

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Kingdom: A Study of Matthew 8–13

STUDY TWELVE

Get Some Rest

Matthew 11:27–30

To you who are broken and bruised, outcasts and offensive. To all who are failures and have fallen. To all who are ashamed and rejected. All who are brutal and bullies. All who are victims and offenders. Jesus says, “Get into My yoke. Submit to Me, My plan. Obey My instructions. Follow My lead. Feel the reins across your back as I’m leading you in the direction I would have you go. Walk with Me, all of you who would learn new ways to live and to relate to others.”

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

GREAT gifts often come in small packages, don't they? We see this truth frequently in the Scriptures. With just a handful of words, God provides encouragement for the downtrodden and gives rest for the weary. We find one of these great gifts wrapped in a few verses at the end of Matthew 11 during Jesus' address to the crowds.

After Jesus spoke about John the Baptizer's identity, He condemned those who rejected John as well as those who rejected His own teaching. Thankfully, Jesus then clarified that He didn't come only to condemn. He also came to reveal the Father and extend rest to those who receive Him with childlike faith.

Now, He's not talking about a year-long-vacation kind of rest nor a loads-of-cash-in-the-bank kind of rest. He's talking about *soul rest!*

So what is soul rest exactly? In this *Searching the Scriptures* study on Matthew 11:27–30, we'll explore just what Jesus means by offering rest for our souls. To give you a hint . . . it's the kind of rest everyone desperately searches for but only God can give.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Day-to-day worries can easily blind us from what God wants to do in and through our lives. Take time now to still your heart and mind as you come before Him. Ask Jesus to help you focus on His words so you can live in the peace and power of the soul rest only He provides.

Thank You, Father, for all the gifts You have given me. As I come to Your Word today, I ask that You would remove any fears, worries, or burdens that might distract me from understanding Jesus' words. I ask these things in His name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

By way of review, read all of [Matthew 11](#).¹ Take note of the flow of Jesus' address, which we summarized in the introduction above.

Look especially at Matthew 11:25–27. How do verses 25–26 logically relate to verses 1–24? Next, how does verse 27 logically relate to verses 25–26?

In [verse 27](#), Jesus made some very controversial theological statements—in a public prayer of all places! Below, list the claims Jesus made about Himself and His Father. What claim prepares us for what Jesus said in verses 28–30?



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Now, let's look more closely at what Jesus said in verses 28–30.



Observation: Straight Talk from Jesus

Read *Matthew 11:28–30*. Jesus employed five different kinds of words that *invite*, *expose*, *describe*, *promise*, and *relieve*.

We'll use these five categories as our observation guides. First, Jesus used words that *invite*. He offered an invitation to His audience in 11:28–29 by using three commands. List these three commands.

Second, let's look at the words Jesus used to *expose* our condition. Scripture works like a mirror that reveals our character. Reread 11:28 and note the words Jesus used to expose our true selves.

Next, let's look at how Jesus *described* Himself. After highlighting others, Jesus then focused on Himself. In fact, this passage is the only place in Scripture where Jesus personally described His own character. What two phrases did He use in 11:29?



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Fourth, Jesus used words of *promise*. What did Jesus say He *will do* in 11:28? And what did He say *will happen* to those who respond in 11:29?

Finally, what gracious words did Jesus offer to *relieve* His listeners of their weary condition in 11:30?

We come on His terms. We come receiving His offer, believing in Him, trusting in Him. Please observe that we are not obligated; it's an invitation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Come to Jesus, Take His Yoke, and Learn from Him

Jesus said, “*come to me*.” He didn’t say, “come to a creed” or “come to church” or “come to a ministry.” Jesus then explained what we do when we come to Him. He said, “take my yoke upon you.” During interpretation, we explore the meaning of cultural references, like a “yoke,” to better understand what these references teach historically and theologically.



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Read pages 224–225 of Pastor Chuck's commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*, and discover what Jesus meant when He told everyone to take His yoke upon themselves.² You can also freely access the NET Bible's notes along with *Constable's Notes* at NETBible.org. By using this image, how is Jesus opposing the teachings of the rabbis of His day?

In Christ are “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). He alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:58). Indeed, He's inexhaustible, never-ending, everlasting. Our knowledge of God will only grow throughout eternity because God is infinite. *What a reality!* Jesus has more than a little to teach us. It all starts with the fact that He alone reveals the Father.

In Matthew 11:29, Jesus *described* Himself as humble and gentle at heart. Don't think of humility and gentleness as *weakness*. Think in terms of strength under control. Like a vigorous racehorse brought under control by its rider. Why is it significant that Jesus characterized Himself in this way while extending His invitation?

Take just a moment to let the identity of Christ, the offer of Christ, and the character of Christ really sink in. Mull these over. Consider the tremendous privilege for us who've been given such knowledge. Life is but a brief vapor within the vastness of eternity, isn't it? So it's eternally worthwhile to spend all our lives on Him.



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Correlation: Rest Now and Forever

Jesus' invitations represent a *promise* for His listeners. We can only accept the rest that Jesus offers within our lifetime, but we will enjoy His rest now *and* beyond the grave. Look at what [Revelation 14:13](#) teaches about the rest we receive from Jesus. Summarize what it says below.

You don't find worry or strife in that picture of paradise. That glorious future awaits all who "die in the Lord." Until then, we receive a foretaste of the soul rest Jesus gives. To experience eternity's appetizer, we must personally come to grips with the words of Jesus that *expose* and *relieve*.



Application: You Will Receive Rest

Jesus' words that *expose* help us apply His teaching because they reveal the onerous condition of all people today.

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

Do the terms *weary* and *heavy burdens* describe your situation? Are you trying to earn God's favor or the approval of others? Does the voice of legalism still whisper in your conscience? Are you running incessantly in culture's hamster wheel?



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Jesus described His yoke as “easy” and his burden as “light” (Matthew 11:29). This statement may seem contradictory, but it flows from the spring of Jesus’ character. How has accepting Jesus’ easy yoke allowed you to be free from the burdens of performance-based religion?

Following Jesus doesn’t always feel easy or light. Jesus Himself stated that His followers will face persecution and trials because of their commitment to Him. Yet, in these few verses, we see a great gift wrapped in a small package—the beautiful promise that even amid life’s most strenuous difficulties, Jesus gives rest. Go to Him, bear His yoke, learn from Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for being a God who invites us to Himself with open arms. Forgive me for the ways that I have taken on the yoke of the world and looked for rest in all the wrong places. Forgive me for the legalistic ways that I have tried to earn good standing with You. Help me to take on Your yoke so that I can receive the true soul rest that only You can offer. I ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).”
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15*, vol. 1A (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 224–25.

