

Transcript for Matthew 11:20-30 Questions

For Landon Shaw

1. What was wrong with the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom? (Verses 20-24)

Landon Shaw: “If you go to read Joel 3:4-6 we can see what was so wrong about the cities of Tyre and Sidon, “Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; Because you have taken My silver and My gold, And have carried into your temples My prized possessions. Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem You have sold to the Greeks, That you may remove them far from their borders.”

And we can see the answer for Sodom in Ezekiel 16:49:50 “Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.”

Bart Shaw: “Tyre and Sidon are Gentile seaport cities located on the Mediterranean coastline with which the Israelites had a long history. Sidon received its name from the "first-born" of [Canaan](#), the grandson of [Noah](#) ([Genesis](#) 10:15, 19). Tyre was probably a colony city established by Sidon.

We recently studied in the OT how the Israelites failed to conquer Sidon in the conquest of the Promised Land ([Judges 1:31](#)),

The city of Sodom of course, needs no introduction.

These were depraved and diseased cities, full of sin and idolatry. They murdered their babies with child sacrifice and committed sexual perversion. What is wrong with them? The same thing that is wrong with North America and the rest of the world today: unspeakable sin and the rejection of God.”

Loren Gorrell: “Tyre was as wealthy Phoenician port city. It was very powerful. It was a trading city. Solomon got cedar logs from Hiram king of Tyre 1Kings5. They made and sold purple dye. They likely trusted in their wealth. They also worshiped the idol Melqart. Nehemiah 13:16 – Tyre natives encouraged commerce in Israel on the Sabbath. Prophecy against Tyre Isaiah 23.

It was destroyed by Alexander 333 B.C. and rebuilt by Pompey 64 B.C.

Sidon – Another wealthy Phoenician port city, so had same pride in wealth. Worshiped Baal. Influential in spreading idolatry in Israel, was the hometown of Jezebel 1Kings 16:31

Sodom – Genesis 19:5”

For Levi Shaw

2. Explain why it was going to be more tolerable for those historically evil cities than for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. (Verses 20-24)

Levi Shaw: “Because Jesus said that if he had done his miracles in those historical sinful cities they would have repented. Jesus is trying to show how much these cities (that think they are purely upright and righteous) don't want to have anything to do with Jesus.”

Bill Smith: “Bill writes: The saying that of whom much is given much is expected applies here with these Jewish cities. It is clearly a contrast between those wicked Gentile cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom (where nothing was given) and the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (where much was given). Those Gentile cities didn't get a chance to see or hear of Jesus and His miracles, vs21, and Jesus said if they had they'd repented with sackcloth and ashes, symbols of remorse.

So nice to read in Acts 21: 3 - 6, and 27:3 how that Paul was able to stop briefly and visit with faithful brethren, likely Gentiles in the cities of Tyre and Sidon.”

Bart Shaw: “Jesus is using a rhetorical device to demonstrate the stiff-necked nature of the Jewish people in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. The miracles performed in these towns were so spectacular that they would have even converted those in Tyre, Sidon and Sodom.

Jesus is illustrating how the archetypal legendary wicked pagan Gentile cities were more accepting to the work of the Lord than the hardhearted children of Abraham. These three cities were the epitome of all wickedness to the Jews, and this comparison would strike hard to the hearts of the listeners. It's like saying: “...that sermon would have converted even Richard Dawkins and Neil deGrasse Tyson, why are you completely untouched and unmoved?” The Israelites of Jesus' day believed themselves to be righteously following God, yet they did not recognize God in their midst as the Messiah walked down their streets.”

For Bart Shaw

3. Why weren't there mighty works done in the historically evil cities to get them to repent? (Verses 20-24)

Bart Shaw: "It is a mistake to assume that God did nothing for these gentile cities. Some light from God did shine into these communities. For example, Lot, Abraham's nephew, took up residence in Sodom and testified to the people there about their wicked deeds (2 Peter 2:7) "righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked..."

Also, Sodom was saved by the intercession of Abraham when they were carried away by foreign kings. Abraham went after them – did battle with only 318 servants and won – and brought back the people of Sodom to their city. On the way back he showed his excellent godly character and refused to take payment from the Sodomite king, but instead offered sacrifice with the priest-king of Salem. Melchizedek—by the way, of whom we know almost nothing, was a priest-King of God and must have been a great example to the Sodomites as well.

Also, the Sidonian city of Zarephath was where a widow took care of Elijah and the Lord provided oil and flour for her through the famine; later, the widow's son became ill, and Elijah raised him from the dead. 1 Kings 17:8-24

King Hiram of Tyre had exposure to Israel and King Solomon and his wisdom when he provided many of the temple furnishings 1 Kings 7:13-51 Tyrians and Sidonians are also mentioned in helping rebuild the temple in Ezra's time Ezra 3:7 . Queen Jezebel was a Sidonian 1 Kings 16:31 and saw great miracles worked by God's prophet Elijah. Balaam was an ancient gentile prophet of God from Mesopotamia who preached to the gentiles, perhaps he or some other preacher went to these cities, we just don't know.

Jesus' main theme is to highlight the great disparity between the unsurpassed knowledge the Jews of Jesus time versus the lesser knowledge of God that the ancient cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom had. The Jews were much more culpable than the ancient Gentiles because they had God Himself walking among them.

Loren Gorrell: "Verses 4-5 Miracles were done by Jesus and the apostles to verify the deity of Jesus and to validate the gospel message. It was not the appropriate time in the "Historically Evil" cities for miracles.

Some of those cities were given special teaching. Jonah went to Nineveh and simply preached repentance. Nineveh had the future role of destroying Israel.

People in those places while not having seen the miracles, or even having the written records we have, did have enough knowledge of God to comprehend what is evil – Romans 1:20, and everyone is built to seek God – Acts 17:20, they weren't seeking."

Austin Maddox: "There are many things to consider here. For one, God is under no obligation to perform miracles for the sake of getting people to repent. Mankind has everything that they need in order to understand that there is a God and that there are things that are right and wrong. Secondly, this was a unique experience that these cities in Jesus' day were getting because these mighty works were indicative of the Messiah. Those kinds of works were not done before or since in the same magnitude. Third, they did have interactions with righteous people and would've known that there was a God and what it looked like to serve him, with righteous Lot and the many interactions with the Jews throughout the Old Testament scriptures. Fourth, those were evil cities and God knows the hearts and minds of everyone. It could simply be that no matter what had occurred, save for the coming of the Messiah himself, that these cities would not have repented at all. The cities that beheld the Christ literally saw their Savior coming and preaching the good news and still utterly rejected him!"

For Austin Maddox

4. Why does God hide things from people? (Verses 25-27)

Austin Maddox: "So, the right people will find them! The knowledge that God ultimately wants all mankind to know, needs to be in the right hands. There are many people that don't appreciate the things of God. If it were up to them, it would be laughed at or purposefully made inaccessible to those that are well meaning. The wise and prudent people of the world, the world's intelligent and remarkable individuals are not looking for the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:25-31. This is why Jesus spoke in parables as we will find out later."

Bart Shaw: "Pride makes a person unworthy for acceptance into the Kingdom. If an individual is wise in their own eyes, puffed up, and full of arrogance they cannot discern the truth of the scriptures. Hubris hides God's word— God has miraculously arranged His scheme of redemption, His Gospel, so that it is unavailable to those who hang onto their ego and self-image. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians:

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (1 Co 1:18–20)

Loren Gorrell: “Romans 1:22 – professing to be wise they became fools. While God does not reveal all things, and limits information to certain people in certain time periods, He does not hide His love. It is human pride that prevents people from comprehending divine truths. The Lord designed his message to appeal to the humble. Psalm 51:17 – a broken and contrite heart.

Primary application in context is traditions and pride prevented the Pharisees and scribes from accepting the teaching of Jesus.”

Bill Smith: “Bill writes: I think back on passages that tell us how the prophets longed to know the things made know to N.T. Christians. I'd rather think not that these things were hidden from mankind but that Christ / God shares what needs to be shared and when. Jesus wasn't hidden from the Jewish leadership. This Jewish leadership had a program in mind, this is what the Messiah will look like, will act like, will come from upper class, will be an earthly king. This wasn't who Jesus was and despite the miracles the Jewish leadership refused to recognize Jesus as the Son of God.”

For Wes Bonifay

5. Is it impossible to know anything about the Father or the Son unless it is revealed by them? What is Jesus trying to teach? (Verse 27)

Wes Bonifay: “Several commentators note that the Greek translated as “know” in this verse refers to full or complete knowledge, with particular reference to the mystery of Christ's divinity. As Albert Barnes wrote, “Such is the nature of the Son of God, such the mystery of the union between the divine and human nature, such his exalted character as “divine,” that no mortal can fully comprehend Jesus. None but God fully knows him. If he had been only a mere man, this language surely would not have been used of him.” So if that interpretation is correct, then the point would be that only the Father cannot truly know the Son. As for our role as Christians, the end of verse 27 says that we can only know the Father through the Son. As Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:5, “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” And Jesus himself underscored this important point in John 14:6, when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Thus, I believe the teaching here is that we need an intercessor and, importantly, that a connection to the Father is only possible through the Jesus the Son.”

Austin Maddox: "Obviously, Jesus has said that this is the case, but the question that must be asked is how. How are these things revealed? The other question is what is being hidden. Because the evidence of God is all around us in nature and conscious. The first statement that no man knows the Son but the Father is a statement about the fact that only God can fully comprehend the Son because He is deity. The other side is that because Jesus is flesh and is God incarnate in flesh, man, through the Son can understand more about the Father also! This verse is not teaching that there must be divine intervention for any human being to comprehend righteousness or what God wants His creation."

Bill Smith: "Bill writes: #1) Short answer, Yes. John 14:6, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but through me." Long answer, Rom.1:20 reads, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," Even nature teaches / demonstrates that there has to be a creator of this world. That is a revelation through the workings of even nature, and yet some will continue refusing to recognize God's hand in it. God's creation, mankind, has demonstrated a desire to believe in a creator. I.E. ancient civilizations, tribes, etc. always have a belief in a higher being.

#2) Jesus is trying to teach that He and the Father are one, of one mind, and of one purpose."

For Austin Maddox

6. How could following Jesus, which He has already stated will bring persecution be considered something that will give you rest and a light burden? (Verses 28-30)

Austin Maddox: "Jesus says that you can find rest for your SOULS! There will be physical persecution, but that doesn't mean that our souls can't be at rest. This is an important distinction that few make in the larger religious world. Spiritual rest and physical rest are two entirely different things! Many grapple with this, thinking that Christianity is supposed to make their physical lives better. While there are some serendipitous things of Christianity that improve the overall well-being of its adherents, that is not the mission of Christ. Christianity is not here to bring peace on earth, raise up the impoverished, improve the social networks that we have created or using government to accomplish its tasks. Christianity is here to bring peace to the weary soul, to relieve the weary laden soul that is troubled with burdens. Jesus stands and calls whosoever will to lay down their heavy burdens that sin lays upon us, so that we can take a yoke upon us that is light and easy. Jesus doesn't promise

life with no yoke, but one that is far superior to the one that is worn by the sinner.”

Bart Shaw: “Faith in God and trust in His directives and commandments gives peace, knowledge and wisdom to the heart of men and women. Disobedience leads to suffering, sorrow, and death. The Jews who persecuted the early Christians eventually found themselves to be the target of persecution at the hand of Romans. The same is true of every person who has ever lived. Faith in Christ leads to joy through the trials which we must pass. Rebellion against Christ leads to the enemy surrounding your life and destroying everything you hold dear.”

Levi Shaw: “He wants to let people know that following Jesus brings us benefits in this life (peace of mind, although yes persecution is not a physical benefit.), and especially the next.”

Loren Gorrell: “Coffman’s explanation makes the most sense.

A yoke is a device of burden and servitude. However a yoke while itself a burden is a device designed to make bearing very heavy burdens possible. Following Jesus is burdensome, but following Him, wearing His yoke, makes it possible to bear other difficulties of the human condition – death, sorrow, disease, misfortune.”