

The Rejection of the King Matthew 12

The leaders of the nation of Israel rejected their Messiah, because He did not conform to their expectations and He threatened their way of life. Their way involved control, toil and fear. Jesus offered hope, peace and rest. They chose poorly. Which way will you choose?

Top of the list of life's biggest question? What is the meaning of life?

Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in and try to live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations.

Discovered the answer to the greatest question on our minds is found by answering what Jesus considered the most important question: Who do you say that I am? All other questions can be answered out of that question.

- Unfortunately, most people, including many Christians, answer that question without concern for how Jesus Himself would answer. Their answer is based on who they hope, or desire or expect Jesus to be.
- **Prosperity Jesus.** Jesus exists to make me wealthy and healthy.
- **Political Jesus.** Jesus exists to set the world right under authority of my political party.
- **Self-improvement Jesus.** Jesus exists to make me into a better version of myself.
- **Warm and fuzzy Jesus.** He didn't come to save me from anything, or change me in any way. He lives to make me feel better about myself. I'm ok, you're ok.
- None of these fit with who Jesus really is, and what He really has to offer.

Matthew 12 Jesus says, this is who I am. He offers Himself as He is, not as anyone might hope, or desire or expect Him to be. Just as He is. And everyone has to make a choice.

Review

- 2000 years before Jesus Abraham promised a son who would be a blessing to nations
- 1000 years before Jesus David told his son/descendent would be that Son, King
- 500 years before Jesus prophets told Messiah would bring New Covenant, remove debt of sin, gift of Holy Spirit, fulfill promises to Israel and all nations.
- Jesus was born. Qualified to be Messiah by His genealogy, affirmed in baptism, demonstrated to be righteous by wilderness temptation. He is the one.
- Revealed Himself to the nation (Matthew 5-11). Teaching, miracles
- End of ch 11 Jesus offers Himself to the nation as their king
- Chapter 12 is pivotal point in the book. Will the nation receive Him or reject Him?
- 2 competing visions of life, God, reality. Spiritual leaders' or Son of God's?
- Jesus will build His vision around the concept of Sabbath rest

Matthew 11:28. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

1. Sabbath rest is...life as it was meant to be

- I don't need to rest. I have lots of energy
- I love naps; take one every day.
- Genesis 2:2-3
 - Why did God rest? Not b/c He was tired.
 - All God does, He expects us to imitate b/c we are in His image.
 - 7th Day unlike any other

- God did not speak or create. God did not pronounce anything good
 - No boundaries of time; no “evening and morning” formula
 - On a day unlike any other day, we would expect that God did something dramatic, but all He did was stop, cease
 - Sabbath = to cease, to stop.
 - He tells us to stop normal activities thru which we provide for ourselves, and go deep into God and things that refresh body, mind and spirit.
 - Isaiah 58:13-14. Turn your attention to enjoying and receiving
 - Sabbath is a foretaste, a brief glimpse into, life in the kingdom of God
 - Genesis 5:29. “Noah” = rest. It wasn’t Noah, it would be Jesus
 - All of life in the kingdom of God will be “Sabbath rest” = Shalom
 - No more toil or striving. Curse is lifted.
 - God doesn’t need anything from us, but longs to give to us.
 - Sabbath represents understanding God’s character = He loves to give gifts
 - Sabbath represents an understanding of life with God = receiving good gifts, not constant toil under unreasonable demands
 - I can rest/cease striving because I can trust. 2 paths – toil or trust
- Greatest barrier to people coming to God is that they stubbornly perceive God as they expect Him to be, or want Him to be, not how He is
 - 9/10 Americans believe in God. 75% believe disengaged or judgmental
 - Jesus is offering an alternative view of God, Himself, kingdom, life itself

2. Sabbath rest is...only found in Jesus – Matthew 11:28-30

- “Come to Me...and I will give you rest”
 - Different: Jesus is offering Himself, not revised list of regulations as source of life
- “Weary and heavy laden”
 - Israel was weary and heavy laden
 - Poverty, sickness, early death, oppressive Roman rule, spiritual and political leaders offered no hope
 - You may be weary; Your friends and family members are weary and heavy laden
 - We are toiling not trusting, toiling not resting
 - Never content. What you have or achieve is never enough.
 - Never confident. Who you are or can become is never enough.
- “Take My yoke”
 - 2 kinds of yokes in Jesus day. Wooden bar across neck of 1) oxen or 2) men
 - My yoke = Jesus is in control, like farmer. He gets to define your best life
 - Gentle, easy. True righteousness as described in SOTM is exceptionally high, but Jesus’ way is to give desire and ability to be transformed
 - Yoke on a man was designed to make work easier
 - Spiritual leaders also had a yoke
 - Yoke was Law and interpretations and applications of Law
 - But it was hard; not life-giving
 - “Even the Mishnah laments that ‘the rules about the Sabbath ... are as mountains hanging by a hair....’” (*Hagigah* 1:8).
 - Long list of things you could not do, and it was work to keep from failure. Created fear of violation, not freedom
 - **Matthew 23:4**
 - Contrary to the invitation of good news of Jesus. Acts 15:10 (cf. Gal 5:1)
 - Which vision of life will you choose? Who will be in control of defining meaning and determining direction in your life?

Matthew 12 is marked by a series of challenges to Jesus' authority to define self/life

- 1st challenge to Jesus' authority. Matthew 12:1-2
 - Sets the stage for a series of conflicts
 - Matthew 12:8. "Lord of the Sabbath"
 - I am God. I define what the Sabbath is for.
- 2nd challenge to Jesus' authority. Matthew 12:9-14
 - Mark 2:27. Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man
 - Miracles aren't actually supernatural. Restoration of natural, intended order.
- 3rd challenge to Jesus' authority. Matthew 12:22
 - All bad. Completely trapped. Completely, instantly healed
 - 12:23. Response is doubting in Greek, but the door is open
 - Pharisees sense they are about to lose control
 - 12:24
 - Kids were little, loved to play games. It was to their advantage to control the rules and to change the rules at any point in time. Add rules, drop rules, ignore rules.
 - Pharisees don't reject the miracle, they throw the flag on the source
- Jesus' warning – Matthew 12:30-32
 - One last chance to change their decision about Jesus.
 - Serious consequences = "unpardonable sin"
 - "Could I commit this sin?" NO! You can't.
 - This sin tied to a specific moment in history
 - Jesus filled with the Spirit at baptism; affirmed by the Father; testified of Himself – King and Kingdom. Spirit testified through miracles.
 - If you call the Spirit's work satanic now, this is a point of no return for you as the representatives of the nation.
 - President and congress can take us to war. Voice in electing, but then they make decisions on our behalf.
 - That generation of leaders who heard the teachings and saw the miracles had a responsibility to receive Jesus as their king
 - Matthew 12:34, 36-37
 - Can a person reject Jesus in this life and end life separated from Him? Yes, but that is not the point of Matthew 12.
 - As long as a person is living there is hope they will turn and believe. That's why we keep praying for and sharing gospel with stubborn people
- Final rejection – 12:38
 - "show us a sign"; they had seen many signs
 - Jesus: I know what you are doing here. No, no more signs but one.
- Pronounces judgment on that generation – 12:39-42
 - Sealed their fate
 - Rome would crush rebellion and destroy Jerusalem and Temple
 - "this generation" = not every Israelite (apostles, et al) but most
 - Sealed His fate. Cross was inevitable. They rejected Him, and He rejected them.
- Significant shift in the narrative
 - No more offers of the Kingdom
 - Guest list has changed. Spiritual leaders have said, We don't want to come in. Family thinks He is crazy.
 - Parables only
 - New vision of "kingdom"

- 13:31-32. Davidic kingdom not like a mustard seed, but conquering army
 - The way you could recognize Me and Kingdom before was obvious
 - From now on, it won't be so obvious
 - 13:10-13. Those who have made choice will be kept in the dark
 - Rejected in home town (13:53-58); John the Baptist beheaded (14:1-12)
 - Darkness descends: Jesus will walk resolutely toward Jerusalem, rejection, crucifixion and resurrection
 - Acts 2:23-24. They were responsible, AND this was God's plan. Take the greatest injustice ever committed and through it reconcile mankind to Himself.
- Let's make this personal
 - You must choose toil or trust in Jesus. Rule your own life or rest in Jesus
 - Who do you say that I am?
 - John 6:28-29. Will of God is that you believe.
 - Romans 4:5
 - You must choose daily, followers of Jesus
 - Who is in charge of your life?

Why is it so hard to choose Jesus every day?

3. Sabbath rest is...never complete today

TRANSITION: *Why is it so hard to choose Jesus every day?*

- What we get today is not what we expect and not what we want. We hate to wait.
- In our impatience we strive and toil and try to find life without Jesus. Never satisfies.
- Our best days are shadows of future Sabbath rest. They don't seem to last
- In Jesus day
 - Not everyone is healed, on the Sabbath or on any other day
 - No one is healed forever; no one escaped death completely. Lazarus died again.
 - John the Baptist died in prison. Hebrews 11
- Hebrews 4:9. There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God
- We get glimpses, but we have to learn to wait and to trust.

Application

When life is not what you expected...Trust and hope

- Angry with God, others, life in general? Fearful? Name it. I have expectations in this life
- Who for the joy set before Him
- Not encouraging fatalism but realism

When life does bring good gifts...Enjoy and give thanks

- We take the gifts for granted when we have them, and complain when we don't

At all times...Give and keep giving

- Most important question: Who is Jesus?
 - Who are you telling?