

LESSON 14: MATTHEW 11 OCTOBER 1, 2008

OVERVIEW

- . The fourfold reaction to Christ's Early Ministry (Matthew 11&12)
 - . The Genuinely Perplexed – Matthew 11:1-15
 - . The Unresponsive Majority – Matthew 11:16-24
 - . The Responsive Minority – Matthew 11:25-30
 - . The Active Opposition – Matthew 12

THE GENUINELY PERPLEXED – MATTHEW 11:1-15

- . John the Baptist was genuinely perplexed – Matthew 11:1-3
- . His perplexity had a threefold source
 - . He was the last of the Old Covenant, or Old Testament prophets
 - . Like all Old Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit would carry them along and provide them with God's words, but did not permanently indwell itself in them – 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - . Big difference in understanding between the prophets and apostles – John 16:12-13
 - . John the Baptist's prophetic interpretations
 - . Like most of his contemporaries, John believed the prophecies of the Old Testament announcing that Messiah would deliver Israel from her earthly enemies would be fulfilled immediately in his day.
 - . Christ, the suffering Savior – Isaiah 53
 - . Christ, the conquering powerful King – Micah 5, Isaiah 9:7
 - . John was not seeing Christ rise to earthly kingship with authority, power and honor, as expected
 - . Personal reasons for John's perplexity
 - . Instead of being honored and made prime minister in the new kingdom, John was imprisoned
- . John the Baptist's question to Jesus
 - . John brought his heartfelt questions directly to Jesus
 - . Many who publicly confess Christ experience something of John the Baptist's confusion
 - . We can fall in to the error in believing that our lives should be easy
 - . The glory of knowing Jesus is intertwined with the privilege of suffering with Him – Romans 8:17
 - . We should not be afraid to bring our confusion or doubts before the Lord
 - . He who understands us and our difficulties will answer us in a way most convincing for our situations and in accordance with the reasoning powers he has given us

- . Jesus' answer to John the Baptist – Matthew 11:4-6
 - . Jesus quoted from Isaiah, which was the book John referred to more than any Other
 - . Jesus directed John back to the book he was the most familiar with
 - . There is nothing that creates faith and dispels doubt so much as prolonged exposure to God's revelation through His word – Romans 10:17
 - . Encouragement by a promise – Matthew 11:6
 - . God promises to turn suffering into blessing and to bring surprising fruit from it
- . Jesus' message to the multitude about John the Baptist – Matthew 11:7-15
 - . Jesus' praise – Matthew 11:7-15
 - . Praise concerning personal character
 - . Praise concerning the power of John the Baptist's influence
 - . Jesus' explanation of John the Baptist's limitations – Matthew 11:11-15
 - . Was limited in his understanding of the Holy Spirit – John 7:39
 - . John the Baptist was the friend of the bridegroom, whereas the disciples of Jesus would soon become the church, His bride – John 3:29

THE UNRESPONSIVE MAJORITY – MATTHEW 11:16-24

- . Jesus' description of the majority of His generation – Matthew 11:16-18
 - . The rebellion, and irresponsibility of fallen humanity toward God and His message is portrayed in this illustration
 - . John the Baptist and Jesus deliver the same message, yet the culture focuses on the wrong thing; their lifestyle
 - . People who do not want to hear a message that applies to them will invent any excuse to refuse it
- . Jesus' warning to those who reject His message – Matthew 11:20-24
 - . Jesus rebuked three specific places, Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum
 - . Each had a special opportunity to hear God's message from Christ's lips and witness the miracles
 - . The sin of these three cities was the sin of hearing God's message, of witnessing God's power but doing nothing about it
 - . These cities did not attack Jesus, they did not drive Him away, they simply disregarded Him
 - . They chose not to repent and reorient their lives in submission to Jesus
 - . The gravity of refusing to acknowledge Jesus' rightful place is realized when we think of their fate when compared to that of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon
 - . Sodom's fate – Genesis 19
 - . Tyre and Sidon's fate – Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26:3-7, 28:12-23

THE RESPONSIVE MINORITY – MATTHEW 11:25-30

- . The responsive minority's reception of God's revelation – Matthew 11:25-27
 - . Jesus' profound rejoicing over the disciples glowing reports of the response to their message and victory over the forces of evil – Luke 10:21
- . Most people consciously or unconsciously carry a burden of guilt
 - . Only God can remove this burden of guilt
 - . If this burden is not removed the individual suffers the consequences of it throughout their life
- . The invitation and promise – Matthew 11:28
 - . Jesus invites all who labor under these burdens to come to Him
- . The command linked to the promise – Matthew 11:29-30
 - . We were made to be yoked together with God
 - . Jesus made His yoke for each of us and it will be perfectly adjusted to the purpose for which we were created
- . We need to examine what we are yoked to
- . Let us discover God's will for us, even though it is a restricted yoke
- . Then let Him adjust it to us, and us to Himself, so that He can work blessing through it and help us to see fruit and meaning and future gain

NEXT LESSON: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2008: MATTHEW 12