

## Episode #748 Matthew 11 Part 2-Who Is This 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 11, John from prison had sent His disciples to the Lord to ask if He was the One they were looking for, or if they should look for another? He may have had the idea of a Messiah Ben-Joseph and Messiah Ben-David in mind. He was probably wondering why, if the Lord was the great Messiah, He allowed John to languish in prison? The Lord answers by pointing to His mighty works, the same works the Messiah is said to perform.

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

A. Verse 5. 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?”

B. Verse 6. Blessed here is *makarios*, Oh the happiness! Some are offended when God does not immediately do what they expect. Offended is *skandalisthe* or scandalized. Examples: the Nazarenes, Matthew 13:54-58 (Mark 6:1-5); the Pharisees, Matthew 15:12; the disciples who left Him, John 6:61, the twelve on the night of His arrest, Matthew 26:31,33 (Mark 14:27,29). Some today are offended when they cannot get kingdom blessings now. Yet happy are those not offended!

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

A. Verse 7. What did they go to *theaomai*, view, gaze at, or contemplate? Some attach a reed to Old Testament ceremonies: Exodus 12:22, Leviticus 14:4-7 (49-52), Numbers 19:18-19. Hebrews 9:19. Hyssop seems to have been a kind of plant or reed, John 19:29. The suggestion is his water ceremony was done by sprinkling water over their heads with hyssop. However, it seems likely that the idea is one who bends one way or the other whichever way the wind blows.

B. Verse 8. “Soft” would be silk or linen, as worn by nobility.

C. Verse 9. The Lord answers this question “yes,” whereas the obvious answer to the first two questions was “no.” He was more than men like Isaiah or Elijah!

D. Verse 10. Quoting Malachi 3:1. (Also quoted in Mark 1:2; Luke 1:17, 76, 7:27.) “Messenger” is *angelos*, angel, often used of humans in the Bible.

E. Verse 11. These are most eloquent words regarding John, giving him a eulogy that places him on the highest pinnacle of human fame, on a higher plane than Moses or Elijah. Neither Israel nor the church has tended to give him such a place. Least is of least rank. This does not mean the least in the kingdom of heaven will be greater than John in the kingdom of heaven. Wait until you see him then! The least then will be greater than John in the past. Bullinger: the possessor is greater than the proclaimer.

F. Verse 12. *Resultant Version*: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of God is being forced, and forceful men are seizing upon it.” Bullinger: “forces itself on men’s attention.” We are not sure exactly what this means. John did use very forceful methods to almost force the fact of the kingdom on men’s attention.

V. Conclusion: 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. He spoke to the crowd about John. Those who went out to see him did not go to see a changeable man or a noble, but a prophet, and Christ says he was

even more! He was the messenger going before His presence. Among those born of women there were none greater than John, though the least in rank in the kingdom of the heavens will be greater than John! What a privilege the kingdom to come is. Will you be a part of it? If so, it can only be through your faith in Christ!