

## Episode #8-26 Matthew 16 Part 6-Christ's Big Mistake?

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being "in Israel," in contrast to believers today who are "in Christ."

II. The Lord revealed His upcoming death and resurrection to His disciples. When Peter took Him aside and chided Him for saying such things, He rebuked Satan, who was working through Peter. Then, He revealed that to follow Him meant denying yourself and taking up the cross.

III. Take Up the Cross! Matthew 16:24-28.

- A. Verse 25. "Will" is again *thelo*, whosoever wishes or desires to. "Life" both times is Greek *nephesh*, meaning soul. Soul here refers to his status, his honor, his comforts, etc. All these things are eventually lost. Lose it is *apollumi*, destroy it, cause it to perish. To hang on to your own life as your own and to refuse to submit it to God will result in you ultimately losing it. Yet he will find it again in resurrection life.
- B. Verse 26. A "man" is *anthropos*, a person. Gaining the whole world is obviously an impossible condition, but hypothetical. The "world" is the Greek *kosmos*, the entire order of mankind on earth. His own soul here means his own self, his own life. What could possibly be worth your very self? And yet, many do sell their very selves for the empty lies of this world!
- C. Verse 27. A glorious future for the Son (Representative) of Man! Man is *anthrOpos*, humanity. He will reward or pay back everyone for their practices.

IV. Christ's Big Mistake? Matthew 16:28.

- A. Verse 28. Is "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" the same as the second coming? If so, was the Lord mistaken in thinking it would come in their lifetimes (Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*)?
- B. Some try to suggest that He meant His transfiguration. He was a poor kind of prophet if He predicted some of twelve men would be alive a week later! Moreover only three of those men saw the transfiguration, even though the others were not dead, so there was more required than just not dying to see this! But the transfiguration was not the same as seeing the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.
- C. E.W. Bullinger in *The Companion Bible*, followed by Michael Penny and others, try to throw it all back on the untranslatable Greek particle *an*. They say this means that the action of the verb is dependent on a condition (which is true). Then, they try to suggest that this condition is that Israel had to accept Him as their Messiah. Since they did not, the kingdom did not come in their lifetimes. Michael Penny likes to refer to *Young's Literal Translation*, which has the same idea and translates this, "Verily I say to you, there are certain of those standing here who shall not taste of death till they may see the Son of Man coming in his reign." I do not agree with this translation, and I have multiple problems with this interpretation. First of all, the vast majority in Israel did accept Christ as their Messiah. Secondly, the Lord uses the strongest possible Greek "no" in this sentence, *ou* and *me* combined, which when it is used makes the statement very emphatic. This would make Christ to be saying that there are some standing here who shall by no means, no way, could not possibly be, pound the table that they will not, taste of death until the Son of Man might, maybe, possibly, could be, not sure, come in His kingdom. This is wishy-washy in the extreme, and a foolish way to put together a sentence. I do not believe this could

- possibly be what Christ was saying. Finally, this is simply not how the particle *an* works. It always occurs in the apodosis (not the protasis) of hypothetical sentences. For example, in the sentence “If you invite me, I will come,” “If you invite me” is the protasis, and “I will come” is the apodosis. Thus, it is in a way the opposite of the word “if,” which is always in the protasis. One might render it by the phrase “under that condition.” Thus it always appears in the part of the sentence that is dependent on the condition in the other part of the sentence. It does NOT appear in the part of the sentence that has a condition in it. The condition is stated in the protasis. In this sentence, the condition is that you are among the “some” who are not going to taste of death. If you are one who is going to taste of death (Judas), then you will not see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. If we wanted to try to translate this sentence by using a phrase for *an*, we would make it, “Amen I say to you, there are some standing here who shall by no means taste of death, until, fulfilling that condition and being part of the ‘some,’ they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” The condition is stated in the protasis (first part) of the sentence. This is always true of the word *an*. The condition is ALWAYS stated in the sentence. It is never in some remoter context not stated in the sentence, so translating by “may” as Young does is simply incorrect and poor translation. Here, the condition stated is that they are among the “some.” To make Israel accepting Christ or anything else the condition is entirely foreign to the way this particle works. I respect the scholarship of Bullinger and Young, but they are trying to solve a difficulty here and have set aside good grammar to do so.
- D. How is this problem to be solved? The gospels record this statement three different ways. Matthew 16:28, “the Son of Man coming in His kingdom;” Mark 9:1, “the kingdom of God present with power;” Luke 9:27, “the kingdom of God.” These are all the same. One makes the other clear. Moreover, “coming” is not the word *parousia* for His coming to be personally present but merely *erchomai*, a simple coming. How would one see the Son of Man “coming in His kingdom”? What would His kingdom look like? Would it have chariot wheels? Would it be drawn by horses? Would it have “the Son of Man’s Kingdom” written on the side in gold lettering?
- E. Understand that when Germany took over France in World War II, the people of France would have seen Hitler and the Nazis coming into the government. They did not have to see Hitler arriving on a train or by motorcar in order to see this. Though some of them may have seen that during his visit in 1940, that would not have been seeing him coming into the government. Instead, what they saw were things like Nazi soldiers walking the streets, signs going up announcing curfew, Jews and others undesirable to Nazis being arrested, new and restrictive rules being put in place, and so forth. This was Hitler and the Nazis coming into the government of France, not Hitler arriving in a motorcar. So this does not have to do with the second coming of Christ, but with the coming of the kingdom of God.
- F. To interpret this, we need to realize that the kingdom of God comes in stages (as the parable in Mark 4:26-29 sets forth), that it begins before the second coming of Jesus Christ (this is the truth that most do not see!), and that the earliest of the stages already happened in the book of Acts, but the remainder was then suspended at Acts 28:28 to bring in the parenthetical dispensation of grace. Of the twelve men standing there, before long one would be dead by his own hand (Judas). Eleven of them would live to see the kingdom come in its early stage like the blade stage of growing grain

(Mark 4:28). They would not see it fully come, for that did not happen. Nor would they see the second coming without dying, but Christ never said they would. At the day of Pentecost, God's governmental power was poured out, and many of these men saw it. It healed, it punished, it ruled, it displayed power. It did many governmental things, and these men watched these happen. They saw Him coming into His kingdom in a limited way. Thus this promise was fulfilled. In the future, we will yet see Him come into the kingdom in an unlimited way, and these disciples will see it as well when they are raised from the dead. May God speed the day!

V. Conclusion: To follow the Lord meant being willing to give up your soul, your comfortable life, to follow Him. Yet He promised His disciples some of them would live to see Him coming in His kingdom. Many have fits over this because they incorrectly identify His second coming and the kingdom of God as being the same. Yet the kingdom of God was coming powerfully in the Acts period in its earliest stage. Now it is suspended, and will take up in a future time. Yet it did start to come, and they saw it. Christ's words were true, as they always are.