

# Echoes of Scripture

## Proper 9a – Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

### Summary of Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

This passage comes in three parts, separated by a section where Jesus criticizes the hometown people of the disciples for their lack of repentance and response despite the incredible ministry that has taken place among them. In the first part (vs. 16-19), Jesus likens “this generation” to childish bickerers who spend their days heaping unreasonable expectations on others and then criticizing them for not living up to them. In the second part (vs. 25-27), Jesus prays a prayer of thanksgiving that God has shown the truth to the little ones, but has hidden it from the “wise and intelligent”. Then Jesus mentions the authority he has been given and how God can only be known by those whom he chooses to reveal him. In the third part (vs. 28-30), Jesus brings comfort to those who are suffering from the burden or weight of those who misunderstand the Torah (God’s will and God’s ways) and have made the life of faith such a difficult burden.

### Suggested Course of Study

- Read Matthew 23:1-39 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”
- Read Matthew 11:1-30

### Immediate Context

Matthew 10:1-4 The Twelve Apostles  
 Matthew 10:5-15 The Mission of the Twelve  
 Matthew 10:16-23 The Difficulties  
 Matthew 10:24-25 Being Maligned Like Christ  
 Matthew 10:26-33 Whom to Fear  
 Matthew 10:34-39 Not Peace, but a Sword  
 Matthew 10:40-42 Welcome & Rewards  
 Matthew 11:1-15 Discussing John the Baptist  
**Matthew 11:16-19 Criticisms and Complaints**  
 Matthew 11:20-24 Woes to Unrepentant Cities

**Matthew 11:25-30 Jesus Thanks His Father**  
 Matthew 12:1-8 Plucking Grain on Sabbath  
 Matthew 12:9-14 Man with Withered Hand  
 Matthew 12:15-21 God’s Chosen Servant  
 Matthew 12:22-32 Jesus and Beelzebul  
 Matthew 12:33-37 A Tree and Its Fruit  
 Matthew 12:38-42 The Sign of Jonah  
 Matthew 12:43-45 The Unclean Spirit  
 Matthew 12:46-50 True Kindred of Jesus  
 Matthew 13:1-23 Parable of the Sower

### The Text<sup>i</sup>

#### MATTHEW 11:16–19 (NRSV)

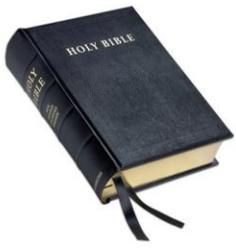
<sup>16</sup> “But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, <sup>17</sup> ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

<sup>18</sup> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup> the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”<sup>h</sup>

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “I thank<sup>i</sup> you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your

<sup>h</sup> Other ancient authorities read *children*

<sup>i</sup> Or *praise*



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gracious will.<sup>j 27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

## Questions/Issues

**The Critical Church.** When the church gets too concerned about condemning others, pointing fingers, or calling one another names, the church has gotten off track. This is the complaint of Jesus against “this generation” in this text. Is it that Jesus is encouraging us to base our judgments on the fruit of their labor, rather than whether or not they hold fast to the beliefs and traditions we hold dear?

This raises the questions: How do we deal with those who don’t think like us or act like us in the church? How are we called to respond? What are we called to do? How can we focus our attention on the good things that unite us in mission and ministry rather those things that divide us? Which things are essential

Must we “yoke” ourselves *only* to those who “dance, when we play the flute” or “mourn, when we weap”; those who walk lockstep with us in all things (those whose beliefs are the same as ours; those whose faith and practices are the same as ours)? Or can we partner with others despite our differences? Can we recognize and affirm and affirm their place in God’s kingdom (their service to God) while holding fast to our own beliefs?

**The Hidden God/Hardened Hearts.** When Jesus prays and says “*I thank/praise you... because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; for such was your gracious will*”, I think we are rightly disturbed and should question why. Why does God hide God’s self from some and not others? Why does God reveal God’s self to some and not others? Why do we read in the scriptures that God hardens people’s hearts? And what are the implications of this?

## Key Words

**THIS GENERATION** – Whenever the phrase “this generation” appears in Matthew’s gospel, the context is one of condemnation or judgment.

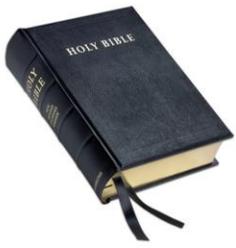
Matthew 12:41–45 <sup>41</sup> *The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!* <sup>42</sup> *The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!* <sup>43</sup> *“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. <sup>44</sup> Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup> Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with **this evil generation.**”*

Matthew 23:36 <sup>36</sup> *Truly I tell you, all this will come upon **this generation.***

Matthew 24:34 <sup>34</sup> *Truly I tell you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things have taken place.*

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<sup>j</sup> Or for so it was well-pleasing in your sight



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**LIKE CHILDREN SITTING IN THE MARKETPLACES AND CALLING TO ONE ANOTHER** – The imagery here is of kids bickering or arguing with one another; complaining about the behavior of the others who are not in step with them (those who are not “on the same page”). This generation is like a group of children who are too concerned about bickering with one another; chastising one another; complaining about one another; pointing fingers at one another and calling one another names. Jesus will use John the Baptist and himself as examples of their condemnatory name calling.

**JOHN CAME NEITHER EATING NOR DRINKING AND THEY SAY, ‘HE HAS A DEMON’** – Just prior to our passage, Jesus had spoken with the disciples of John the Baptist and then to the crowds about John. He states clearly that John the Baptist is Elijah (see Matthew 11:14)! In Matthew 3, the description of John (Matthew 3:1-6) is similar to the description of Elijah (see 2 Kings 1:7-8; hairy with a leather belt). By Jesus’ day, there was a messianic expectation that Elijah would return to prepare the way for the Messiah. This expectation comes out of what we read at the end of the book of Malachi; the last book of our Old Testament (see below; especially Malachi 4:5). The promise of the return of Elijah is how our Old Testament ends.

What Jesus is complaining about here is how many people refused to accept John the Baptist because he was so straight-laced (neither eating nor drinking); he “rubbed them the wrong way”. He was too religiously “conservative” in their eyes and so they said he was crazy; he had a “demon”.

Matthew 3:1-6 <sup>1</sup> In those days **John the Baptist** appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” <sup>4</sup> Now **John** wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

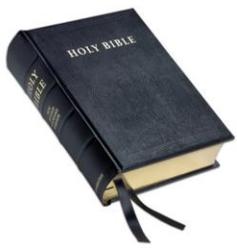
Matthew 4:12 Now when Jesus heard that **John** had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.

Matthew 11:1–15 <sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities. <sup>2</sup> When **John** heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, “Go and tell **John** what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” <sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about **John**: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What then did you go out to see? **A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.** <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ <sup>11</sup> Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than **John the Baptist**; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> From the days of **John the Baptist** until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until **John** came; <sup>14</sup> and if you are willing to accept it, **he is Elijah who is to come.** <sup>15</sup> Let anyone with ears listen!

Malachi 4:1–6 <sup>1</sup> See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup> But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. <sup>3</sup> And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>4</sup> Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> **Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.** <sup>6</sup> He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

2 Kings 1:7–8 <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “What sort of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” <sup>8</sup> They answered him, “A hairy man, with a leather belt around his waist.” He said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

**THE SON OF MAN CAME EATING AND DRINKING; A FRIEND OF TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS!** – If the complaint was that John was too religiously conservative (neither eating nor drinking), then the complaint against Jesus was that he was too religiously liberal (he like to eat and drink; he liked to “party”; and he hung



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out with the wrong kind of people; “a friend of tax collectors and sinners”). Jesus didn’t follow their rules or traditions in the manner they expected and so they criticized him.

“**Son of Man**” is a term used in Hebrew or Aramaic that simply means “human being”. However, by Jesus’ day, it had taken on new meaning as a messianic promise, particularly in light of the vision of judgment found in Daniel 7:9-14 where one like a human being (one like a son of man) is coming with the clouds of heaven and receives vindication after a period of suffering; he receives everlasting dominion and glory and kingship of all peoples, nations, and languages (see below). Jesus used this phrase about himself not only to hint at his coming suffering, but also his vindication, God-given authority, and glorification.

Daniel 7:9–14<sup>9</sup> *As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One<sup>d</sup> took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire.<sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.<sup>11</sup> I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.<sup>12</sup> As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.<sup>13</sup> As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like **a human being<sup>e</sup>** coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One<sup>f</sup> and was presented before him.<sup>14</sup> To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.*

**THEY SAY, ‘LOOK, A GLUTTON AND A DRUNKARD’** – At first, calling Jesus a glutton and a drunkard might appear to be a simple insult. But the background behind this phrase shows that it was a much more serious accusation. In Deuteronomy, this phrase appears in a section that talks about what to do with a rebellious child; the child is to be stoned to death in order to purge the “evil” from the midst of the community.

Deuteronomy 21:18–21<sup>18</sup> *If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father and mother, who does not heed them when they discipline him,<sup>19</sup> then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the gate of that place.<sup>20</sup> They shall say to the elders of his town, “This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is **a glutton and a drunkard.**”<sup>21</sup> Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death. So you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel will hear, and be afraid.*

**YET WISDOM IS VINDICATED BY HER DEEDS** – καὶ ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων<sup>1</sup> αὐτῆς. ἐδικαιώθη is the aorist passive indicative, third person singular from δικαιόω meaning “to justify, to vindicate”. ἔργων is normally translated as “works, deeds”. Another possible translation is “*Yet wisdom is justified by her works*”.

This proverb by Jesus means the same thing as what we hear him say in Matthew 7:16, 20 - *You will know them by their fruits.* However the wisdom Jesus is talking about here is himself. He is the personification of wisdom (see the connection between his deeds and wisdom below in Matthew 12:38-42, 13:54-58). He is encouraging his critics to take a look at the effects of his ministry. The “fruits” of his labor will prove his case. This is what Jesus was saying to John’s disciples (just prior to our passage) when they approached him asking “*Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?*” (Matthew 11:3). Jesus replied “*Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.*” (Matthew 11:4-6).

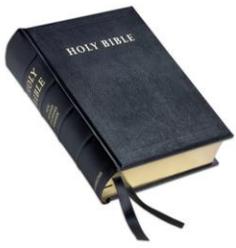
Matthew 12:38–42<sup>38</sup> *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”<sup>39</sup> But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet*

<sup>d</sup> Aram an Ancient of Days

<sup>e</sup> Aram one like a son of man

<sup>f</sup> Aram the Ancient of Days

<sup>1</sup> Other ancient authorities have the word τέκνων for “children”



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Jonah. <sup>40</sup> For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! <sup>42</sup> The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the **wisdom** of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

Matthew 13:54–58 <sup>54</sup> He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, “Where did this man get this **wisdom** and these deeds of power? <sup>55</sup> Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?” <sup>57</sup> And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house.” <sup>58</sup> And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

The word for wisdom in Greek is *sophia* σοφία. In Hebrew it is *hokma* חָכְמָה. This word occurs over 300 times in the Old Testament; 183 times in Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Here is a brief sampling:

Deuteronomy 4:6 <sup>6</sup> You must observe them diligently, for this will show your **wisdom** and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a **wise** and discerning people!”

Deuteronomy 34:9 <sup>9</sup> Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of **wisdom**, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Job 12:13 <sup>13</sup> With God are **wisdom** and strength; he has counsel and understanding.

Job 13:5 <sup>5</sup> If you would only keep silent, that would be your **wisdom**!

Job 33:33 <sup>33</sup> If not, listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you **wisdom**.”

Psalms 37:30 <sup>30</sup> The mouths of the righteous utter **wisdom**, and their tongues speak justice.

Psalms 51:6 <sup>6</sup> You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me **wisdom** in my secret heart.

Psalms 104:24 <sup>24</sup> O Lord, how manifold are your works! In **wisdom** you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Psalms 111:10 <sup>10</sup> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of **wisdom**; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Isaiah 11:2 <sup>2</sup> The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of **wisdom** and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah 28:29 <sup>29</sup> This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in **wisdom**.

Isaiah 29:14 <sup>14</sup> so I will again do amazing things with this people, shocking and amazing. The **wisdom** of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden.

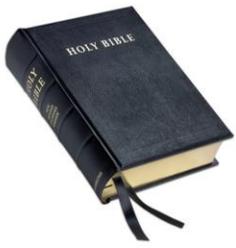
Isaiah 47:10 <sup>10</sup> You felt secure in your wickedness; you said, “No one sees me.” Your **wisdom** and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, “I am, and there is no one besides me.”

Jeremiah 8:9 <sup>9</sup> The **wise** shall be put to shame, they shall be dismayed and taken; since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what **wisdom** is in them?

Jeremiah 9:23 <sup>23</sup> Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their **wisdom**, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth;

**I THANK YOU, FATHER, LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH** – Having just criticized the disciples’ hometowns for not having repented (despite the ministry and works done in their presence) and saying that these cities will be judged more harshly for their lack of faith (than other cities who were known for their “wickedness”), Jesus now prays a prayer of thanksgiving and praise that it was God’s will or “pleasing in God’s sight” that the “wise and intelligent” don’t respond appropriately to his teachings and miracles.

**YOU HAVE HIDDEN THESE THINGS FROM THE WISE AND THE INTELLIGENT** – We can assume that the “wise and intelligent” in this prayer refer to those who have rejected Jesus with a certain arrogance and self-



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sufficiency because of their supposed understanding of God and God's ways. They are unreceptive to Jesus' teachings and ways of living faithfully to God. And this causes them to question the ultimate source of his works; whether or not these are the works of God.

The prophets spoke of this in Isaiah 29:14 and Jeremiah 8:9 (see above). And yet Jesus understood that he himself personifies that which was spoken in Isaiah 11.

Who or what is the source of this "hardness of heart"? If it is God (as some scriptures indicate), this is disturbing and rightfully raises some questions for us.

Consider this passage in Matthew 13 amidst Jesus' telling of the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:10–16 <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup> He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' <sup>14</sup> With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: 'You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. <sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn — and I would heal them.' <sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

Mark 6:52 <sup>52</sup> for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

John 12:40 <sup>40</sup> "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn — and I would heal them."

To explore this theme further, read three chapters from Paul's letter to the Romans, Romans 9-11. Then consider the following passages:

Exodus 4:21 <sup>21</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

Exodus 7:3 <sup>3</sup> But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 8:15 <sup>15</sup> But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said.

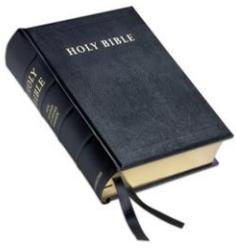
Exodus 11:10 <sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Isaiah 6:8–13 <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" <sup>9</sup> And he said, "Go and say to this people: 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.' <sup>10</sup> Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed." <sup>11</sup> Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; <sup>12</sup> until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. <sup>13</sup> Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

Isaiah 53:1 <sup>1</sup> Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Isaiah 63:15–19 <sup>15</sup> Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and glorious habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The yearning of your heart and your compassion? They are withheld from me. <sup>16</sup> For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our father; our Redeemer from of old is your name. <sup>17</sup> Why, O Lord, do you make us stray from your ways and harden our heart, so that we do not fear you? Turn back for the sake of your servants, for the sake of the tribes that are your heritage. <sup>18</sup> Your holy people took possession for a little while; but now our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary. <sup>19</sup> We have long been like those whom you do not rule, like those not called by your name.

Romans 1:24–28 <sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,



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who is blessed forever! Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, <sup>27</sup> and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done.

Romans 9:14–24 <sup>14</sup> What then are we to say? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" <sup>20</sup> But who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God? Will what is molded say to the one who molds it, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one object for special use and another for ordinary use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction; <sup>23</sup> and what if he has done so in order to make known the riches of his glory for the objects of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— <sup>24</sup> including us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

Romans 11:8 <sup>8</sup> as it is written, "God gave them a sluggish spirit, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."

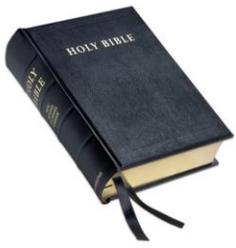
Ephesians 4:18 <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 <sup>1</sup> As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, <sup>2</sup> not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. <sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. <sup>4</sup> He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. <sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? <sup>6</sup> And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. <sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. <sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. <sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, <sup>10</sup> and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. <sup>11</sup> For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, <sup>12</sup> so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

Hebrews 3:7–19 <sup>7</sup> Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> where your ancestors put me to the test, though they had seen my works <sup>10</sup> for forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.' <sup>11</sup> As in my anger I swore, 'They will not enter my rest.'" <sup>12</sup> Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup> As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." <sup>16</sup> Now who were they who heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? <sup>17</sup> But with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

**AND HAVE REVEALED THEM TO INFANTS** – νήπιος meaning "a small child"; but here either in the sense of more simple people or people who aren't full of themselves. It is the contrast to the wise and intelligent (or those who think they are wise and intelligent). The apostle Paul uses it in Romans in the same sense that Jesus uses it here when he says:

Romans 2:17–24 <sup>17</sup> But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, <sup>19</sup> and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> **a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children**, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, <sup>21</sup> you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You that forbid adultery,



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*do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples?<sup>23</sup> You that boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?<sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”*

Paul also uses it in 1 Corinthians when he says:

1 Corinthians 13:11 <sup>11</sup> *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.*

This same word appears in Matthew 21:16 where Jesus quotes Psalm 8:2.

Matthew 21:16 <sup>16</sup> *and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?’”*

Psalm 8:1–2 <sup>1</sup> *O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup> Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.*

Many of those on the margins or fringes of society (tax-collectors, sinners, the sick, the poor, the blind and the lame) accepted Jesus and responded with great faith while many of the rich and religious elite (and those influenced by them) rejected him. Richard Donovan points out that this was a self-perpetuating polarity. “The more that Jesus appeals to the rejected of society, the more that society-people reject Jesus.”

He also points out, however, that there were several exceptions to this: Nicodemus (John 3), Joseph of Arimathea (John 27:57-60), Gamaliel (Acts 5), and Saul (Acts 23:6; 26:5).

**FOR SUCH WAS YOUR GRACIOUS WILL** – The phrase in Greek reads *ὅτι οὕτως εὐδοκία ἐγένετο ἔμπροσθέν σου* which should be translated as *“for so it was well-pleasing in your sight”*. It was pleasing in God’s sight that the “top dogs” would be blind to Jesus while the “bottom of the barrel” would see perfectly and joyfully respond with faith, hope and love.

**ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN HANDED OVER TO ME BY MY FATHER** – The verb *παρεδόθη* is made up of the prefix *παρα* (“to the side of” or “over to”) and the root verb *διδωμι* (“to give”) meaning “to hand over”. Most of the time the phrase *handed over* appears in Matthew’s gospel to refer to Jesus or his disciples being handed over to suffer and/or die (see Matthew 10:17-19; 20:18-19, 24:9; 26:2; 27:2, 18, 26). However, it is also used in the parable of the talents to refer to things God has given us; things with which God has entrusted us (see Matthew 25:14-30). Here, as there, it has the sense of Jesus being given “authority” over “all things” by the “Lord of heaven and earth” to whom Jesus has just prayed.

The issue of Jesus’ authority appears frequently in Matthew especially within the context of Jesus disputes with the religious leaders and their question as to his identity and the source of his power and teachings. They want to know who he is and who gave him the authority to teach what he teaches and do the things he does.

Matthew 7:29 *for he taught them as one having **authority**, and not as their scribes.*

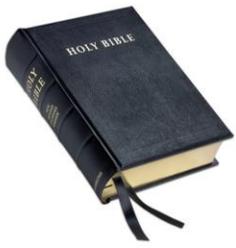
Matthew 9:6 *But so that you may know that the Son of Man has **authority** on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.”*

Matthew 9:8 *When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such **authority** to human beings.*

Matthew 10:1 *Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them **authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.*

Matthew 21:23 *When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what **authority** are you doing these things, and who gave you this **authority**?”*

Matthew 21:24 *Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what **authority** I do these things.*



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Matthew 21:27 *So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what **authority** I am doing these things.*

Matthew 28:18–20 <sup>18</sup> *And Jesus came and said to them, "All **authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

The phrase *All Things* also appears elsewhere in Matthew (see Matthew 17:11; 19:28).

Matthew 17:11 <sup>11</sup> *He replied, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore **all things**;*

Matthew 19:28 <sup>28</sup> *Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of **all things**, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

**NO ONE KNOWS THE SON EXCEPT THE FATHER; NO ONE KNOWS THE FATHER EXCEPT THE SON AND ANYONE TO WHOM THE SON CHOOSES TO REVEAL HIM** – This is quite a remarkable statement by Jesus.

First, Jesus is saying that he has a special relationship with the Father that no one else has. There is a closeness and understanding in that relationship that others just can't have. The only way that others can share in this special relationship and understanding is for Jesus, by his choice, to reveal God's nature and will to them. He is essentially saying "You can't know God like I know God! It's impossible, unless I decide to let you in and share my knowledge, my closeness, my relationship with you." In this way, Jesus is our window to God. Jesus is the one who can pull back the curtain on the mystery of the divine.

When you consider that Matthew intentionally shapes his gospel story of Jesus according to the traditions of Moses, it is not surprising that these words have a faint echo of the story of Moses in Exodus 33. There we learn that Moses and God had a very close relationship. Moses would meet God and speak with God "face to face" in the tent of meeting (see Exodus 33:11). God says that God knows Moses and Moses prays that he would know God's ways (see Exodus 33:12-13). Then God says that God will reveal God's self to Moses; that he will make his "goodness pass before" him (Exodus 33:19). It's also interesting that in Exodus 33 there is also the promise of rest.

This idea is also similar to some of the things Jesus says in the gospel of John:

John 3:1–3 <sup>1</sup> *Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God."* <sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, **no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.**"*

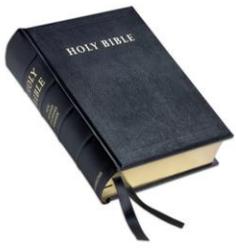
John 6:44–45 <sup>44</sup> ***No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.** <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.*

John 14:6 <sup>6</sup> *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.**"*

You can imagine how the religious leaders would have reacted to these statements. They had come to believe that they had cornered the market on the knowledge of God. And so Jesus, his teachings and his ministry, were a challenge to their standing and authority; which is why Jesus was often in conflict with the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the scribes/lawyers.

The **Sadducees** were the aristocratic priestly class who controlled the temple and had a favorable/privileged relationship with the Romans. All Sadducees were priests, but not all priests were Sadducees.

The **Pharisees** were a religious party (the name "Pharisees" literally means "separatists") whose aim was to strictly follow the written and oral law. While they often looked down upon the common people who did not have the slightest chance of fulfilling the complex requirements of the Law, the common people often admired the Pharisees as representing the ideal followers of Judaism. The Pharisees (with their separatist ideals) didn't like Sadducees (because they were in cahoots with the Romans).



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The **scribes** were lawyers whose “religious office” was to copy, study and expound the law. Most of the scribes were probably also linked to the Pharisees, although the Sadducees had their own scribes/lawyers as well.

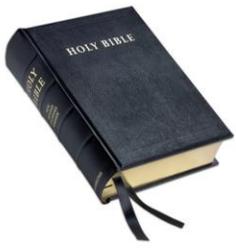
**COME TO ME, ALL YOU THAT ARE WEARY AND ARE CARRYING HEAVY BURDENS** – What is Jesus referring to in this verse? What is making people weary? What are the heavy burdens that people are carrying?

It is very common to hear this verse as part of the opening sentences of scripture during a funeral or memorial service. There, the verse is used to comfort people who are weighed down by the loss of a friend or loved one. But within the context of Jesus sending the disciples out in ministry where they will be persecuted, within the context of Jesus’ disputes with the religious leaders (see especially what follows in Matthew 12), and within the context of Jesus’ claim of authority and as gatekeeper to our knowledge of God, we very quickly see that the “heavy burdens” and the “things that were making people weary” were the growing complexity and minutia of scriptural interpretation or misinterpretation that made it very difficult for people to live according to God’s law; a law that was meant to lead to life and not to death. The heavy burdens they were laying on the people was not the law itself, but rather their particular interpretations and practices of the law; their way of understanding it and living it out. To “come to Jesus” in this context means to receive and accept his authority and his teachings; his understanding of the law and his way of living it out.

To fully understand what burdens the scribes and Pharisees were placing on the people, we need to read Matthew 23.

Matthew 23:1–30 <sup>1</sup> Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; <sup>3</sup> therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup> **They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.** <sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. <sup>6</sup> They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. <sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. <sup>9</sup> And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you will be your servant. <sup>12</sup> All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted. <sup>13</sup> **“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.** <sup>15</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and **you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.** <sup>16</sup> “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.’ <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.’ <sup>19</sup> How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; <sup>21</sup> and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; <sup>22</sup> and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it. <sup>23</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and **have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.** <sup>24</sup> You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! <sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean. <sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. <sup>28</sup> So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. <sup>29</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’

**AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST** – By saying that he will give rest to those who come to him, Jesus is suggesting that adherence to the complexity and minutia is not necessary. There is another way. The word rest is the



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word ἀναπαύσω from the root παύω (to make stop) and has the sense of making someone rest, giving them comfort, making them feel refreshed.

Again we here a faint echo of Exodus 33 in these words of promised rest. In Exodus 33, God promises Moses that God's presence will go with him and the God will give him rest (Exodus 33:14).

**TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME** – When Jesus says “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me”, it is important to understand what the “yoke” of Jesus is.

The visual imagery of the word is helpful. A yoke (pictured on the right) would have been a common site in ancient Israel. It is a device used to harness large animals like oxen. The large wooden portion of the yoke would be placed on the animals neck and the animals head would secured by the “ox bow”. Two animals could be linked together by a double yoke and in this way they would share the load, partnering in the task at hand.



If Jesus intends us to imagine that his is a double yoke, this is an incredible image of comfort (being harnessed with Jesus). We would be partnering with Jesus who remains by our side, helping to pull the weight.

At the time of Jesus, this word and its accompanying imagery was used to refer to more than farming. It was used to refer to the interpretations of the law of a particular rabbi or community. For a rabbi or a community to say “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me” was to say “follow my interpretations of God's law” over and against the interpretations of others; give “weight and authority to my understanding of the law”.

This is why Jesus includes the phrase “learn from me”. Disciples would take on the “yoke” of their rabbi, meaning they would seek to learn everything their rabbi had to teach them about living as God's people/following God's law.

In Matthew 23, Jesus uses the imagery of the yoke to talk about the heavy burdens the scribes and Pharisees were placing on the shoulders of the people:

Matthew 23:1-4 <sup>1</sup> Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; <sup>3</sup> therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, **and lay them on the shoulders of others**; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.

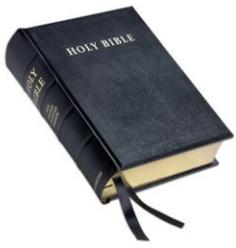
**I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART** – I am πραῦς (mild, gentle, meek) and ταπεινός (humble, unpretentious) in τῇ καρδίᾳ (heart). This is a contrast to those who are pompous, arrogant and demanding.

In Matthew 5:5, Jesus blessed the humble and the meek.

There is a faint echo here of Numbers 12:3, where we learn that Moses was humble “more so than any man on the earth”. See also Numbers 12:7-8 for an interesting connection to how Moses could clearly understand the things of God because God spoke to Moses clearly, rather than in riddles.

Numbers 12:3 <sup>3</sup> Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth.

Numbers 12:7-8 <sup>7</sup> Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. <sup>8</sup> With him I speak face to face—clearly, not in riddles; and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”



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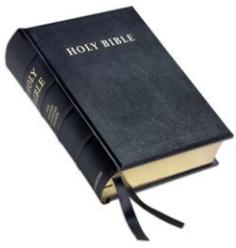
**YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS** – Once again, the results of taking on Jesus' yoke is to find rest. Again, the word here for rest is the word ἀνάπαυσις which means "restful relief; R&R; relief from trouble and related anxiety". This time, Jesus speaks of rest for our souls, which in Greek is the word ψυχᾶς (life, soul).

This has echoes of what we find in Jeremiah 6:16 (the context of which is interesting in light of Jesus dispute with the religious leaders).

Jeremiah 6:1–30 <sup>8</sup> *Take warning, O Jerusalem, or I shall turn from you in disgust, and make you a desolation, an uninhabited land.* <sup>9</sup> *Thus says the Lord of hosts: Glean thoroughly as a vine the remnant of Israel; like a grape-gatherer, pass your hand again over its branches.* <sup>10</sup> *To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? See, their ears are closed, they cannot listen. The word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it.* <sup>11</sup> *But I am full of the wrath of the Lord; I am weary of holding it in. Pour it out on the children in the street, and on the gatherings of young men as well; both husband and wife shall be taken, the old folk and the very aged.* <sup>12</sup> *Their houses shall be turned over to others, their fields and wives together; for I will stretch out my hand against the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord.* <sup>13</sup> *For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.* <sup>14</sup> *They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.* <sup>15</sup> *They acted shamefully, they committed abomination; yet they were not ashamed, they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown, says the Lord.* <sup>16</sup> **Thus says the Lord: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, "We will not walk in it."** <sup>17</sup> *Also I raised up sentinels for you: "Give heed to the sound of the trumpet!" But they said, "We will not give heed."* <sup>18</sup> *Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them.* <sup>19</sup> *Hear, O earth; I am going to bring disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not given heed to my words; and as for my teaching, they have rejected it.* <sup>20</sup> *Of what use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor are your sacrifices pleasing to me.* <sup>21</sup> *Therefore thus says the Lord: See, I am laying before this people stumbling blocks against which they shall stumble; parents and children together, neighbor and friend shall perish.*

The same echo is heard in Isaiah 30:15 (again with context that is important to consider).

Isaiah 30:8–22 <sup>8</sup> *Go now, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, so that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever.* <sup>9</sup> *For they are a rebellious people, faithless children, children who will not hear the instruction of the Lord;* <sup>10</sup> *who say to the seers, "Do not see"; and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions,* <sup>11</sup> *leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."* <sup>12</sup> *Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel: Because you reject this word, and put your trust in oppression and deceit, and rely on them;* <sup>13</sup> *therefore this iniquity shall become for you like a break in a high wall, bulging out, and about to collapse, whose crash comes suddenly, in an instant;* <sup>14</sup> *its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel that is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a sherd is found for taking fire from the hearth, or dipping water out of the cistern.* <sup>15</sup> **For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you refused** <sup>16</sup> *and said, "No! We will flee upon horses"— therefore you shall flee! and, "We will ride upon swift steeds"— therefore your pursuers shall be swift!* <sup>17</sup> *A thousand shall flee at the threat of one, at the threat of five you shall flee, until you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.* <sup>18</sup> *Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.* <sup>19</sup> *Truly, O people in Zion, inhabitants of Jerusalem, you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when he hears it,*



# Echoes of Scripture

## Proper 9a – Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

he will answer you.<sup>20</sup> *Though the Lord may give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself any more, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.*<sup>21</sup> *And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."*<sup>22</sup> *Then you will defile your silver-covered idols and your gold-plated images. You will scatter them like filthy rags; you will say to them, "Away with you!"*

**MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT** – When Jesus says that his (ζυγός; yoke) is (χρηστός; easy, pleasant, not too difficult to bear) and that his (φορτίον; burden) is (έλαφρόν; light, not heavy), Jesus is again speaking figuratively about his interpretation of the Law.

In Matthew 22, as the Sadducees, Pharisees and Scribes were seeking to entrap Jesus, Jesus offers us this summary of the law.

Matthew 22:37–40<sup>37</sup> *He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*<sup>38</sup> *This is the greatest and first commandment.*<sup>39</sup> *And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*<sup>40</sup> *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

It's interesting that Jesus in chapter 23 talks about the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith.

<sup>23</sup> *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and **have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.***

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