

(Matt. 11:16-17) - Here, the Lord draws a parallel between those who heard His and John's preaching and the children of the world playing games. *"BUT WHEREUNTO SHALL I LIKEN THIS GENERATION? IT IS LIKE UNTO CHILDREN SITTING IN THE MARKETS, AND CALLING UNTO THEIR FELLOWS, AND SAYING, WE HAVE PIPED UNTO YOU, AND YE HAVE NOT DANCED; WE HAVE MOURNED UNTO YOU, AND YE HAVE NOT LAMENTED."* As the children would not be satisfied no matter what kind of music was played, even so, no matter what sort of preacher the Lord sent to the Jews, whether an out-going, warm, personable man, like the Lord Jesus, or a rough loner, like John the Baptist, most refused to believe the message of salvation by God's grace in and by Christ. It was not the messenger they hated. It was the message that called on them to repent and believe in Christ (John 3:19-20). This is the natural state of all fallen, sinful, human beings (1 Cor. 2:14). We must be born again by the Holy Spirit from above (John 3:3-7).

(Matt. 11:18-19) - John the Baptist did not indulge himself in food and drink. The unbelieving Jews heard John preach and said, *"HE HATH A DEVIL."* They saw Jesus (*"SON OF MAN"*) *"EATING AND DRINKING,"* and they called Him *"A MAN GLUTTONOUS, AND A WINEBIBBER, A FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS."* They hated the message of God's grace in Christ, no matter who preached it or how it was preached. Like contrary children who cannot be pleased, they blamed the preacher instead of themselves. *"BUT WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN"* - The wisdom of God in sending HIS preachers to preach HIS message is vindicated by the fact that it is God's Word and not the invention and/or opinion of men. It is also vindicated in that God uses this message of wisdom, revealed in Christ as the salvation of His people, to draw and call His people to salvation (John 6:44-45). It is vindicated in the fact that this message glorifies God in every attribute of His nature as both a just God AND a Savior. It is vindicated in that it exalts Christ in the glory of His Person and the power and success of His finished work of redemption. It is vindicated in that it reveals the "righteousness of God" (Rom. 1:16-17), which is Christ's righteousness imputed to His people for their justification before God, and it is the righteousness by which all people will be judged (Acts 17:31).

(Matt. 11:20) - *"UPBRAID"* means to denounce, to speak a word of condemnation. It is clear from Christ's speaking a word of woe (distress, grief, anguish) again the unrepentant that God's wisdom is vindicated, not only in the salvation of His chosen people, but also in the condemnation of those who continue and die in unbelief (the non-elect). The Lord rebuked the people of those cities wherein He had performed so many miracles. They had been eyewitnesses to His powerful and glorious wonders which proved Him to be the one true Messiah (God manifest in the flesh). They remained unchanged in their unbelief and opposition towards Him. This proves that even though we know that no sinner will believe in Christ and repent of dead works and idolatry unless God sovereignly and effectually does a work of grace and power in their hearts, every person is held accountable to turn from all other ways of salvation and turn to God alone as He reveals Himself (Rom. 2:14-16). The Bible says that God commands "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30) and believe His Word. Some argue that not everyone hears the true Gospel. This is true, but every person has the light of nature and of conscience by which God holds them responsible to seek Him and not be satisfied with any way of salvation and righteousness by the works and the wills of men. The reason sinful and unregenerate people cannot seek and believe the Lord is because they are sinful and self-righteous by nature and do not know and/or desire the things which glorify God in Christ.

(Matt. 11:21-23) - God ordained that some of His *“MIGHTY WORKS”* be done in Chorazin and Bethsaida but not in Tyre and Sidon. The Lord states, *“FOR IF THE MIGHTY WORKS, WHICH WERE DONE IN YOU, HAD BEEN DONE IN TYRE AND SIDON, THEY WOULD HAVE REPENTED LONG AGO IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES.”* He mentions *“CAPERNAUM”* which was exalted to heaven only in the sense that this is the city the He made His headquarters and where He performed many miracles contrasted with *“SODOM.”* He states, *“FOR IF THE MIGHTY WORKS, WHICH HAVE BEEN DONE IN THEE, HAD BEEN DONE IN SODOM, IT WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNTIL THIS DAY.”*

Those who believe in “free-will” and the inherent goodness of man invoke this verse to try to prove that men and women have the natural ability to repent if given the opportunity. The Bible tells us plainly that man by nature will not repent or believe because he is spiritually dead and totally depraved (Rom. 3:10-12). Both faith in Christ and repentance of dead works are gifts from God to His elect and given to us in the power of the Holy Spirit when we are born again from above. God says that the natural (unregenerate) man will not receive (believe) the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14). Left to himself, he will always refuse and go away in unbelief. God also says, *“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy”* (Rom. 9:15-16).

However, there is an interesting question here that ought to be raised. If Tyre and Sidon and Sodom would have repented, had the miracles done in Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum been done there, then why did Christ not give them the opportunity? The answer is that the Lord was not in any way implying that the opposite of what He teaches in other places in His Word is true. These words are to be understood from the viewpoint of human responsibility, not human ability. We know that if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom were chosen by God unto salvation and redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ, they would have heard the Gospel in the power of the Spirit and repented.

(Matt. 11:24) - The Lord’s point here is that these religious cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were much worse off than the infamous sinful cities of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom. Why? It is because they heard the Gospel and saw His miracles but still refused to repent. He says, *“BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT IT SHALL BE MORE TOLERABLE FOR THE LAND OF SODOM IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, THAN FOR THEE.”* We know that all sin deserves eternal damnation, and God will judge all who die in their sins (having sins imputed to them) with eternal damnation. The only hope for any sinner is to be found before God in Christ, washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness imputed. Some commentators believe that this verse teaches a greater degree of punishment for those who heard the Gospel but refused to repent. To reject the Gospel of Christ, when clearly preached, is a more wicked crime against God than any other sin and will receive greater punishment (Mark 6:11; Lam. 4:6). Others believe that this describes the greater mental anguish that those who heard the Gospel and rejected it will experience at Judgment as they will know then the opportunity that they let pass by them. Either way, we know that willful unbelief is the greatest assault against God’s glory in Christ. As the writer of Hebrews wrote, *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him”* (Heb. 2:1-3). **GOD WILL BE VINDICATED IN THIS JUDGMENT!**