

Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Lecture 11, Matthew 10-11

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Matthew. This is session 11, Matthew 10-11.

In Matthew chapters 8 and 9, we read times where Jesus demonstrates his authority over sickness, spirits, and storms.

We have three sets of miracle stories, and each is separated by speaking of Jesus' authority, inviting people to submit to his authority. Well, after this third set of three miracle stories, we read about Jesus' expression of authority as he speaks of more laborers for the harvest. Jesus' activity that's been going on is summarized in 9:35, just as it was summarized before the Sermon on the Mount in 4:23 through 25, healing the sick, teaching and preaching about the good news of the kingdom.

We also read in verse 36 about Jesus' motivation, his compassion. My people, these people are like sheep without a shepherd. He expresses love toward them.

Now that language appears for God's people some other times in the Old Testament, particularly in Ezekiel 34, where the sheep are like sheep without a shepherd. They're being scattered because the shepherds aren't doing their job. And so, God himself comes and shepherds his people.

But in verse 37, we read that more workers are needed to complete the mission. The work has to be multiplied and not simply added up. And that's a problem.

You know, if for 20 days you just win two people to Christ each day out of 20 days, well, you've won a lot of people to Christ. You've won 40 people to Christ. But if instead you were multiplying that, you would have much larger numbers.

Well, Jesus, he's doing the best he can as an incarnate human being, but there are limits to how far you can go. You can't be in two places at once. The needs of the world are so vast.

So, he wants to multiply laborers for the harvest. So, verse 37, there's a need for more workers to complete the mission. In verse 38, before sending the disciples out, he says, pray for laborers for the harvest.

Well, who will those laborers be? Well, when you get to chapter 10, you find out that the laborers are the very ones who are praying for laborers when he says the labor is

worthy of their hire. So that's the same Greek term. So now we're going to look at Matthew 10 through 12.

I'm not doing all of Matthew in the same amount of detail because otherwise, this course would be very, very long. But I'm going to go through Matthew 10 through 12 with some details but not full detail. Well, Matthew 9:35 to 38, as we've just seen, sets up for this.

And then after they pray for workers for the harvest, Jesus sends them out. He authorizes the disciples to carry on the mission. And the mission includes proclaiming the kingdom, but also, gives them authority over spirits and to heal, verse 1. And he commissions 12 apostles.

The word apostle, there are debates about exactly what that means. People today sometimes, missiologists and others will often speak of apostolic ministry in terms of church planting and so on. And some other people say, no, the apostles were just the 12.

Well, the gospels usually apply the term to the 12, but the term actually is used in a broader way in Paul's letters. So, it can be used in more than one way. And some of the modern debates about, well, can there still be apostles? Depends on how you're using the term.

Obviously, the 12 are not with us, but in terms of people being sent and commissioned, *apostello* is the verb from which apparently *apostolos* is formed. Not everybody who was sent was said to be an *apostolos*, but especially commissioned messengers. Some people trace this back to the Jewish conception of the *sholiach*, the appointed messenger.

In rabbinic literature, this is a special kind of function where the messenger can arrange marriages and do all sorts of things. They have authority to the extent of their commission. So, whatever they've been commissioned to do, that's the authority that they have.

Other people say, well, no, the rabbinic literature is too late. We can't depend on that for the *sholiach*. But the basic idea of a commissioned messenger authorized by the person sending them, you find it already in Proverbs.

You find it in the Old Testament. You find it in the Greek world. So, the general conception already is there wherever the specific language comes from.

But *sholiach* means sent one, and *apostolos* means sent one. And the idea is not just sent but commissioned with, authorized by the sender with authority to do certain things. So, anyway, Jesus sends out the twelve.

Why twelve? Well, probably because there were twelve tribes of Israel. Some other Jewish people said, well, why twelve tribes of Israel, twelve constellations, and so on? They tried to relate it to other things.

But the Old Testament speaks of the twelve tribes of Israel. And Jesus sends out these twelve especially. Why does he want to evoke the idea of the twelve tribes of Israel? The Dead Sea Scrolls also seem to speak of a group of twelve leaders because they saw themselves as a renewal movement, as the remnant, the righteous remnant of Israel from which God would ultimately restore his people.

So, in the same way, Jesus may choose twelve disciples as a way of symbolizing or representing his mission to Israel. Now the names of these disciples. Simon was a common name.

Simon called Peter. We also have Simon the Zealot. They both had to have these names because you couldn't just call them both Simon and not have a way to distinguish them.

So, you have Simon Peter and Simon the Zealot or Simon the Zealous One. Another common name was James. Actually, it wasn't really James.

That's an anglicized version of it. It was in Hebrew Yaakov, Jacob, or in Greek it was Yakobas. We say Jacob in English.

But in the New Testament, they try to make it sound like they translated Jacob for some reason as James. But there are two Jacobs or two Jameses here. So, it has ways to distinguish them.

Judas was another common name. Judas is the same name in the Greek form as Judah, the tribe of Judah. So, you had two Judas actually among the disciples.

One was Judas Iscariot. Now what does Iscariot mean? How does that set him apart from the other one? Well, that's a matter of debate. But some people have said it may mean Judas the Dagger Man, one of the Sicarii.

I think that probably more likely it means Iscariot, the man from Kerioth. He was from a place called Kerioth. We know of a place by that name, a village by that name.

So, in any case, you had more than one person with this name. You find a lot of Marys in the Gospel. Why is that that we have a lot of Marys in the Gospels and the first half of Acts? Mary was the most common name in Judaism at that time, well in Judea and Galilee at that time.

So, it's not surprising. If somebody were making this up in Rome or in Athens, chances are they wouldn't have come up with the names that were most popular in Judea and Galilee. But this goes back to the earliest tradition.

These were actually the common names of the period, and so it's not surprising, the period and the location. It's not surprising that they show up so much in the Gospel tradition. Jesus sends his disciples on a mission, the mission of Jesus' agents.

The initial mission is to Israel only, verses 5 and 6. That was the short-term priority in Jesus' ministry. That comes out again with the Canaanite woman in chapter 15. I'm sent to the house of Israel.

He speaks of, this is for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Well, that's evoking language from the Old Testament as well, Jeremiah 50 and verse 6, Ezekiel 34:12. Jesus is full of Scripture, and his mission is shaped by the ethos of Scripture.

But the issue here is partly geography more than ethnicity. He said, don't go in any way of the Gentiles. Well, those would be ways or roads leading to Gentile cities.

Galilee was surrounded by Gentile cities on the north, so you can't really go outside Galilee in that direction. Limits the mission to Galilee. If they're not going to the Samaritans, they're not going to the Gentile cities.

Well, they have to stay in Galilee. This is the only command in the chapter that's specifically revoked in Matthew chapter 28. The other thing, we may expect some continuity in the mission, that this mission is a model for us, but not this part.

It's not limited to the house of Israel. In terms of their message, well, we're going to see continuity there. Continuity with John the Baptist in 3:2, continuity with Jesus in 4:17. Well, here also the disciples are to carry on the message of the kingdom.

Another element is signs, which constitute one form of authentication in 10 and verse 8. Well, this has continuity. It's part of carrying on Jesus' work in 9:35. Jesus was doing this. He was preaching and teaching the kingdom, and then he was demonstrating God's reign, God's authority, and God's kingdom by healing the sick and casting out demons.

He tells the disciples to do the same. It's an expression, it should be an expression of Jesus' compassion, like in 9:36, his compassion that he wanted to cure people. We also see that Jesus' agents live simply in 10 verses 8 through 10.

You know, there are some circles today, and it's been true, especially since the 1950s, there are some circles today that associate healing with prosperity teaching, not in the form of God supplying your needs as you go out, which is taught here, but

in the form of God just blessing you with abundant wealth and so on, especially some of the people who preach it. Well, that association has only existed since around the 1950s. Throughout most of church history, it was the opposite, that people expected those who lived simply to be the ones who were most likely to be walking close to God and having miracles follow.

Now, of course, God isn't limited to doing it any one way, but we do often see that in history, certainly with St. Francis and St. Anthony was particularly known for that, as recorded by Athanasius. We also, there's a story, it may not be a true story, but there's a story told from medieval times that the Pope, this was during a more corrupt period in history, that the Pope was saying to one of the medieval Catholic scholars, well, it can no longer be said, as it was said by Peter and John in Acts chapter 3, it can no longer be said, silver and gold have we none. Look, we have plenty of silver and gold, to which the scholar replied, neither can the church still say rise up and walk.

Peasants often had one cloak. This is especially in Egypt, where we have more details about it. They may have had more than that in Judea and Galilee, but at least many people were so poor that they had only one cloak.

Some people have compared this traveling simply to cynics, but even the cynics had a bag. This is more simple than the cynics, what we have here in Matthew chapter 10. Josephus says that the Essenes took no provisions when they traveled because they could depend on hospitality from other Essenes wherever they went.

Hospitality was something that Jewish people normally could depend on if there were other Jewish people where they traveled. But we also can look at another example, and this one is right there in the Bible. It's the most obvious example that was available to all of Matthew's audience, and that was the example of Israel's prophets in times of national apostasy.

Elijah in the wilderness, Elisha having to reprove Gehazi for trying to get material possessions when he really needed to have his focus on something else. Normally as people traveled, they would take a staff for protection. It also might give you some stability on narrow mountain paths.

But you see a serpent, you want to bop it on the head. But here, you're supposed to travel completely lightly. Now, Paul, when he traveled, he would stop in places, and he would work if he was going to stay in a place for a long time, but he traveled very simply.

He had to live very simply to carry out this mission. So, this is a description of life and mission. First Corinthians chapter 4, second Corinthians chapter 11, I've often been hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, and so on.

It's a cost that's well worth paying to get the good news out to people. The disciples had to travel light because they trusted God to supply their needs, chapter 10 verses 10 and 11. There was an emphasis on hospitality in antiquity.

People normally would carry letters of recommendation to attest their character, so this isn't somebody who's going to rob you in your sleep if you put them up for the night. Also, there's an emphasis that actually has come into mission again, especially in the 19th century. George Mueller, Hudson Taylor, and others very much emphasized trusting God's provision for the mission.

In fact, they went so far as they didn't want to tell anybody what their need was. They would just pray for it and let God provide. Now, some of the early faith missionaries who went out had a very difficult time, and many missions today have streamlined things, but this idea of depending on God, God is ultimately our source, and God often works through people, but we have to depend on God.

I remember a time in my life when I had committed to support a child in Kolkata to provide food and school for this child in Kolkata for \$15 a month. And right after that, after I'd done that for like a month or two, I lost all my means of income. I had \$10 in my pocket when I lost all my means of income.

I spent \$9 on groceries. I had \$1 left, and after a few weeks, the time was due for me to send the \$15. And I didn't have it, and I was desperate.

And I can't boast that I was a person of great faith like George Mueller or Hudson Taylor because I wasn't. I was just desperate. And that night there was a knock on the door, and somebody had felt led to give me \$25.

God answered my desperate prayer. The next day I sent out the \$15 for the child in India, and I had \$11 for buying groceries. And the Lord kept providing for me every month.

And the day before I was going to call Duke University, this was around the same time period, the day before I was going to call Duke University and tell them that I could not come and do a Ph.D. because I only had a dollar at the time I was getting ready to call them, I didn't have the money to do the program. The day before I was going to call them, the money was provided from an unexpected source. Now, that doesn't mean that every time we have something we want, we get it.

But this was my calling. God knows. God knew.

I needed a PhD to be a professor that God had called me to be, and therefore he provided the means for me to do that. When my Ph.D. was finished, you know, God

had provided for me all along, and finally I was hoping to start teaching right away. But it was already June, school started in September, and I was noticing that there were no openings available for me.

I'd done my best, I'd been applying to all sorts of places, but I didn't have a position. Finally, I think it was now in July, it was a Sunday night, and I figured out how much money I would need just to have an apartment large enough to hold my research files because I had spent years doing research so I could talk about Bible background and so on, I had it all in index cards, but I had tens of thousands of index cards. And the place where I was living, I didn't see how I was going to come up with that much money to pay for the rent.

And I figured out how much I needed to leave, and I just live on that, I just said, God, I don't see how this is going to happen. And unless you do a miracle, I'm not going to be able to do this. And less than 24 hours later, InterVarsity Press called me back.

They said, oh, this background commentary that you offered to write, we decided that we want you to offer it, we want you to do it, we want to offer you a contract. It was to the dollar. They gave me an advance on it.

It was to the dollar of what I decided the night before I needed to live on that year. It wasn't because of my great faith, but God was protecting his calling. If we are involved in what God has called us to do, God can supply our needs in doing that.

So, we don't get big dreams about doing something we haven't been called to do, but if God has called us to do it, God can do it. And God usually calls us to do things we can't do in our own strength. So, we learn to depend on him.

He's our provider. Well, is it wrong to work as well as pray for our daily bread? Well, Paul did it. Is it wrong to raise support? Well, Paul accepted support from the church in Philippi.

So, these things aren't wrong, but ultimately, we trust in God to supply our needs. We also see in verses 12 through 15 that hearers are judged by their response to Christ's messengers. Everything is at stake for these people in terms of how they respond to the truth of the gospel.

Now, greetings were essential to social etiquette. Whom to greet first and so on. If somebody was of higher social rank, you had to greet them before they greeted you on the way.

And the greeting was normally shalom. That was the fundamental greeting of a Jewish people, meaning peace be with you. Shalom aleichem.

Peace be with you, but peace not just in the sense of may you not be at war, but peace in the sense of may it be well with you. May everything go well with you. It was in a sense of prayer.

It was like in English we say, God bless you. You are speaking to the person, but indirectly you're ultimately invoking God to give blessing to this person. So, it's a prayer, but it's addressed to the person like a blessing, like when Isaac blessed Jacob and so on.

So you go to a place, you offer them this blessing. If they refuse your message, well, they're not going to get the blessing. If they receive the message, the blessing will stay with them.

Jesus also talks about shaking the dust off your feet because when people, very pious Jewish people would enter the Holy Land, they would shake the dust from their feet to show, okay, that was profane. Now I'm entering a more holy place. Jesus said that's the way you should treat these Galilean towns and villages.

If they don't repent, then you treat them as profane and it will be worse for them than it was for Sodom. In chapter 10, verses 16 through 23, persecution is promised. Now some of this material in Mark appears at a different place.

It appears in Mark 13, talking about end-time sufferings. But Matthew also has it here because this mission, as we will find out in verse 23, goes on until the end of the age. Jesus says in verse 23, you won't have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

So, the mission is continuing, both to Israel and to the nations. And we can expect opposition. Not everybody is going to respond positively.

Some people will. Some places you go, it's like breaking up fallow ground. It takes a long time of sowing and praying and then things begin to happen.

Other places are so ripe. I've ministered in places where it was like the harvest was so ripe it was falling to the ground because we didn't have enough laborers to gather in the harvest. But Jesus promises to empower his followers in the face of persecution, verses 16 through 20.

First of all, Jesus depicts his followers as sheep among wolves, as we share the gospel. Not everybody is going to be friendly. And we find out that, well, sheep were notoriously defenseless.

So, we find out that Jesus is portraying us as relatively powerless. Some of our enemies will be more powerful than we are and will mean us harm. Jewish texts sometimes portrayed Israel among the nations as sheep among predators.

But Jesus doesn't just portray us as sheep among predators. He specifically says sheep are sent among predators. It's part of our mission.

We have to expect it. We can expect physical suffering for Jesus' sake. In verse 17, he speaks of opposition in the local courts.

Local courts often were ruled by about seven local elders, Josephus tells us. Sometimes those would have been priests, but whoever were elders in the local community. And synagogues functioned as community centers.

So that's also where the local court was held and so forth. Jesus talks about being beaten there. The way beatings were done in synagogues, if we can depend much on the somewhat later Mishnaic tractate, Makot, the way beatings were done, normally they would use a strap of calf leather with interwoven thongs.

And they would beat you 26 times against the back and 13 across the chest, as hard as the striker can beat you. The condemned person would first be stripped and then tied to a pillar both ways so they could strike them that way. Now, we also know that this actually was carried out in this period, the 39 lashes.

Of course, Deuteronomy says, don't beat the person more than 40 lashes. And so as a fence around the law to make sure they didn't go beyond 40, they did 39 as a maximum. Well, Paul received that 39 lashes five times, he says, in 2 Corinthians 11.24. One thing that shows us is Paul's continuing solidarity with the synagogue.

He kept ministering in the synagogue, even though some synagogues he was not well-liked, and they beat him. But we can expect physical suffering for Jesus' sake. But what Jesus says here goes beyond the initial mission in Galilee because he doesn't just talk about synagogues.

He says that God will empower his disciples to speak before the Gentiles. Remember, they're not going in any way of the Gentiles. So, this is Matthew's recording more of this from other places in Jesus' teaching, putting it here because he's telling us about the mission.

The mission of the disciples was a model for our mission because we too are supposed to expect we may have to suffer for the name of Christ. Now, don't provoke it. Don't eagerly seek it.

But we can rejoice when it happens, although I admit that when I've been beaten for the gospel, I didn't always rejoice. It hurt. But anyway, God will empower the disciples to speak before the Gentiles, verses 18-20.

He speaks of governors. Well, that's not just Pilate. That's not just the governor of Judea.

This is beyond Judea and certainly beyond Galilee, which wasn't under a governor per se. It was under a tetrarch, Herod Antipas. We also see that persecution will sometimes divide families.

Now, that was regarded as an especially awful time, and the Old Testament talks about it. Jewish people talk about it as a special time of suffering in Mishna sotha. Even in the Holy Land, persecution would continue until Jesus returns, chapter 10 and verse 23.

There was a similar Jewish saying about the end time. Then we come to promises for the persecuted in 10:24-33. We will face persecution, but he also gives us promises. And he encourages us in verses 26 and 27 to preach boldly, and not be afraid of shame, because God will ultimately vindicate us.

In verse 28, we shouldn't even fear those who threaten death, because God knows and God watches over us. It won't happen unless it's in God's hands. Chapter 10, verses 29-31.

Trust God's sovereignty, whether he protects you or whether you die. God is still faithful. God is still with you.

He says, aren't two sparrows sold for a cent? Your father knows about the sparrows. He watches over even the sparrows. The word that's translated cent here, it's assarion in verse 29.

That was less than one-sixteenth of a denarius. What that means is it's less than an hour's wage for an average worker, maybe half an hour's wage for an average worker. Jewish teachers agreed that God knows or decrees the death of every bird.

And here, if God knows about the sparrows, how much more does he care about us? Verse 30. Every hair on your head is numbered. That was a common Old Testament expression in terms of every hair on the head.

God has every hair on our head numbered, not just for those of us who don't have much hair, but even for those who have much hair, he has every hair numbered. This is quite different from the Greek view of capricious fate or fortune, where you never

know what's going to happen, so just might as well get used to it. We're not serving a God who just has whims.

We're serving a God who loves us and we know he's got everything under control and we can trust him. Verses 32 and 33. If we confess him, he'll confess us.

If we deny him, he'll deny us. You can think of Stephen in Acts chapter 7, where Stephen is being stoned and the people who are stoning Stephen, strip off their clothes, which people sometimes would do for athletic activities, but normally when you're executing somebody, you strip them. By the way, Luke is reporting it.

He's letting us know something about them stripping off their clothes. Maybe Luke is trying to tell us something about who's really guilty. Normally, the person who was condemned was supposed to say, according to Jewish tradition, may my death atone for all my sins, but Stephen doesn't confess his sins, he confesses theirs.

Lord, lay not this sin to the charge. But also, in that passage about Stephen, he sees the Son of Man standing before the Father. Why is he standing? That was the posture of a judge rendering the verdict or a witness in a trial.

Jesus is there to vindicate. The ones who are really on trial in God's sight are the ones who are the false witnesses and who are stoning Stephen wrongly. We have Jewish stories of martyrs refusing to compromise their faith, and therefore this would be understood.

You're not supposed to compromise your faith. Normally that was faith in God, confessing faith in God. Here, it has to do with confessing faith in Jesus, who is again being portrayed as divine.

In 10:34-39, we see that our devotion to Jesus must not be rivaled by anything else. Jesus comes before everything. In verses 34-36, we read about the opposition of family.

Young couples usually stayed with the man's family, which is why we read about the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law because that was the most usual arrangement where they'd be together in the same home. Micah 7.6 speaks of a time of suffering with familial division before Israel's restoration. Mishnah Sotah 9.15, a Jewish tradition, develops that idea, saying you can't even trust family members before the end, during the period of final tribulation, the great suffering of families.

Jesus shows us in verse 37 that he matters more than the approval of our family. Luke has it that you need to hate your father and mother and family members

compared to Jesus, but that's hyperbole, obviously, because you're not going to be able to love them. You're not going to be able to love them.

It means you love them less. Nothing must compare with our love for Jesus and our loyalty to Jesus. But we know from Jesus' other teachings, you know, there's the paradox of how you put the teachings together.

We know from Jesus' other teachings he wants us to love our families, but nothing can compare with our love for Jesus. Some sages said, well, you should love me first because I'm your teacher. But nobody talked about hating parents by comparison.

Only God warranted that rule, even hyperbolically. But he goes on, not just family, but you have to love me, verses 38 and 39, more than your own life. You have to carry the cross and follow me.

Well, what does it mean to carry the cross and follow him? When people were being executed by crucifixion, they would be stripped, they would be beaten, and then they would be made to carry the horizontal beam of their cross out to the site of their execution, normally in the midst of a howling and jeering mob. As you were marching on the way to your death, carrying the instrument of your own execution, shamefully naked, mocked by people around you, Jesus said, that's where I'm going. If you want to follow me, you need to follow me to the cross.

The narratives show us that he does have patience with us. He's compassionate. But in his teachings, he doesn't lower the standard.

We know what is expected of us, and he can give us the power to do that if we love him more than we love anything else. Chapter 10, verses 40 to 42, honoring Christ's agents. How you treat an agent, how you treat a messenger, how you treat a herald, and how you treated ambassadors back then, reflected the treatment of the sender.

If you despised a messenger, that's how you despised the person who sent them. If you honored the messenger, well, you were showing honor to the person who sent them. And we see that in Exodus and in 1 Samuel as well, where what they do to Moses, Moses says, you haven't done it to me, but you've done it to the Lord.

Or in 1 Samuel 8, where God says, it's not you they've rejected, but me, Samuel. Hospitality. Well, we read about that earlier in Matthew chapter 10.

When you go into a city, depend on hospitality. Let somebody take you into their home, and if they take you in, stay there. It depends on their hospitality.

Chapter 10 and verse 11. Now, normally in that culture, hospitality could last up to sometimes three weeks, not normally much more than that. But hospitality was larger in that culture than it is in some other cultures.

If you visited the United States, or if you're from the United States, you know that the United States is not the most hospitable of cultures. But actually, in earlier times, and in more rural places, there tends to be more hospitality, because you tend to know people better, you're less likely, less thinking somebody's going to mug you, whatever. But hospitality is a value in many cultures.

It was a value throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. It was a value in ancient Judaism. And you could depend on this.

You also see this in Matthew chapter 25. Well, the same way God rewarded Elijah's host, the widow of Zarephath, and even raised her son, and God rewarded Elisha's host, the Shunammite woman, and raised her son. He says, if they receive you, they receive me.

If they even give you a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, that's all they have to give you. Sometimes that's all peasants would have to give. If they give you what they can, they will not lose the reward.

It was just this act of faith, of giving what they could, receiving hospitably the messengers of the gospel. Because the people who disagreed with the message normally wouldn't receive the messengers. But the people who received them hospitably were normally the people who embraced the message that they brought, and therefore embraced the messengers.

Chapter 11 starts off with the doubts of a man of God. In chapter 10 we read about some agents who were rejected. Well, we come to one who definitely was rejected, John the Baptist.

He was accepted by many of the people, but he ended up being imprisoned. And the prison that it's talking about here we know about from Josephus, it's the fortress Machaerus in Perea. Well, that's on the other side of the Jordan.

John heard about Jesus' works, and that's when he doubted, chapter 11 and verse 3. Now that may surprise us. John didn't doubt when he first met Jesus. He doubted when he heard about Jesus' works.

What works? The healings? The exorcisms? So, in Matthew 11, verses 2 through 6, we learn about trusting the signs of the kingdom. We read about questioning Jesus in 11, 2, and 3. He heard about Jesus' deeds. That's when he questioned.

And we have that also certainly in Western culture. Western academics question Jesus' deeds. We talked earlier about David Friedrich Strauss thinking these miracles were legends.

Presuppositions. David Hume said that, well, there can't really be miracles. And so following David Hume's presuppositions, I talked about David Hume earlier.

Some people could say it's not fair to critique him now that he's dead. You're right. Presuppositions matter.

A lot of people have bought into Hume's presuppositions, and so they explain things only as coincidence, misdiagnosis, or psychosomatic recoveries. And some things are coincidences. Some things are misdiagnosis, and some things are psychosomatic.

But God also heals. And God can work through some of those other things too. I mean, even if it's a psychosomatic ailment, you need to get over the ailment.

So, in any case, but some skeptics will prefer any possible natural explanation to a divine one. Even if the best that they can do is to say, well, I don't have an explanation for that now, but I know that there must be one, and somebody must have one, and there must be one someday. That's basically saying, I will not believe you no matter what.

But Jesus appeals to eyewitness testimony. He says, tell John what you see and hear. John's with Jesus.

They saw some of these things Jesus was doing. Now, in terms of what David Hume said, David Hume said, well, don't believe. You can't believe the witnesses.

That's why some people today have an impossibly high bar of evidence for any kind of miracle that takes place. He posed uniform human experience against miracles. It really isn't uniform, but he posed that against eyewitnesses.

But as we know, as we talked about earlier in the course, we've got hundreds of millions of people claiming to be witnesses, and many people coming from non-Christian backgrounds who claim to be witnesses. So, first of all, Jesus mentions various cures. Tell John what you've seen and heard.

Tell him about these various cures, including blindness. That's one of the ones he mentions. Well, back in chapter 9, verses 27 and 28, we had two blind men cured.

I found plenty of reports of cured blindness. Talked about them earlier. The disabled walking.

Well, there was an example of that back in chapter 9, verses 2 through 6. And I gave some examples of that too, like Lisa Larios. Examples of leprosy being cleansed. I didn't give an example of that earlier, but Matthew has already given us an example of that in chapter 8, verses 2 and 3, where the leper comes to Jesus, if you will, you can make me clean.

Jesus says I will be cleansed. And we have accounts of that today too, and I'll give one at this point. One of my students from Asbury Seminary, Ebi Perenbaraj, worked with somebody named Barnabas Malto, originally Bari Malto, and everybody in the area knew the story.

Bari Malto was a shaman, but he became a leper, and he was cast out of his village because he became a leper. One day, two people came along, and they prayed for Bari Malto, nothing happened immediately, but that night he had a dream, and in the dream, angels touched Bari's hands, and he woke up, he found himself completely healed, he went into the village, and the entire village accepted Christ. And so this is, of course, well known in the village where my student worked.

In the early days of the movement there, they had raisings and so on, and half the region was converted. But he said the miracles happened only in the early days, afterward the need was for teaching. But this was very good for getting people's attention for the gospel.

Well, the deaf hearing, we have many examples of that. I gave some examples of that earlier, examples from Mozambique, and so on. The dead being raised, again, we have that today.

You have that in Matthew chapter 9. You also have examples of that today. It's not usually considered psychosomatic, and I've given you a number of examples of that as well. So, what's the point of these miracles that he's making to John? He says, you've seen these things, you've heard these things, tell John about these things.

But the language that Jesus uses to tell John about these things shows that he's not just listing these randomly, but these are specific signs of the kingdom. Jesus' wording here evokes two texts from Isaiah. One is Isaiah 35, verses 5 and 6. The other one is Isaiah 61, and verse 1, about the good news being preached to the poor.

And this language evokes the context also in Isaiah, with the restoration of all of creation, which I talked about earlier, the deserts blossoming with lilies, and so forth. Jesus' signs, Jesus' miracles are not just random acts, but they're a foretaste of the kingdom of God. They're temporary in the sense that even if we're raised from the dead, sooner or later we'll die again in this age.

But these are signs of the coming kingdom. Whether you get a particular miracle or not, the fact that God does a miracle for anybody is an encouragement to all of us. It's a reminder to all of us of God's promise of the world to come.

When there'll be no more sighing, when there'll be no more crying, when God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and we will be fully restored. This again is the idea of the kingdom being already, not yet. The kingdom is not its consummation.

But this brings us to what he says to John in verse 6, Jesus the stumbling block. The kingdom was first for the broken. Jesus came first among the broken and ministered among the marginalized.

That was a stumbling block for many people. And again, that's what it means that he bore our sicknesses. And he started on the road to the cross.

But Jesus didn't do not only what the Pharisees expected, not only what the Sadducees expected, Jesus didn't even do what John expected. Why didn't John recognize him at this point? John rightly understood that Jesus was going to baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire. But where's the fire? John didn't understand that there were two comings.

It's like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:9, we know in part, we prophesy in part. None of us has the whole picture except for God himself. We have to trust him with the rest.

John didn't see how everything was going to fit together. He knew that Jesus was a man of God. He knew Jesus would tell him the truth if he was the coming one or not.

But John wanted to know because John had really been looking forward to a kingdom that might come before John was executed. And John's execution was coming very soon. Jesus didn't do things the way people expected.

Jesus was a stumbling block to some. And that's the way it is with the kingdom. We read the gospel and we find something deeper than miracles.

Yet, miracles are a foretaste of the kingdom. Miracles show us something eternal even though miracles in this life are not themselves eternal. But we see God's heart in an even deeper way in the cross.

Because the cross shows us the price that he paid to give us the miracles and every other gift. And in the cross, we see that in the time of greatest anguish, in the time of greatest suffering, when it looked like there wasn't a miracle when it looked like everything had fallen apart, when it looked like the greatest travesty of justice imaginable, where the most righteous person ever had been nailed to a cross,

condemned as a criminal, God was still at work. Even in the midst of the darkness, even in the midst of the sorrow, even in the midst of the death, God was still at work to bring about his purposes.

And that means that we can trust him no matter what. As Betsy Ten Boom, before she died in a Nazi concentration camp, said to her sister, there's no pit that's so deep that God is not deeper still. And that's part of the message of the gospel.

That even in the midst of suffering, God is still at work. God will fulfill his promises and his purposes. The signs and the miracles are promises of that, but the cross also is the promise of that.

Because we know what happened on the third day. Well, Jesus, after John's messengers go, he talks about John the Baptist. And he says, what did you go out in the wilderness to see? Did you go out to see just a reed shaken by the wind? Well, that's good Old Testament language.

A reed was something weak. It was something you couldn't depend on when you needed it. But also, the reed was the emblem on the coins of Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee, who executed John.

So, he may be making a contrast. He said, what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in royal robes? Oh, now we know he's making a contrast with Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, who thought himself like a king. He said, you know, those people are in king's palaces.

But I tell you, no, John was a prophet and more than a prophet. And here is where he quotes Malachi 3.1. Mark doesn't need to quote this saying because he's got it, he just quotes the verse elsewhere. But Malachi 3.1. I see my messenger before my face.

And Malachi, of course, goes on to talk about Elijah, who will come and prepare the way for the day of the Lord, the day of Yahweh. John fulfills the promise of one like Elijah. We saw that earlier in Matthew 3. So, in Matthew 11.14, basically, Jesus is saying John is like Elijah.

John is Elijah. But the kingdom is greater than John. Now, that's not saying something bad about John.

Some people have taken this as insulting to John. But in ancient comparisons, sometimes they could compare something bad with something good. But sometimes in ancient comparisons, they were comparing something good and something better.

And they'd specifically do that to really emphasize how good this other thing was. John is more than a prophet. John is greater than those born of women beforehand.

But those in the kingdom have been born not just from women. Those in the kingdom have something greater. Jesus compares the hearers in the culture to spoiled children in verses 16 through 19.

To what shall I compare this generation? That was a common Jewish figure of speech. To what shall I compare this generation? Well, these are like children who say, well, we're playing the flute. You should dance.

And now we're singing the dirge, so you should mourn. In other words, play along with us. And if you're not playing along with us, we're very upset.

And they'll change their tune at whim. They act as if people must play their inconsistent way. Well, John came in a more ascetic way.

He came neither eating nor drinking, except for locusts and wild honey and water. People said he has a demon. Well, having a demon, if you're saying a prophet has a demon, that was what you said about false prophets.

So, what's the penalty for false prophets in Deuteronomy 13? Death. So they're saying, John is death-worthy. What about Jesus? Jesus came eating and drinking.

Oh, a gluttonous man and a drunkard. Well, that's an allusion to Deuteronomy chapter 21. What's the penalty for that, for a rebellious son who's a glutton and a drunkard? Death.

So, he's saying, you're like spoiled children. God tried to speak to you one way, but you ignored it. God speaks to you another way, you ignore it for the opposite reason.

You simply refuse to pay attention no matter what. And then he begins to lament over unrepentant cities. Now, keep in mind that as in the Old Testament, sometimes this was just a poetic way of pronouncing judgment.

When Isaiah is giving a lament over the fall of Moab or Jeremiah laments over the fall of Babylon, they're not really necessarily sad about it. But in any case, Jesus can be sad about it because we know how he weeps over Jerusalem and says, I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But unrepentant cities, he gives these woes against Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, which probably nobody outside of Galilee had heard of.

And he says these Galilean towns will be judged more strictly than Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. He says, Capernaum, have you been exalted to heaven? You will be thrust

down to Hades, to the realm of the dead. Now, that language is evoking Isaiah chapter 14, verses 11 and 12, where the king of Babylon tried to be a god and the spirits of the dead were mocking him.

This is like Capernaum, well, you've been exalted. You've had so many opportunities, but you will be thrust down to Hades because you will be judged according to the light that has been given to you. Jesus goes on in verses 25 to 30, and he speaks like divine wisdom.

He says these things have been hidden from the wise. The Pharisees didn't get it, most of them. The Sadducees didn't get it.

Most of the educated people didn't get it. Now, keep in mind, I am not against education. I mean, after all, I'm a professor.

I teach doctoral students as well as master's students. So, please keep in mind, I think education is good. But Proverbs also asks, why is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom? You have to have enough wisdom to know what to do with wisdom.

And the wisest thing of all, it seems to me, is to commit everything to God. When I was an atheist, I thought I was so smart. And when I found out I was wrong about that, I was wrong about the most important thing in the world, I realized my intellect led me astray.

Because it's the fear of the Lord that's the beginning of wisdom. And God knows everything. God has infinite knowledge and infinite wisdom.

Surely the wisest thing of all for me to do is to trust him. And if somebody doesn't agree with that, hopefully at least they can respect that, recognizing I have good reason to trust in an infinite God. Isn't that the wisest way of all? Jesus says these things have been hidden from the wise, but revealed to infants.

Remember how he said you have to become like a little child in Matthew 18? Remember Matthew chapters 6 and 7 where he talks about being dependent on our Father. We also see in chapter 11 and verse 27 that Jesus is the only mediator with the Father.

These things can be revealed only through Jesus and only in relation to Jesus. So, it's not just in John's Gospel, in John 14.6, it's not just Acts 4.12. Jesus is the only mediator with the Father here in this material that's in Matthew 11 and Luke chapter 10. Earlier, Ben Sirach in the book of Sirach says, come near me, get wisdom, accept wisdom's yoke, she provides great rest.

Well, yokes were normally pulled by animals or maybe if you were a very poor farmer, you could also carry a yoke. Yoke was often used negatively with regard to slavery, but sometimes it was used positively. Jewish teachers spoke of the yoke of the kingdom or the yoke of the Torah in a positive way.

But only God would speak of it and say of the Torah or the kingdom, this is my yoke. Or even the yoke of wisdom, this is my yoke, take it on you. Jesus here is being portrayed as divine.

And Jesus says, come to me and I'll give you rest. Just like in John's Gospel, he often says, come to me. Jesus offers rest.

And use of the language here of chapter 6 and verse 16 of the book of the prophet Jeremiah. God says, turn to the right way and find rest for your souls. Jesus says, come to me and I will give you rest, rest for your souls.

But Jesus' rest in this passage differs from the definition of rest that the Pharisees would have had. We can see that starting in the next chapter Jesus has conflicts with the Pharisees. They have one idea about the right way to keep the Sabbath.

And Jesus has a very different idea about what Sabbath rest means.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Matthew. This is session 11, Matthew 10-11.