

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

h. Christ's Instruction On Humbly, Faithfully Using Every God-Given Opportunity To Serve Him (Matthew 19:27-20:16)

I. Introduction

- A. Christ's call for His followers to deny themselves and take up their cross to follow him (Matthew 16:24) in reference to Christian **service** will have its reward in heaven **providing** they function in God's **approved WAY**.
- B. Exactly **what** that **WAY** involves is taught in Matthew 19:27-20:16, and we view it for our insight as follows:

II. Christ's Instruction On Humbly, Faithfully Using Every God-Given Opportunity To Serve Him.

- A. After the rich young man had gone away sorrowful for not being willing to give up his possessions to follow Jesus, Peter contrasted himself and the disciples with that wealthy man, telling Jesus they had forsaken all to follow Him, and asking what reward God might then give them for doing so, Matthew 19:27 with 19:21-22.
- B. Jesus replied that the disciples would indeed be greatly rewarded: in the Kingdom when Christ sits on His glorious throne, each of them would also sit on thrones under Him administering the affairs of the twelve tribes of Israel, Matthew 19:29; G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospel According to Matthew, 1929, p. 242.
- C. Then, Jesus added that not just the twelve, but each of His disciples who forsakes houses, family or lands for Christ's sake will receive an hundredfold in reward besides his eternal life [gained by faith], Matthew 19:29.
- D. However, Jesus added that God's rewards will be given based on a certain criteria, for in Matthew 19:30 KJV Jesus clarified that with respect to rewards, "many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."
- E. Immediately following this statement, Jesus gave a parable in Matthew 20:1-16, and at the end of it in verse 16 (KJV) repeated the clarification, saying, "So the last shall be first, and the first last." [The added words in the KJV of "for many be called, but few chosen" are not in many manuscripts, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 77.]
- F. Thus, the Matthew 20:1-16 **parable explains** the **basis** God will use to **reward** believers' **service** (as follows):
 - 1. The parable relates how a householder in accord with the custom of the era went out early one morning to the marketplace to hire day laborers who were waiting there to work in his vineyard, Matthew 20:1.
 - 2. When he found some men who agreed to his offer to work for a "denarius" that day, "the normal daily pay for a laborer," he hired them, and they began to work, Matthew 20:2; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 65.
 - 3. When the householder went out at about the third hour, or 9 a.m., and found more men standing idle in the marketplace, he offered to pay them what was right if they started to work for him along with the men who had already been hired earlier that day. They agreed to the offer, and went to work, Matthew 20:3-4; *Ibid.*
 - 4. The householder in like manner hired more men at the sixth and then at the ninth hour, that is, at noon and 3 p.m., and also at the eleventh hour, at 5 p.m., with only one hour left for the work, Matthew 20:5-7; *Ibid.* This last group of men had stood idle all day long in the marketplace waiting to be hired simply because no one had given them the opportunity for a job, Matthew 20:6-7a. The householder thus hired them with the provision that he would pay them whatever was right at the end of that work day, Matthew 20:7b.
 - 5. When the work day ended, the householder began to pay all of the day laborers, starting with those he had hired last and going up the line of laborers until he paid those he had hired at the start of the day, giving each set of men the identical pay of a denarius, the typical day's wage for a day laborer, Matthew 20:8-9.
 - 6. The men who had worked all day assumed they might get more pay than those hired later, so when they received the one denarius everyone else got and complained about it, the householder reminded them that they had agreed to work that day for that pay, that he was free to pay others as he willed, Matt. 20:10-15.
 - 7. Thus, the parable taught God will reward a believer **not** based on how his work compares to that of other believers, but by how **faithfully** he used the **opportunities God gave him to serve**, *Ibid.*, Morgan, p. 243.

Lesson: *Jesus taught the believer's cross-before-the-crown life of service to God will be rewarded NOT according to typical HUMAN evaluations like how famous or widespread was one's ministry effort compared to the efforts of other believers, but by how FAITHFULLY he USED the PERSONAL OPPORTUNITIES that GOD GAVE HIM!*

Application: *(1) May we not judge our service efforts in light of what others do, but by how faithfully we use the opportunities to serve the Lord that God personally gives us. (2) May we be CONTENT with our GOD-GIVEN ASSIGNMENTS so as to focus on doing THEM, for HE wants US to EXCEL in THEM, NOT something ELSE!*