

Lesson 11 . . . Taking on the Yoke of the King

Gospel of Matthew

.....



Suggested responses to questions about Matthew 11:1-30

Note: Be sure to respond to all the questions yourself before reading the suggested responses in order to make the most of this study.

1. In Isaiah 35:5-6, it's prophesied that the Messiah would do the very same things that Jesus has been doing: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy."
2. Paragraph 548 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that Jesus' "miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God. But his miracles can also be occasions for 'offense'; they are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons."
3. The prophecy in Malachi 4:5 (*Mal 3:23* in the New American Bible) associates the messenger of the LORD with the prophet Elijah. Luke 1:17a records that the angel Gabriel told Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist: "he will go before him [the LORD] in the spirit and power of Elijah."
4. Malachi 4:5 (*Mal 3:23* in the New American Bible) prophesies: "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes." Then in Malachi 4:6 (*Mal 3:24* in the New American Bible), the prophet declares God's words saying: "And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse. In Luke 1:17b, the angel Gabriel expands on this prophecy by saying that John the Baptist will "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."
5. In 2 Kings 2:9-14, Elisha, a prophet and the successor of Elijah, asks for and receives from God a double portion of Elijah's spirit. In 2 Kings 2:10, Elijah explains how Elisha will know whether he's been granted his request: "You have asked for a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." 2 Kings 2:13-14 records the miracle that Elisha immediately performs after he sees Elijah taken by a whirlwind into heaven: "And [Elisha] took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?' And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other; and Elisha went over." As the prophet Elisha completes the ministry of the prophet Elijah in an even greater way, Jesus completes the ministry of the prophet John the Baptist in the greatest of ways. What John the Baptist begins, Jesus completes.

Matthew Lesson 11 Suggested Responses

6. John the Baptist was a prophet who wouldn't live on earth long enough to see the mission of Jesus reach its fulfillment. Those who would receive the grace of salvation through the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus would receive an even greater blessing. 1 Peter 1:10-12 teaches: "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preach the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look."
7. The sin of Sodom was sexual immorality. Genesis 13:13 describes the men of Sodom as "wicked" and "great sinners against the LORD." Genesis 18:20 describes the sins of Sodom and the nearby city Gomorrah as "very grave." Genesis 19:1-24 recounts the story of two angels sent by God to Lot and his family, how the men of the city threatened to molest them, and how God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with brimstone and fire from heaven. The people of Capernaum are blinded by the sin of pride, which prevents them from repenting in humility.
8. In both Matthew's Gospel and John's Gospel, Jesus is shown to have an intimate relationship with God the Father. In John 3:35 Jesus says: "[T]he Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand." In John 10:14-15 he teaches: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." In John 17:25 Jesus says: "O righteous Father, the world has not known thee; but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me."
9. In Sirach 51:23-27, "Wisdom" issues this invitation: "Draw near to me, you who are untaught, and lodge in my school. Why do you say you are lacking in these things, and why are your souls very thirsty? I opened my mouth and said, Get these things for yourselves without money. Put your neck under the yoke, and let your souls receive instruction; it is to be found close by. See with your eyes that I have labored little and found for myself much rest."
10. Exodus 20:9-11 describes the sabbath as a holy day of rest: "Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it." Hebrews 4:1-11 explains that sabbath rest in the Old Covenant didn't have the same benefit as it does now that Jesus has fulfilled the law. Faith and obedience are necessary to truly benefit from the sabbath under the New Covenant.

Responses to the Questions for Reflection will vary.