

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

3. Christ's Messianic Identity Seen In His Instruction On Dying To Selfish Pride, Matthew 18:1-35

d. Christ's Instruction On Humbly But Decisively Excommunicating A Brother For Sin

(Matthew 18:18-20)

I. Introduction

- A. The pride of life is one of the characteristics of worldliness (1 John 2:15-16), and the great men of this world typically dominate their subordinates and view them as of lesser value than themselves, Luke 22:24-25.
- B. However, this is **not God's way** for the *believer* to function, for those in God's cross-before-the-crown lifestyle (Matthew 16:24) are to relate in **humility** toward others, *especially in how they handle sin in other believers!*
- C. On the **other** hand, when excommunication issues arise, the Church must be careful **not** to view *humility* as a necessary reason to **EXCUSE** an unrepentant believer from proper excommunication, but **humbly yet thoroughly EXCOMMUNICATE** the unrepentant for the spiritual welfare of the body, and this truth is taught in Matthew 18:18-20, directing us on such necessary cross-before-the-crown behavior (as follows):

II. Christ's Instruction On Humbly But Decisively Excommunicating A Brother For Sin, Matthew 18:18-20.

- A. Having taught His disciples on humbly addressing a brother's sin in Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus taught that if a brother refused to repent, he was to be excommunicated from the assembly or the Church, Matthew 18:17c.
- B. However, such action is often viewed today as being too "judgmental," as coming from "proud" people, so Church discipline is often not even practiced, and that to the decline of holiness in the body.
- C. Nevertheless, Jesus followed up His claim that the body should excommunicate the unrepentant as a "Gentile and a tax collector" (Matthew 18:17c) by revealing such action, if necessarily and Biblically taken, was entirely supported by God in that He had **already** passed such a sentence on the unrepentant, Matthew 18:18:
 1. The KJV reads that whatever the disciples "shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matthew 18:18a, as if God in heaven was following the lead of believers on earth relative to excommunicating an unrepentant brother.
 2. However, the Greek New Testament tenses actually **reverse** this order (as follows):
 - a. The verb rendered "shall be bound" is written as *dedemena*, the perfect passive participle form of *deo*, "bind, tie" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 69; *The Analytical Grk. Lex.* (Zondervan), 1972, p. 85, 88), and the verb rendered "shall be loosed" is written as *lelumena*, the perfect passive participle form of *luo*, "loosen, untie" (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., *The Analytical Grk. Lex.*, p. 250, 255).
 - b. The perfect tense reflects an action in the past, the effects of which continue on into the present and the future, so Jesus taught that what binding and loosing occurs in regard to Church discipline on earth is a binding and loosing activity that has already been performed by God in heaven. In effect, the disciples only reflected on earth what decision God had already authoritatively make in heaven!
- D. This decision rightly to excommunicate an unrepentant brother meets God's full approval, for Jesus added that if two righteous believers on earth agreed on anything that they would ask the Father in prayer, it would be done unto them by His Father, for it matched the Father's will, Matt. 18:18 (cf. 1 John 5:14-15).
- E. Indeed, Jesus further stated that wherever just two or three people are gathered together in righteousness in Christ's name, there He is in their midst, in their fellowship, Matthew 18:20. This is why God condones two of the steps of Church discipline that involve two or three people back in Matthew 18:15-16: just a few righteous people taking a righteous stand meets God's full support, and even if just one righteous person approaches one unrighteous person, there God is to support the righteous as in Matthew 18:15!

Lesson: *Jesus taught that if an unrepentant brother must be excommunicated, the Church body is NOT sinfully proud for exercising such discipline against him, for God in heaven already fully supports that action. Thus, humility of necessity does NOT imply one cannot take a righteous stand or exercise discipline, only that he do so in humility, considering himself lest he also be tempted, cf. Galatians 6:1.*

Application: *In our cross-before-the-crown living, may we not confuse humility with neglecting courageously to exercise Church discipline where God commands it, for He fully approves of Church discipline. Thus, may we rightly exercise such discipline while humbly considering ourselves lest we also be tempted, Galatians 6:1.*