

Matthew 19 - Marriage & Divorce; Rich Young Ruler

III. King's interim kingdom program (Matt 13:1—20:28)

- (3) Christ trains the disciples (Matt 14:13—20:28)
 - (O) Teaching on marriage and divorce (19:1-12)
 - (P) Teaching on not thwarting the children's access to the kingdom (19:13-15)
 - (Q) Teaching on wealth and entrance into the kingdom (19:16-30)

Matthew 19

(O) Teaching on marriage and divorce (19:1-12) (Cf. Mark 10:1-12)

1 When Jesus had finished these words, He left Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan;

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1 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the territory of Judea on the other side of the Jordan.

1 And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;

2 and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.

2 and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.

2 Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

These verses conclude a major section of Matthew's Gospel (13:54—19:2). This section highlighted Jesus' reaction to Israel's rejection of Him. Jesus continued to experience opposition from the ordinarily Israelites, from the Roman leadership, and from the Jewish religious leaders. His reaction was often to withdraw and concentrate on preparing His disciples for what lay ahead of them in view of His rejection and crucifixion. However, He also continued to minister to the needs of the crowds, primarily the Jews, because He had compassion on them.

Matt 19:3—20:34 continues Jesus' instruction of His disciples in preparation for their future. After this, Jesus formally presented Himself to Israel as her King in the Triumphal Entry (21:1-17). This resulted in strong rejection by Israel's leaders (21:18—22:46).

Consequently, Jesus pronounced His rejection of Israel (Matt 23), and revealed to His disciples that He would return to Israel later and establish the kingdom (Matt 24-25). Throughout this section, the Jewish leaders' opposition to Jesus continues to intensify; reconciliation becomes impossible. Jesus revealed increasingly more about Himself and His mission and stressed the future inauguration of the kingdom.

3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, **testingHim** and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason *at all*?"

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3 Some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

- "...testing Him" - the Pharisees again engaged Jesus to trap Him (Cf. 12:2,14,38; 15:1; 16:1; 22:15,34-35)

- Divorce and the criteria required for divorce, was a hot issue in Jesus' day, as it is today: when is it proper under God for a marriage to dissolve?

— Longstanding debate between two rabbis...one interpreted it very strictly, the other very liberally (can divorce for any reason at all):

1. Rabbi Hillel - any reason (like bad cooking!), real or imagined

2. Rabbi Shammai - only for something "indecent," like adultery

— So the Pharisees came to Jesus to get His opinion on this debate, to find out whose side He was on on this topic...

4 And He answered and said, "**Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,**

4 And He answered and said, "**Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female,**

4 He answered them, "**Haven't you read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'**

4 And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,**

- Quoted from Gen 1:27

- The Pharisees based their thinking on Deut 24:1-4, where Moses permitted divorce (Cf. v7). Jesus went back to Creation (Gen 1-2) as expressing God's original intention for marriage: no divorce.

— He argued that the original principle takes precedence over the exception

5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME **ONE FLESH**'?

5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

5 and said, 'That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

- Quoted from Gen 2:24 to show that He believed that marriage unites a man and a woman in a unified ("one flesh") relationship

— Gen 2:24 is quoted twice by Jesus and twice by Paul in the NT

— "...ONE FLESH" - expressed the fact that when a man and woman marry, they become whole, just as Adam was a whole person before God created Eve from his side

— As unmarried individuals, Adam and Eve were each lacking something, but when God brought them together in marriage, they became whole

6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, **no person is to separate.**"

6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must never separate."

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

- Christ doesn't get into a bogged down debate over the viewpoints of these two rabbis... He doesn't even seem to care what they were saying. He goes back to God's pattern in Creation, specifically God's design in marriage.

- In view of the marriage union, a husband and wife are no longer two, but one. God has united them in a "one flesh" relationship by marriage.

— Since God has done this, separating them by divorce is not only unnatural, but rebellion against God

— Jesus aligned Himself with Malachi (Mal 2:16), rather than with the Pharisees or any of the rabbis

- "...no person is to separate" - the verb is an imperative. To break up a marriage is to usurp the function of God by whose creative order it was set up and who has decreed that it is a permanent "one flesh" union.

7 They *said to Him, "Why, then, did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND HER AWAY?"

7 They *said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send *her* away?"

7 They asked him, "Why, then, did Moses order us 'to give a certificate of divorce and divorce her'?"

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

- Jesus had not yet answered the Pharisees' original question about how one should interpret the Mosaic Law on this subject, so they asked Him this question

- This was a misquote of Deut 24:1-4: Moses did not command, Moses *allowed*

— It is the interpretation of this phrase that divided the two schools of Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai, famous first-century Jewish scholars

— Hillel took a very lax view and said that the husband could divorce his wife for almost any reason, while Shammai took the stricter view and said Moses was speaking only about sexual sin. No matter which side Jesus took, He would surely offend somebody.

- In the Deut 24:1-4 passage to which the Pharisees referred, God showed more concern about prohibiting the remarriage of the divorced woman and her first husband than the reason for granting divorce.

— However, the Pharisees took the passage as a "command" (*entellomai*) to divorce one's wife for any indecency. God intended it as only a permission to divorce, as the passage itself shows.

8 He *said to them, **"Because of your hardness of heart** Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.

8 He *said to them, **"Because of your hardness of heart** Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.

8 He told them, **"It was because of your hardness of heart that** Moses allowed you to divorce your wives. But from the beginning it was not this way.

8 He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**

- Jesus explained that the concession of the Mosaic Law was just that, a concession. It did not reflect the will of God in creation, but the hardness of the human heart. Divorce was no more a part of God's creation ordinance than sin was. However, He "permitted" divorce, as he permitted sin.

- "...your hardness of heart" - this is a reason that God allowed, but did not condone, polygamy in the OT (see notes on 1 Sam 1:2)

- The divorce option that God granted the Israelites testified to man's sinfulness, therefore one should always view divorce as evidence of sin, specifically hardness of heart.
- People should never view divorce as simply a morally neutral option that God granted
- The Pharisees' fundamental attitude toward the issue was wrong: they were looking for grounds for divorce
- What was the indecency for which Moses permitted divorce?
- It was not adultery, since that required the death penalty (Deut 22:22)
- It was not suspicion of adultery either since there was a procedure for handling this (Num 5:5-31)
- Likely it was gross immoral behavior short of adultery, namely fornication, which includes all types of prohibited sexual behavior

9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery."

9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

9 I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

- Jesus gives the Pharisees His position on the subject
- Matthew recorded only Jesus' words concerning a man divorcing his wife because in Judaism wives could not divorce their husbands
- Mark recorded Jesus saying that the same thing holds true for a woman who divorces her husband (Mark 10:12). Mark wrote for a Roman audience where wives were permitted to divorce their husbands.

— "...except for sexual immorality" - the exception clause; "except for immorality" [NASB]; "except for sexual immorality" [NKJV, NIV]; there are two interpretation problems in this verse:

1. What does fornication (*porneia*) include? Paul used this word to describe prostitution (1 Cor 6:13,16). Others believe it only refers to premarital sex. It likely doesn't mean adultery (*moicheia*) because this is a different Greek word, which Matthew used along with *porneia* in 15:19. Thus, they must not mean the same thing. The best solution seems to be that *porneia* is a broad term that covers many different sexual sins that lie outside of God's will. Essentially, it refers to any sexual intercourse that God forbids with any creature other than one's spouse.

2. What does this exception clause mean, and why is it found only in Matthew's account, not in Mark or Luke? There are a number of interpretations (Matthew added the clause; the exception clause does not express an exception [it does]; divorce in v9 doesn't really mean divorce, but separation [same word as v3, which means divorce]). It is best to interpret *porneia* and the exception clause as they appear normally in English: whoever divorces his wife, except for some gross sexual sin, then remarries someone else, commits adultery (Cf. 5:32). Mark (10:11) and Luke (16:18) likely omitted the exception clause to express the main point of Jesus' words without dealing with the exceptions.

- Just as Moses permitted divorce because of the hardness of man's heart, so did Jesus. Yet, Moses was indefinite about the indecency that constituted grounds for a divorce, Jesus specified the indecency as gross sexual sin—fornication.
- A close reading of this verse shows that Jesus is not prohibiting remarriage if the divorce was due to sexual immorality. He is only prohibiting divorce in instances where the divorce was NOT because of sexual immorality.

10 The disciples *said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."

10 The disciples *said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."

10 His disciples asked him, "If that is the relationship of a man with his wife, it's not worth getting married!"

10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

- The disciples probably expressed regret because Jesus came down more conservatively than even Rabbi Shammai: Jesus conceded divorce only for sexual indecency (as Shammai did), but He encouraged the disciples not to remarry after a divorce not involved sexual indecency (Shammai permitted it)

- The disciples thought that if they could not divorce and remarry as both Hillel and Shammai permitted, they were better off to remain single

11 But He said to them, "Not all men *can* accept this statement, but *only* those to whom it has been given.

11 But He said to them, "Not all men *can* accept this statement, but *only* those to whom it has been given.

11 "Not everyone can accept this saying," he replied, "except those to whom celibacy has been granted,

11 But he said unto them, *All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.*

12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by people; and there are *also* eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who is able to accept *this*, let him accept *it*."

12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are *also* eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept *this*, let him accept *it*."

12 because some men are celibate from birth, while some are celibate because they have been made that way by others. Still others are celibate because they have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom from heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

- Jesus identified three types of eunuchs (those who are celibate):

1. Those born that way ("so born from *their* mother's womb") - born impotent or without sexual drive, thus remained unmarried
2. Those castrated by other men ("made eunuchs of men"), mainly those who served in government positions where they had frequent access to royal women
3. Those who have chosen to remain unmarried ("made themselves eunuchs") so they could serve God more effectively.

— Thus, in answer to the disciples' suggestion that Jesus' encouragement to remain unmarried was too high a standard (v10), Jesus pointed out many people who can remain unmarried.

- This is not an invitation to celibacy. It is simply an indication that some people have the gift of desire to be celibate.

— This also is not evidence that God views celibacy as "holier" than marriage (1 Tim 4:1-3; Heb 13:4; Cf. 1 Cor 9:5)

- See 1 Cor 7 for additional instructions and clarification on marriage and divorce

(P) Teaching on not thwarting the children's access to the kingdom (19:13-15) (Cf. Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17)

13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He would lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

13 Then some little children were brought to him so that he might lay his hands on them and pray. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

- It was customary to bring children to rabbis for blessing. This practice is also reflected in the OT (Gen 48:14; Num 27:18; Cf. Acts 6:6; 13:3).

- We're not told in any of the synoptics why the disciples rebuked those who brought them, but the fact that they did it showed that they needed further instruction from Jesus on humility

14 But Jesus said, "Leave the children alone, and do not forbid them to come to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

14 Jesus, however, said, "Let the little children come to me, and stop keeping them away, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to people like these."

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

- Jesus welcomed the children with the same attitude He had toward all the humble, dependent, needy, trusting and vulnerable people who came to Him

- Jesus did not say the kingdom belonged to children, but rather to people who are similar to children (in the qualities children display)

15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

15 When he had laid his hands on them, he went on from there.

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

(Q) Teaching on wealth and entrance into the kingdom (19:16-30) (Cf. Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23)

16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do so that I may obtain eternal life?"

16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

16 Just then a man came up to Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what good deed should I do to have eternal life?"

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

- Luke 18:18 identifies the man as a "ruler"
- The young man's idea of how to obtain eternal life was far from what Jesus had been preaching and even recently illustrating (v13-15)
- The ruler demonstrated the opposite of childlike faith and humility, and thought he had to perform some particular act of righteousness in addition to keep the Mosaic Law (v20)
- He wanted Jesus to tell him what that act was; obviously he was a performance-minded person

17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

17 Jesus asked him, "Why ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you want to get into that life, you must keep the commandments."

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

- Jesus response showed the ruler that he had an improper understanding of "goodness"
- Jesus goes on to explain that only God is good enough to obtain eternal life by performing some good deed. No one else is good enough to gain it that way.
- "...if you want to enter life, keep the commandments" - does not mean that Jesus believed a person could earn eternal life by obeying God's commands
- Obedience to God's commands is a good preparation for entering into eternal life, but obedience apart from faith will not do

18 Then he *said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY;

18 Then he *said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness;

18 The young man asked him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "You must not murder, you must not commit adultery, you must not steal, you must not give false testimony,

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

- The rabbis had added so many commands to the Mosaic Law that the young man did not know which "commandments" Jesus meant

19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

19 Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

19 honor your father and mother; and, 'you must love your neighbor as yourself."

19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

- Jesus listed the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 5th commandments, in that order. All of these commands deal with observable behavior.

— Note that Jesus did not introduce the Law to show the young man *how* to be saved, but to show him that he *needed* to be saved

20 The young man *said to Him, "All these I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

20 The young man *said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

20 The young man told him, "I have kept all of these. What do I still lack?"

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

- The fact that he proudly told Jesus that he "kept all" of the commands reveals his lack of understanding of God's demands

— In addition, after living a seemingly upright life, he still had no assurance of his salvation and eternal life. This is always the case when someone seeks to earn eternal life by their works...you can never be sure you've done enough.

— He was materially rich, but still had an eternal-life-sized hole that he was looking to fill. His material wealth provided him much, but he was lacking what he needed most: the assurance of salvation.

21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

21 Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the destitute, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come back and follow me."

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

- Did Jesus add a requirement for salvation in His reply to the Rich Young Ruler? — No. We can't use this passage the way Jesus did because Jesus is omniscient and we're not.

— When Jesus was dealing with this specific person, He could see this man's hang up to belief. He saw through His omniscience that the thing holding this man back from belief was money. If money was out of the way, this man would have a straight shot at belief, but as long as money was involved, he would never believe.

- Jesus, through His omniscience, could look into this guy's heart and see his problem, so when He told the man to sell everything, Jesus was giving him an individualized formula.
- Jesus is doing here what we call "pre-evangelism"...the goal was to get the man to believe in Christ, but Jesus, through His omniscience, knew the root of the problem in his belief: love of money. The only way this could be resolved in his life was to sell everything. Doing this wouldn't save the man, but would remove the barrier to his belief.
- We are not omniscient, therefore we don't have the same right to tell people to sell everything before coming to Christ.
- The Bible never teaches that money is the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10)...it is a (not *the*) root of all sorts of evil.
- This man's problem was not that he owned things, but that the things he owned, owned him

22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

22 But when the young man heard this statement he went away sad, because he had many possessions.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

The ruler needed to become a follower of Jesus and begin learning from Him. God's will does not just involve keeping commandments; it also involves following Jesus. If he did that, he would learn how a person obtains eternal life: not by works, but by faith in Jesus. To do this, he needed to sell his possessions. He could not follow Jesus without removing the things that would distract him.

The ruler was so attached to his wealth that he was unwilling to part with it. That is the insidiousness of riches. He was willing to keep the entire Mosaic Law, and even do additional works, but submitting to Jesus was another thing entirely. Jesus put His finger on the crucial decision the man had to make when He told him to dispose of his possessions.

This passage does not teach that a person must surrender all to Jesus before they can obtain eternal life. Jesus never made this a condition for salvation. He made giving away possessions here a condition for discipleship, not salvation. Jesus followed a familiar pattern here, as He did throughout the Gospels: First, He called a person to follow Him, that is, to begin learning from Him as a disciple. Next, He called His disciples to believe on

Him, and lastly, He called those who believed to continue following and believing because He had an important job for them to do.

It is good to have the things money can buy provided we do not lose the things that money cannot buy.

Salvation and Reward (Cf. Mark 10:23-27; Luke 18:24-27)

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

23 Then Jesus told his disciples, "I tell all of you with certainty, it will be hard for a rich person to get into the kingdom from heaven.

23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

24 Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into the kingdom of God."

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

- "...a camel to go through the eye of the needle" - there are many theories, but it appears this was a common expression for something impossible

The use of the "kingdom of heaven" in v23, and "kingdom of God" in v24, in the passage and context, point to Matthew's use of the terms interchangably. Matthew uses the term "kingdom of heaven" 31x (3:2; 4:17; 5:3,10,19,20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11,12; 13:11,24,31,33,44,45,47,52; 16:19; 18:1,3,4,23; 19:14,23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1) and "kingdom of God" (6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31; 21:43) appears only 5x. The multiple references to the former and the scant references to the latter also reflect a common Jewish reluctance of mentioning God's name directly.

25 When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"

25 When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"

25 When the disciples heard this, they were completely astonished. "Who, then, can be saved?" they asked.

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

- The disciples amazement was due to the Jewish belief that wealth signified God's favor
- "...saved" - a synonym for entering the kingdom (v24) or obtaining eternal life (v16)
- Is it possible to be saved if you are rich? Yes (Cf. v26)
- See 1 Tim 6:10. Money is not the root of all evil, the LOVE of money is! (Money is only a unit of measure)
- Money can be a blessing (1 Tim 6:17-19)

26 And looking at *them*, Jesus said to them, "With people **this** is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

26 And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

26 Jesus looked at them intently and said, "For humans this is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**

- "...this" - the antecedent is salvation (v25); in other words, man cannot save himself

The Disciple's Reward (Cf. Mark 10:28-30; Luke 18:28-30)

27 Then Peter responded and said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"

27 Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"

27 "Look!" Peter replied. "We have left everything and followed you. So what will we get?"

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

- Based on Jesus' response that the rich young ruler (v21) that if he followed Him, he would receive treasure in heaven, Peter asked Jesus what was in it for those who had already made this sacrifice

28 And Jesus said to them, "**Truly I say to you**, that you who have followed Me, in the **regeneration** when the Son of Man will sit on His **glorious throne**, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

28 And Jesus said to them, "**Truly I say to you**, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon

twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

28 Jesus told them, *"I tell all of you with certainty, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne in the renewed creation, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, governing the twelve tribes of Israel.*

28 And Jesus said unto them, *Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

- "...Truly I say unto you" - Jesus assured the disciples that God would reward them for leaving what they had left and following Him

- This verse links Jesus' kingdom reign with the Second Coming, the regeneration of the earth, and the coming judgment

- "...regeneration" - *palingenesia*, *palin* = again; *genesia* = begin, so regeneration means to "begin again." It has the notion of renewal here; it refers to the regeneration of the heavens and earth before the Messianic Kingdom (Is 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 11:1-11; 32:16-18; 35:1-2; 65:17; 66:22; Cf. Acts 3:21; Rom 8:18-23).

— The only other time *palingenesia* is used is in Titus 3:5, referring to "regeneration" in relation to believers

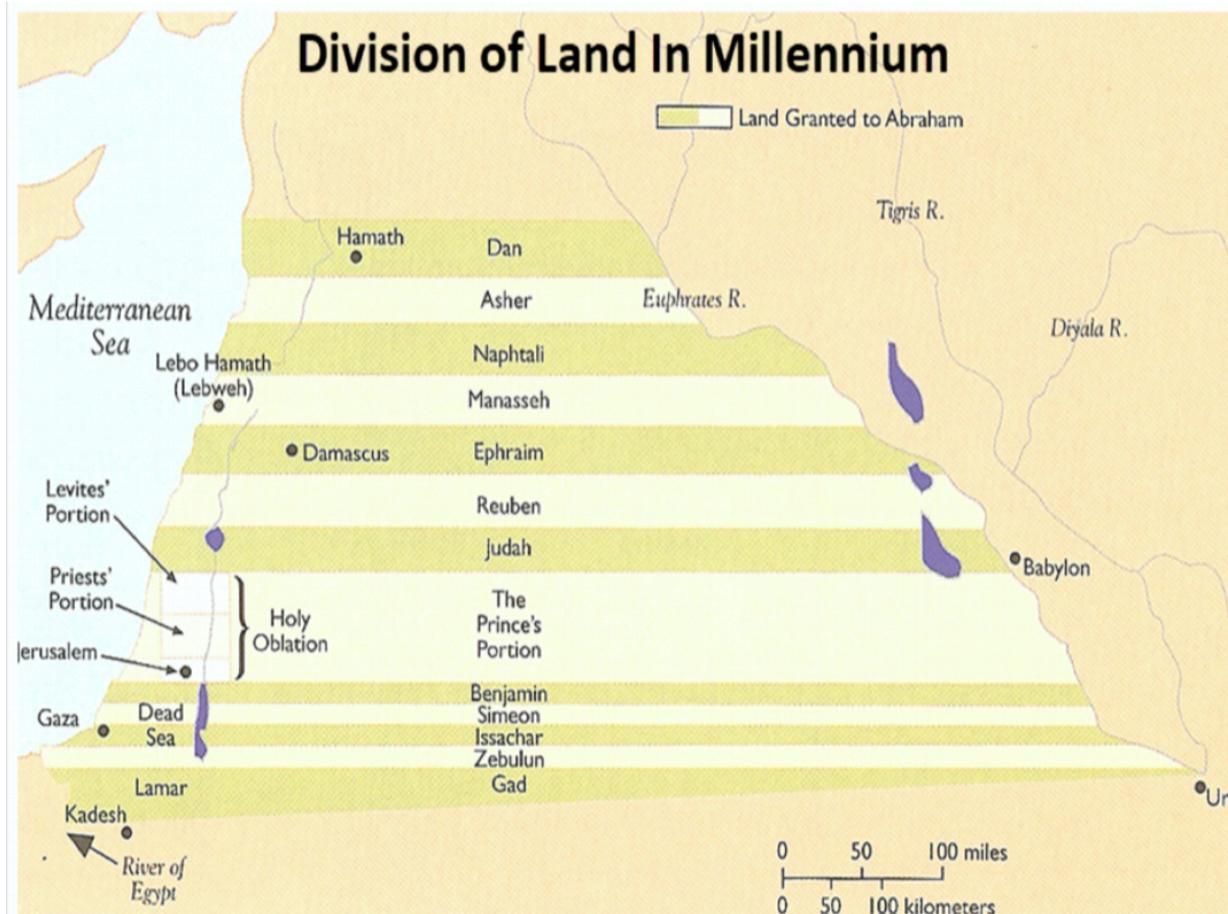
- The reward of these disciples, for forsaking all and following Jesus, will be sharing judgment and rule with the great Judge, Jesus, in His kingdom

— This judgment will take place and this rule will begin on earth when Jesus returns at the Second Coming (the Sheep & Goat Judgment, 25:31-46; Cf. Luke 22:28-30)

— The 12 apostles' destiny was Israel, not the Gentiles. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles.

- "...glorious throne" - David's Throne, to which Jesus is the Heir genealogically

— Upon hearing this, the disciples' minds would've gone back to Ezek 47, which describes the apportionment of the land of Israel during the kingdom



4 Truths about the Kingdom from Matt 19:28

The context of Jesus' words is His encounter with the Rich Young Ruler (19:16-26) and Peter's question concerning what rewards the apostles would have for following Jesus (Matt 19:27). The Rich Young Ruler loved his possessions more than He loved Jesus and he would not part with his wealth. But Peter asked what reward there would be for himself and the apostles who did forsake all to follow Jesus. The main point is that Jesus reveals great rewards for those who follow Him. But Jesus' answer also reveals four key truths concerning events to come:

1. There is a coming renewal of planet earth. This is made clear by Jesus use of the term "regeneration" which is the Greek word, *palingenesia*. This term refers to "re-creation" or "renewal." In this context it refers to the recreation or renewal of the earth and parallels the glorified creation that Paul speaks of in Rom 8:18-23. Thus, Jesus sees a restored planet earth in the future. The future involves a real tangible earth, not a wispy existence on a cloud. This planet will be the base for the rewards of relationships and farms that Jesus brings up in Matt 19:29. This truth refutes any idea of a Platonic elevation of the spiritual over the physical. The physical earth matters in God's plans and His kingdom certainly includes it.
2. The Davidic Throne of Jesus is future in connection with a renewed earth. Jesus links His assumption of the Throne of David with the renewal of creation. He refers to sitting on His "glorious throne" which is a reference to the throne of David. In Luke 1:32-33 the angel Gabriel promised Mary that her Son, Jesus, would sit upon the throne of His father David and would rule over the house of Jacob [i.e. Israel] forever. What is quite significant about this statement is that Jesus tells us when He will sit on His glorious Davidic throne. It is at the time of the regeneration of planet earth. This shows that Jesus' kingdom reign is future from our standpoint since it is connected with the renewal of the earth. In Matt 25:31 Jesus says He will sit on His "glorious throne" when He comes again in glory at His Second Coming to judge the nations of the earth.
3. The nation Israel will be restored. On several occasions the OT prophets predicted a restored Israel with a unification of the twelve tribes (See Ezek 36-37). The mention of the "twelve tribes of Israel" in Matt 19:28 shows that Jesus expects a future restoration of the nation Israel with the twelve tribes present. Some have tried to read the Church into this statement, but such a conclusion is unwarranted. Other than just asserting it, what evidence is there that the Church is the Israel of Matt 19:28? Thus, this verse is explicit NT evidence for a restoration and unification of national Israel.
4. The apostles will rule over a restored Israel. The Bible teaches that when the Messiah reigns, the saints will reign too (see Dan 7:27; Rev 5:10). For the twelve apostles this means "sit[ting] upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." When Jesus sits on His glorious Davidic Throne, then the apostles will rule as well over the tribes of Israel. This is a literal rule over the literal tribes of Israel when the kingdom comes. So not only will Israel be united and restored, the nation will be ruled over by the twelve apostles. Other Scripture references indicate that the Church and saints of God will be ruling too when Jesus returns (Rev 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10). For the apostles, their reign is centered in Israel, but the saints as a whole will be involved with a worldwide reign.

Jesus' words in Matt 19:28 are astonishing and show incredible blessings to come. We see that planet earth will be restored, Jesus will reign as King, Israel will be restored and united, and the apostles will have ruling functions. There is much to look forward to for those who give up all to follow Jesus in this age.

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms on account of My name, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

29 In fact, everyone who has left his homes, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or fields because of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

- Not only the twelve disciples, but every self-sacrificing disciple will receive a reward for their sacrifice

— Jesus point is that everyone who makes a sacrifice to follow Him will receive much more than they sacrificed as a reward. God is no man's debtor.

30 But many *who are first* will be last; and *the last, first.*

30 But many *who are first* will be last; and *the last, first.*

30 But many *who are first* will be last, and *the last will be first."*

30 But many *that are first* shall be last; and *the last shall be first.*

- This proverbial saying expresses the reversals that will take place when the King begins to reign in the kingdom: "first" and "last" are positions representing greatness and lowliness, and the examples are the rich young ruler and the disciples.

— While those who have been "keeping score" in this life may be in for some unpleasant surprises in the kingdom

Jesus here points out a fact that is present throughout the NT, but not covered much: that is, the fact that eternal life is something that a believer must work to inherit. Eternal life is quantitative as well as qualitative (Cf. Matt 19:16; Mark 10:17,30; Luke 10:25; 18:18,30; John 12:25-26; Rom 2:7; 6:22; Gal 6:8).