

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

Part XV: Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Discipling Of His Followers, Matthew 16:13-20:34

B. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Focus On The Cross Before The Crown

(Matthew 16:21-27)

I. Introduction

A. One of the questions Matthew's Gospel answers is the question that if Jesus was the Messiah, "why did He fail to establish the promised kingdom?" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1337)

B. Matthew 16:21-27 answers this, revealing the Messiah and His servants must face the cross before the crown:

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Focus On The Cross Before The Crown, Matthew 16:21-27.

A. Immediately after Peter had made his wonderful confession of faith that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, and Jesus had spoken of building His Church and of the great heralding ministry of Peter in God's program of the coming Church era (Matthew 16:13-19), Jesus did two surprisingly **contrasting** things:

1. First, He charged His disciples to tell no man that He was Jesus the Messiah, the opposite what Hebrews of that day expected of the Messiah were He to appear to Israel and establish His kingdom, Matt. 16:20.
2. Second, Jesus then began predicting that He had to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things of the elders, chief priests and scribes, be killed, and be raised again the third day, Matthew 16:21

B. These announcements contradicted the popular belief in Israel that the Messiah upon His arrival would establish His Kingdom, not be rejected and slain by Israel. Naturally, then, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him, telling the Lord that such mistreatment and death of Him at the hands of Israel's leaders would certainly not occur, Matthew 16:22.

C. However, Jesus turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," Matthew 16:23 KJV.

D. This statement by Jesus reveals that carnal man's and Satan's views coincide, the view that Messiah would rule without dying on the cross. However, bypassing the cross would have left man eternally condemned to hell with no atonement for his sin, so the plan of **GOD had** to include the **cross BEFORE the crown!**

E. Indeed, this cross-before-the-crown theme is played out in the experience of Christ's disciples, Matt. 16:24-27:

1. Jesus certified that if **any** man would be His disciple, he had to deny himself, take up his cross and follow Him, Matthew 16:24. Since "(i)n the Roman Empire a convicted criminal, when taken to be crucified, was forced to carry his own cross, showing publicly that he was then under and submissive to the rule he had been opposing," Jesus' disciples were to "demonstrate their submission to the One against whom they had rebelled," to obey the God against whom they had been in rebellion, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 59.
2. Yet, in losing one's life in suffering from man's view, one finds "a better life" in God's plan, Matt. 16:25.
3. Jesus' statement that a man would not profit anything if he gained the whole world but lost his own soul and His question of what would a man give in exchange for his soul (Matthew 16:26) indicate the need for His disciples to follow the plan of God in their lives and ministries regardless of the human, worldly cost involved, that it was the only truly worthwhile investment for them to make in view of eternity, *Ibid*.
4. To explain, Jesus then predicted the "end" event in discipleship, predicting that one day He would come in His glory, at His Second Coming, together with the glory of His Father and with His angels, and that He would then reward every man according to his works in life and service, Matthew 16:27:
 - a. The verb "reward" is *apodidomi* in the Greek Testament (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 89-90), "recompense, give back," a compensation for the costs involved in following Christ!
 - b. Thus, the believer was to be motivated to invest his life and work in God's plan even at great worldly cost to himself, knowing that in the end, he would be fully, eternally recompensed by the Lord!
5. Thus, **just as Jesus was to face the cross before the crown, so must His disciples face their own cross, dying to the world and its lusts, en route to the crown and eternal reward for following Christ!**

Lesson: *Just as Jesus would face the Cross before the Crown of His Messianic Kingdom, so must we His disciples face the "cross" of dying to selfish interests and worldly lusts to gain the crown of God's final reward.*

Application: *(1) May we believe that Jesus is the Messiah though He went to the cross, for the plan of God required that He face the Cross before the Crown. (2) May we also take up our cross in following Christ, dying to selfish interests and worldly lusts in favor of God's will en route to His reward and blessing at Christ's Coming!*