they were willing to receive him as such, he would do in their lives the same work that Elijah will do in the lives of others when he comes. John could not take the place of the actual Elijah, who will still come as predicted. The Bible does not teach reincarnation! Remember Matthew 17:10-11.
- C. Verse 15. The first example of this solemn charge often repeated by the Lord. Also in Matthew 13:9 (contrasted with the disciples who did have such ears in verse 16), Matthew 13:43, Mark 4:9, 4:23, Mark 7:16, Luke 8:8, Luke 14:35, Revelation 2:7 (also the Lord!), 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22, 13:9.
- D. Verse 16. The Lord often spoke of “this generation,” but one has to note from context which one He is talking about. A generation is NOT always of the people of a certain age living at the same time. It is related to the word “generate,” and people can be generated by their upbringing, religion, etc. Often the Lord’s enemies, “generated” by the example, instruction, and religious views they had, but contrary to the truth of God. In Matthew here, 12:39 (evil and adulterous generation), 12:41, 42, 45, 16:4 (wicked and adulterous), 17:17 (faithless and perverse), 23:36, 24:34 (His words).
- E. Verse 17. These children will not play happy games or sad ones. They are stubborn and willful and do not want to play at all. Bullinger: danced and lamented sound the same in Greek, like “leap...weep” or “stepped not...wept not.”
- F. Verse 18. Of course he had to eat and drink, but this means at dinners and banquet.
- G. Verse 19. Wisdom finds its justification in its children, meaning that which it produces. These people were shown unwise because no matter what happened they were simply not going to “play.” They were sulky like children who would not play no matter what the game was.

IV. Conclusion: While John emphatically claimed he was not Elijah, the Lord said if they would receive it He was Elijah who is to come. The Lord meant he could do the same work for them that Elijah will do in the future, for if Elijah does not come back and do that work, John was not like him at all. The Lord spoke against the generation of leaders that they would never be satisfied no matter what God did, since they did not like the way John did it or the way the Lord

did it, in spite of the fact that they did it opposite ways! Do we gripe and complain about the Lord's works and ways? Or do we, as we should, submit to whatever He wants to do? Let us be satisfied with Him and submit!