

Matthew 11:7–15
Entering Heaven by Force

Saturday, August 31, 2024 • Read Matthew 11:7–15

Questions from the Scripture text: What do John's disciples do (v7)? What does Jesus begin to do? To whom? About whom does Jesus ask them? What does He ask if John was? What does He ask them again in v8? What does He ask if John was, this time? Where does he say such people can be found? What does Jesus ask them a third time (v9)? What does He now suggest that John is? With what qualification? Whom, specifically, does Jesus identify John to be (v10, cf. Mal 3:1)? How does He begin His statement in v11? What does He proceed to say about John—whom is he greater than (v11)? Who is greater than John? What has been happening since when (v12)? What continues to happen? Who did what until when (v13)? What does Jesus urge them to receive about John (cf. Mal 4:5)? What does He urge them to do (v15)? How can they do so?

Why did John need help? Matthew 11:7–15 looks forward to the morning sermon in public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **every believer in this life still needs help from Christ, because the path to glory is a battle that requires zeal and strength and perseverance.**

Saving face for one still growing in faith. Those who had observed the exchange with John's disciples might have thought less of him because of his difficulty in faith. Jesus does not permit this. He praises John and presents him as an example.

Praising John as the greatest of the prophets. How easily men can change their opinions of another based upon a moment of weakness! Is John really easily shaken—a reed shaken by the wind? They surely didn't think so when they went out into the wilderness to see him (v7). Is John really addicted to comfort, buckling under the pressure of a little trouble? That sort of person isn't found in the wilderness, where they had gone out to see John, but in king's courts (v8). No, John does not deserve their criticism. In fact, he is to be esteemed as a prophet, and not just any prophet (v9).

John is the last of the prophets, the prophet who would break centuries of silence as the one who precedes the sudden appearance of the Lord Himself (v10, cf. Mal 3:1). John had gone before to prepare the way for the Lord (cf. 3:3; Isa 40:3) by calling the people to be converted for entry into the kingdom of God (cf. 3:1–2).

Promoting John as one to whom we must listen. So, we must listen, when we hear John urge us to be converted for entry into the kingdom. There is no prophet greater than John, no one greater from among those born of women (v11a).

All prophets had proclaimed repentance; and, more importantly, all prophets had proclaimed Christ (v13, cf. Jn 1:45, 5:39; Lk 24:27; 1Pet 1:10–11). At the close of the Old Testament, this final "Elijah" had been promised (cf. Mal 4:5–6; Lk 1:13–17; Mk 9:11–13), and Jesus now confirms that John is he (v14).

The problem is that not everyone has "ears to hear" (v15). We must seek, from God, the grace we need to hear and heed John's message.

Presenting John as an example of how we must enter glory. Jesus had answered John's question by sending him a sermon (cf. v1–6). Jesus uses His Word to give His people strength, zeal, and endurance for the battle of faith (cf. Rom 10:17).

However far we have progressed in this life, we are not what we must be to enter glory. None had arisen greater than John, and he still wasn't fit for glory; the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (v11b).

John had preached a vigorous believing and obeying in keeping with being converted (cf. 3:2, 8, 11; Lk 3:7–14; Lk 16:15–16). From his days on, people had been coming to this vigorous, forceful faith that the Spirit gives to those whom God is saving.

This is how we enter glory, not coasting in on clouds of comfort, but fighting and battling, pressing on and pushing in. Christ alone is our worthiness to enter, but the faith by which He unites us to Himself is a fighting faith. He has chosen us for a salvation that comes not through passivity, but through sanctification and standing fast in every good word and work (cf. 2Th 2:13–17).

If you are not in the battle, then you are not in the faith. Take warning, for the kingdom comes, and you may be found outside of it as an enemy. But, if you are weary in the battle of faith, take heart from Christ, and press on! Come to His Word, that He may strengthen you by it, and give you to press on unto glory!

What would be an indication that you are easily shaken? What would be an indication that you are addicted to comfort? How can those who are weak in faith get more or stronger faith? What is required to enter glory? Who attains to it in this life? What must we do, then, throughout our life? How can we do that? Where can we get ears to hear? If we have been given such ears, what must we do with them?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for giving us Your own Son to be our great Prophet. And we thank You for the servants by whom His word has come near. Have mercy upon us, for we are weak in faith. We are often easily shaken. We are too addicted to comfort. We need to be sanctified. We need strength and zeal and endurance. So come, glorify Yourself in our lives by giving us the resolve and the force of will to press on unto glory. Conform us to Christ, our great King and Warrior and Redeemer, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP72A "God, Give Your Judgments to the King" or TPH539 "Am I a Soldier of the Cross"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)"

Matthew 11 verses 7 through 15. These are God's words. As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John. What did you go out into the Wilderness to see? A reed shaken, by the wind. But what did you go out to see a man clothed in soft garments?

Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in King's houses. But what did you go out to see the prophet? Yes, I say to you and more than a prophet for this is Of whom it is written. Behold, I send my messenger before your face. Who will prepare your way before you?

Assuredly, I say to you among those born of women. There's not resin one greater than John, the Baptist. But he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence. And the violent take up by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, He is Elijah, who is to come? He who has ears to hear. Let him hear.

So far. Reading of gods, inspired and inerrant, tort Those who observed the two Disciples of John coming and asking Jesus. about his identity. Might have been tempted to look down at John. The apparent wave ring in faith. And Not possible unbelief. Although, We note that he asks, Christ himself and Christ, sends back a sermon.

And designed aiming at Help of His cousin and his Subject in his kingdom. And so, Although we are tempted to look down upon John just as we are tempted to look down upon Christians who go through. Difficult things. And They seem like their faith. shaken or they don't have the perseverance.

Strength or endurance. That. We might think that they should have. We ought not looked down upon them. The Lord Jesus. Who redeems? Who brings to Faith also? As we saw last week. By his use of his word and preaching. The Lord Jesus also sanctifies and strengthens and Brings us all the way home.

In this particular case, the Lord Praises John. Defends his reputation as it were. You know, we are Short-Sighted, or we have very short memories. And because of how, Sinfully judgmental. We are about others. We can very Quickly come to despise those. And we had previously esteemed and these people Several of whom.

Among Jesus, disciples had the comments, they had begun as John's disciples. They had gone out into the Wilderness to see John Well, what would make them leave their homes or their towns? Then go out into the Wilderness to see him. Is he really read shaken by the wind?

Like some people might be Criticizing him or slandering him. He's so easily shaken. he is just addicted to comfort ended up in that prison and he can't he can't hack it. Is that really? The truth about John. When they were going out to see him in the wilderness, they didn't think he was some easily shaken guy.

When they wanted to go see him, they they didn't go to the King's house. To see the guy who is favored and pampered, and And had the soft clothing. No, they didn't go to the King's house to see her here. John you had to go out to the Wilderness.

Where the guy was wearing. Campbell's hair robe and a leather belt and eating Locust and Honey. It was not exactly. Enjoying Banquets at the king's table. And so, he The Lord Jesus here. Gently correcting. These. The hearts and minds and males might have turned on. They have also done.

On the baptizer. The prophet John. And he Praises him as a reminder here. Not. Quickly, despise others. And also not to be surprised. When those who had thought well and spoken, well of us. quickly despise us this An age-old problem among among Sinners. But, The Lord helps. Multitudes.

Not around him. Not to think like that I've dropped. Instead, they are to remember. That he is a prophet. And now the Lord Jesus says, not only, should you remember how highly you esteemed him before and not easily? Dispense with your good opinion of him. But now he says, and your opinion of him before actually wasn't high enough.

You thought he was a prophet. So he says, what? What did you go out to see a prophet? Yes. Okay. So they thought he was a prophet. So they were going out to see him because they thought he was a prophet, but now Jesus says yes, I say to you more than a prophet.

This is almost like Earlier the you have heard, it said. This is something that they heard at synagogue, and then, but I say to you and then he Gives them more truly and more fully the reality of the situation. So you thought that he was just a prophet. But I say to you is more than a prophet.

This is he of him who has written any quotes from Malachi 3:1 About the last prophet who is going to come. Right before. the Messiah. Is also God. It's God himself actually even more than the Messiah in the context of Malachi 3, 1. The messenger goes before. The one the face of him who is God.

As he comes into his Temple suddenly and and Jesus says, this is that one. So, don't you don't you despise The Malachi 3-1 messenger. The Malachi 4 verse 5, Elijah Who was to come? As Jesus says about him in verse 14, don't you quickly look down on him?

The greatest. Prophet. He's the greatest mere man. That the Earth has seen. So he says, assuredly, I say to you. Among those born of women there has not risen one greater. Then John the Baptist, he The Elijah who has to come. And so we are to listen to him.

We are to listen to him to what he says about Jesus. Especially. That Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That Jesus is the one who Comes after John, but is greater than John because he is before, John how could he be that?

Well, because he's God. Jesus is the one who doesn't just call to repentance. Doesn't just call us to conversion but gives us repentance. He gives us conversion. By the pouring out of a spirit of the Holy Spirit, who is God the spirit. Well, how How can a man pour out?

God the Holy Spirit? Well, it's because that man has also got And so, here's here's John, one of the first to come into a Triune understanding these the Forerunner announcer. Herald of The Lord Jesus Christ. he had fearlessly Opposed the king for his sin and called the Jewish leaders to repentance and told the Roman soldiers, whom the Lord was using him to.

His preaching to bring them to repentance how they were. to show repentance in their lives by not extorting. John Jesus, testifies of him. There's, There's not been one born of women. Who is, who has risen that is greater. Thing on the back. Just so he promotes John as one.

To whom we must listen. To listen to him, we need God's grace. To enable us to listen. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Meaning that not all of us have ears to hear. And so we must receive. actual hearing ears. Not just ears that interpret.

Compression waves in the air. and sounds. and not just brains that interpret waves into words. But Souls, that are alive. To understand and receive and respond and believe. To sit under God's word, and Be convinced by. So, John Jesus has praised John And he, Promoted John as a prophet that they must listen to.

But he also presents John as an example. This is surely. I say to you among those born of women. There has not risen one greater than John the Baptist, but He who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. So, rather than looking down On John, because he's still growing in faith and still needs.

The strengthening. from Jesus, by the Jesus's blessing upon the preaching of the word and still needs. Sanctifying From Jesus by Jesus's Blessing in the preaching. Upon the preaching of the word rather than looking down upon John. Now, you know, they're not only to look opt to John as The greatest on the Earth at the time.

But they're also to imitate John as those who still need to grow in the Lord. Jesus who still need to become stronger in the faith, who still need to become Holier. we are not yet fit from for heaven. So if the greatest man on Earth. Is not fit for heaven, then you're not fit for heaven either.

Which means that faith in Jesus Christ, doesn't isn't something where you kind of believe in him at some point and the switch is flipped and now that you're Justified, you can just kind of Coast into heaven on. Clouds. Licking lollipops with your Rainbow Sunshine all around you, and Everything.

Just easy. No. John as the greatest of Believers in the earth, Yeah, still had to be Sanctified and Walk with faith. Preparation for Glory is being fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, was a fierce battle. Faith requires fighting Faith requires, strength and Zeal and endurance. Yes, Jesus alone has earned heaven for us.

Our fighting in Zeal endurance, strength perseverance. These things do not earn heaven for us but they are the path by which The faith of those for whom Jesus alone has earned Heaven. This fighting and Zeal and strength, and battle, and perseverance is the path by which we enter. That's what the Lord Jesus is saying, when he says, And from the days of John the Baptist, until now the Kingdom of Heaven, suffers violence and the violent, take it by force.

John did not preach. A passive easy. Complacent. Christianity. He preached battling. Running. Repenting. Struggling fighting. He breached a A new life, for which a new way of life, for which we needed a New mindset and a new mind, a new nature. From God, the Holy And so, when Jesus describes those who are actually entering Heaven, He uses this language of the violent take-up by force.

Believers are supposed to be. A mighty battle. Those whom the Lord is saving those whom the Lord is actually bringing Into heaven. do not come as. One. Him puts it on.

Flowery beds of ease. But they come as soldiers. Storming Heaven. And so this is a real challenge to us.

That if we are not, Fighting in faith and for the faith. If we are not in a battle to be fit for Glory, Then we might not actually be converted.

John had a battle. And those who are entering Heaven. Verse 12 teaches us. Also battle. They're wet well, their way all the way there. You know, so do not think That the battle is going to end. At some point in this life. It'll be easy. Flowery coasting. That's not the way the Christian Life Works.

And so, not only. The Lord Jesus. Praise John to them. So that they won't look down upon John or think themselves better than John. Not only does Jesus. Promote John to them as Prophet. Urging them to. Listen to his preaching about Christ, and The conversion of The conversion of nature.

That we must have from Christ. In order to be saved and to enter the kingdom, But the Lord Jesus also presents John as an example. Of how the Christian Life. Christian faith. Walking by faith is A battle. This whole lifelong. So may the Lord. Blessed to us. This portion of his word.

Not only today, but especially as we prepare to Sit under hearing it, preached. Sit under the preaching of it tomorrow, then the Lord's Day public worship. Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven. Thank you for Speaking plainly to us about, What the Christian Life will be like. Forgive us. When we either? Think that we can Coast in. Think highly of ourselves. Grant that we would. Continually look to you. For more faith. For the strengthening of our new nature.

And Killing of what remains from, our former nature. But Grant also that we would receive it from you. Give us to battle until we reach Glory. We ask Through Jesus. Amen.