

## Lesson 12 – 17 October 2010

### Truth Rejected

**Lesson Scope:** [Matthew 11 and 12](#)

#### Lesson Focus

Matthew 11 opens with John the Baptist, now in prison, seeking reassurance that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus, asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus told them to return to John and testify of all the miracles they had witnessed. Jesus' works proved that He was the Christ (Matthew 11:1-6).

Jesus went on to testify to the faithfulness of John's ministry, closing His testimony with the solemn warning, "He that bath ears to hear-, let him hear" (Matthew 11: 15). Unfortunately, the Jewish leaders refused to hear, and many of the people followed their example. The Jews even had the audacity to ask Jesus for a special sign to confirm His authority. In the verses that follow. Jesus warned them to heed the signs they already had and to consider the serious consequences of continually rejecting the truth.

The choice to reject truth is ultimately the choice of a destiny. God, who is not willing that any should perish, extends the invitation for all men to come unto Him

The devil's yoke is abrasive and oppressive. He is a hard taskmaster. Those who reject truth choose to come under his rule, even though many would claim to be independent. But they are dishonest with themselves, being blinded by the god of this world. They walk in craftiness, handle the word of God deceitfully, and oppose themselves. Because they refuse to believe the truth, they are taken captive by the devil's deception. There is no neutral ground in regards to the truth of God and of His Word. Those who reject truth become hardened to Christ's appeal. He cannot reveal Himself to them in their unbelief. "But his hand is stretched out still" to whosoever will come and find rest in Him.

**Lesson Aim:** To observe characteristics of those who reject truth.

**Theme Verse:** [2 Chronicles 36:16](#). But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

## Lesson Text

### Critical

#### Matthew 11:16-19

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, <sup>17</sup>And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. <sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. <sup>19</sup>The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

### Unrepentant

#### Matthew 11:20-30

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: <sup>21</sup>Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup>But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. <sup>23</sup>And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup>But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. <sup>26</sup>Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. <sup>27</sup>All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

<sup>28</sup>Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

### Condemned

#### Matthew 12:38-45

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. <sup>39</sup>But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: <sup>40</sup>For as Jonas was

three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup>The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. <sup>42</sup>The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. <sup>43</sup>When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. <sup>44</sup>Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. <sup>45</sup>Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **Critical**

1. Explain the analogy of the marketplace children.
2. Why do those who reject truth become critical?

#### **Unrepentant**

3. What were the mighty works of Jesus'? What was their evident purpose?
4. Why would it be "more tolerable" for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for the cities in which Jesus preached?
5. Why is truth hidden from the "wise and prudent"?
6. Is there any hope for truth rejecters? Explain.

#### **Condemned**

7. What were the characteristics of "this wicked generation" (Matthew 12:45)?
8. Explain Jesus' conclusion that "the last state ... is worse than the first."

### **Analyzing the Passage**

The illustration of children playing in the marketplace (Matthew 11:16-17) gives a vivid picture of a natural human trait. One group refused to cooperate with their companions, whether they played having a wedding or a funeral.

Jesus likened their play to the Jews' response to both Himself and John. They presumptuously rejected the message of truth in whatever form it came (Matthew 11:18-19). Jesus called them to logical thinking by saying,

"Wisdom is justified of her children." The results of truth confirm its validity.

To upbraid (Matthew 11:20) is to reproach. Jesus indicated in Matthew 11:22 that Judgement will vary according to one's opportunity to know the truth. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum—cities representing Israel's unbelief were more responsible than Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom because they were eyewitnesses of the mighty works of Jesus; yet they refused to repent. The Father's way for the "wise and prudent" (worldly wise and self-sufficient) is to repent and become as babes (Matthew 11:25) (teachable and trustful in disposition).

"The sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matthew 12:39) was the reviving from "death" to preach repentance to Nineveh. "The queen of the south" (Matthew 12:42) was the Queen of Sheba. The "greater than Solomon" (Matthew 12:42) is the Lord Jesus Christ—resurrected to live forever! The scribes and Pharisees pretentious request for a sign drew a solemn warning from Jesus. Persistent rejection of truth paves the way for complete deception (Matthew 12:43-45).

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Critical**

1. Those who reject truth criticize truth in an attempt to disprove it (Matthew 11:10-19). A critical spirit indicates that wrong thought patterns are already embedded in the heart. Truth rejecters are blinded by selfish motives that prompt illogical conclusions. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" (John 3:20).

2. Truth is verified by its results (Matthew 11:19). "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). An inconsistent testimony is more obvious to others than to the offender. A middle-of-the-road approach always leads to a crisis point requiring a clear decision one way or the other. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus chose to align themselves openly with truth (John 19:38-42).

### **Unrepentant**

3. Truth rejection is punished according to one's degree of knowledge (Matthew 11:20-24; 12:41-42). "The angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6) had no recourse. Sodom and Gomorrah did not have the Law; yet they suffered the "vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Israel had

the Law, the Prophets, and the miracles of Jesus, making it less tolerable for them than for Sodom in the Judgment Day. In addition to all this, we today have the New Testament! Will it be more tolerable for Capernaum in the Day of Judgment than for truth rejecters today?

4. Humanistic wisdom a common cause for rejoicing rejecting truth (Matthew 11:25).

The Jewish leaders considered their own knowledge of the Scriptures to be unrivaled (John 9:30-40). They were blinded to their real ignorance, unwilling to receive "the love of the truth." Once Jesus answered their question about blindness this way, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9:41). Pride and humanistic reasoning destroy love for the truth. Jesus gives the answer to the problem—"become as little children" (teachable and without pretense).

5. Jesus compassionately invites truth rejecters to leave their hem, loads and enter into His rest (Matthew 11:28-30). "Burdens are lifted at Calvary' Lay down your carnal reasoning, pride in self-accomplishment, superiority, and ulterior motives, and come to the cross. Jesus is eager to lift our burden and give us spiritual rest. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22).

### **Condemned**

6. The spiritually insensitive seek for miraculous demonstrations (Matthew 12:38). The rich man in hell reasoned with Abraham that, if one should rise from the dead, the wicked would repent. Abraham replied, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Jesus spoke this prophetically of the Jews, who, after Jesus' resurrection, remained willfully unbelieving. Today, people who seek for special signs while rejecting plain Scriptures open themselves to Satan, the master deceiver (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).

7. The resurrection of Christ is the greatest verification of the truth of the Gospel that men will ever have (Matthew 12:39-41). Jesus was without sin: therefore death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24). "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18). "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself" (Luke 24:39). Jesus appeared to more than five hundred people, giving them many infallible proofs of His resurrection.

8. One cannot be neutral about truth he is filled with God's truth or he is

filled with Satan power (Matthew 12:43) Each person who hears the truth must make a decision. Attempts to remain neutral will not be successful. The attitude that "I will go so far and no further- quenches the Holy Spirit's work in one's life. Continuing in that state opens the way for former evils to return with greater deceptive reinforcements.

### **Important Teachings**

1. Those who reject truth criticize truth in an attempt to disprove it (Matthew 11:16-19).
2. Truth is verified by its results (Matthew 11:19).
3. Truth rejection is punished according to one's degree of knowledge (Matthew 11:20-24; 12:41-42).
4. Humanistic wisdom is a common cause for rejecting truth (Matthew 11:25).
5. Jesus compassionately invites truth rejecters to leave their heavy loads and enter into His rest (Matthew 11:28-30).
6. The spiritually insensitive seek for miraculous demonstrations (Matthew 12:38).
7. The resurrection of Christ is the greatest verification of the truth of the Gospel that men will ever have (Matthew 12:39-41).
8. One cannot be neutral about truth he is filled with God's truth or he is filled with Satan power. (Matthew 12:43)

### **Answers to Questions**

1. Explain the analogy of the marketplace children.  
Jesus likened the Jews to children playing in the marketplace. One group refused to cooperate with their companions, whether they played having a wedding or a funeral. John the Baptist had severely restricted his eating and drinking, and they accused him of having a devil. Jesus lived among them without those restrictions, and they accused Him of being over-indulgent and too friendly with sinners. These leaders had set themselves on a religious pedestal and were selfishly guarding their position of authority. They felt themselves to be superior to the multitudes. They rejected reason and their very own King!
2. Why do those who reject truth become critical?  
Those who reject truth criticize in an attempt to justify themselves. A critical spirit indicates wrong thought patterns in the heart. Truth rejecters are

blinded by selfish motives that prompt, illogical conclusions about truth. They presumptuously malign God's people, whose lives constantly remind them of their own spiritual lack.

3. What were the mighty works of Jesus? What was their evident purpose? Jesus invited John's disciples to see that "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:5). Their evident purpose was to demonstrate the Father's power and blessing in Jesus' life and ministry.

4. Why would it be "more tolerable" for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, in the Day of Judgment than, for the cities in which Jesus preached?

Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom did not have the Old Testament Law. The cities Jesus preached to, which represent Israel as a whole, had Moses and the Prophets. They had also witnessed Jesus' mighty works in their midst, yet they refused to repent and believe. God judges individuals and nations according to the degree of knowledge they have and how each one responds to that knowledge.

5. Why is truth hidden, from the "wise and prudent"?

Truth is hid from the worldly wise and self-sufficient because they exalt themselves above others in their pride. Jesus spoke directly to the Jewish leaders of His day. They were wise in the doctrines of men and thought that they knew the Scriptures. Jesus said to them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." They twisted the Law to justify their own works. They refused to be taught, even by the Lord Himself.

6. Is there hope for truth rejecters? Explain.

Yes, but only if they repent, humble themselves, and come to Jesus for deliverance.

7. What were the characteristics of "this wicked generation" (Matthew 12:45)?

They were evil and adulterous (Matthew 12:39); they wanted a sign despite the fact that Jesus had done miracles among them. Their motives were wrong. They were more accountable and under greater condemnation than the heathen.

8. Explain Jesus' conclusion that "the last state . . . is worse than the first." Second Peter 2:20, 21 gives a clear answer: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end

is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Every relapse into sin brings greater accountability along with a greater hardening of the heart.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Oh, do not let the Word depart,  
And close thine eyes against the light;  
Poor sinner, harden not your heart.  
Be saved, oh, tonight.  
Tomorrow's sun may never rise  
To bless thy long deluded sight;  
This is the time, oh, then be wise,  
Be saved, oh, tonight.  
Our Lord in pity lingers still:  
And wilt thou thus His love requite"  
Renounce at once thy stubborn will,  
Be saved, oh, tonight.  
Our blessed Lord refuses none  
Who would to Him their souls unite.  
Believe, obey, the work is done,  
Be saved, oh, tonight.  
*Horatius Bonar*

### **Research Guide**

1. Meditate on "Wisdom" from Proverbs 8.
2. Read the chapter on "Unbelief" in Doctrines of the Bible.
3. Read the parallel Scripture in Luke 10 and 11.