



SPORTS IN FOCUS

THE REACTIONS TO THE KING

Matthew 11:20-24 • Lesson Six

ZOOM!

READY

- There's no shortage of opinions about who Jesus is and no shortage of expressions for or against Him. What are some of the strongest reactions to Jesus—positive and negative—that you've heard or seen? Why such strong reactions from people?

SET

Context of Matthew 11 and 12

The first ten chapters of Matthew are, in general, a series of testimonies that prove who Jesus is. Matthew marshals all that evidence into the courtroom as it were, to testify that Jesus is the Christ, the King of kings, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. In chapters 11 and 12 Matthew focuses on the reasons of various individuals and groups to that evidence.

Keys to Text

The cities: Jesus' harsh reproach against the cities in which most of His miracles were done seems on the surface to be less justified than His comparatively mild rebuke of those who openly criticized Him. For the most part, the three cities mentioned here—which typified all the places where His miracles were done—did not take any direct action against Jesus. They simply ignored Him. But indifference is a heinous form of unbelief. It completely disregards God that He is not even an issue worth arguing about.

GO

Read Matthew 11:20-24

Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

1. The people of Chorazin and Bethsaida never persecuted Jesus, and few of them even criticized Him. Yet their sin was worse than if they had done those things. As G. A. Studdert-Kennedy has written in his poem "Indifference," "They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain." Where do you see this type of indifference today? Why?

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Quarterback Brett Favre awaits the outcome of an NFL inquiry into whether he sent inappropriate messages and salacious photos to Jenn Sterger when both of them worked for the New York Jets in 2008. Earlier this week, he apologized to his Minnesota Vikings teammates for the distraction created by the NFL's inquiry into his behavior. This scandal reminds me of something I heard my college coach repeat more than once. He said, "The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility." With today's Sports In Focus lesson, we also see how the bible teaches "The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility; and the greater the light, the greater the punishment for not receiving it." When people have a great opportunity to hear God's Word and even to see it miraculously demonstrated and then reject it, their guilt is intensified immeasurably. It is far better to have heard nothing of Christ than to hear the truth about Him and yet reject Him. "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement" (Heb. 10:26-27 NKJV). www.nebraskafca.org