

Episode #842 Matthew 20 Part 2-The Coming Betrayal

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 told a parable of a householder hiring men for harvest. Though he hired at the beginning of the day, he went out later and later and hired more workers. Yet the ones who worked barely more than an hour he paid for a full day, and the ones who worked all day he also paid for a full day. His grace to the last did not change the fact that he was fair with the first.

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

A. Verse 16. This context is different than when we had the same phrase in 19:30. Here, it seems that the last are rewarded first, and the first are rewarded last. This is one reason we believe that, for those who are not raised all at once in a resurrection company, resurrections will proceed in the reverse order to when people lived in this world. Also, it could be that those who became God’s servants last, in the dispensation of grace, will receive the most gracious rewards of all, more than those who lived long ago. “Called” is *kletoi*, positioned. “Chosen” is *eklektos*, chosen or elected. Many will be in the kingdom, but few will be elected for exalted positions.

IV. The Lord Predicts His Death a Third Time. Matthew 20:17-19.

A. Verse 17. In the Bible, one always goes up to Jerusalem. This has nothing to do with moving north and south, as we think of it today in our automobile-based society. This may be partially topographical, for Jerusalem is in the mountains. Yet also Jerusalem is the city of God, and so to go to it is always to go “up.” The Lord wanted to have a private communication with the twelve.

B. Verse 18. This is the third of the Lord’s predictions of His coming death. The details are: 1. Betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, 2. They shall condemn Him to death, 3. They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles (nations), 4. The nations shall mock, scourge, and crucify Him, 5. The third day He shall rise again. He has mentioned betrayal in the second prediction and suffering at the hands of the chief priests and scribes in the first prediction, but now He puts these two things together. The fact that it is the chief priests and scribes who shall condemn Him to death is first revealed here. The fact that they shall give Him into the hands of the nations is first revealed here. The list of sufferings: mocking, scourging, and crucifying, are first mentioned here. Yes, this is the first time He has told them His death shall be by crucifixion. Of course, He had already revealed His resurrection on the third day. “Betrayed” is the same word as in the prediction in Matthew 17:22, and is used for Judas. This, of course, was the pinnacle of injustice!

C. Verse 19. “Gentiles” are the nations. In the context it means nations other than Israel: the Roman courts and the Roman soldiers, who may have been from nations besides just Rome. “Mock” can also mean to play or trifle with. We know their mockery consisted both of words and cruel actions.

1. This is the first occurrence of “crucify.” It is *stauroo*, which is related to *stauros* or a stake, to impale on a stake.

2. This leads some to suggest that the Lord was not crucified at all, but merely hung on a stake. There are several problems with this view, however:

- a. The fact that we know that the great Roman punishment was crucifixion, not impaling on a stake.
 - b. The Latin word for this is *crux*, related to the cross.
 - c. The fact that there were nails (plural) in His hands, rather than a single nail (John 20:25) leads to the idea that His hands were separate, not together, as they would have been on a stake.
3. All this leads us to believe that He was crucified, not impaled on a stake. This word is probably used to emphasize the Old Testament connection to a curse on everyone who was hung on a tree or a piece of wood, Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Plus it just may have been the word the Greeks used to describe this punishment. If there was another word they typically used for actual crucifixion, cannot those who claim this put it forward? We cannot expect them to have used a Latin word!
 4. Again the Lord mentions the glorious outcome, but it seems to have gone in one ear and out the other for the disciples!

V. The Request of James and John. Matthew 20:20-23.

- A. Verse 20. "Came" is *proserchomai* again; approached, as to a king. Some say their mother's name was Salome, judging from a comparison of Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40. This could well be, but we cannot prove it, since both passages clearly imply there were other women with them as well. We could as easily argue her name was Joanna, Luke 24:10. This was not done on her own, but these two were trying to make their request appear less self-serving by having their mother ask on their behalf. Of course, the self-serving nature of the request is not really hidden by this shallow method. "Kneeling down" is *proskuneo*, which again the Lord accepts, though angels and apostles refuse it. They were asking or requesting.

VI. Conclusion: The Lord predicted His coming betrayal, mocking, scourging, death, and resurrection. All this happened according to God's plan. Do we believe in God's great plan for the future? Do we know, realize, and believe that all will happen as He wills it to?