

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

I. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Parable Of The Rebellion Of Israel's Leaders (Matthew 21:28-32)

I. Introduction

- A. When Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah, He was not accepted by the Jerusalem chief priests and elders, for they challenged His authority and refused the authority of His forerunner, John, Matthew 21:23-27.
- B. Yet, this refusal of not only Jesus, but even of His forerunner in John the Baptizer was inexcusable rebellion, and it provides a great lesson for us on discerning true from false spiritual leaders in Matthew 21:28-32:

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Parable Of The Rebellion Of Israel's Leaders, Matthew 21:28-32.

- A. After Jesus had answered the chief priests and elders who questioned His authority, pointing them to His messianic forerunner, John the Baptizer as the human authority behind Him in line with Rabbinic rule, but they had refused to recognize John as from God, Jesus had refused to explain His authority, Matt. 21:23-27.
- B. Lest anyone think these religious rulers had just cause to doubt Jesus' authority and the credibility of John, Jesus gave a parable in Matthew 21:28-32 that exposed the rebellion in the leaders that led to their unbelief:
 - 1. Immediately after not explaining the authority by which He ministered, Jesus refused to let the religious leaders go, asking them the leading question, "But what think ye?" (Matthew 21:28a)
 - 2. He then launched into a parable about a man with two sons, and how when he had asked the first son to work that day in his vineyard, and that son had initially said he would not do so, but later repented and went where when the father had asked his second son to work in the vineyard, he had agreed to do so, but refused to go as he had said, Matthew 21:28b-30.
 - 3. Jesus then asked the religious leaders which son did the will of the father, and they replied with the obvious answer, the first son who actually eventually obeyed the father, Matthew 21:31a.
 - 4. Christ then explained that the publicans and harlots, people the religious leaders despised as unholy, would enter the kingdom of heaven ahead of them, a startling charge, Matthew 21:31b!
 - 5. The Lord explained in Matthew 21:32 as follows:
 - a. John had come "in the way of righteousness," but the religious leaders did not believe him, Matt. 21:32a.
 - b. However, the publicans and harlots who had initially not believed in God had since then repented and believed John's message much like the first son in Jesus' parable, Matthew 21:32b.
 - c. Nevertheless, even when the religious leaders had seen this conversion of the sinners they despised, they still had not repented as had the others that they might believe John's ministry, Matthew 21:32c.
 - 6. Now, Jesus' claim that John had come in "the way of righteousness" was obvious to any Jew (as follows):
 - a. Matthew 3:1-2 shows John came in the wilderness preaching repentance as the kingdom of heaven was at hand in fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 about a voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare for the Lord.
 - b. In addition, Matthew 3:4 shows that John's preaching ministry was backed up by a godly life: he wore rough camel's hair clothing with a leather belt and his diet was locusts and wild honey, what the poor often wore and ate in contrast to false prophets who lived in worldliness, cf. Matthew 11:8-9, and clothing and food typical of the credible Old Testament prophet, Elijah, 2 Kings 1:7-8, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 24.
 - c. Indeed, John's personal life and preaching were so godly and Biblically credible, that all Jerusalem, Judaea and all the region round about the Jordan River went out to John in the wilderness to be baptized with the baptism of repentance, confessing their sins, Matthew 3:5-6. Thus, the testimony of the people in addition to John's personal life and fulfillment of Scripture in his ministry made his credibility very sure.
 - 7. Accordingly, the Jerusalem chief priests and elders of the people were without excuse for not accepting John's credibility as a messenger from God, and thus in not heeding his testimony about Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God! Their unbelief was thus based in the sin of rebellion against the Lord.

Lesson: *By a parable, Jesus explained the unbelief of Israel's religious leaders in John's ministry regarding Jesus' credibility was inexcusably caused by rebellion, not a lapse in evidences of John's credibility!*

Application: *(1) May we believe in the credibility of John and his testimony of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. (2) In discerning false teachers from the true, may we (a) heed those who are ((1)) godly in life, ((2)) credible to God's people and ((3)) align with written Scripture (2 Timothy 3:13-17) while (b) NOT heeding those ((1)) with sinful lives, ((2)) with no credibility with God's people and ((3)) who do not align with written Scripture.*