

Episode #839 - Matthew 19 Part 4-The Rich in the Kingdom

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. In Matthew 19, the Lord had been approached by a rich, young man who wanted to know how he could be sure to inherit a place in the kingdom of the heavens.

III. The Rich Young Man. Matthew 19:16-22.

- A. Verse 21. If you want is Greek *theleis*, to will in the sense of wish or desire. “Perfect” means mature or complete. Poor are those reduced to beggary, the helpless or needy. The commandments mentioned so far had to do with other people; he shows love to them, but will he show it to God? What this young man truly lacked was faith. He now had a word from God, and he could act on it. If he did, that would be faith, and he would find eonian life. This does not mean that selling our possessions and following the Lord today would guarantee us eternal life, or wealth and honor in the future. Where is the Lord, that we could follow Him? And He never told us to do this.
- B. Verse 22. He wanted eonian life, but not at the expense of his comfortable life now. Many today want the same thing, but they have no desire to sacrifice and lay it all on the line for that desire. Like the rich young ruler, they go away sorrowful. Oscar Baker suggested this young man was Paul. But we can hardly imagine Paul turning away from a radical move to attain eternal life! This does not fit his personality.

IV. The Rich Man and the Kingdom. Matthew 19:23-30.

- A. Verse 23. “Assuredly” is *amen* I say to you, meaning truly. This passage shows how foolish it is to say that the kingdom of the heavens or the kingdom of God is Christendom, for there is nothing easier than for a rich man to get into Christendom.
- B. Verse 24. Some have tried to say that “the eye of a needle” was a very small gate, and that a camel could get through, but only if he was completely unloaded of all burdens. This is clever, but the problem is that the Lord is illustrating something impossible with men, verse 26, but it is very possible for men to unload a camel, so that does not fit. Notice that “the kingdom of the heavens” in verse 23 and “the kingdom of God” in verse 24 are parallel. “The heavens” was a phrase they used to substitute for saying the name of God, which the Jews were often reluctant to say aloud.
- C. Verse 25. “Can” is *dunamai*, who has the inherent power to be saved? Remember that we look down on the rich, elite class in Israel because they were the Lord’s enemies, but the people at the time looked up to them as the cream of the crop and the best of the best. The disciples thought, if the rich could not be saved, who could, since they were the best of people? But they were wrong in their assessment.
- D. Verse 26. He looked at them, probably with focus and intensity. “Men” is the Greek *anthropois*, meaning human beings. “Impossible” is *adunaton*, without power or strength. So He did not mean you could do it but you just had to unload the camel. Yes, the salvation of a man, the changing of a heart, are not possible for men. Yet these things are very possible with God, so many rich will indeed be saved.
- E. Verse 27. Peter wants to know about them. They are not rich, but they have chosen to follow the Lord, and they have given up everything they had, which is surely significant. What will be their lot for so doing?
- F. Verse 28. “Assuredly” is again *amen*, meaning “truly,” an affirmation.

1. “Regeneration” is the Greek *palingenesia*, literally “again to generate,” the making new of all things. Often used of the restoration of a thing to its pristine state. In the Bible it is used twice; here, and in Titus 3:5, “washing of regeneration.” By this washing we are restored to the way humans were meant to be in the beginning; no water ceremony of baptism, but a renewing that is done by the Holy Spirit when we believe. Here, it is another name for the kingdom of God, for it will be characterized by things being renewed to their pristine state, as God always intended for them to be.
2. A “throne” is not an ornate chair, but a seat of government. His throne is in the heavens when His kingdom rules over all, Psalm 103:19. At the same time, the man David will be prince under Him upon earth, Ezekiel 34:24. At the same time, He will restore their judges as at the first, Isaiah 1:26. Part of this will doubtless be the restoration of the rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens of the past, but it will also come down to twelve major judges over each tribe, and these will be the twelve disciples.

V. Conclusion: The rich, young man received a word he could have faith in, yet he went away sorrowful because he loved his worldly possessions. Are we willing to make the sacrifice to have a true relationship with God by faith? The Lord revealed how impossible it is for a rich, powerful man to enter the kingdom, but that what is impossible with humans is possible with God. Peter wanted to know what they would get since they had left all for Him, and He told him they would be twelves judges over the twelve tribes. Are we willing to sacrifice all for Him?