

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

D. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Discipling Of His Followers, Matthew 6:13-20:34

3. Christ's Messianic Identity Seen In His Teaching On Living The Cross Before The Crown

g. Christ's Instruction On Humbly Heeding God's Way Of Salvation

(Matthew 19:16-26)

I. Introduction

- A. Christ's call for His followers to deny themselves and to take up their cross to follow Him (Matthew 16:24) of necessity includes the path one selects in gaining eternal life for salvation.
- B. Jesus clarified that way in His encounter with a wealthy young man in Matthew 19:16-26, and we view it for our insight and application (as follows):

II. Christ's Instruction On Humbly Heeding God's Way Of Salvation, Matthew 19:16-26.

- A. In the prolonged context of Christ's instruction to His followers on the cross-before-the-crown path of living, Jesus was met by a wealthy young man (Matthew 19:22) who asked Him, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16 ESV) This question reflected the Jewish belief of that era "that performing some single act would guarantee salvation," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Matthew 19:16.
- B. Jesus answered with the question, "Why to you ask Me about what is good? There is only One Who is good," Matthew 19:17a ESV. This was a direct counter to the belief of the day, for it showed the only One Who was truly Good was God, that all men were sinners and incapable in themselves of attaining eternal life!
- C. However, the rich young man was not ready to accept the view that he lacked the goodness to attain eternal life, so Jesus had to direct him to see his need for God's grace, Matthew 19:17b: He thus told the man that he had to keep the commandments of the Mosaic Law if he would enter eternal life.
- D. This claim may lead one to conclude Jesus taught salvation by the works of the Law, but Matthew 19:18-26 shows He aimed to do exactly the opposite, to use the Law to expose the man's inability to save himself:
 - 1. First, Jesus had prefaced His call for the rich young man to do the works of the Law with the claim that only God was good, that no man, including the young man himself, deserved eternal life, Matthew 19:17.
 - 2. Second, Jesus used the Law to teach the man was incapable of the goodness he needed to gain salvation:
 - a. When the rich young man asked Jesus what specific commands he should keep, Jesus named the fifth through the ninth commands of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:12-16, and added the Leviticus 19:18b summary call to love one's neighbor as himself, Matt. 19:18-19; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 64.
 - b. The wealthy young man said he had kept all these commands, but asked what he lacked, Matt. 19:20.
 - c. Jesus then demonstrated that he actually failed in the application of the Leviticus 19:18b law He had mentioned: He told the man that if he wished to be perfect to go, sell what he possessed and give it to the poor so that he would have treasure in heaven, and then to come and follow Jesus, Matthew 19:21. This directive does not teach that God wants people to give all their possessions away to have eternal life, but that Christ knew this man hoarded wealth versus helping the poor in love in failure of Leviticus 19:18b.
 - d. Upon hearing this, the rich young man went away sorrowful, for he had great wealth, meaning his love for his possessions had hindered his love toward his neighbor, Matthew 19:22 with Colossians 3:5b.
 - 3. Third, Jesus responded to this event to teach His disciples man's need for God's justification by grace:
 - a. He told His disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a sewing needle (*rhaphidos*, Ibid., p. 65), not a small gate as some teach (Ibid.), than for a rich person to be saved, Matt. 19:23-24.
 - b. When the disciples heard this claim by the Lord, they were astonished, for the Pharisees of that era taught that God bestowed wealth on those He loved, that if He thus made one wealthy, he had to be loved enough to have access to the kingdom of God, Ibid.
 - c. Jesus explained that with man, salvation was impossible, but with God all things were possible, Matt. 19:26. Justification by human effort is impossible, but it is possible as God's work through faith, the justification through faith theme about which the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 3:21-28.

Lesson: *In the cross-before-the-crown discipleship, Jesus taught that His followers must abandon their own merits and works to gain eternal life and instead rely on God's grace through faith to be saved, Romans 3:21-28.*

Application: *May we (1) believe alone in Christ alone to be saved, Ephesians 2:8-9. (2) May we teach this way of salvation, the TRUE way of salvation, upheld by Jesus and the Apostle Paul and the rest of the apostles!*