

# Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

## 11:1-15

by J.C. Ryle

### Transcript

The first thing that demands our attention in this passage is the message which John the Baptist sends to our Lord Jesus Christ. He "sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?" This question did not arise from doubt or unbelief on the part of John. We do that holy man injustice if we interpret it in such a way. It was asked for the benefit of his disciples: it was meant to give them an opportunity of hearing from Christ's own lips the evidence of his divine mission. No doubt John the Baptist felt that his own ministry was ended; something within him told him that he would never come forth from Herod's prison house, but would surely die. He remembered the ignorant jealousies that had already been shown by his disciples towards the disciples of Christ. He took the most likely course to dispel those jealousies forever: he sent his followers to "hear and see" for themselves. The conduct of John the Baptist in this matter affords a striking example to ministers, teachers and parents when they draw near the end of their course. Their chief concern should be about the souls of those they are going to leave behind them; their great desire should be to persuade them to cleave to Christ. The death of those who have guided and instructed us on earth ought always to have this effect. It should make us lay hold more firmly on no more "continueth ever," and "hath an unchangeable priesthood" (i.e. Hebrews). The second thing that demands our notice in this passage is the high testimony which our Lord bears to the character of John the Baptist. No mortal man ever received such commendation as Jesus here bestows on his imprisoned friend. "Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist." In time past John had boldly confessed Jesus before men as the Lamb of God; now Jesus openly declares John to be more than a prophet. There were some, no doubt, who were disposed to think lightly of John the Baptist, partly from ignorance of the nature of his ministry, partly from misunderstanding the question he had sent to ask. Our Lord Jesus silences such cavilers by the declaration he here makes: he tells them not to suppose that John was a timid, vacillating, unstable man, "a reed shaken by the wind." If they thought so, they were utterly mistaken. He was a bold, unflinching witness to the truth. He tells them not to suppose that John was at heart a worldly man, fond of kings' courts and delicate living; if they thought so, they greatly erred. He was a self-denying preacher of repentance, who would risk the anger of a king rather than not reprove his sins. In short, He would have them know that John was "more than a prophet." He was one to whom God had given more honor than to all the Old Testament prophets. They indeed prophesied of Christ, but died without seeing him; John not only prophesied of him, but saw him face to face. They foretold that the days of the Son of Man would certainly come, and the Messiah appear; John was an actual eyewitness of those days, and an

honored instrument in preparing men for them. To them it was given to predict that Messiah would be  
"brought as a lamb to the slaughter" and "cut off" (Isa.53:7; Daniel 10:26 );to  
John it was given to point to him and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of  
the world!" (John ). There is something very beautiful and comforting to true Christians in this  
testimony which our Lord bears to John the Baptist. It shows us the tender interest which our great Head  
feels in the lives and characters of all his members; it shows us what honor he is ready to put on the work  
and labor that they go through in his cause. It is a sweet foretaste of the confession which he will make of  
them before the assembled world when he presents them faultless on the last day before his Father's  
throne. Do we know what it is to work for Christ? Have we ever felt cast down and dispirited, as if we were  
doing no good, and no one cared for us? Are we ever tempted to feel, when laid aside by sickness, or  
withdrawn by providence, "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught"? Let us  
meet such thoughts by the recollection of this passage. Let us remember there is one who daily records all  
we do for him and sees more beauty in his servants' work than his servants do themselves. The same  
tongue which bore testimony to John in prison will bear testimony to all his people at the last day. He will  
say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of  
the world" (Matthew 25:34 ). And then shall his faithful witnesses discover, to their wonder and  
surprise, that there was never a word spoken on their Master's behalf which does not receive a  
reward.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jc-ryle/expository-thoughts-on-matthew-matthew-111-15/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**