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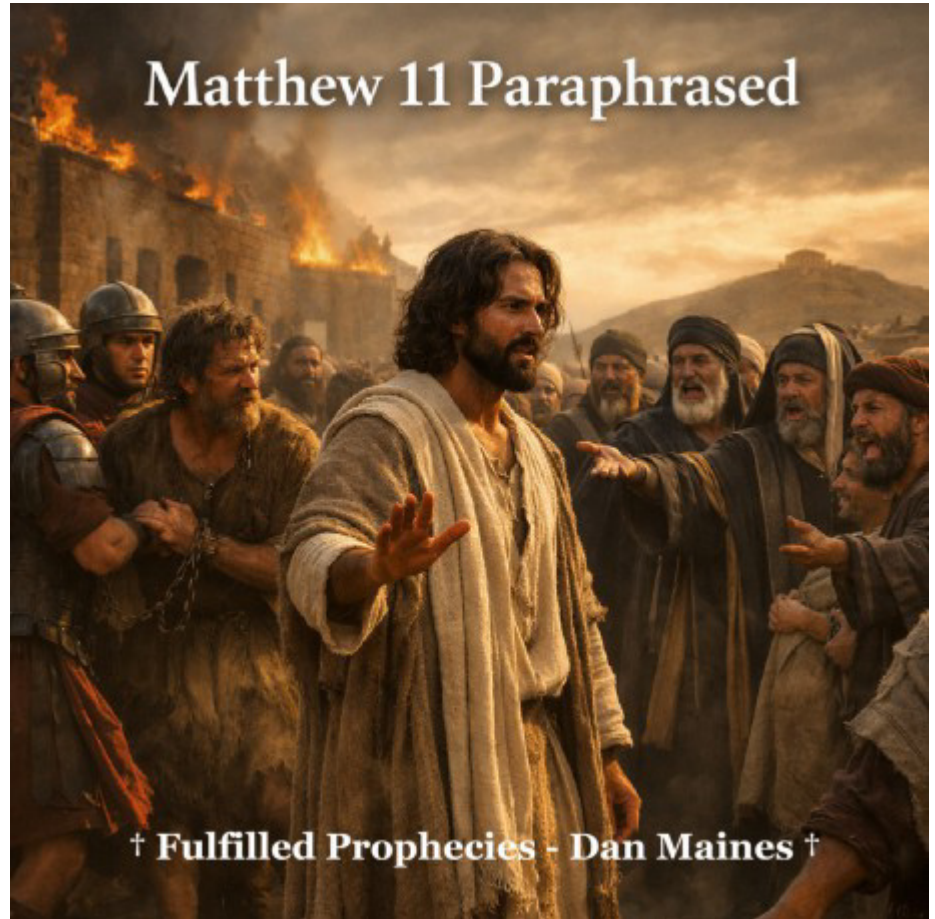
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## Matthew 11 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## Matthew 11 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† Matthew 11 shows the growing tension between Christ and the unbelieving generation of Israel. Even though Jesus performed clear signs proving He was the Messiah, many still refused to repent (Matthew 11:20).

† John the Baptist's question gives Jesus the opportunity to publicly confirm that the prophecies about the Messiah were being fulfilled right before their eyes (Isaiah 35:5-6; Isaiah 61:1).

† The chapter ends with one of the most gracious invitations in

scripture, where Christ calls the weary to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28-30).

### **Matthew 11:1**

When Jesus finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

† Jesus continued preaching throughout Israel, demonstrating that His ministry focused on calling that generation to repentance (Matthew 4:23).

† This mission of teaching and preaching fulfilled the expectation that the Messiah would proclaim good news to the people (Isaiah 61:1).

† Eusebius notes that Christ's ministry traveled throughout Judea before the coming judgment upon Jerusalem (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

### **Matthew 11:2**

Now when John heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples.

† John had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas for condemning his unlawful marriage (Matthew 14:3-4).

† The miracles of Jesus had already spread throughout the region, confirming that the Messiah had appeared (Matthew 4:24).

† Josephus records the imprisonment and later execution of John by Herod (Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.2).

### **Matthew 11:3**

and said to Him, Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?

† John asked for confirmation that Jesus truly was the promised Messiah (Psalm 118:26).

† The title Expected One refers to the promised deliverer spoken of throughout the prophets (Genesis 49:10).

† Tertullian explained that this question allowed Christ to demonstrate fulfillment of prophecy rather than simply claim

authority (Against Marcion 4.18).

### **Matthew 11:4**

Jesus answered and said to them, Go and report to John what you hear and see.

† Jesus directed attention to His works rather than merely offering words (John 10:37-38).

† The evidence of fulfilled prophecy was visible in His miracles and teachings (Isaiah 35:5-6).

† Irenaeus taught that Christ's miracles confirmed the prophetic promises given to Israel (Against Heresies 3.10).

### **Matthew 11:5**

The blind receive 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.

† This list reflects Isaiah's prophecy describing the signs of the coming Messiah (Isaiah 35:5-6).

† The message reaching the poor fulfilled Isaiah 61:1 concerning the preaching of good news.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that these works revealed the arrival of the long awaited kingdom (Stromata 6.6).

### **Matthew 11:6**

And blessed is the one who does not take offense at Me.

† Many in Israel stumbled over Jesus because He did not match their political expectations (Isaiah 8:14).

† The Messiah became a stumbling stone for those unwilling to believe (Romans 9:32-33).

† Justin Martyr explained that Israel's rejection fulfilled prophecy about the rejected cornerstone (Dialogue with Trypho 118).

### **Matthew 11:7**

As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

† Jesus defended John before the crowd so they would not

misunderstand his question.

† The wilderness ministry echoed the prophetic call for repentance outside the corrupt temple leadership (Isaiah 40:3).

† Eusebius described John as the final prophet before the Messiah appeared publicly (Ecclesiastical History 1.11).

### **Matthew 11:8**

But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces.

† John lived a rugged prophetic life similar to Elijah (2 Kings 1:8).

† His lifestyle separated him from the corruption of royal courts and religious elites.

† Early Christian writers frequently identified John as fulfilling the Elijah prophecy of Malachi.

### **Matthew 11:9**

But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

† John was more than a prophet because he personally announced the arrival of the Messiah (Luke 1:76).

† Previous prophets predicted Christ, but John directly pointed to Him (John 1:29).

† Irenaeus highlighted John's unique role in revealing Christ to Israel (Against Heresies 3.11).

### **Matthew 11:10**

This is the one about whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way before You.

† Jesus quotes Malachi 3:1, identifying John as the messenger preparing the Lord's arrival.

† This prophecy connects the coming messenger directly to the appearance of the Lord Himself.

† The prophecy signaled the final stage before covenant judgment on Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 11:11**

Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

† John was the greatest prophet under the old covenant order.

† Those entering the new covenant kingdom would experience greater revelation and spiritual blessing (Hebrews 8:6).

† Augustine wrote that John represented the final voice of the prophetic era before Christ established the kingdom (Sermon 293).

### **Matthew 11:12**

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.

† Opposition began immediately when John and Jesus called Israel to repentance (Matthew 3:7).

† Religious leaders resisted the message and later persecuted Christ and His followers (Acts 4:1-3).

† Tertullian connected this violence to the hostility of corrupt leaders against the gospel (Apology 21).

### **Matthew 11:13**

For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

† John marked the end of the prophetic anticipation of the Messiah.

† The entire Old Testament pointed forward to the arrival of Christ (Luke 24:44).

† The prophetic timeline was reaching fulfillment in that generation.

### **Matthew 11:14**

And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.

† This fulfills Malachi 4:5 concerning Elijah's coming before the Day of the Lord.

† Luke explains that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17).

† This fulfilled prophecy before the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 11:15**

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

† Jesus often used this phrase to call listeners to spiritual understanding (Matthew 13:9).

† Many heard His words but refused to accept their meaning.

† This warning prepared the audience for the rebuke that followed.

### **Matthew 11:16**

But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces who call out to the other children.

† Jesus compares that generation to immature children who refuse every message.

† They rejected both John's call to repentance and Christ's message of grace.

† This illustrates the stubborn unbelief of the nation.

### **Matthew 11:17**

and say, We played the flute for you, and you did not dance, we sang a funeral song, and you did not mourn.

† The people rejected both joyful and serious messages from God's messengers.

† Their refusal revealed hardened hearts rather than lack of evidence.

† This behavior fulfilled the long history of Israel rejecting the prophets.

### **Matthew 11:18**

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a demon.

† John's strict lifestyle was used as an excuse to dismiss his message.

† Critics focused on the messenger rather than the truth of the message.

† This same rejection would later target Christ.

### **Matthew 11:19**

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.

† Jesus associated with sinners to call them to repentance (Luke 5:32).

† The religious leaders twisted this compassion into accusations.

† Christ's works ultimately proved the truth of His mission.

### **Matthew 11:20**

Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.

† The miracles should have led the people to repentance (John 12:37).

† Their refusal showed spiritual blindness despite overwhelming evidence.

† This rebuke begins a pronouncement of judgment on several cities.

### **Matthew 11:21**

Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida. For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

† Jesus declared that pagan cities would have responded more humbly than Israel's towns.

† Sackcloth and ashes symbolize repentance in the Old Testament (Jonah 3:5-6).

† This statement exposes the depth of Israel's unbelief.

### **Matthew 11:22**

Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

† Greater revelation brings greater accountability (Luke 12:48).

† Israel had witnessed the Messiah Himself yet refused to

repent.

† This warning pointed forward to the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 11:23**

And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades. For if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.

† Capernaum witnessed many miracles yet remained largely unrepentant.

† The comparison with Sodom emphasizes the severity of their unbelief.

† Judgment would soon fall on that generation.

### **Matthew 11:24**

Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

† The greater the light rejected, the greater the judgment.

† Israel's rejection of Christ brought covenant judgment upon the nation.

† Jesus repeatedly warned that this judgment would occur within that generation (Matthew 23:36).

### **Matthew 11:25**

At that time Jesus said, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

† The religious elite failed to understand the truth because of pride.

† God revealed the kingdom to the humble rather than the self confident.

† This pattern appears throughout scripture.

### **Matthew 11:26**

Yes, Father, for this way was well pleasing in Your sight.

† God's plan unfolded according to His sovereign purpose.

† The revelation of the kingdom followed divine wisdom rather than human expectation.

† This demonstrates the authority of God's redemptive plan.

### **Matthew 11:27**

All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

† Jesus declares His unique authority and relationship with the Father.

† True knowledge of God comes only through Christ (John 14:6).

† This statement reveals the divine authority of the Messiah.

### **Matthew 11:28**

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

† Jesus invites those burdened by sin and legalism to come to Him.

† This rest reflects the fulfillment of God's promise of spiritual restoration (Jeremiah 31:25).

† The invitation remains open to all who trust in Christ.

### **Matthew 11:29**

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.

† The yoke represents submission to Christ's teaching.

† Unlike the heavy burdens imposed by religious leaders, Christ's guidance brings peace (Matthew 23:4).

† This echoes the promise of rest given in Jeremiah 6:16.

### **Matthew 11:30**

For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

† Christ's teaching frees believers from the crushing weight of legalistic religion.

† The new covenant offers grace rather than endless ritual

obligations (Hebrews 8:13).

† The kingdom Christ brought provides true spiritual rest.

## **Historical References**

† Josephus records John the Baptist's imprisonment and execution by Herod Antipas (Antiquities 18.5.2).

† Eusebius described John as the final prophetic messenger preparing the way for Christ (Ecclesiastical History 1.11).

† Irenaeus taught that John's ministry marked the closing voice of the Old Covenant prophets (Against Heresies 3.11).

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† Christ's works confirm that He is the promised Messiah foretold by the prophets.

† Just as that generation rejected clear evidence, people today still resist the truth.

† The invitation of Christ remains open to everyone who comes to Him in faith.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Why did John question whether Jesus was the Expected One?

**A:** John sought confirmation that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies concerning the Messiah (Isaiah 35:5-6; Luke 7:22).

**Q:** Why did Jesus condemn certain cities?

**A:** Those cities witnessed powerful miracles yet refused to repent, showing hardened unbelief (Matthew 11:20-24).

**Q:** What does it mean that Christ's yoke is easy?

**A:** Christ frees believers from the heavy burden of legalistic religion and offers spiritual rest through the new covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13).

**Q:** Why did Jesus compare that generation to children in the marketplace?

**A:** Jesus was exposing the stubborn attitude of that generation. They rejected both John's message of repentance and Christ's message of grace, showing they weren't seeking truth at all (Matthew 11:16-19; Luke 7:31-35).

**Q:** Why did Jesus say pagan cities like Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have repented?

**A:** Those cities never witnessed the miracles that Israel saw. Jesus was showing that Israel had far greater light yet still refused to repent, making their judgment more severe (Matthew 11:21-24; Luke 12:48).

**Q:** What does it mean that the kingdom was revealed to infants rather than the wise and intelligent?

**A:** Jesus was speaking about humility. Those who were humble and willing to receive truth understood the message, while the proud religious leaders rejected it (Matthew 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

**Q:** What burden was Jesus talking about when He said people were weary and heavy laden?

**A:** Many Jews were crushed under the weight of religious traditions and legal requirements imposed by the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus offered freedom and rest through His teaching and the coming new covenant (Matthew 23:4; Hebrews 8:6-13).

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Matthew 11:1-30; Matthew 4:23; Matthew 14:3-4; Psalm 118:26; Genesis 49:10; John 10:37-38; Isaiah 35:5-6; Isaiah 61:1; Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:32-33; Isaiah 40:3; 2 Kings 1:8; Luke 1:76; John 1:29; Malachi 3:1; Hebrews 8:6; Matthew 3:7; Acts 4:1-3; Luke 24:44; Malachi 4:5; Luke 1:17; Matthew 13:9; Luke 5:32; John 12:37; Jonah 3:5-6; Luke 12:48; Matthew

23:36; John 14:6; Jeremiah 31:25; Matthew 23:4; Jeremiah 6:16; Hebrews 8:13

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 18.5.2; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 1.11, 3.5; Tertullian, Against Marcion 4.18; Tertullian, Apology 21; Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.10-11; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.6; Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 118; Augustine, Sermon 293

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