

Lesson 74 – CHRIST, THE SERVANT-KING
20:17-34

Matthew

(Matt. 20:17-19) – The Lord began walking toward Jerusalem with His disciples. He spoke to *“THE TWELVE DISCIPLES APART”* from the rest of the crowd telling them of His mission in coming into the world. He identified Himself once again as *“THE SON OF MAN,”* which spoke of Him as the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, the Savior of sinners and Lord of glory. He spoke of His betrayal which would come by the reprobate Judas. He spoke of how He would *“BE BETRAYED UNTO THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND UNTO THE SCRIBES”* and how *“THEY SHALL CONDEMN HIM TO DEATH.”* He spoke of how they *“SHALL DELIVER HIM TO THE GENTILES TO MOCK, AND TO SCOURGE, AND TO CRUCIFY HIM: AND THE THIRD DAY HE SHALL RISE AGAIN.”* Notice that He used the word *“SHALL”* four times. These were not things that might happen but things that would happen because, before the world began, God had determined and ordained the substitutionary death of His Son in Jerusalem (Acts 2:23; 4:26-28; 2 Tim. 1:8-10; Heb. 2:14-18; Rev. 13:8). This was the very reason the Son of God came into the world – to save His people from their sins. And in order to accomplish this great redemption, He had to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and establish righteousness whereby God is just to justify the ungodly (Gal. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 10:10-14).

(Matt. 20:20-21) – While the heart of the Savior was occupied with His approaching death, the disciples were thinking about personal ambition in the coming kingdom, which they thought was a physical kingdom. It is clear that their mother was speaking for them (Mark 10:35-37). Christ had just dealt with the issue of equality in His spiritual kingdom of grace. Obviously, the disciples had not learned the lesson of the vanity of seeking higher positions. Note, however, that this woman came *“WORSHIPPING HIM,”* which indicates that, even though her thoughts on the kingdom were wrong, she honored Christ as the Messiah/King, the Lord from glory and deserving of worship (John 20:28).

(Matt. 20:22-24) – The *“CUP”* and baptism to which the Lord referred were His sufferings unto death. He asked, “Are you able to go through this experience with Me?” And they answered, *“WE ARE ABLE.”* He told them that they would suffer for the Gospel. James would be beheaded (Acts 12:2), and John would be exiled (Rev. 1:9). But there will be no higher and lower positions in the glorious, spiritual, and eternal kingdom of God for the people of God. All of God’s people are equally “kings and priests” (Rev. 1:5-6) through the grace of God and the merits of Christ. The other disciples resented James’s and John’s request as they thought the two were seeking to rule over them.

(Matt. 20:25-27) – The Lord pointed out that the people of the world spend their time and energy trying to become greater than others, and when they achieve it, they often abuse it to get gain and hurt others. But the Word of God instructs true children of the King of kings not to do this – *“And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not”* (Jer. 45:5); *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matt. 6:33). In the kingdom of God, there will be one Ruler, the Lord Himself. Greatness in HIS kingdom comes only by humility and service to Him and His people.

(Matt. 20:28) – As always, Christ Himself is the supreme example of humility and service that leads to greatness (Php. 2:1-11). He came to serve His Father and His people by giving *“HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.”* Christ paid the ransom price of His own blood, dying for the sins of the *“MANY”* (God’s elect given to Him before the world began) that had been imputed to Him. This *“MANY”* describes those chosen by God in Christ (2 Tim. 1:9), who were ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:38), the sheep for whom He died and for whom He now makes intercession (John 10:11; 17:9,20). They are those whom He keeps safe by His power and who shall be presented *“faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 24-25).

(Matt. 20:29-31) – As Christ and the disciples departed, the crowd followed, and two blind men heard that the Lord was passing by and cried, *“HAVE MERCY ON US, O LORD, THOU SON OF DAVID.”* The crowd rebuked them and told them to *“HOLD THEIR PEACE,”* but the two were desperate and cried out again unto the Lord.

(Matt. 20:32-34) – Notice, *“JESUS STOOD STILL,* and asked, *“WHAT WILL YE THAT I SHALL DO UNTO YOU?”* They said, *“LORD, THAT OUR EYES MAY BE OPENED.”* Christ then *“TOUCHED THEIR EYES,”* and they *“RECEIVED SIGHT.”* Then *“THEY FOLLOWED HIM.”* This is a great illustration of how Christ in His mercy saves all who come to Him seeking true mercy. All whom the Father gave to Him SHALL come to Him, and He will not cast them out (John 6:37). We who are spiritually blind by nature will receive spiritual sight to see His glory in our salvation as the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life and brings us to cry out to Christ for mercy, grace, salvation, and all spiritual healing. And when this happens, all whom He heals and to whom He gives spiritual sight will follow Him as the Lord their Righteousness (Rom. 10:4), the complete and faithful Savior of their souls, and their sovereign Lord and King. Christ stands still to save His people from their sins, and He brings all of them to *“stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD”* (Exod. 14:13).