

Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 15

Chapter 11 can be divided into three topics:

- I. Jesus and John the Baptist (verses 2-19)
- II. Jesus' judgment on three cities of the Galilee (verses 20-24)
- III. Jesus' thanksgiving, revelation and invitation (verses 25-30)

The division can also be classified thematically:

1. Unbelief/rejection (verses 2-19)
2. Unbelief/rejection (verses 20-24)
3. Invitation/acceptance of the Christ (verses 25-30)

The first section opens with the announcement that St. John the Baptist, who is in prison, has sent his disciples to Jesus. Verses 2-19 can be subdivided into three sections dealing with the subject of John the Baptist:

1. John's disciples inquire about Jesus' eschatological office and Jesus responds (verses 2-6)
2. Jesus reveals John's true identity (verses 7-15)
3. The response of "this generation" to Jesus and John (verses 16-19)

The third section can be divided into three subsections:

1. Thanksgiving (verses 25-26)
2. Revelation (verse 27)
3. Invitation (verses 28-30)

Chapter 12 repeats the three part thematic division found in chapter 11 but in two 3-part divisions:

- I. First Section
 - A. Unbelief/rejection (verses 1-8)
 - B. Unbelief/rejection (verses 9-14)
 - C. Invitation/acceptance (verses 15-21)
- II. Second Section
 - A. Unbelief/rejection (verses 22-37)
 - C. Unbelief/rejection (verses 38-45)
 - D. Invitation/acceptance (verses 46-50)

Since Sacred Scripture was originally written without any chapter or verse divisions, it is more likely St. Matthew intended the divisions in chapters 11-12 to be viewed as a thematic triad.

St. John the Baptist had proof of Jesus' true identity as the Messiah:

- The Holy Spirit revealed Jesus' true identity the day Jesus came to John to be baptized (Mt 3:14; Mk 1:9-10; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:32).
- John also heard the voice of God from heaven identifying Jesus as His beloved Son (Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:26, 34).
- He knew of Jesus' pre-Incarnate state (Jn 1:30).
- He knew Jesus was the Messiah who was promised to baptize with the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33).

Handout 2: Matthew Lesson 15

Matthew 11:12 ~ *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force.*

There are several interpretations of this verse:

1. *the days of John the Baptist until now* is the period of the beginning of the end of the fulfillment of the old covenants and the beginning of the Messianic Age. It was a common belief of the times that a period of intense tribulation would usher in the Messianic Age. Jesus’ statement in verse 13 points to the beginning of the time of spiritual crisis (also see Jesus’ teaching about division in Mt 10:34-36).
2. This verse might also refer to those Jews who want to rebel against the Romans with the hope that in doing so they might force the coming of the Messiah and to re-establish the kingdom of Israel (the misguided violence of the Zealots).
3. The reference might be to the violence of the powers of Satan and his agents on earth who seek to maintain their dominion over the earth and who perpetuate violence in their efforts to thwart Jesus and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 11:25-30 can be divided into three subsections:

4. Thanksgiving (verses 25-26)
5. Revelation (verse 27)
6. Invitation (verses 28-30)

Mt 11:28-30 and the image of the “yoke” in the symbolic images of the prophets

Image	Part I Covenant relationship	Part II Rebellion	Part III Redemptive Judgment	Part IV Restoration Fulfilled
Animals	Domesticated animals obedient to the Master’s yoke	Resist the yoke; run away and become wild	Ravaged by wild beasts/birds of prey	Rescued by their Master
Examples in Scripture	Mic 4:13; Is 40:10-11; 65:25; Ez 34:15-16	Ex 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Dt 9:6, 13; Is 50:6; 53:6; Jer 5:5d-6; 8:6b-7; 23:1-2; Ez 19:1-9	Is 50:7; Jer 8:15-17; 50:6-7; Ho 8:1-14; 13:6-8	Mt 11:28-30; 25:33-34; Jn 1:29, 36; 10:1-18; Heb 3:20; Rev 5:6, 13; 7:9-17; 14:1-10; 19:2-9; 21:9-23; 22:1-3

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Since Sacred Scripture was originally written without any chapter or verse divisions, it is possible to view the thematic divisions in chapters 11-12 as a triad.