

Bill's Thoughts on Matthew 11. 16-19, 25-30

Mathew wrote his gospel for orthodox Jews and uses many quotations from the Old Testament and does not explain the customs as they would be known by all Jews.

Jesus heard that John the Baptist was in prison and that John's time was over. John had asked if Jesus was 'the one'. Jesus quoted the scriptures (saying he was) and continued:-

"But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' Just like children who would not play happy games or sad games and are contrary, Jesus played the flute and John wailed.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; John came following all the rules and living frugally, but the leaders would not listen to him or follow him.

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." 'The Son of Man', used only by Jesus to describe himself 81 times in the Gospels, is trusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power. Once again, the leaders would not listen to him. Wisdom here is referring to God who sent both John and Jesus in their two different roles, that have been vindicated by the lasting works of both of them.

"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; Jesus uses this title for God, emphasising his sovereignty only three times in the Bible. The leaders were blind to the message, but the followers and disciples (infants) received the message.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Difficult! No one except the Father can fully know the Son; total knowledge of the Son belongs to God the Father. Believers can know the Son for salvation in a deep and satisfying way but not completely. Jesus chooses to whom he reveals a saving knowledge of God

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Here Jesus is referring to the heavy loads the Pharisees place on the people with legalistic interpretation of the law. There are 10 commandments but whole books of rules interpret them in detail.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. A yoke is a device to prevent an animal from going its own way. Here Jesus is saying he is not restrictive and forceful but gentle. Rest for the soul with no inner conflict, instead peace.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. This is love for God: to keep his commands. Amen