

1) Moving on ...

Matthew 11:20–24 (ESV)

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

²⁰ Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

2) These three towns – Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, were situated at the north end of the Sea of Galilee.

a) Of course, Capernaum was Jesus’ home base after he left Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry.

b) Chorazin was situated on a basalt plateau north of Capernaum.

i) It is not mentioned outside this context and then only in two of the gospels.

c) There is some debate about exactly where Bethsaida was located.

i) There are currently two archeological digs that are candidates which are only a few miles apart.

ii) Bethsaida is mentioned several times in all the gospels but nothing specific regarding a large number of miracles is mentioned.

3) What we can surmise from Jesus’ statements here is that MOST of his mighty works and miracles were done in these towns.

4) We do know of some in Capernaum.

5) Regardless of the lack of detail that scripture reveals, Jesus knows that enough signs and wonders were done so that they should have repented and turned to him.

6) I think it is important to realize also that he is saying that the witnessing should have been enough if they had been paying attention.

a) And – the implication is that the entire towns should have turned and believed in Him as the Messiah.

7) Dale C. Allison writes:

“Jesus speaks as an Old Testament prophet would speak, indicting whole communities. The language presupposes that towns can repent or refuse to repent as collective bodies.”

8) Further, Craig Keener makes the point:

“The miracles are not mere displays of power but function as signs of the kingdom. To reject them is to reject the divine visitation itself.”

Matthew – Teachings, Messiahship, and Ministry of Jesus Christ – NOTES

- 9) I think it is interesting that in the case of Chorazin and Bethsaida they were only compared to Tyre and Sidon as cities that would have repented.
- a) Looking at little history of Tyre and Sidon, we see
 - i) They were ancient Phoenician cities with a reputation for wickedness (Isaiah 23; Ezekiel 27–28; Amos 1:9–10).
 - ii) God destroyed each city for its opposition to his people and for its wickedness as a center of Baal worship.
 - iii) Herod the Great partially restored Tyre so citizens from there may well have heard these very words of Jesus.³¹
- 10) However, in the case of Capernaum, Jesus is very specific in the punishment that awaits – going down to Hades.
- a) Sodom and Gomorrah were already mentioned in 10:15 as being better off on the Day of Judgment than those cities who would refuse the disciples’ message.
 - b) So, now he singles out Capernaum itself saying it would be worse off than the worst of these Old Testament cities.
 - c) Because it was Jesus’ home base, its people had seen him and many, many miracles done there and as a whole, they had rejected him.
- 11) One last item we should consider in this is that these cities were really not what we call cities.
- i) Capernaum had an estimated population of roughly 1,000 to 1,500 people.
 - (1) Archaeological evidence shows the village area was ~10–12 acres. This supports this population number range.
 - ii) Chorazin had an estimated population of approximately 500 to 1,000 people.
 - iii) Since there is doubt about the actual location of Bethsaida the population estimates are not easily verified. However, it was fairly large and estimates run around 2000.
- b) Obviously, none of these were near the size of Fort Worth.
 - i) 2024 population estimate was a little over one million residents.
 - c) In fact, some of our neighborhoods could be 500 to 1000 people just to get a better idea of size – all of Wedgewood is estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000 people.
 - d) Just our little section of Summer Creek is perhaps 5000.

If Jesus were to come to Ft. Worth and perform miracles as he did in these cities, would we be judged as a city the in same way?

1) Continuing we read ...

Matthew 11:25–27 (ESV)
Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest

²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been

³¹ Bruce B. Barton, [Matthew](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 226.

handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

- 2) The opening phrase “at that time Jesus declared” most feel is a direct connection back to what he had just said regarding his rejection.
 - a) He is saying that he is actually thankful for these rejections by the arrogant, self-righteous, majority of residents of these towns.
 - b) Instead, God had chosen to reveal himself through Christ to those who were open to seeing Jesus for who he was – his disciples and dedicated followers.
 - c) He also clearly states that this was God’s gracious will.
- 3) Jesus begins with a public prayer – not corporate in the sense of praying on behalf of, but rather his praying in this case has a benefit for them.
- 4) After the prayer, Jesus makes three defining statements clearly stating his relationship with the Father and the Father’s relationship with him.
 - a) **All things have been handed over to me by my Father.**
 - i) These words define a shared knowledge.
 - ii) The phrasing here “have been committed or handed over” indicates that this has been the case for all eternity.
 - b) **No one knows the Son except the Father. ... AND No one knows the Father except the Son.**
 - i) These statements define an intimate personal relationship between the Father and the Son.
 - ii) A relationship like no other – one we cannot begin to understand.
- 5) He then adds; **“and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”**
 - a) One important note here is that the choice is given to Jesus.
- 6) Knowing that Jesus uses parables to teach and it is his choice to reveal God or not, here is a related question.

For God’s plan to work, was it possible for everyone to know and accept who Jesus was?

If yes, how would the plan then work?

If no, why not?

- 1) Jesus continues ...

Matthew 11:28–30 (ESV)

Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Matthew – Teachings, Messiahship, and Ministry of Jesus Christ – NOTES

- 2) When we read this, it is always tempting to jump to the application to us but, we must first consider who he is talking to and what it meant to them.
- 3) Jesus saw many of the rules and regulations of the Pharisees as the true burdens that they were though, the people may not have felt that way.
 - a) There is also of course, the Romans and all the taxation and interference in the people's lives that were truly burdens."
- 4) Jesus invites these folks to come to him and shed all that.
 - a) Remember the Sermon on the Mount and the fulfillment of the Law.
 - b) Jesus was clearly offering these folks a way to abandon Pharisaic legalism and live as God intended.
 - c) There is no question their lives would be easier without that burden.
 - d) As to the Romans, living with the heart of God would make that burden easier as well.
- 5) His message is extended not only to the people to whom he is speaking but to us as well.
 - a) We only have to accept his invitation.

So, in this context for them and us, what is the rest that Jesus gives?

- 6) In both verse 29 and 30, Jesus speaks of his yoke.

What do you think Jesus' yoke is?

Do you feel you have religious burdens?

What about fear of failing?

What about living up to what Jesus wants us to be?

- 7) I think the big takeaway here is that we must not consider the labor and being heavy laden as something to do with work or the trials of life.
 - a) To be clear, Jesus will always be there for us and help us during our trials and tribulations of this life.
 - b) However, this is not the point of this passage.
- 8) It is for us to lay aside our religious burdens, our fears of failing and not being what he wants and trust him in our hearts and strive with knowledge of his love for us and his grace covering us.