

## Episode #750 Matthew 11 Part 4-The Fate of Wicked Cities

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 about John, that if they were to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. We explained that this meant he could fulfill in their lives the role Elijah will yet play in the future. That generation was never satisfied, no matter what God did, as they complained when John came one way, and complained when the Lord came the opposite!

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

A. Verse 19. “Son of man” was first used by the Lord of Himself in Matthew 8:20, 9:6, 10:23. He represents Adam’s race to God. Also true manhood as God intended it before the fall, to which none of us fallen beings can fully attain.

IV. The Cities That Did Not Submit. Matthew 11:20-24.

A. Verse 20. He rebukes these cities because His mighty works, Greek *dunameis*, had been done in them, but they did not submit, *metanoeo*.

B. Verse 21. “Woe” is Greek *ouai*, like the sound of wailing. Chorazin means “A Furnace of Smoke.” Not positively identified but perhaps a few miles from Capernaum per Jerome. Bethsaida means “House of Fish,” a fishing village, suburb of Capernaum, on the shore of Lake of Galilee. Tyre was an ancient city destroyed by Alexander the Great. Sackcloth and ashes are a sign of grief and submission. This shows us an important truth about the Lord’s judgment: He can know, not only what people did, but what they would have done had they received more light. When the day for judging Tyre and Sidon comes, He will take this into account! Of course He will judge these people individually, not just as a company. It is not about “another chance,” but it is judgment based on God’s knowledge.

C. Verse 22. The day of judgment is when all final outcomes will be decided. A city might be restored in judgment, but for the people in it things will be on an individual basis. A city can be restored without every single inhabitant being restored.

D. Verse 23. Capernaum was not exalted to heaven. In its mind and actions and thoughts, in their opinion of themselves. “Heaven” here is singular, so we might put it “exalted to the sky.” The first occurrence in Scripture of the Greek *Hades*. In Acts 2:27, it is used to translate the Hebrew word *she’ol* in Psalm 16:10, showing us that the two words are equivalent. It is used in both Greek and Hebrew for the state of death, a concept we cannot put into a single word in English. It is especially used of the state of death while resurrection is in view. Since Capernaum was not literally exalted to heaven, neither will the city ever be brought down to hades. Hades here has a figurative meaning best expressed as “oblivion.”

E. Verse 24. This seems like a radical statement! But only because we do not know the Old Testament. Ezekiel 16:46-49, 53-55. Realize that to restore a city does NOT have to mean restoring every last person who inhabited that city. The LORD will choose the people to restore with the city when He restores it. But surely it must contain some of the same people or it would not truly be the same city. The people of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom were immoral. The people of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum

were religious. The Lord says that when the religious rejected, the immoral would have received! Thus He will take all this into account on the day of judgment.

V. Conclusion: Jesus Christ is the Son of Man, the representative of Adam's race to God. He rebuked the cities in Israel where His mighty works had been done for not receiving Him, saying that many of the morally wicked cities of the past would have received Him if He had done the same things in them! This shows that God's judgment can consider not just what people do, but what they would have done in other circumstances. Sodom, that wicked city of the past, will be graciously restored someday! The Lord's grace is great, not just to them, but to those who believe in Christ today and through His sacrifice are saved.