

Episode #840 Matthew 19 Part 5-Sacrifice and Reward

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord had just stated that, in the kingdom of the heavens, many who are last will be first, and many first will be last. Now, He tells a parable illustrating what He means by this.

III. The Rich Man and the Kingdom. Matthew 19:23-30.

A. Verse 28. “Assuredly” is again *amen*, meaning “truly,” an affirmation.

1. His throne is in the heavens when His kingdom rules over all, Psalm 103:19. At the same time, the man David will be prince under Him upon earth, Ezekiel 34:24. At the same time, He will restore their judges as at the first, Isaiah 1:26. Part of this will doubtless be the restoration of the rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens of the past, but it will also come down to twelve major judges over each tribe, and these will be the twelve disciples.

2. Notice that this promise cannot possibly apply to all believers today, since it involves the “twelve tribes of Israel.” Yet why then do so many, when it is not so obvious as this, take the Lord’s promises to these same disciples and assume they are applicable to all believers today? We should not forget the obvious fact that we are not these men just because a passage does not make it so plain as this. Of course, even this plain passage some want to appropriate.

B. Verse 29. We have a specific example of forsaking your father when James and John (Jacob and Jonah) left their father Zebedee at his fishing business, dropped everything, and followed the Lord. No doubt the other disciples had done similarly.

A. We might think that the hundredfold payback means in the kingdom to come, but in Mark 10:30, he says “now in this time.” When we consider the great unity in Jerusalem, when they were welcome into every believer’s house; when there were hundreds of believers their own age who were like brothers and sisters; when there were hundreds of believers older than they were who were like parents; when there were hundreds of believers younger than their own age who were like children; when in the place of or along with a wife they had a close relationship with God; when all shared all things in common and all who had lands sold them and brought the money to the apostles’ feet; we can see that this was literally fulfilled in that time. How much more, then, will it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God yet to come?

B. To “inherit” means to receive a place or enjoy a portion.

C. “Eternal life” is eonian life, life in the great eon to come, when God flows out to the world in His kingdom and people experience outflowing life rather than encroaching death. In Mark 10:30, He says this is “in the eon to come.”

C. Verse 30. “First” is *protos*, meaning first in sequence or chief, leader. In the context, we understand that many who are rich and important in this day may not be so important in God’s kingdom, and many who were poor and insignificant like the disciples might be the most significant people around. Many in that time had high and favored positions in the status quo in Israel. They were then first. They were not to be excluded altogether because of this, but many of them would be last, and many of the last would be first. “Last” is *eschatos*, and can mean last in a series, but it can also

mean the result, as in Matthew 12:45 for the demon-possessed man. It can also mean most significant, as in I Corinthians 15:52, which speaks not of the last trumpet in a sequence, but of the most significant trumpet. So this might also be that many of the leaders shall be the most significant in God's sight, and the most significant in God's eyes shall be the leaders. Often that is not the case today!

IV. Parable of the Laborers. Matthew 20:1-16.

A. Verse 1. This is another parable, found only in Matthew. Again it is a likeness of the "kingdom of the heavens." This means the same thing as the kingdom of God, as in Matthew 19:23-24. This parable has to do with one aspect of God's government. None of these parables have to do with the complete thing in all its aspects or departments, but most deal with a single aspect of it.

1. The "landowner" is the Greek *oikodespotes*, but a "despot" was originally just a ruler or master. The owner or manager of a great estate.
2. He would have many household servants, but at the harvest time there might be a need for extra help. To fill this need, he would go out to hire day laborers.
3. "Early" is at the time of the fourth night watch, or before dawn. In other words, he wanted to hire laborers to start as soon as it was daylight.
4. There were places where men who needed work would congregate. These laborers had not managed to get permanently attached to a household, which was more desirable. Hired servants had to find work day to day.
5. In the Old Testament, a vineyard is used figuratively for the nation of Israel. Psalm 80:14-17, Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 12:7-12.

V. Conclusion: Peter wanted to know what they would get since they had left all for Him, and He told him they would be twelve judges over the twelve tribes. All who had left home and family for Him would receive a hundredfold payback. In that day, the last would be first and the first last. The Lord told a parable to illustrate this. We will consider the parable in our next program.