

Gospel of Matthew Chapter 11 -- John Karmelich

1. If I had to summarize this chapter in 2 key words, it would be 1) judgment, and 2) rewards.
 - a) Jesus spends most of the chapter either complimenting people by telling them what are their rewards in heaven or condemning them to eternal judgment.
 - b) We, like the people in these lessons, will fall into one of these two categories.
 - c) For most of us, this is old news. Most Christians understand what is required to be saved.
 - d) The interesting thing to read from this chapter is why they are condemned and what are the rewards in heaven for those who are saved.
 - e) We are going to discover in this chapter:
 - i) God judges cities (or towns, or nations, etc.) as well as people.
 - ii) Believing Christians are a “different category” than those in the Old Testament who were obedient to God. One can even argue that we get greater rewards in heaven than the Old Testament prophets.
 - iii) Finally, and most importantly, God holds you accountable for what you know.
2. There is an interesting verse in Luke that summarizes this whole chapter:
 - a) (Jesus said) “But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:48, NIV)
 - i) To paraphrase, God judges us based on how much information we have.
 - ii) People always wonder about the people “in the deepest depths of Africa” that have never heard the gospel message. The response is Luke 12:48. God judges us and rewards us based on how much information we know.
 - iii) That idea is the main concept behind Matthew Chapter 11.
 - iv) Jesus spends most of the chapter either discussing the benefits of believing in Jesus or condemning those who don’t.
3. Let’s talk about the personal application. What does any of this have to do with our life?
 - a) I’m so glad you asked that question! ☺
 - b) The primary reason is to keep the eternal perspective in view.
 - c) It is easy to get discouraged and get your focus off of God.
 - i) In the first part of this chapter, we’re going to read of John the Baptist, now in jail, having his doubts about Jesus. He sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus in effect, “Are you the Messiah or not?” This is from the guy who saw the “dove” fall on Jesus.
 - ii) The point is even if we have had lots of miracles in our lives, it is easy to focus on our current pain-of-the-moment and get our eyes off of Jesus. That was the mistake John the Baptist made here and it is a lesson for all of us.
 - iii) The final section of this chapter is Jesus speaking to those who do believe. It is the reminder that Jesus cares for us here-and-now as well as in heaven.
 - d) One has to keep the “eternal condemnation” also in focus.
 - i) It is equally as easy to become jealous of people who don’t have Jesus in their life.
 - ii) We look at the financial success of unbelievers and wonder how God can bless them so much. Jesus is saying to those people in effect, “Enjoy it folks, because this is all the reward you will get and nothing for eternity.”
 - a) David himself wondered how the wicked were allowed to prosper:
 - (1) When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me—Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. (Psalm 73:15-16, NIV).

- iii) Like Jesus, we have to look at these people with sorrow and not as someone who is better than them. I believe when Jesus saw the unsaved, his heart was broken. We need to see people as those who also need Jesus, not in any form of superiority.
 - iv) With that in mind, let's start Chapter 11.
 - 4. Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 11, Verse 1: After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.
 - a) It would help at this point to go back to Chapter 10.
 - b) Chapter 10 was about Jesus giving instructions to go to the surrounding towns of Israel. Jesus instructed them to perform miracles in Jesus name and to preach of Jesus coming.
 - i) The disciples had the rolls of "front-men". They were to go to the towns ahead of Jesus. They were to perform miracles to validate their authority. They were preparing the way for Jesus.
 - a) Their job, like ours is essentially to point people to Jesus.
 - c) Verse 1 has a time gap.
 - i) Between the last verse of Chapter 10 and the first Verse of Chapter 11 is the time era when the disciples actually went into the surrounding towns as per Jesus' instructions.
 - a) In fact, Verse 1 covers a long period of time itself.
 - b) In Chapter 10, Jesus sent his disciples out to surrounding towns as "front-runners". Here we have Jesus now going to those same towns.
 - c) The verse also implies that this is just the towns around the Lake of Galilee region as opposed to all of Israel.
 - ii) Later in this Chapter, we get the impression that not many people in these towns came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah.
 - a) They may have accepted Jesus-the-miracle-worker, but not Jesus the Messiah. To accept that meant changing their lifestyle, which apparently little did then, as relatively few do today.
 - 5. Verse 2: When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"
 - a) We now change topics in Verse 2. Verse 2 is about some followers of John the Baptist coming to see Jesus and ask in effect, "Are you the Messiah or not"?
 - b) We learn elsewhere that King Herod put John the Baptist in jail.
 - i) King Herod had an affair with his sister in law, as then she became his own wife.
 - ii) John the Baptist had the audacity to mention this publicly, and John was put in jail for that fact. We'll discuss this more in Matthew Chapter 14.
 - iii) Herod didn't kill John (yet), as John the Baptist was a popular prophet, and the king didn't want an uprising.
 - c) I should put my standard disclaimers out now: Don't confuse John the Baptist with the apostle John. John the Baptist did not write any bible books. The apostle John, is the one who wrote the Gospel of John and 1st, 2nd and 3rd John as well as Revelation.
 - d) Remember that John the Baptist was a "wild man". He lives out in the desert, ate honey and locusts for food and preached of a coming Messiah. There is probable speculation that he didn't even know that Jesus was the Messiah until John saw the dove descended upon him.
 - e) Now here was John in a jail cell. He wasn't used to being cooped up. ☺
 - f) He may have been thinking, "Come on Jesus, if you are the Messiah, let's get this show on the road. I did my job. I pointed people to you. I stood up to evil King Herod. When are you going to set up your kingdom and get me out of this stupid jail?"
 - i) This is probably why he sent some of his followers over to see Jesus.

- ii) The application to you & I is God does not work on our timetable.
 - a) John the Baptist was right. Jesus is to rule and reign from earth one day.
 - b) John was also right about the fact he will get great rewards for being obedient for what God called him to do.
 - c) His mistake was wanting action on his timetable and not God's.
 - d) We do the same thing. We get mad at God our frustrated with our own lives because we expect things to get done in a certain time. Our goal in life is simply to preach and "live" Jesus. The timetable is God's problem. ☺
 - g) There is a minority view among the commentators that John the Baptist was actually "just" testing his followers.
 - i) This view is that John the Baptist knew Jesus was the Messiah.
 - ii) He sent out his followers as John wanted his followers to see Jesus for themselves.
 - iii) This is similar to the idea of a teacher (or a boss) sending out people to find the answer to a question that the teacher (or boss) already knows the answer.
 - a) It is to teach your students, not to actually get an answer to the question.
 - iv) I personally disagree with this view.
 - v) With either view, Jesus spends the time to teach John the Baptist and his followers that Jesus is really the Messiah.
 - h) Remember the big-picture idea of the Gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Messiah. John the Baptist, in the first century had a large following and was considered by many 1st Century Jews to be a prophet.
 - i) His primary mission was to prepare people for the coming Messiah.
 - ii) I believe part of Matthew's gospel is to show the importance of John in comparison to the importance of Jesus.
 - a) This is why Jesus spends the next couple of verses teaching about John the Baptist's role and his rewards in heaven.
 - b) Speaking of the next verse... ☺
6. Verse 4: Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.
- a) Jesus appears to be quoting (or paraphrasing) Isaiah 35:5-6:
 - i) "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy." (NIV)
 - b) Notice what Jesus did not say: "Listen dummies, I am the Messiah, John should know that, after all, he did see the dove land on me, right?" ☺
 - i) Assuming John the Baptist was going through a period of doubt, notice the first thing is that Jesus had compassion for John, not condemnation.
 - ii) Second, Jesus used Old Testament prophecy to validate his role as the Messiah.
 - a) Don't underestimate how important it is to use prophecy as validation.
 - b) This is especially true to someone with a Jewish background, as was John.
 - c) If John the Baptist believes the Old Testament is the Word of God, then one should use the Old Testament's words to point out who Jesus is.
 - d) This is essentially what Paul did as he traveled around in Acts.
 - (1) Most of sermons were to Jews, and he used the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - c) Back to the text itself, Jesus either performed miracles in front of these witnesses, or they heard the reports of the local townspeople as to what Jesus had done. With Jesus reminding John the Baptist of these scriptures, combined with the validation of Jesus performing these miracles, that was enough to report back to John.

7. Verse 6: Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."
 - a) Blessed can also be translated "happy". It is the reminder that happiness and joy comes from putting our trust in Jesus.
 - b) Remember this verse is a message to John the Baptist. It is a reminder to John to "hang in there" through the times of doubts.
 - c) Jesus is telling John the Baptist in effect: "Yes, there are times of doubts. There are times when you are going to have doubts about Jesus. Go back to the Scriptures, and see if all of this is "real" or not. When things are at their worse, get back to reading the bible and let the bible validate itself that Jesus is all the things he claimed he was.
8. Verse 7: As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?"⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces.⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

 - a) The first thing to notice is that Jesus is no longer speaking to John the Baptist (via his disciples) but is now speaking to the crowd around him.
 - b) Before Jesus began his ministry, John the Baptist was a popular fellow. From the introduction chapters in Matthew and Luke we learn that people from all over Israel went on foot out to the desert to see John the Baptist preach.
 - i) One has to remember for the Jews that this was a time of oppression. They were all under submission to the Roman Empire. There has not been a prophet in Israel for 400 years. The hope of every religious Jew is that the Messiah would one day come. Given all of that, here was this "wild man" preaching out in the desert. People went either for the curiosity factor and/or to see if this guy really was either the Messiah or a prophet of God.
 - a) Later in Matthew we get clues that even after John's death, he was widely esteemed as a prophet of God. (See Matthew 14:5, 21:26)
 - c) Jesus, now talking to the crowd, makes them think about why they went to see John.
 - i) Let me try to paraphrase Jesus: Hey everybody, did you go out to the desert to see a reed shaking in the wind? What's the big deal about a reed? That is nothing special. You went out there because John was something special. Also, did you go to see a king? Nope, because kings were comfy clothing and live in palaces. Did you go out to see if John was a prophet? Yes, that's right, John is a prophet."
 - d) It is important at this point to compare John the Baptist with Elijah the prophet.
 - i) Jesus himself compares and contrasts John the Baptist with Elijah the prophet
 - ii) In Verse 11, Jesus quotes Malachi 3:1. In Malachi, there is a prophecy that a "messenger" will come before the appearance of the Messiah.
 - a) The second to last verse of Malachi, which is the last book of the Old Testament says that "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:" (Mal 4:5, NIV)
 - b) Given that verse in Malachi, religious Jews were looking for Elijah prior to the coming of the Messiah.
 - iii) In Luke, right before John the Baptist was born, the angel Gabriel made this statement to his father:
 - a) "And he (your son) will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous-to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:17 NIV

- iv) Here is where it gets interesting:
 - a) In John's Gospel, the Jewish leaders asked John the Baptist, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He (John) said, "I am not." (John 1:21)
 - b) Here are all of these statements in Luke and Matthew that John the Baptist is the fulfillment of the prediction about Elijah coming again.
 - c) Yet John the Baptist himself denies he is Elijah.
 - d) How do you reconcile this problem? The answer is verse 14 of this chapter.
 - e) "And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come."
 - (1) The point is simple. To those who became followers of Jesus, John the Baptist does fulfill the role of Elijah.
 - f) This is a case where it helps to remember that God knows all things. He knows all of history and its outcome.
 - (1) If the nation of Israel collectively accepted Jesus, then John the Baptist does completely fulfill the prediction of Elijah.
 - (2) Since Israel corporately rejected him, then they also reject that prophecy as being fulfilled about them.
 - g) In Revelation Chapter 11, there are "two witnesses" that come to give warnings of all the judgments that are about to happen. Many commentators speculate that one of those two represent Elijah to come again as a double-fulfillment of the Malachi prophecy.

- 9. Verse 11: I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
 - a) This is one of the most powerful statements in Matthew.
 - b) Jesus is saying of all the people born up to that point, none is greater than John the Baptist. That would include Noah, Moses, David and a few other biggies. ☺
 - c) It also is saying something equally as profound. It says he (or she) who is least in the "kingdom of heaven" (i.e., believers in Jesus) is greater than John the Baptist.
 - i) Does this mean that somebody who is "barely saved", has greater rewards in heaven than the Old Testament saints? Possibly. It could refer to stature.
 - ii) There are two predominate views on this, and I'll let you determine which is best:
 - a) The first is that because we comprehend Jesus better than the Old Testament patrons, therefore we are "greater" than those saints.
 - (1) Further, because John the Baptist was given the privilege of introducing Jesus, he then understood more about Jesus than all of the Old Testament saints. For that reason, Jesus proclaimed John the Baptist as being "greater" than the Old Testament saints."
 - (2) A similar idea is what is told of Jesus' mother Mary. She is called "blessed are you among women" (Luke 1:28b). The idea is that she is more blessed than any other woman in the Old Testament as she had the privilege of giving birth to the Messiah and raising Him.
 - b) The second view is that Christian believers (as opposed to Old Testament saints and those who are saved because they are naïve to Jesus and judged based on what-they-do-know) are a special category in heaven.
 - (1) This view is that Christians have higher stature in heaven (however that works!) than Old Testament saints and other saved people.
 - (2) Notice what is says in Revelation about the first resurrection.
 - (a) "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6, NIV)

- (b) There is a second resurrection where God judges people fairly. I agree with the view that only Christian believers get part in the first resurrection. There is a 1,000-year time gap between the two resurrections. During that time Christians rule and reign with Jesus.
 - (3) That 1,000-year “bonus” ☺ given to Christians may be what Jesus was referring to when he says that those who are part of the “kingdom of God” are greater than the Old Testament saints.
- 10. Verse 12: From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.
 - a) This verse is considered one of the toughest verses to translate and explain in Matthew.
 - i) That makes my job easier. ☺
 - b) Remember the short time that Jesus is describing in this verse. It is only from the time era when John the Baptist was preaching about Jesus, until “now”, when Jesus was talking.
 - i) This verse could refer to the whole Christian era, or just this short time window.
 - c) It is helpful here to note that the NIV translation (used above) is different from the King James, New King James, New American Standard, etc.
 - i) The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. (Matthew 11:12b NIV)
 - ii) The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. (NKJV)
 - a) The New American and King James are similar to the New King James.
 - iii) In one translation (NIV), it says the “the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing; in another it says, “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence”.
 - a) The problem is that both translations can be correct.
 - d) Let’s look at the possibilities of each translation. One emphasizes external struggles and the other emphasizes internal struggles.
 - i) This verse means that those who are trying to become Christians are violently struggling to “get in” to God’s kingdom.
 - a) It could refer to zeal of being a disciple, or it could refer to the fact that people were working hard to become followers of Christ. This view represents the internal struggles.
 - b) This sentence could refer to the spiritual warfare happening as those who are trying to become followers of Jesus are facing violence. This view represents the external struggles.
 - e) There, that’s the best I can explain it. The rest is up to you. ☺
- 11. Verse 13: For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.
 - a) Verse 13 is another powerful think to think about.
 - b) “The Prophets and the Law” is an idiom of the collective writings of the Old Testament.
 - c) This verse is saying that all the prophecy writings of the Old Testament go on until John the Baptist.
 - d) It sort of brings up the question, “When did the Old Testament “end”?”
 - i) The last book of the “Old Testament” was completed about 300-400 years before Christ was born. This was the Book of Malachi
 - a) That term, “Old Testament” comes from Paul. He refers to the collective works of the Hebrew writings inspired by God as “The Old Testament”. (2nd Corinthians 3:14) Jews never use that term.

- ii) In another perspective, the main purpose of the Old Testament was to point the way to the coming of Jesus. In that concept, the “Old Testament” ends with John the Baptist, not the Book of Malachi.
 - a) I believe that is what Jesus meant in Verse 13.
 - b) Remember the “big-picture” idea of the Gospel of Matthew. It is to present Jesus as the coming Messiah. Matthew is telling his Jewish readers in effect, “The Old Testament is not a closed book. There is more to life than that set of books. The purpose of that book, the purpose of all of those prophets, is to point the way to Jesus.”
 - (1) In some ways, you can learn more about Jesus in the Old Testament than you can in the New Testament. I am convinced that every aspect of Jesus birth, life, ministry, resurrection and 2nd coming can be found throughout the Old Testament. The purpose of the Old Testament for Christians is not just to point us to Jesus, not just to teach us valuable lessons, but to also teach us about Jesus. It is about what was Jesus’ purpose and why he came to this world.
- 12. Verse 14: And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.
 - a) We talked earlier about whether John the Baptist “is/is not” Elijah, so I won’t start again.
 - b) This verse represents the end of Jesus talking about John the Baptist to the crowd.
 - c) There is another big-picture idea that I would like to point out here:
 - i) Compare what Jesus said to John the Baptist, via his disciples with what Jesus said about John the Baptist after John’s disciples left.
 - ii) When Jesus spoke to John’s followers, he quoted Isaiah and sent a message in effect, “Happy are those who don’t stumble (i.e., moments of doubts) over me”.
 - iii) The next few verses are all compliments about John the Baptist.
 - iv) Jesus went on to praise how John the Baptist is greater than all the Old Testament prophets to date. Jesus didn’t say that to John the Baptist’s disciples. Why?
 - a) I’m speculating here, but I believe we have “Jesus-the-teacher” in view here. God loves with us with an everlasting love. (See Jeremiah 31:3). God loves us so much he can barely contain himself! Yet, sometimes God has to take the role as a teacher, as opposed to a complimentor. Even though God loves us unconditionally and wants to shower us with praises, he also knows what our ego’s are like. There are times God rebukes us and tests us in order to mature us as believers. Yes God loves us. Because God loves us, He tests and works with us in order to mature us. He maybe bragging about us, but not to our face, as is the case of Jesus and the crowd.
 - (1) Jesus is “bragging” about John the Baptist, but not to his face. At that moment, Jesus was helping John grow in his maturity. At the next moment, Jesus, without John knowing it, was bragging about how great was John’s faith. I believe that is a lesson to us on how much God loves us, but for some moments, doesn’t tell us as he is working on us to help us grow.
- 13. Verse 15: He who has ears, let him hear.
 - a) This verse is Jesus’ “trademark” phrase.
 - i) Jesus is saying in effect, “What I am saying to you to you know, let it sink in”.
 - b) Ever heard a cliché and associate that cliché with someone? You ever meet a person who repeats the same cliché over and over again, to the point of when you hear someone else say it, you think of the first person who says it a lot?
 - c) This expression is common in the Gospels as well as in the Book of Revelation. Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation are letters to 7 churches from Jesus. Each of those letters in Revelation repeats this particular phrase.

- d) When I think of this phrase, I think of what Paul said about faith:
 - i) "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17, NKJV)
 - ii) Here was Jesus saying to *hear* the Word of God. Paul takes that one step further and says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. (Reading counts too! ☺)
- 14. Verse 16: "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: ¹⁷ "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' ¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." ' But wisdom is proved right by her actions."
 - a) Let me try to paraphrase Jesus' illustration: "Pretend that all of us are all children. We as children played a happy tune on a musical instrument, and you as other children did not dance. We played a remorseful tune (like you would hear at a funeral march) and you did not respond." So what does that mean?
 - b) Verses 16-18 can be summarized by the idiom: "There is no pleasing some people".
 - c) John the Baptist came along, being very serious. He didn't drink any alcohol and he preached a "hell and brimstone" type of sermon.
 - i) The religious leaders reacted by saying John the Baptist "has a demon".
 - d) Jesus took the opposite approach. He spent time with "sinners" to teach them about himself. He ate and drank with people who were not very religious.
 - i) Yet the religious leaders criticized that as well.
 - ii) Again, the point is you can't please some people. No matter if you preach a serious-tone message, or happy-tone message, some won't care.
 - e) The last phrase is translated here as, "But wisdom is proved right by her actions."
 - i) The New King James says, "But wisdom is justified by her children."
 - ii) The idea here is similar to "you reap what you sow". Jesus is saying in effect, "Wise children come from wise parents, just as foolish (i.e., non-God fearing) children come from homes where the parents don't take God seriously."
 - iii) Jesus may have been quoting some familiar idiom of the day. The idea is simply that one can look at children (usually, not always) as a reflection of how they were raised by their parents.
 - a) Jesus was saying about the religious leaders is that their actions, or lack of acknowledgement about Jesus is obvious by their denial of his deity.
 - f) Also notice that Jesus calls himself "The Son of Man" to the religious leaders.
 - i) This title "Son of Man" is associated with the Messiah (see Daniel 7:13).
 - ii) This is one of many places where Jesus did claim that He was the Messiah.
- 15. Verse 20: Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. ²¹ "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
 - a) Remember in Chapter 10, Jesus sent the disciples to the surrounding towns to preach of His coming.
 - b) In the time frame covered in Chapter 11, Jesus followed up with miracles to the towns around the Galilee area where the disciples actually went.
 - c) By Verse 20, it is apparent, the towns rejected Jesus' claim as the Messiah. They may have accepted Jesus as the miracle worker, but not as the Son of God.
 - d) Here is Jesus condemning these cities.

- e) Today, neither Korazin nor Bethsaida exist. They are just architectural digs.
 - i) If you look at the location of those ancient towns, they are lakeside, and would be good locations for a town. When Jesus condemns a town, it comes true!
 - ii) This is partially what is meant when I said that Jesus corporately judges towns, cities and nations. If they fail to be obedient to what God calls them to do, God will wipe them out as a functioning location.
 - iii) "If God does not judge the United States of America, then God Sodom and Gomorrah an apology. And God does not apologize" Billy Graham.
 - a) The only reason God has restrained his judgment on the United States is we are still a "beacon" to the world for the Gospel message.
16. Verse 22: But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.
- a) Tyre and Sidon were towns north of Israel that are located in present-day Syria.
 - b) Why does Jesus say, these towns will receive less judgment?
 - i) The answer is Jesus didn't walk around in these towns.
 - c) This leads back to something I said on Page 1. It was a quote in Luke 12:48 (NIV):
 - i) "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded."
 - ii) God does judge us based on how much information we have.
 - iii) That is why I believe people who barely know anything about Jesus will be judged less strictly than adults living in the United States where information is prevalent.
 - d) Notice Jesus says the towns will be judged "on the day of judgment".
 - i) I believe the judgment on location is two-fold: The existence and blessings that a town, a city, a nation get are based on what information, corporately, that town, city, etc. does with the bible now.
 - ii) The second part of the judgment is the individual judgment on people. This is the "Great White Throne Judgment". This is not a judgment for believers. This is the second judgment that occurs at the end of the 1,000-year millennium. (See Revelation 20, 11-14).
17. Verse 23: And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."
- a) Capernaum is another town that no longer exists today. It is an archeological dig.
 - b) That reminds me of a cute joke I heard by Jon Curson:
 - i) "Do you know why it is great to be married to an archeologist?"
 - ii) "Because the older you get, the more your spouse will like you." ☺
 - c) The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is told in Genesis 18-19.
 - i) Their sin was the public condoning of homosexuality.
 - ii) This is implied based on the actions that took place in these chapters.
 - d) Jesus says in the day of judgment to come Sodom will have "less judgment" Capernaum.
 - i) This must refer to individual judgment of the townspeople as the physical location of Sodom has already been "judged".
 - ii) Jesus is saying that if Jesus performed those same miracles in Sodom and Gomorrah that had been performed in Capernaum, and then Sodom and Gomorrah repented of their sins and accepted Jesus, those towns would never have been destroyed.
 - a) This further shows that no sin is beyond the help of Jesus other than the continual denial of Jesus as God. That particular sin is discussed in Chapter 12 of Matthew, so I'll take that up in the next lesson.

18. Verse 25: At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.
²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.
- a) Jesus changes his focus in Verse 25.
 - i) He is no longer focusing on the judgment of those who did not accept him.
 - ii) Instead, he gives God the Father praise for those who do accept him.
 - b) Jesus is saying in effect "Father, thank you for not revealing the "truth" of who I am to all the religious leaders and the scholars. Instead you revealed it to the "common folk".
 - i) Why does God do this? What did Jesus mean by this?
 - ii) Suppose only the "scholarly" figured out the truth about Jesus:
 - a) Then everyone else would think, "I have to be really smart or very educated before I can get into heaven."
 - b) With God "pre-destining" only the common folk of that time to accept Jesus, it shows that anyone, at anytime can accept Jesus without getting any sort of education or having some sort of special skill.
 - c) That is why Jesus is praising God the Father in these verses.
 - d) Does this mean the "scholarly" were somehow "mentally-blocked" from knowing the truth? I don't know. We're getting to the classic free will vs. pre-destined debate. God knows all things, and we don't. I do know that God will judge all people fairly and at the same time holds everybody accountable for the information they are given.
 - (1) If you are not sure if you are pre-destined by God to accept Jesus, just accept Him and you will know that you are! ☺
 - iii) Does this mean that nobody who is educated or has say, lots of money can accept Jesus? No, and my proof is this verse.
 - a) For you see your calling (to salvation), brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; (1st Corinthians 1:26-27, NKJV)
 - b) Note Jesus says not many of the wise, mighty and noble are called.
 - (1) It does not say "any". Queen Victoria of England says she was saved by the letter "m" in "many".
19. Verse 27: "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
- a) Ever wonder what God the Father is like? The answer is to study Jesus.
 - b) To approach and have a relationship with God The Father, you must go through Jesus.
 - i) "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6, NIV)
 - c) God the Father and God the Son are the "same, yet different entities".
 - d) The word "Trinity" is not in the bible. It was coined by the early church to describe the mystery of "Three distinct God's, yet they are all one".
 - i) I always liked the illustration of a test tube filled only with ice, water and steam. Each is different, yet each is the same.
 - e) Again, if you want to get to know God-The-Father, you have to go through Jesus.
 - f) This is one of those Jesus-is-the-only-way verses in the bible.
 - i) Jesus is proclaiming that the only way to salvation is through Jesus.
 - a) The miracles are simply validation that Jesus speaks the truth.
 - ii) This is a prayer Jesus is saying out loud to those in earshot. I suspect it is both to the apostles who are following him as well as the crowd.

20. Verse 28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
- a) I have to admit, these are my favorite verses in the chapter.
 - i) If I had to pick a few verses to memorize, these would be it.
 - ii) When I first was on the road to being saved, these verses stuck strongly in my head and God used them to lead me to Jesus.
 - b) First, let's talk about "yoke's".
 - i) A yoke is a harness for an ox. It is made of wood and custom made for each ox.
 - ii) Jesus, being trained as a carpenter, may have even made yoke's.
 - iii) When oxen were used to plow, they were typically sent out in pairs.
 - a) The older ox did the real pulling, while the younger ox had a light yoke, and followed along to learn the system.
 - b) The ox is the strongest of all the animals that can be domesticated.
 - iv) This verse is to say, "My yoke is easy. I'm the one doing the strong work, and I want you to be harnesses to follow me. You get the "light-yoke" and I get the "strong yoke".
 - a) Read Verses 28-30 again, in light of that knowledge of "yokes".
 - c) Getting away from the yoke-analogy, how does Jesus give us "rest" for our souls?
 - i) The "Gospel" literally means "good news".
 - ii) The good news is that we don't have to work to make God happy.
 - a) We are saved just by believing. We can't add anything to that.
 - (1) We do "works" out of gratitude of being a servant of God.
 - (2) That is a whole separate issue from being "saved".
 - iii) The "rest" comes from the fact that:
 - a) We never have to worry about salvation.
 - b) Second, it has to do with regular confession of our sins. God desires that we take our burdens, our worries, and even the things we do wrong and turn them over to him.
 - c) There is a classic joke that goes as follows. "Hey Bob, remember how I used to worry about everything? Well, I stopped all my worrying. I've hired a guy to do all my worrying for me".
 - (1) Bob responds, "How much do you have to pay him?"
 - (2) The worrier says, "I will pay him \$100,000 per year.
 - (3) Bob says, "But you only make \$50,000 per year, how can you afford that?"
 - (4) The worrier says, "That is HIS problem to worry about"
 - iv) That is the idea God wants us to do. It doesn't mean we quit our jobs, or go "live in sin". We live in obedience to what God commands us to do in His Word. We don't worry about it because God is now in charge.
 - v) When Jesus says, "his burden is light", he means we don't have to worry. We give our live to God, and He is now in charge. No more worries.
 - a) "I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread. (Psalm 37:25, NIV).

- vi) Here is a similar verse:
“Cast your cares on the LORD
and he will sustain you;
he will never let the righteous fall. (Psalm 55:12, NIV)
 - a) To “cast” is to throw as hard as you can. Think of casting a fishing rod. The line and hook goes a long distance if you cast it hard. Except with God, he doesn’t want us to reel it back in. We give it to him.
 - b) When times of worry come, I often have to give my worries to God in “baby steps”. Here is an example, “OK God, for the next 5 minutes, I’m not going to worry about this issue.” Start in small time chunks if you find yourself dealing with worries.
 - c) I’ll end with this thought, “If you are going to pray, why worry?
If you are going to worry, why pray?”

- 21. I opened this chapter with the concept that it is all about rewards and judgments.
 - a) Jesus condemns both individuals and locations for failure to accept him.
 - b) In other verses, he speaks of the immediate and eternal rewards for those who choose to follow Him.
 - c) With that, let’s stop worrying and cast our burdens upon the Lord.
- 22. Let’s pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for our eternal salvation. Out of gratitude, we cast our cares and cast our lives into your hands. You have stated that “your yoke is easy, your burden is light.” We do put your “yoke” (requirements) upon us, as we desire to follow you. Give us the power, the grace and the mercy to follow you all the days of our lives. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.