

Lesson 7. Study Guide
For
The Gospel according to Matthew
A Torah for the Church
Fr. Lawrence Farley

Chapter 11

**Messengers from John the Baptist;
Jesus speaks on John**

Overview: When John was about to be killed by Herod he sent his disciples to Christ, intending that when they meet him, they would believe in him. Why did John send a question he already knew the answer? Was it that John was rather asking if he was destined to precede Jesus in his ministry into the nether world (below the earth's surface). The Fathers offer various interpretations of this passage. As the law announced Christ, predicted forgiveness of sins and promised the kingdom of heaven, so John accomplished all of this work. Jesus answered nothing about his divinity, but left his miracles as a testimony. Jesus defended John, signifying that John knew who Jesus was and had not faltered in his thinking. John had already borne witness to Christ and in so doing received more from Christ than he gave. John is described as a messenger or an angel. One who is angelic by his human nature becomes holy by the grace of God. Having said that he is greater than a prophet, Jesus signified in what way he is greater. John attested that the One to come who was born of a woman yet existed before a woman. Jesus said compared with all born of a woman, John is the greatest, but compared with those who partake of the Spirit in the kingdom of heaven, he will be found to be the least. John is called Elijah because he came in the spirit of goodness of Elijah and had the same grace and power of the Holy Spirit. The Jews accepted neither the vigor of John nor the freedom of Jesus.

Those looking for the truth, he says, accepted the leadership of John and Christ. It changed their lives. The Jews did not believe in Christ either through the ascetic life of John or through the submissive mode of life and providential citizenship of Christ the Lord himself. Hereafter, they could no longer accuse him for he fulfilled all his promises and did not leave behind them a shadow of unkindness or ingratitude. (Church Fathers: Chrysostom; Gregory the Great; Theodore of Mopsuestia; Anonymous; Jerome; Apollinaris; and Cyril of Alexandria)

1. According to Fr. Lawrence, John the Baptist's (JTB) question of Christ as the Messiah is due to his: (check)

anguish from incarceration a call to Jesus to begin his work as Messiah
John's faltering memory

2. Jesus' response to John is found in what prophecy below: (check)
 Isaiah 61:1 Joel 3:1-5 Isaiah 35:5
3. What does Jesus mean by the statement in v. 6: "And, blessed is the one who does not stumble over Me."
4. JTB is the _____ of Jesus and the one noted by the prophet _____ who said, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way for me....."
5. T or F. JTB is greater than all the prophets.
6. T or F. With JTB's ministry, the whole Old Testament comes to an end.
7. JTB is considered the forerunner of Jesus and like the prophet _____ quoted in Malachi 4:5. (Please note that your OSB does not have chapter 4 of Malachi so go elsewhere like the Revised Standard Version or New International Version.)
8. Who was originally the one to reappear from heaven and anoint the Messiah?
 Malachi Moses Samuel Elijah Abraham

On The Unbelieving Towns (11:20-24)

Overview: At Bethsaida and Capernaum mutes spoke, deaf heard, lame ran, dead came alive, yet these miracles did not produce strong faith or repentance in these towns! Similar miracles might have happened in Tyre and Sidon or even Sodom and Gomorrah if they had come to repent. Jesus spoke harshly so as to use every possible means to reclaim them to repentance. (Hilary; Chrysostom and Theodore of Heraclea)

Come to Me and Rest (11:25-30)

Overview: The Arians object because Christ renders thanks to the Father, he is less than the Father. To this the apostolic tradition answers that nothing prevents the consubstantial Son from accepting and praising his own Father. The Son here glorifies the Father, who had seen the trajectory of the Word from the Jews to the Gentiles. Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees what appears to be wisdom because of their clever use of words. He called the fishermen, unskilled in evil, to be the children to whom he revealed his Word. Only the Father knows his own Son, and only the divine child recognizes the eternal One by whom he has been begotten. Only God the Holy Spirit understands the deep things of God in the intercommunion of the Father and the Son. (Cyril of Alexandria; Origen; Theodore of Heraclea; Epiphanius the Latin and Chrysostom)

9. Christ curses certain Galilean cities for he spent much time there preaching and healing in his hometown of _____, for even _____ and _____ would have _____ and have been spared.
10. The Father has given _____ all the powers for _____ to those who _____ to him.
11. T or F. Only Jesus has the personal knowledge of the Father's fullness and Jesus as Messiah can give knowledge of the Father to his disciples.
12. The icon of Christ in our Church iconostas has the saying, "_____." Which is verse ___ in this Gospel passage.
13. Jesus says he will give rest and refreshment and give strength to those who are:
(check)
 the weary the burdened the hardworking
 the exasperated faithful
14. Jesus' yoke is _____ and his load is _____. If they learn from him they will find _____ and _____ for their _____.
15. Unlike the proud Pharisees, Christ is _____.

Commentary: It is only in Luke 10 that we find more than the 12 apostles of the Lord being sent out to do his work. Luke states:

"After these things the Lord appointed 70 others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.

Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest."

The list of all **The Seventy** is on page 818 of your OSB with the calendar date of their commemoration and the Bible references.

Please take the time now to read the "black box" presentation of **The Seventy** on page 165 of your OSB. Do some research and tell us now a bit about these important disciples:

Barnabas:

Titus:

Aristarchus:

Sostenes:

Tychicus:

Simeon son of Cleopas:

Aristobulus:

Gaius:

Timothy:

Handouts for discussion:

1. The Seven Signs of Christ's Divinity
2. The Five elements of Godliness
3. St. Irenaeus - Greatest theologian of the Second Century

On Holy Tradition: Even if the apostles had not left their writings to us, ought we not to follow the rule of tradition which they handed down to those to whom they committed the churches? Many barbarian peoples who believed in Christ follow this rule, having the message of their salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit without paper and ink."

St. Paul on Holy Tradition: "Stand fast and hold to the traditions you were taught by t word or epistle." 2 Thessalonians 2:15

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