



Matthew 11:1-24

THE DANGER OF FALSE EXPECTATIONS

Thematically the three chapters (11-13) are held together by the rising tide of disappointment in and opposition to the kingdom of God that was resulting from Jesus' ministry. He was not turning out to be the kind of Messiah the people had expected. Even John the Baptist had doubts (11:2-19), and the Galilean cities that were sites of most of Jesus' miracles hardened themselves in unbelief (11:20-24)... [This passage] is therefore an implicit challenge to reexamine one's presuppositions about what the Messiah should be and do in the light of Jesus and his fulfillment of Scripture and to bring one's understanding and faith into line with him.

—D. A. Carson

ex•pec•ta•tion: the feeling or belief that something will or should happen (Cambridge Dictionary)

Jesus and His twelve disciples, along with John the Baptist, had proclaimed the message of the kingdom of heaven throughout all of Israel (3:2; 4:17; 10:7). Their message was validated by the signs of the kingdom. But in Matthew 11, the opposition to Jesus begins to escalate. He was not the Messiah that the nation was expecting.

JOHN'S QUESTION—Are You the Messiah? (11:2-3)

- His Situation (4:12)
- His Discouragement (cf. 1 Kings 19:4)
- His Expectation (3:10-12; cf. Is. 35:3-6, 61:1-2)

JESUS' ANSWER—Yes, I Am the Messiah. (11:4-6)

- Jesus' _____ verify that He is the Messiah.
- Jesus' _____ may make people stumble.

Disappointment is the gap that exists between expectation and reality.

—John Maxwell

Expectations are personal beliefs about events that may or may not happen. They are assumptions about the future, developed from a complex combination of our experiences, desires, and knowledge of our environment.

—Dr. Jennifer Delgado Suarez

The same questions undoubtedly face everyone in suffering for Christ's sake. If our God is omnipotent, why does He permit the righteous to suffer? The answer, of course, is that the time of God's judgment has not yet come.

—John Walvoord

Offended. Greek, *skandalizo*, "to put a stumbling block in the way, upon which another may trip and fall" (Thayer). See Isaiah 8:14-15.

There is need of much grace when the messengers come back saying: "Yes, He has all the power, and is all that you have thought; but He said not a word about taking you out of prison." No explanation. Prison doors left closed. And then the message, "Blessed is he who shall not be offended because of me." —C. G. Moore

JESUS' COMMENDATION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (11:7-15)

- John's position as a prophet is _____.
- John's privilege as a prophet is _____.
- John's perspective as a prophet is _____.

JESUS' CONDEMNATION OF "THIS GENERATION" (11:12, 16-24)

- They _____ the kingdom because it did not, and would not, conform to their expectations.

Three Possible Interpretations of Matthew 11:12:

1. **Positive.** The kingdom has been forcefully advancing and only those who are aggressive in their faith seize it.
2. **Neutral.** The kingdom has been forcefully advancing but at the same time it has been fiercely resisted by many people.
3. **Negative.** The kingdom has been resisted from day one and many people have tried to force it to be what they wanted it to be.

- They _____ both John the Baptist and Jesus because they did not "dance to their tune."
- They _____ to repent even though the mighty works of the Messiah had been clearly done in their midst.

MY PERSONAL RESPONSE

- In what area(s) of my life am I discouraged or disappointed? What expectations are behind my disappointment? What did I expect God to do? Others to do? How many of my expectations are self-focused?
- Do I see God as God...or as a tool to get what I want? Am I okay if God does not do things the way that I expect Him to?
- Am I willing to surrender to God's will? (Matt. 26:39; Rom. 12:1-2)

What was it that John lacked? What is it that the Christian has that John didn't have? The answer is simple and fundamental. John had never seen the Cross.

—William Barclay

The entire OT has a prophetic function, a function it maintained up until, and including, John the Baptist.

—D. A. Carson

Suffers violence. Greek, *biazo*, "to force; inflict violence upon."

Take it by force. Greek, *harpazo*, "to seize, to carry off by force" (cf. Matt. 13:19; John 6:15).

People are growing more and more discontent with Jesus' refusal to promote revolution.

—Craig L. Blomberg

Matthew 11:12 is a reference to the Jewish rulers' attempts to seize the kingdom and make it conform to their ideas of it.

—S. Lewis Johnson

He said that generation was a fickle generation, fickle like children, who want things to go their way. But John, and then Jesus, did not play their game.

—Allen Ross

The plain fact is that when people do not want to listen to the truth, they will easily find an excuse for not listening. They do not even try to be consistent in their criticism. They will criticize the same person and the same institution from quite opposite grounds and reasons.

—William Barclay

Matthew 11:20-24 vividly illustrates the simple truth that the greater the revelation, the greater the accountability.

—Donald A. Hagner