

Cities Reproved

Matthew 11:20-24

Luke 10:13-15

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Texts:

Matthew 11:20-24,

20. Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

21. “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

23. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

24. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

Luke 10:13-15,

13. “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

15. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.

Commentary:

Matthew 11:20, Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

I. Jesus here began to upbraid, verbally chastise the cities in which most of his miracles were performed because they did not repent of their sins after having seen all the wonders Jesus performed among them.

A. This speech is dated A.D. 27.

B. In Scripture only a few miracles performed in Capernaum are mentioned/described. Only one miracle performed at Bethsaida Julias, the feeding of the five thousand, is described in Scripture.

C. We are not told why these people did not repent, but we know reluctance to repent is characteristic of sinful mankind everywhere and in every age.

Matthew 11:21, “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

I. Jesus here includes Chorazin in his scathing attack.

A. Capernaum, located on the Sea of Galilee, Chorazin, and Bethsaida were within three or four miles of each other.

B. Jesus declared that Tyre and Sidon, Phoenician cities populated by Gentiles, would have repented long ago if his miracles had been performed there. Their repentance would have been sincere/genuine evidenced by profound grief; i.e., in sackcloth and ashes.

C. At least two apostles, Peter and Andrew, came from Bethsaida. **John 1:44, Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.**

D. Capernaum was Jesus' residence city. He called it his own city. **Matthew 9:1, Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town.**

E. Chorazin is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament except in **Luke 10:13, 14** which is another account of these same remarks.

1. Luke 10:13, 14, Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. NIV

F. When the time came for evangelizing the Gentiles, Tyre and Sidon accepted the gospel and confirmed Christ's words in these passages.

1. Acts 21:3-6, After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through

the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

2. Acts 27:3, The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs.

G. At Capernaum Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, healed a centurion's son, healed a centurion's servant, and healed a nobleman's son of a fever, et. al.

Matthew 11:22, But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

I. Jesus declared that it would be more tolerable for the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for the Jewish cities of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin.

A. This was because the citizens of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin refused to repent while the citizens of Tyre and Sidon were willing to repent.

B. At the judgment day it will be more tolerable for some people than for others depending on their willingness to believe the gospel and repent of their sins.

II. God the Father, God the Son and the apostles were one (unified.).

A. To hear (heed) one was to hear the others.

B. To reject one was to reject the others.

C. Acts 22:8, “Who are you, Lord?” I asked. “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.

Matthew 11:23, And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

I. The city of Capernaum would not be extolled and admired. It would be despised, cast down to Hades, the grave.

A. “Skies” here refers to Capernaum’s prosperity and worldly standing.

B. “Hades” here refers to the decline of the city. Today it is in ruins.

II. This pronouncement was warranted because even evil Sodom would have repented if the miracles performed in Capernaum had been performed in Sodom.

A. Sodom would have repented. Capernaum did not repent. Sodom was better than Capernaum.

B. Wonder how the people of Capernaum reacted to this pronouncement?

C. How reprehensible are those who reject the word and works of the Saviour.

D. The gospel will either bless or curse depending on our reaction to it.

1. Consider the effect of the hot sun on butter and on clay.

2. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16, For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?

Matthew 11:24, But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

I. In the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for evil Sodom than for unbelieving Capernaum.

A. Will there be degrees of punishment in the world to come?

B. 1 Corinthians 2:10, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

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Questions

1. Jesus began to _____ the _____ in which most of his _____ had been _____, because they did not _____.

2. Jesus condemned _____ and _____ saying that if the _____ which had been performed there had been performed in the Gentile cities of _____ and _____, they would have _____ long ago in _____ and _____.

3. It will be more tolerable for _____ and _____ on the _____ of _____ than for you.

4. Does this mean that there will be degrees of “bearableness” in the judgment?

5. Jesus said it will be more bearable for _____ on the _____ of _____ than for those in _____.