

March 13–19. Matthew 11–12; Luke 11: “I Will Give You Rest”

John the Baptist

After John baptized Jesus, he testified to his disciples that Jesus was the Christ and they should follow Him.

Later, John was imprisoned for stating that Herod was committing adultery. Recall what Jesus did when He heard of John's imprisonment.

Matt 4:12

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

JST Matt 4:11

And now Jesus knew that John was cast into prison, and he sent angels, and, behold, they came and ministered unto him.

While he was in prison John sent two of his disciples to Jesus.

Matt 11:2-6

2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Does it sound like John's faith in Jesus was wavering?

(Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another)

Bruce R. McConkie

“Why did John send two of his disciples to Jesus to ask if he were the promised Messiah? Any inference that the Baptist was uncertain or doubtful in his own mind, as to the identity and mission of the Master, is totally unwarranted....

“John knew who Jesus was.... While in Herod's prison, angels sent by Jesus had ministered comfort and assurance to John.... This act of sending his disciples to Jesus was in effect a final great testimony on John's part that Jesus was the Lamb of God, for the Baptist knew that his disciples, seeing the Master personally and hearing his teachings, could not help but follow the greater light.” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1: 261)

So John was persuading his remaining disciples to follow Jesus.

Christ tell His disciples of the greatness of John.

Matt 11:7-11

7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Why did Jesus consider John to be the greatest prophet?

(this is he... which shall prepare thy way before thee)

Joseph Smith

“How is it that John was considered one of the greatest prophets? His miracles could not have constituted his greatness.

“First. He was entrusted with a divine mission of preparing the way before the face of the Lord. Whoever had such a trust committed to him before or since? No man.

“Secondly. He was entrusted with the important mission, and it was required at his hands, to baptize the Son of Man. Whoever had the honor of doing that? Whoever had so great a privilege and glory?....

“Thirdly. John, at that time, was the only legal administrator in the affairs of the kingdom there was then on the earth, and holding the keys of power....

“These three reasons constitute him the greatest prophet born of a woman.”
(TPJS, pg. 275-276)

Note that Joseph Smith's first point is that John “was entrusted with a divine mission of preparing the way before the face of the Lord”

Matt 11:12-14

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

But those who found John's teachings condemned their own desires managed to rationalize them away

Matt 11:16-19

16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Why do you think that some or people find rationalizations for not believing Jesus and the prophets?

Jörg Klebingat

“The adversary and his followers have always sought to destroy the works of Christ and His prophets. The Savior's commandments, if not ignored altogether, have been rationalized into meaninglessness by many in today's world. Messengers of God who teach ‘inconvenient’ truths are often dismissed. Even the Savior Himself was called ‘a man gluttonous, and a winebibber,’ accused of disturbing public sentiment and being divisive. Weak and conniving souls ‘took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk’ (Matt 22:15), and His ‘sect’ of early Christians was ‘every where... spoken against’ (Acts 28:22).” (CR, April 2022)

Because of their hard-heartedness the truth was kept from them

Matt 11:20-27

20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! 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.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

What does it take to understand and gain a testimony of the gospel of Christ?

(thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes
neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him)

Charles W. Penrose

“How can man know God without revelation from God? ‘Man by searching cannot find out God’ (Job 11:7).... Man cannot find out God, but God can manifest Himself to man. The only way that the Lord can be made manifest to man is by revelation. Jesus Christ thanked His Father, when he was praying, that God had ‘kept those things hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.’ ‘Even so, Father:’ said He, ‘for thus it seemed good in thy sight. And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.’ That is the only way.” (JD, 24:203)

Jesus admonishes all to follow Him and promises that if they do they will find rest

Matt 11:28-30

28 ¶ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

What does it mean to “find rest unto your souls”?

Joseph F. Smith

"The ancient prophets speak of 'entering into God's rest'; what does it mean? To my mind, it means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in His purposes and in His plans to such an extent that we know we are right, and that we are not hunting for something else; we are not disturbed by every wind of doctrine, or by the cunning and craftiness of men who lay in wait to deceive. We know of the doctrine, that it is of God.... The man who has reached that degree of faith in God that all doubt and fear have been cast from him, he has entered into 'God's rest'." (CR, Oct. 1909)

Jesus Confronts Pharisee, Sadducees, Hypocrites

In this weeks lesson are several examples of how Jesus countered those who accused Him and sought to destroy Him and His works. Lets first discuss what these accusers believed.

James E Talmage

"The Pharisee, in the estimation of his class, was distinctively set apart from the common people, to whom he considered himself as truly superior as the Jews regarded themselves in contrast with other nations....

"They made ostentatious display of a certain type of simplicity, plainness, and self-denial, in which external observances they asserted superiority over the luxury-loving Sadducees; they had grown arrogantly proud of their humility, but God knew their hearts." (Jesus The Christ, pg. 65, 465)

Bruce R. McConkie

"The Pharisees were a zealous, devoted sect who accepted both the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders. They were pious and puritannical in conduct, glorying in frequent fasts and public prayers. [They were] intensely patriotic and nationalistic....

"The Sadducees... were a sect composed of skeptical, worldly, wealthy people a selfish group finding their most powerful adherents among the chief priests. Though the Sadducees professed belief in the law, they rejected the traditions of the elders, and made no pretensions of piety or devout worship. The Pharisees were far more powerful and influential in Jewish political and religious life than were the Sadducees." (DNTC, 1:117)

Pharisees:

They considered themselves superior to the common people
Publicly glorified themselves with seeming acts of humility

Sadducees:

Worldly group who gave lip service to the law
Chief Priests were often of this group

So you have two groups, each full of pride. The Pharisees because they though they were religiously superior, and the Sadducees because of their worldly goods.

Lets read how He countered His accusers and used their accusations to testify that He was the Christ.

Matt 12:1-8

1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not

lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?
5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Note that this is considered a mistranslation. It was barley not corn.
They were accused of threshing and blowing away chaff (winnowing).

What do you think He means by His statement in verse 7, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice”?

Hosea 6:6

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Bruce R. McConkie

“A quotation from Hosea 6:6. Mercy, love, charity, the attributes of godliness, take precedence over sacrifices and ritualistic performances. The religion of the Pharisees was one of form, ceremony, rules, and sacrifices, a religion which held them aloof from publicans and sinners; if, on the other hand, they had possessed the pure love of God, they would have viewed all men with mercy and compassion.” (DNTC, 1:182)

They should be more concerned about charity than their rituals.

What does Jesus say to Pharisees to witness that He is the Christ?

(in this place is one greater than the temple
the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day)

He continues His teachings about the sabbath day in the synagogue

Matt 12:9-14

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

10 ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

14 ¶ Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might

destroy him.

What do we learn in this example about what we should do to keep the sabbath day holy?

(Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days)

James E. Faust

"Jesus reaffirmed the importance of the Sabbath day devotion, but he introduced a new spirit into this part of worship. Rather than observe the endless technicalities and prohibitions concerning what should and should not be done on the Lord's day, he affirmed that it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath. He... introduced the principle that 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath' (Mark 2:27). He performed good deeds on the Sabbath, such as healing the man with palsy as well as the man with the paralyzed hand. So the divine mandate of Sabbath day observance in our day is now more of a manifestation of individual devotion and commitment rather than a requirement of civil law." (CR, Oct. 1991)

The people believed Jesus was the Christ because of His works so the Pharisees try to argue that Jesus casts out devils by the power of Satan. Jesus rebuked this logic and testifies again that He is the Christ

Matt 12:22-28

22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

What should the Pharisee have learned about Jesus because He is able to command evil spirits and cast them out?

(I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you)

Bruce R. McConkie

"By casting out devils Jesus offered conclusive and irrefutable proof that he

was the promised Messiah....

"Devils are not cast out except by the power of faith and the authority of the priesthood... Satan is not divided against himself anymore than angelic ministrants of the Lord are rebelling against each other. Hence, the fact that Jesus did in reality cast out devils, as was evident to the Pharisees and all the people, establishes that he operated in harmony with 'the Spirit of God,' and that 'the kingdom of God,' which is the true Church, had come forth again among men." (DNTC, 1:268)

He warns that the things we say is an indication of what our hearts are set on

Matt 12:34-37

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

How does the way we talk to and/or about other people justify or condemn us?

(A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things)

L. Lionel Kendrick

"We will be held accountable for all that we say. The Savior has warned 'that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.' This means that no communication shall be without consequence. This includes the slight slips of the tongue, the caustic communications that canker the soul, and the vain, vulgar, and profane words which desecrate the name of Deity....

"One of the major ways that Satan uses to retard the development of righteous relationships is in the use of gossip, rumor, and slander on his communication network. Perhaps the more common un-Christlike communications are those of lying, blaming, criticizing, and anger....

"Christlike communications are expressed in tones of love rather than loudness. They are intended to be helpful rather than hurtful. They tend to bind us together rather than to drive us apart. They tend to build rather than to belittle." (CR, Oct. 1988)

The Pharisees had just witnessed Jesus heal a man with a withered hand but that was not a good enough sign for them

Matt 12:38-42

38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

After all the signs and wonders that the Pharisee had seen, why do you think that they still found excuses for not excepting Jesus as the Christ?

(An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign)

John H. Vandenberg

"The Savior miraculously fed the four thousand. Then he crossed the Sea of Galilee and came into the coasts of Magdala. There the materialistic, self-centered, and egotistical Pharisees and Sadducees came, tempting him to show them a sign from heaven.... 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign' warned Jesus. Today we have some Pharisees and Sadducees in our society, cloaked in the disguise and the influence of 'professionalism,' urging youth not to believe unless such can be measured in terms of materialistic values. In this mill of life we should heed the counsel that Jesus gave to his disciples: 'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees' (Matt 16:6)." (CR, April 1965)

Jesus continues to openly condemn the scribes and Pharisee for leading the people astray

Luke 11:42-47,52-54

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

45 ¶ Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your

fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

What does Jesus teach us about those who lead people from the truth for their own benefit?

(ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.
ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered)

Dallin H. Oaks

“Gospel truths have been corrupted and gospel ordinances have been lost when left to the interpretation and sponsorship of scholars who lack the authority and reject the revelations of God.

“That is what the Savior told his professional critics, as recorded in the eleventh chapter of Luke. He was confronted by a group who had hypocritically built monuments to the prophets their predecessors had murdered, while personally rejecting the living prophets God was sending them. In what I understand to be a condemnation of their rejection of revelation, the Savior pronounced woe upon these worldly professionals: ‘For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.’” (CR, April 1989)

How did the scribes and Pharisees react when their works were brought to light?

(urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:
Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth)

Neal A. Maxwell

“Some lie in wait in our day, as during the ministry of Jesus, seeking to ‘provoke him to speak of many things,’ seeking to ‘catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him.’ The Pharisees actually ‘took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk’ (Matt 22:15).” (CR, Oct. 1984)