

Matthew Chapter 19-20 – Jesus’ Judean Ministry – Part 5
Matthew 19:27-30 – The Disciples’ Reward
The Question in Response to the Rich Young Ruler

Introduction

Matthew 19-23 is an account of Jesus’ final Judean ministry; He is in this region for 6-9 months, which will end with Jesus being arrested and crucified. During this time, Jesus, with the disciples, is going in and out of Jerusalem, healing the crowds and increasing the faith of the disciples while refuting challenges from the leadership sects in Jerusalem.

In this section, Jesus focuses on the preparation of the Remnant of Israel to survive the Time of Jacob’s Trouble to enter the kingdom of heaven when He comes back to reign.

Matthew 19:16-26 – Review the Rich Young Ruler

Lesson 1 – The Question – Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?

We concluded that this young man was asking Jesus what was one good thing he could do to secure his entry into the kingdom of heaven. This is not a question about being born from above or saved from hell; rather, the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Lesson 2 – The Response – Jesus does not answer the question directly; rather, He addresses the rich, young ruler’s actual need.

Jesus first addresses the rich, young ruler asking, “Why do you (call Me) ask Me about what is good?” With this answer, Jesus is saying to the young man, “Who do you say that I am?”

“Keep the commandments” is not a statement about being perfect; rather, it means to observe, to preserve, and do the Law of Moses. There is no indication that keeping the commandments means doing so perfectly. It does mean that there is respect and a perpetual observance of the commandments.

Since the young man attested that he has kept the Law, Jesus addresses something that he lacks to enter the kingdom. It is important to realize that Jesus pointing out one thing he lacks is not the only thing he lacks. What Jesus does do is hit him where it hurts. The lack of self-sacrifice is definitely an issue here. Based on this interaction, we can say what the rich, young ruler lacked: An understanding of who Jesus is and an attitude of self-denial, true love of his neighbor.

Lesson 3 – The Lesson

In the Law, there was a responsibility for those with abundance to care for those who were poor. It is impossible, without God, to enter the kingdom of heaven because of the persistent problem of the rich oppressing the poor. The rich have no reason to help the poor except for God’s truth and Law.

Who can be saved? The question revolves around the Time of Jacob’s Trouble and entrance into the kingdom of heaven. If a rich person were to make it, it would be because he believed God that the riches of this world were to be used to provide for the needy.

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After His interaction with the rich, young ruler, Jesus makes a proclamation about the rich. The disciples, through Peter, asked a question. We have left everything and followed you; what then will there be for us? Hopefully, you can see that this question is directly tied to the previous conversation. The young man was told to sell all that he had and follow Jesus; he did not, but the disciples had.

The disciples were young men from various careers and family situations; all of them had left their professions and family to follow Jesus. Many were fishermen, one was a tax collector, and there were probably a few businessmen. The statement that Peter makes is not refuted, and there is no reason to suspect that Peter was speaking metaphorically or in hyperbole.

Jesus answers them with assurance, not rebuke.

You who have followed me – This is an articular participle—“the ones who followed.” The word “ἀκολουθέω *akolouthēō*” means to follow, and the five cognates all have the same basic meaning with a small nuance.

The idea of following Jesus is only found in the Gospels. It is not in Acts, and only one time in 1 Peter 2:21 do we see that Jesus is an example to follow. In the Epistles, people were encouraged or instructed to follow sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:6) and good works (5:10), also Paul has a list for Timothy to follow (2 Timothy 3:10).

But following Jesus is not mentioned after His ascension. Following Jesus was literal, and without Jesus present, a person cannot follow Jesus as the disciples were told to do. This emphasizes that the instructions we have and what they were given are different.

The article accompanied by the pronoun *you* also restricts the subject to the Twelve. Judas is obviously there, but we will find out that he was not true follower of Jesus. The question of who takes Judas’ place (Matthias or Paul) will be discussed in Acts.

In the regeneration – In this phrase, there is a definite article indicating a specific situation. “παλιγγενεσία *palingenesia*” – this is a compound word “palin” and “genesis” (*ginomai*). The restart, to begin again, the renewal of this world. This is not the resurrection or a person’s new birth; this is about the promise of the restoration of Israel and the world (Isaiah 65:17-25).

When the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne – This is a time marker; when will this occur? This is obviously the return of Jesus Christ and His establishment of the Millennial Reign, the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:32).

You also shall sit upon twelve thrones – The apostles will be given a place of high honor because of their sacrifice, work, and dedication to Jesus Christ and the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 22:28-30). It appears that the Twelve will have very high authority in the kingdom with authority over Israel.

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And everyone who has left... – This statement is for their time and the time of Jacob's Trouble in the near future. We know, reading back, that the gospel of the kingdom waned, and the gospel of Jesus Christ (salvation to all who believe) took the forefront in Acts. This is not for us, and it is not an instruction for the administration of the church.

Will receive many times as much and will inherit eternal life – Being that we have been discussing this from verse 16, we know that their inheritance is not about reconciliation to God, nor is it about rewards, but they will guarantee their entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

κληρονομέω klēronomeō –

to be an inheritor, inherit, to receive by lot

to receive a part of an inheritance, receive as an inheritance,
obtain by right of inheritance

acquire, obtain, come into possession of by means of being an heir

This word is **not** used in regard to a reward, rather this is used to indicate that a person is an heir, waiting for their possession in due time.

This is in the Future Indicative; this is a promise, and they will receive it later. They do not have possession of this eternal life at that moment. Contrast that to the multiple verses in John that state that eternal life is a current and permanent possession based solely on belief in Jesus, the Son of God (John 5:24).

But many will be first last and last first – This is a bridge verse. Jesus concludes the validation and the promise made to *everyone who has left houses....*

This is a caveat, a stipulation, a warning not to be consumed with being first (Matthew 18:1-4).

Jesus does not leave them in ambiguity about this statement but explains what He means by this statement (Matthew 20:1, 16).

Timeless Truth

Principle vs. Instruction

As we have stated many times before, we can take principles from Matthew, but we must be very careful with both instructions and results. This is captured under the economy of law and the administration of Israel with the kingdom of heaven being at hand.

We are not commanded to leave house, family, and responsibility to spread the Gospel.

What is a timeless truth we can understand from this passage?

1. Be careful with riches.
2. Dedication to Jesus Christ in the mission we are given will be rewarded.
3. Humility and self-sacrifice are honorable character traits that will be rewarded by God.