

Matthew 11b

In a general sense, how did Jesus address the three Galilean cities in which He had done many miracles (vv. 20-24)? He denounced them because they did not repent even after seeing extraordinary miracles..

What were the judgment comparisons He made against Chorazin and Bethsaida (v. 21)? Jesus compared them with the wicked Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon which had fallen under the judgment of God because of their idolatry and wickedness. If Tyre and Sidon had been privileged to see the miracles of Jesus that Chorazin and Bethsaida saw, they would have humbled themselves in deepest repentance. In the terrible day of judgment, therefore, Tyre and Sidon would fare better than Chorazin and Bethsaida.¹

What is the significance of the words “it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment” (v. 22)? They indicate that there will be differing degrees of punishment in hell, just as there will be differing degrees of reward in heaven (v. 24; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Luke 12:47-48; Hebrews 10:28-29). The single sin that consigns men to hell is refusal to submit to Jesus Christ (John 3:36b). But the depth of suffering in hell is conditional on the privileges spurned and the sins indulged.² The greater the revelation, the greater the accountability.

What were the judgment comparisons He made against Capernaum (vv. 23-24)? Few cities had been as favored as Capernaum. It became Jesus' home town after His rejection at Nazareth (9:1, cf. Mark 2:1-12), and some of His most extraordinary miracles—irrefutable evidences of His Messiahship—were performed there. Had vile Sodom, the capital of homosexuality, been as privileged as Capernaum to see the miracles of Jesus, it would have repented and been spared. Sodom's sin of perversion was great, but no sin is greater than Capernaum's rejection of the holy Son of God. Therefore, Sodom will not be punished as severely as Capernaum in the day of judgment. “*Lifted up to the skies*” in privilege, Capernaum “*will go down to the depth's* in judgment. If this is true of Capernaum, how much truer of places where Bibles abound, where the gospel is broadcast, and where few, if any, are without excuse.³

All three Galilean cities, in spite of their greater “light,” rejected the Messiah, refused to repent, and are today in ruins.⁴

How would you characterize Jesus's prayer (vv. 25-26)? The three cities of Galilee had neither eyes to see nor hearts to love Jesus. How did He react to their refusal to repent....their hardness of heart? Not with bitterness, cynicism, or vindictiveness. Rather He lifted His voice in thanks to God that nothing could frustrate His sovereign purposes. *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. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”*⁵

“These things” refer to the significance of Jesus' miracles, teaching, and signs of the messianic kingdom,

The “wise and learned” refers to the self-sufficient Jews who rejected Jesus because they felt no need for what He offered (cf. 1 Cor. 1:19-20). They were wise in their own eyes.

The “little children” are the dependent people who received Jesus' teaching as needy individuals.

Why did God hide truth from the unrepentant? It was God's good pleasure to hide truth from some and to reveal it to others. This may make God appear arbitrary and unfair. However, Scripture reveals that God owes human beings nothing. God is not unjust because He hides truth from some while revealing it to others. Hiding things from some is an evidence of God's judgment, not His injustice. The fact that He extends mercy to any is amazing. That He extends it to those who are inadequate, undeserving and totally dependent on Him is even more amazing (Romans 9:14-16).⁶

The three cities had every chance to welcome the Lord Jesus. They deliberately refused to submit to Him. When they refused the light, God withheld the light from them. But God's plans will not fail. If the learned will not believe, then God will reveal Him to humble hearts elsewhere. He fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty ([Luke 1:53](#)).⁷

How does Jesus describe His relationship with the Father (v. 27)? Here is another of Jesus' claims to being the Son of God.

"No one knows the Son except the Father." There is incomprehensible mystery about the Person of Christ. The inseparable union of divine and human natures in one Person boggles the human mind. So although we can know Him and love Him and trust Him, there is a sense in which only the Father can truly understand Him.⁸

"No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." The Father, too, is inscrutable. Ultimately, only Jesus is great enough to understand God. Man cannot know Him by his own strength or intellect. But the Lord Jesus can and does reveal the Father to those whom He chooses. Whoever comes to know the Son comes to know the Father also ([John 14:7](#)).⁹

After saying all this, we must confess that in seeking to explain verse 27, we are dealing with truths too high for us to understand ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#)).

11:28 What is the universal invitation and promise the Lord Jesus issues (v. 28)? The invitation to all who are weary and heavy laden to come to Him for rest.

Jesus, the revealer of God, invites those who feel their need for help that they cannot obtain by themselves to come to Him for rest (cf. [Revelation 22:17](#)). Israel's spiritual leaders had loaded the people with unscriptural burdens that were too heavy to bear (cf. 23:2-4) particularly in regard to the Sabbath. The "rest" in view anticipates both a future earthly kingdom rest (cf. [Hebrews 4](#)), and a present reality as well.¹⁰

What does the Lord mean by "rest?" Rest here is a gift; it is unearned and unmerited. This is the *rest of salvation* that comes from realizing that Christ finished the work of redemption on the Cross. It is the *rest of conscience* when one realizes that the penalty of one's sins has been paid once for all and that God will not demand payment twice.¹¹

What does He tell the weary to do (vv. 29-30)? Accept His yoke. A yoke is a neck harness for two, and the Lord Himself pleads to be One of the two. He wants to share the labor of any galling task. The fatal mistake for the believer is to seek to bear life's load in a single collar. God never intended a man to carry his burden alone. The secret of peace and victory in the Christian life is found in putting off the taxing collar of "self" and accepting the Master's relaxing "yoke."¹²

What will be the result of accepting His offer? By placing themselves under His yoke and learning from Him, they may find rest for their souls.....rest from the burdens of sin and its consequences.¹³

¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1244.

² *Ibid.*, 1245.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 331.

⁷ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1245.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1246.

¹⁰ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew*, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 332.

¹¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1246.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1247.

¹³ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 45.