

**Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry**  
**F. Crucial Events Leading up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tour of Galilee**

**5. Jesus Rebukes Unrepentant Towns, and Welcomes the Repentant**

**The DAILY JESUS NEWS #085**

**Base Text: MT 11.20-30 (Parallel Text: None)**

20 Then Jesus began to speak against the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

21 *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you."*

23 *"And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down into the depths. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."*

25 At that time Jesus said, *"I voice my agreement with you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is your good pleasure."*

27 *"All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one has experiential knowledge of the Son except the Father, and no one has experiential knowledge of the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*

28 *"Oh come to me, all you who are weary and have become heavily burdened down, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere in Galilee
Timeline	May, 31 AD (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	F. Crucial Events Leading Up to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tour of Galilee
Title	5. Jesus Rebukes Unrepentant Towns, and Welcomes the Repentant

**COMMENT:**

After chiding the people for acting like spoiled children in the inconsistency of their fickle expectations, Jesus turned to active rebuke in the beginning of our reading for today. Before considering the content of this rebuke we will ponder the background for these words.

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Jesus mentioned three towns in Galilee where he had performed most of his miracles: Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. We have seen that Jesus made Capernaum his headquarters during the Galilean ministry. He performed more miracles there than anywhere else. Bethsaida was located just a few miles from Capernaum to the East along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Peter and Andrew were originally from this town. Chorazin lay in the hills, several miles north of Capernaum. It makes sense that these three towns that were clustered so closely together received so much ministry from Jesus.

In spite of seeing and hearing so much, the residents of these towns as a whole had not repented and believed in the good news of Jesus. They were content for him to minister with miraculous power to their physical needs, but that was it. The Gentile centurion had observed the same miracles in Capernaum, learned from them, and placed his faith in Christ. Unfortunately, very few of his fellow residents were like him.

Jesus rebuked these three towns with a dire warning of **"woe...."**-- a portent of impending destruction. His reprimand shows us that God judges according to the principle of light. The more revelation we have received, the more responsibility we have to obey it. Conversely, our responsibility decreases in proportion to the lack of revelation we have received. We are only accountable for the knowledge we have, but we are totally responsible to believe and obey it.

Jesus said it will be worse for the three cities that received and rejected the most revelation from him than it will be for Sodom in the final judgement! As Sodom was destroyed in judgement in the Old Testament by God already, everyone who heard Jesus' words of warning was shocked by the seriousness of the situation as Jesus was describing it.

Jesus then taught that our ability to receive revelation from God is a function of his grace, not our inherent ability or worthiness. No one truly knows the Father in experience except the Son, and no one knows the Son but the Father. In other words, each Person of the Trinity has unique, experiential knowledge of the other two Persons. Humans have no way to enter into this knowledge directly--we cannot even imagine what it is like to be BE and experience GOD, much less figure it out in our own minds.

Jesus came to reveal the Trinity to us, so that we could enter into the fellowship and community of their love--forever. This revelation is pure grace--no one deserves it. It is therefore *"hidden"* from people who consider themselves *"wise"* and *"intelligent"* enough to figure it out, or experience it for and in themselves. That is pure pride, and God resists it because it is utterly false to the core.

On the other hand, God has chosen to reveal himself through his Son to people who are like *"little children"* in their attitude of humble dependance and trust in him. This is the first time in the gospel that Jesus spoke of the virtue of being *"childlike."* He will have more to say about this in the future. Just note for now that the positive qualities in the image of being *"child-like"* are humility and dependance. (Jesus had earlier referred to fickle inconsistency as a negative quality of being child-like.)

The Trinity resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble, or child-like heart. This is God's pleasure. Jesus agreed with the Father in this attitude toward the proud. The vast majority of people living in the three towns where Jesus had revealed more about his Father than anywhere else had rejected his light because of their pride. Hence, they were in grave danger of the "woe" of judgement.

On the other hand, there were a few *"child-like"* souls like the Roman centurion, and Jesus' disciples, who humbled themselves to receive Jesus' revelation to them, and obey what he said. These were gradually receiving all the fullness of God in Jesus as he continued to reveal the things of heaven to them.

See the beauty and humility of Jesus now. In spite of the fact that most of the people he was speaking to, and healing with miraculous compassion and power did NOT believe in him, Jesus continued to reach out to them in unconditional, gracious love. He even issued his most gracious invitation to them all:

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***"Oh come to me, all you who are weary and have become heavily burdened down, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***

Jesus knew that people who reject him are damning themselves to a life of trying to carry bone-crushing, heart-breaking burdens of bitterness, guilt, failure and dissatisfaction. Jesus used a verb tense that described the "weariness" as constant and ongoing, and the result of "becoming heavily burdened down" as a permanent condition, which cannot be cast off.

Instead of taking the attitude that we deserve the just consequences of our foolish pride in rejecting him, and leaving us to endure the full weight of our own self-inflicted pain, Jesus sees those who reject him as people breaking down under burdens too heavy for them to carry any longer! Yes, he is ***"gentle and humble in heart"*** to a degree that defies comprehension, and requires worship. So he gave two commands and one promise.

The commands are to ***"come--right now,"*** and to ***"take my yoke upon you."*** To "come" is to make the commitment to believe in Jesus. "Taking his yoke" means yielding ourselves to him completely and dependently, to follow Jesus' will by adjusting ourselves constantly to him. This command was a rich word-picture that Jesus' listeners all knew well.

Wealthy farmers used oxen to plow the ground in teams. Every team had a leader, which was the strongest and wisest ox of the group. The leader ox stepped out and worked the hardest by bearing the load first. The other oxen would follow by adjusting themselves to the leader. The more effectively they followed him, the easier their part of the load became for them, because they received the full benefit of the strength and stamina of the lead ox.

Jesus is the leader who bears the full load. We hide away in his strength and direction by staying in perfect step with him. The yoke does not bind or limit us, it is a tool for allowing us to benefit from his strength in our behalf. The yoke distributes the weight of our load from us, to Jesus. It speaks of perfect coordination in following the Lord, all the while fellowshiping in the closest intimacy with him.

Therefore, the result of having Jesus as our leader and strengthener is peace and rest, for Jesus bears the heaviness and difficulty of the yoke, and we glide along, carried in his strength. Jesus could promise and deliver on peace that defies comprehension, because he has the power to overcome and bear every difficulty and burden that lies before us.

### APPLICATION:

Isn't Jesus magnificent? His love is *"better than life itself."*

He loved these people first by warning those who rejected him of the seriousness of what they were doing. He loved them by continuing to heal and minister to them in spite of their lack of response to his revelation. And he loved them by issuing the most caring, gracious invitation of all time to the very people who deserved it the least. Jesus laid his loving heart wide open in giving this invitation to join him in a life of eternal peace and rest.

*Have you already "come" to Jesus by believing in him?*

*Are you growing in peace and rest as you increase your sensitivity to Jesus' guidance?*

*What do you need to yield to Jesus today by surrendering your will into his yoke of guidance?*