

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

D. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Teaching On Living The Cross Before The Crown

2. Christ's Messianic Identity Seen In Re-Emphasizing His Disciples' Need To Trust In Him (Matthew 17:22-27)

I. Introduction

- A. The "sin that so easily besets us" (Hebrews 12:1), that of **unbelief**, was a frequent problem for Jesus' disciples.
- B. However, to succeed in a life of experiencing the cross before the crown in accord with the will of God (Matthew 16:24), **every** disciple of the Lord **must** live a life of faith in Him by trusting and heeding His Word.
- C. Thus, when the disciples wavered in their faith in Jesus, He re-emphasized it in Matthew 17:22-27, a passage we view for our instruction and edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Messianic Identity Seen In Re-Emphasizing His Disciples' Need To Trust In Him.

- A. Though Jesus had told His disciples of His need to go to the cross in Matthew 16:21, and that as the pattern for His disciples in following Him (Matthew 16:24), He repeated this prophecy in Matthew 17:22-23a.
- B. The disciples reacted by focusing only on the negative aspects of Jesus' prediction, the part on His suffering and death, omitting the positive news of His victory in the resurrection, so they "became distressed, grieved" (*lupeo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 482-483) "greatly, extremely" (*sphodra*, Ibid., p. 803), as if the life of Christ would become a pointless tragedy, Matthew 17:23b. As the renowned Bible expositor G. Campbell Morgan put it, "(t)hese men were unable to look through the Cross to the Resurrection . . . they were still . . . unbelieving," Morgan, The Gospel According To Matthew, 1929, p. 226.
- C. For this reason, in Matthew 17:24-27, "our Lord was leading Peter and the rest back to the faith in Him which they lacked," Ibid., p. 227, using a unique event to emphasize His Lordship as the Son of God (as follows):
 1. When Jesus and His disciples had returned to Capernaum, men from the Jerusalem temple who collected the a half-shekel (or two drachmas in Gentile money) per head due for the temple's support came to Peter and asked, "Does your teacher not pay the [temple] tax?" (Matthew 17:24 ESV; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Matthew 17:24-27; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 61)
 2. Peter responded, saying that He did, and turned to enter the house where Jesus was, Matthew 17:25a.
 3. However, before Peter could speak about the incident, Christ spoke to him first, asking, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" (Matthew 17:25b) The question was put to Peter to address his reason for answering the tax collectors as he did, the belief that Jesus, like any **mere** Hebrew **man**, owed the tax to the temple of God.
 4. Peter naturally replied that kings exact taxes from others, not from their own sons, Matthew 17:26a.
 5. Jesus then said that the sons then are free from obligations to pay their fathers' taxes, Matthew 17:26b. Christ thus inferred that He was exempt from having to pay the temple dues as the Son of God the Father! Jesus thus claimed to be the Son of God, a claim to deity in that culture (cf. John 5:17-18), and evidence of it was His knowledge of Peter's discussion with the tax collectors before Peter had entered the house!
 6. However, the tax collectors did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, and would have thought His claim of that fact would have been a sinful attempt to try to avoid paying the tax in violation of Exodus 30:11-16. Thus, so as not to give offense, Jesus told Peter to go to the Sea of Galilee and cast in a line with a hook on the end and take the first fish that came up, and when he opened its mouth, he would find a four-drachma coin in it, exactly enough for Peter and Himself to pay for their temple dues, Matt. 17:27a; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T. Jesus told Peter to pay that coin for Himself and Peter, Matthew 17:27b.
 7. Peter did so, and, in addition, was graciously given a fish from the Lord that he could use in his next meal! The sovereignty of Jesus as the Creator and Controller of the fish, and sovereign over the moneys of even the Gentile world (four-drachma coin) as the Son of God are all portrayed in this faith-building event!

Lesson: When the disciples' faith in Jesus had waned as evidenced in their unbelief that was expressed when He repeated His prediction of His Cross before His Crown, Jesus REPEATED evidences of His DEITY to REBUILD His disciples' FAITH in Him, for trusting God is an essential component to bearing one's cross before the crown.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin. (2) May we yield to God's instruction to live by faith in Him an ESSENTIAL part in the life that follows Jesus through the cross before the crown of blessing.