LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 11 (Part 1) :1-15

Jesus Speaks About John

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

We will get started here this morning in our study as we continue going through the gospel according to Matthew, making our way into the 11th chapter now after finishing chapter 10 and dealing with a lot of issues related to persecution, what it means to be a follower of Christ. Jesus spent like the entire last chapter talking about counting the cost, what it means to follow him. In chapter 11 he goes on to, we're going to be speaking of John the Baptist quite a bit here, it says after Jesus had finished instructing his 12 disciples he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. When John heard in prison that, or what Christ was doing rather, he sent his disciples to ask him, are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else? Jesus replied, go back and report to John what you hear and see.

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me. As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?

If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in king's palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet?

Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet, this is the one about whom it is written, I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare the way before you. I tell you the truth, among those born of women, there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.

He who has ears, let him hear. Let's stop there. That's probably enough to take for one day, isn't it? All right, pray with me. Father God, open our hearts to your word.

We look to you, Father, to speak to us in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, there's probably a hundred things that we could pull from this passage, but I'm going to give you four. I'm going to lay out kind of four things, and I'll put them up on the screen. For those of you that are taking notes, maybe this will kind of help out a little bit, but we're going to be looking at four things that we're going to be considering through these first four, excuse me, 15 chapters.

And the first is John's question that he poses to Jesus through his disciples, and why he asked it, and what was behind it. Secondly, we're going to look at our Lord's response to John, what he says to John. Then we're going to ask the question, what did Jesus mean about that falling away thing he talked about on account of him? What was that all about? Fourthly, we're going to ask the question, who was John the Baptist, and just exactly how is he connected to the prophet Elijah?

So let's consider the first thing, and that is John's question. If you look again in verse 2, it tells us that when John heard in prison what Christ was doing, and that's a significant thing for us to remember. John was in prison. He was there because Herod had imprisoned him, simply because he was speaking out against King Herod's marriage to his brother's wife. His brother was still alive, and yet he took his brother's wife.

John knew that that was wrong, and that was committing adultery, and so he spoke out against the king, and because of that, Herod had him in prison. So here's John languishing in a dungeon. And while I really don't want to get into all of the speculative psychology that kind of surrounds the idea of how a person's perspective can change when they're imprisoned, I'm sure we could probably all agree that that's a big fat drag, and that it would in fact have an impact on your view of things, how you see life, and how you perceive what's going on. Let me back up. I actually want to reference John first.

You know, the Bible says that John came as a witness to the light, but that doesn't mean John was the light. He was not the light. In fact, he said, I am not the light, the true light that lights men is coming into the world. I'm just a witness to the light. But as a witness to the light, he didn't have full revelation of everything that the Bible had to say about what the Messiah was going to do.

He had a lot of revelation, but there were holes in some of his understanding, and there were things about the Messiah's role that frankly the Jews chose not to think about. Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come and suffer, but the Jews tended to downplay that and rather play up the idea of the Messiah coming as the political conqueror who was going to put down the enemies of Israel and free them from their bondage to slavery. Of course, they never really kind of conceived that Jesus was going to come set them free from slavery to sin. They pretty much always interpreted that on a socioeconomic level, and

that was kind of the way they thought. And Jesus went around saying things like, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and that just kind of fueled the fire because in their mind the kingdom of heaven meant political power.

It meant the kingdom of heaven as it is embodied in Israel with Messiah ruling and reigning on the throne, putting down the enemies of the Lord, setting the Jews free from their oppression, right? And that's the way they thought. I think that's the way John thought, too. And so here he is now expecting, you know, the Messiah to come as a political deliverer. He's the one who he knows has been called to go before the Messiah, herald his coming, probably figures it's just a matter of time before all this stuff starts to come down in such a way that, you know, Jesus takes over and he's going to be set free, and it's not happening.

It's just not happening. At least it's not happening the way he expected. And so he questions. I thought the kingdom of God was coming. So he gets to the point of even saying through his disciples to Jesus, listen, are you the one, or should we expect somebody else, you know?

You can hear the doubt. He's wondering. This whole idea of the kingdom of God and the misunderstanding they had about the kingdom of God fueled many questions that Jesus fielded during the time of his earthly ministry. In fact, there's a reference in the book of Luke. I'll put it on the screen for you.

In the 17th chapter where there's this conversation going on, it says, once having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, because they expected it to come in a way that they expected, Jesus replied, listen, he says, the kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, here it is or there it is, because the kingdom of God is within you. You know, I can only imagine what his hearers were thinking at a time like that, when he'd say things like, the kingdom of God is within you, and they're kind of like, what? The kingdom of God is within me? The kingdom of God? How can the kingdom of God be within me?

The kingdom of God is going to be basically embodied by Israel. The Bible says that Jesus, or not Jesus, they didn't, you know, they just thought in terms of the Messiah, but the Messiah is going to come, and he's going to rule and establish his kingdom, and there will be incredible signs and wonders, and he will put down the enemies, and that's what, you know, they knew that this was a historical event that was going to take place, and when Jesus would say, the kingdom of God is within you, that must have just tweaked him something fierce. Now, you and I know from our perspective of things what Jesus was talking about. The kingdom of God in his first coming begins in the heart of the believer, right? When we accept Jesus as our Savior, when we receive him, the kingdom, by the way, in order for there to be a kingdom, what do you have to have?

You have to have a king. And if there's a king, he probably has a throne. Well, when Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you, he's explaining the fact that during his first coming, the kingdom of God begins in the heart of every believer who receives Jesus as Savior, who enthrones him in their heart, makes him Lord of all, and the kingdom grows from there. And then in his second coming, we know that Jesus will return with the saints and will establish his throne upon the earth for that 1,000-year reign, which we call the millennial kingdom. If you have questions about that, you can go online and go back through my revelation study, and we talk a lot about that.

But you see, the Jews took the first coming and the second coming of Jesus and kind of intermixed them. And, you know, understandably so. It's tough sometimes to put them in their proper perspective. But they just decided they were going to kind of focus, you know, on the... I mean, who wouldn't want to focus on the big...

We're the victors part of it. You know what I mean? Why focus on the suffering servant part of the Messiah? Because that was a little bit weird anyway. It's like, that kind of...

That weirds me out. I mean, I'm talking like a Jew back then. When Jesus started talking about the fact that he was going to be turned over to the Gentiles and mistreated and finally killed, that caused a lot of people, in terms of their understanding of the Messiah, to say, well, then he can't possibly be the Messiah. It says the Messiah is going to reign forever. Okay, so you really threw a wrench in my understanding here.

You know, you really tweaked my theology. I don't get it now. And that's because they tended not to look at those prophetic passages about the suffering servant and focused instead on his second coming and so on and so forth. And what does that kind of teach us about human nature? It teaches us the fact that, you know, we are people who come with expectations about life.

You know? We go into marriage, we have an expectation of how it's going to be, and then, when it's not that way, you know, we get disappointed. We go to a new job, we have expectations of how it's going to be. And then, when it's not like that, we get disappointed. We have expectations in relationships, we have expectations in church, we have expectations, you know, in everything.

And these people had expectations related to the Messiah. John had expectations related to the Messiah. And when those expectations were not fulfilled in his understanding of, I think this is the way the thing ought to go, you know, he sends word with his disciples, Hey, listen, go ask him this, would you? Are you the one? Because it's not looking like it right now.

It doesn't look like this is the way things were supposed to go with the Messiah. So, should we hang out and just wait for somebody else? It's understandable, I suppose. But John was not exempt, as we see from some of the misunderstandings, which could potentially go with the Jews' interpretation of their own prophetic word related to the coming of Messiah. And nor are we exempt from misunderstandings and expectations and all that kind of thing.

And it's especially challenging when we have expectations that we feel the Lord ought to fulfill and those do not get fulfilled. You know, I mean, it's one thing to be let down by another person, but we who read the Bible and understand the word of God know that people are fallible and that, you know, they're going to let us down. People are going to let us down. It still hurts. It's still challenging.

Yeah, we've all been let down by other people. And what do you normally do when someone lets you down? Usually, you try to avoid them because it's, you know, it's uncomfortable. It's awkward to be around somebody who's let you down. And so, you just kind of choose to kind of back away a little bit.

Well, do you know that people do the same thing with God? When their expectations of something God, something they'd asked God for, prayed about, maybe even diligently waited on the Lord for or whatever, are not fulfilled. People tend to back away the same way they do with other relationships. And whether it's like, you know, this whole church thing, I think I'm just going to kind of give it a rest for a while. And praying and reading the Bible.

Yeah, I'm just going to take some time off. And you know, there's a lot of things in the world that we can get involved and distracted by to take up our time and energy and effort. And so forth. And just kind of let things go on. But you know, when we get disappointed by God, when we feel let down by God, can I just suggest to you people that that's a very, very dangerous thing to happen.

And we are walking on very dangerous ground at that point. Very thin ice, as they would say. Because I'm sure I won't surprise one single person in this room when I tell you that the enemy would just love to get his hands on your disappointment and your discouragement as it relates to an expectation that you had in the Lord that was not fulfilled in the way that you wanted it or prayed about it to be fulfilled. And it's important, Christians, that you don't allow your discouragement and your disappointment to grow in such a way that it becomes this huge stumbling block to your walk with Christ. So that probably begs the question, how ought we to handle our disappointments with God?

Well, I want to advance for you this morning three things that I think are very, very important to do. And again, for those of you that are taking notes, I'll put them up on the screen for you. But the first thing

I think we ought to do when we are dealing with disappointment and feeling let down by God is, number one, we need to remind ourselves that God loves us. Because, you see, the very first thing the enemy loves to do when we feel let down by God is to somehow corroborate what we're already being tempted to believe. And that is, God doesn't love you.

You see, he loves other people. And you hear about God loving other people, but that doesn't mean you. And somehow, some way, the enemy sows that kind of a thought process into our hearts in such a way that we actually, we probably wouldn't even verbalize it to anyone else, but we begin to believe we are singularly unloved by God. And it's at a time like that that you need to confront that idea, the temptation of that idea, whether it's still a temptation or whether you've grabbed onto it. You need to confront it with the Word of God, bathing your heart in the Scripture.

And let me just suggest one passage. For those of you taking notes, I think 1 Chronicles 16.34 is a great verse that says, Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, number one, and His love endures forever. You know, it is very, very possible for your mind to become so clouded in a time of disappointment and discouragement with God that you will begin to believe that He is not good and that He doesn't love you. And you begin to believe all kinds of other things. But you know, we have to live by faith.

We're called to live by faith, are we not? You know, does the Bible ever say live by feelings? Does the Bible ever say live according to your circumstances? No, it says live by faith. The righteous shall live by faith.

That means that what's going on out here is not the basis by which I'm going to judge God and His goodness and His love for me. That is not going to be the thing. I am going to believe that He is good and that He loves me. Well, that's hard when life is crying out. When life is crying out at that particular moment, like that is not the case.

Many of you who are on Calvary Mail or Facebook or whatever know that we have been putting out a lot of announcements, news flashes, whatever, the last several weeks about our brother Saeed, who is an Iranian-born man who also has dual citizenship with the United States. He's married to a lovely woman named Naghmeh, who was raised in Boise, actually, but is also an Iranian-born individual. And Saeed was arrested a number of months ago in Iran for being a Christian and doing what Christians do, which is sharing the light of Christ. And he was charged with basically subverting the government and put in prison and tortured and beaten. He finally came to a place where he had a trial, a hearing.

He and his attorney were allowed to come to the first day of the hearing. The hearing went on for days after that. He and his attorney were not allowed to come to those additional dates where witness after witness came forward. to testify against him. We've been praying diligently.

Finally, and some news services have been carrying this, some have been totally quiet on it. Fox News has been one of the best with getting the information out, but finally, this last week, the White House spokesman came out and condemned Saeed's imprisonment and called for his release. Finally, the State Department made a statement about Saeed and his incarceration in Iran and called for the Iranians to release him. Of course, that doesn't mean a lot in Iran. We have zero diplomatic relations with Iran and haven't since 1979.

Those of you who are old enough to remember what happened back then know exactly why, or those who know your history. But even a nation who does have diplomatic relations, Brazil came out and condemned the incarceration of Saeed and called for his release. Well, just this morning, the news came out that he had been sentenced to eight years in prison, in this same prison where they've been holding him, which is famous for people disappearing at the most, being beaten at the very least. And I can only imagine what Nagmeh is feeling right now, or maybe what she's being tempted at times to feel, and that is let down. The whole church, Calvary Chapel, Boise, came together and filled their auditorium with people crying out to God, praying for this man's release.

And to be sure, the story isn't over yet, and we're not losing hope related to this thing. This story is not finished by any means, and we still believe that the Lord can intervene and do so powerfully. But that doesn't mean that Saeed, who's sitting in a prison cell in Iran, isn't feeling some of the same sorts of things that John the Baptist was struggling with related to just feeling let down, and doesn't mean that Nagmeh and her two small children aren't aching with the loss of Saeed. And especially after all that prayer, and it's just so easy for those words, God loves you, to just fall on deaf ears, and you stop, you just kind of stop hearing it. But boy, that's a time, you know, we've got to go back to the Word.

We have to go back to the Word and put our faith in the Word of God and not in our circumstances. Because the righteous do not live by circumstances, they live by faith. The second thing that we have to recognize when we're going through a time when we feel let down by God is that God's wisdom is far superior to our own. It exceeds our own ability to see the situation. See, the reason we feel let down, you guys, is because we're trying to figure it out.

And we're missing pieces of the puzzle. Do you know, it's the most natural thing in the world when we face a terrible situation, to try to figure it out to try to make some sense of it. What do you hear on the

news? After these terrible, horrible shootings take place around the country in various places? What do you hear people say on the news?

What do they say? They go, it just doesn't make sense. So what are they telling you? They're telling you that we have a gravitational pull in our hearts to try to put pieces together and make sense of it. And often, we can't.

And most certainly, when God is doing things in our lives that we don't get, we're not going to be able to put it together in some kind of a rational, reasonable, understandable way that we can look at and go, Oh, I see what God is doing. I mean, that's not to say God can't reveal things like that. But boy, I tell you, in my history with walking with the Lord, he usually doesn't. And that is the time that you and I have to go back to the word and remember from Isaiah 55. And I love this verse.

God says, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. You know, we've brought up that verse several different times, but it's one of those things you have to keep coming back to. When I am feeling let down by God, I have to realize, but you know what, God? I've been praying here about this thing, and I've been giving you all kinds of advice on what I think you should do. But I have to remember at the end of the day, that my thoughts aren't your thoughts, vice versa.

Your ways aren't my ways. And I just have to trust you. And there's another part of this that I think is just as important. There's another passage from the Proverbs. It's Proverbs 3.5.

It says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And look at the second part. Lean not on your own understanding. If I had to be completely honest with you today, and pinpoint one single verse in the Bible that I disobey the most, it's this one. I am constantly trying to lean on my understanding.

And that means just like you, I'm trying to figure it out and make sense of it. And I can't. And when I think I do, I just get myself into deeper trouble. And I end up worrying more. So God's word is replete with these kinds of statements that counsel you and I.

Don't do this. Don't go where you can't go intellectually. And don't get yourself tied up in knots. And don't let that temptation to feel let down overwhelm you. Because you just you don't know what God's up to.

And neither do I. At least not exactly how he's going about it. We do know what the end result is, though. And that's the third thing that we need to remember. We need to deal with this situation by

acknowledging that God has promised to work good out of the circumstances and challenges and difficult situations in our life.

We got to remember that, you know, you have to learn to say to the Lord in the midst of your trials, God, I believe you are going to bring good out of this situation. I believe you are going to bring glory to your name out of this situation. You guys know what verse I'm going to put down here. Romans 828. We know that in all things, God works right for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose.

I love the way this verse begins, because it begins with an affirmation. We know, we know. What do we know? We know that God, in all things, God works for the good. You know why I love that verse?

Because I have to go back and read it and ask myself, do I know that? I mean, do I really know that? Or do I say I know it, but when push comes to shove, I really don't believe it. Well, trials have a way of showing us up for who we really are, don't they? They have a way of showing our Christianity for what it really is.

And sometimes we realize when we go through a hard situation, there's all these wonderful promises in God's word that I could sit and quote and I learned them back when I was a kid or whatever. And I know him and I've got him underlined in my Bible. But you know what? I really don't believe him. Because my response to this situation tells me otherwise.

And I need to come back to God and say, Lord, forgive me for not putting my faith in your word. Forgive me for believing the difficulty of my circumstances over and above your word. Forgive me for leaning on my own understanding. Forgive me for not believing that you love me and that you're good. Forgive me Lord for not really truly trusting that you're going to bring good things out of this situation.

Forgive me for that. And now I'm going to bathe my heart in the word of God and allow that to just wash over the stuff that's in my heart, you know, that tries to get me to believe things that are contrary to the word of God. And then Jesus responds to John's question. Look with me again in verse four. Jesus replied, go back and report to John what you hear and see.

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the good news is preached to the poor. Why is Jesus telling them to go back and tell John those things? Because that's what was prophesied. He's reminding John of what else the prophecies had to say about what Messiah would come and do. Remember, John was being rather selective, like a lot of other Jews were, about the coming of Messiah and what that would mean.

And again, they focused on the socio-political aspects of it, really to the exclusion of a lot else. And so Jesus is just gently saying to John's disciples and to John, okay, go back and Tell John this, it's happening, dude. It's happening the way God's Word said it was going to happen. The book of Isaiah outlines that the Messiah would come and do all those things. He would raise the dead, the lame would walk, the deaf would hear, the mute would speak, and so forth and so on, and the lepers would be cleansed, and the good news would be proclaimed.

The Messiah was to come and do all those things according to Isaiah, and it was happening. And then Jesus makes this interesting statement, which has been called the misplaced beatitude in verse 6. And it says, blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me. You know, I have looked at that verse in the past, and I've got to tell you, I've scratched my head in wonder. It's like, what in the world is Jesus saying in this verse?

Well, one of the problems is, frankly, the NIV does not do a good job rendering this verse. I much prefer the New American Standard Bible, which renders it somewhat differently, and it goes like this, and blessed is he who does not take offense at me. Some of you who might have a different translation on your lap will read something similar to that. Here's the thing. The words take offense that you see there in the NASB, and the NIV's rendering fall away, believe it or not, come from a single Greek word, and it means to run into or stumble over something that was in your path.

Kind of like I ran into our bathroom scale this morning on the way to the bathroom before the lights came on. A rather painful experience. But yes, it can refer to things that we stumble over that were in our path that we don't see, but it can also refer to things we stumble over that we do see. And what I mean by that is that there are times that Jesus rains on our parade, for lack of a better term, in such a way that we're offended, or he says something that offends us. He can say things, you know, Jesus offended people all the time.

He would say things like, I am the way and the only way. No man comes to the Father except by me. People still find that offensive. And people who do, people who are offended by that will turn away from Jesus, and they'll say, well, you know, that's ridiculous. That's offensive for you to limit it just to you.

Now, that would be probably an unbeliever who would turn away, and would be offended and would stumble over something that he ran into in terms of Jesus. But do you know that Christians can be offended by Jesus, too? We can be offended. We can be walking along, having a great old time with Jesus, and suddenly he convicts us, through his Holy Spirit, of something in our life that we need to get rid of, as it relates to sin or some behavior that's damaging or detrimental in our lives. And we're offended that he

would have the audacity to say things to me, like, unless you are willing to take up your cross and follow me, you're not worthy of me.

Unless you love me more than father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, you are not worthy of me. That's offensive, Jesus. How could you say such a thing? Jesus says, hey, blessed are they who are not offended at me, who don't stumble over the things that I say, and who understand the implications of who I am, and so forth, and the things that I do say. You know, I'll never forget, a number of years ago, back when we were meeting in the small sanctuary on Sunday mornings, I had a guy come up to me after service, and good-looking guy, youngish, probably early 20s, and he dressed well, and he was very open, and he wasn't shy about coming and introducing himself.

I'd never met him before. In fact, I don't think I'd ever seen him in church before. But I was talking that Sunday about the cost of following Jesus, and how if you're a believer, you might not always be Mr. Popularity, and or Mr. Successful, as to how the world might determine success.

And he came up to me, and I could tell by his demeanor, that he wanted very much to be popular and successful. And I think he was. I think he was actually good at those things. Great personality, one of those guys that probably would have got a job really easy, just looks like a hard-working, clean-cut, I'm-here-to-do-the-job kind of a guy, you know, sort of a thing. And he impressed me from that standpoint, but he was troubled, you see, by what he heard in the Scripture about Jesus.

And he was like, so, what's that all about anyway? I was like, hey, well, you know, if you're going to be a follower of Jesus, you've just got to remember that the world hated him. They hated him, and they wanted to be rid of him, and they ultimately crucified him. So is that the kind of guy you want to follow, because we're supposed to emulate his life, and if we do, we're going to carry some of that same stigma, and even persecution, that Jesus... I mean, look at Saeed.

He's in prison right now because he's a believer. Well, that's what it means to live for Christ. In certain countries in the world, you could go to prison and even lose your life for that. And I was simply bringing that out, like we've been doing in these passages, and I remember... Have you ever watched someone's countenance fall?

I mean, I could practically hear his countenance fall. It's like a thud when it hit the floor, because it was like for the very first time he realized this Jesus character might not be the guy I'm looking for, because I'm not so sure he follows where I want to go in life, because I want to be popular, and I want to make a lot of money. I mean, this guy was not shy about telling me how much money he wanted to make by the

time he was 30 years old. Okay, but just understand something. If you're going to follow Jesus, that means dying to self.

That means taking up your cross and saying, Jesus, I'll go where you want me to go. I'll do what you want me to do. Remember, when we start to love things too much, Jesus might just say something to us like he said to that rich young ruler, tell you what, buddy, why don't you take all that money that your daddy saved up and that you inherited, and why don't you just give it to the poor and then come follow me? And it says he went away sad, doesn't it? Because he had great wealth.

You see, he came up against Jesus, and something that Jesus said offended him to the point where, I can't do that. And that's what Jesus is saying here as it relates to John's question. Be careful, John. You're on dicey ground here. Because at the point where you begin to feel let down and disappointed by God, at the point that you begin to say, you know what, this just isn't living up to my expectations, at the point where you say, I don't really like where this is going, where this is leading.

I signed up to be the messenger, didn't sign up for prison time. I mean, that just wasn't on my radar. This isn't going the way I thought it was supposed to. And I'm not totally sure that you are faithful and so forth. It's a serious place to be.

The last thing that we're going to look at here in just the few minutes that we have left, is this statement concerning John. I like how Jesus began to talk to the people about John, and he began to ask them questions, saying, what did you go out in the desert to see? Did you go out to see a reed swayed by the wind? And again, that means somebody who just flows with popular opinion or political pressure. No, that wasn't John.

John was a pretty strong man. So what did you go out to see? Did you go out to see a man dressed in fine clothes? No, wait a minute. You don't find people with fine clothes living out in the wilderness.

You find them in palaces. So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yeah. Yeah, in fact, more than a prophet.

And then he does something interesting. Jesus says, this is the one of whom it is said, I will send my messenger ahead of you. Do you know that he's quoting Malachi? If you look in your Bible, there should be a little footnote there saying that that is taken from Malachi chapter 3. Malachi is the one who prophesied John's coming.

And he said, I will send my messenger ahead of you. But in the next chapter of Malachi, Malachi said something else about a forerunner of Christ. I'll put it on the screen for you. Malachi chapter 4, look at this. God says, see, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.

What is he going to do? He's going to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers or else I will come and strike the land with a curse. I want you to pay close attention to that last statement. That verse that turning the hearts of the fathers to the children hearts of the children of the fathers, okay Why is that important because that is almost the same? verbiage That the angel Gabriel used when he appeared to John's Father to tell him he was going to have a son in Luke chapter 1 this is what he it says this is the angel Gabriel speaking He says many of the people of Israel Will he bring back to the Lord their God and he will go on Before the Lord who look at this in the spirit and power of Elijah to do what to turn the hearts of the fathers?

to their children and The disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous to make ready a people prepared for the Lord now It's not verbatim, but it's close The angel Gabriel is almost quoting Malachi Which says what I will send Elijah All right now What did Jesus say to his disciples in the passage that we're studying here in in in Matthew chapter 11? What did he say? He said and if you are willing to accept it He is The Elijah Who is to come What which is interesting isn't it is he saying that John is Elijah Well Not really remember that Gabriel said to Zachariah John's father your son is going to go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah Jesus said if you're willing to accept it. He is the Elijah. He didn't say if you're willing to accept it He is Elijah Necessarily so you know there's there's there's some squeaky room there, right?

Well, then we have the other issue What did John say about himself? You know when John started his ministry. They started coming to him and saying who are you anyway and We actually read about it in John chapter 1 And it says he did not fail to confess, but confess freely I am NOT the Christ and then they asked him well, then who are you for heaven's sake are you Elijah? And he said I am NOT That's interesting But let's muddy the water a little further shall we later on in this very gospel that we're studying in Matthew chapter 17 It's going to say this the disciples asked him the question came up again Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first and that means before the Messiah Look at this look what Jesus says Jesus replied to be sure Elijah comes and will future tense Restore all things, but I tell you Elijah has already come and they did not recognize him But have done to him everything they wished in the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist So what are you gonna believe so is is John Elijah is John the Baptist Elijah well It's pretty obvious that he fulfilled at least in part Let's go this far at least in part the prophecies about the coming of Elijah Why would we begin to think that Elijah is still coming? Why?

Why wouldn't we just leave it there and just say you know what John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecies of the coming of Elijah? Gabriel said it Jesus said it. Why should we be left with any other opinion? Well, it's because we go back to Malachi 4 and it says see I will send you the prophet Elijah. Look at this when?

before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord that description is his second coming not his first coming When Jesus came it was not the great and dreadful day of the Lord. It was the day of salvation It was the day of mercy and grace in the second coming It will be the great and dreadful day of the Lord and by the way elsewhere In Malachi he speaks of that day as a day when fire will burn up everything And he says I will send you the prophet Elijah in that day I Believe that this is one of the many examples in the scripture of what we call dual prophecy we see this frankly a lot throughout the Old Testament where there is a near fulfillment of the word and a distant Fulfillment of a prophetic word John the Baptist fulfilled in part the coming of Elijah I believe that God will also send the prophet Elijah who by the way never experienced physical death but was simply taken up to be with the Lord and Many people believe that that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses who come during the tribulation period to to testify and and so forth but and and that's conjecture but it Seems that Elijah is still yet to come in body You