



Chapter 20

The Judean Ministry

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This chapter opens with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, which is a continuation, begun in the last chapter, of Jesus' remarks on rewards. This chapter brings to an end the section that seems to mark time in the movement in Matthew. From this chapter on, the tempo of Matthew increases, and the Lord moves directly to the cross. This chapter also makes an important contribution to filling in some more of the dark corners of the present state of the kingdom of heaven. The principle for giving rewards is stated in this parable: Faithfulness to the task, rather than the amount of work done or the spectacular nature of the work, governs the giving of rewards.

This parable, recorded only by Matthew, is closely connected with the end of the nineteenth chapter, being spoken with reference to Peter's question as to how it should fare with those who, like himself, had left all for Christ. It is designed to show that while *they* would be richly rewarded, a certain equity would still be observed towards *later* converts and workmen in His service.

Matthew 20:1

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

The 40th parable in Matthew (Matthew 18:23). It illustrates the necessity of self-humbling and of being content with rewards to come (Matthew 19:29-30; Matthew 20:16).

Jesus further clarified the membership rules of the kingdom of heaven—entrance is by God's grace alone. In this parable, God is the landowner, and believers are the workers. This parable speaks especially to those who feel superior because of heritage or favored position, to those who feel superior because they have spent so much time with Christ, and to new believers as reassurance of God's grace.

[early in the morning] 6:00 a.m.; 3rd hour, 9:00 a.m.; 6th hour, 12:00 noon; 9th hour, 3:00 p.m.; and 11th hour, 5:00 p.m.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man—a householder—The very commencement of this chapter shows it to be connected with the preceding. The manner of God's proceeding resembles a householder, who went out at day break, together with the morning; as the light began to go out of its chambers in the east, so he went out of his bed-room to employ laborers, that they might cultivate his vineyard. This was what was called, among the Jews and Romans, the first hour; answering to six o'clock in the morning.¹

¹ Adam Clarke's Commentary

This parable is closely related to the previous chapter. Matthew 19:30 says, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” Verse 16 says, “So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.” So you see that at both the beginning and at the end of this parable the concept of the last being first and the first, last, forms sort of a parenthesis around it.

The figure of a vineyard, to represent the rearing of souls for heaven, the culture required and provided for that purpose, and the care and pains which God takes in that whole matter, is familiar to every reader of the Bible. (Ps 80:8–16; Is 5:1–7; Je 2:21; Lu 20:9–16; Jn 15:1–8). At vintage time, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark, labor was scarce, and masters were obliged to be early in the market to secure it. Perhaps the pressing nature of the work of the Gospel, and the comparative paucity of laborers, may be incidentally suggested, Mt 9:37, 38. The “laborers,” as in Mt 9:38, are first, the *official* servants of the Church, but after them and along with them *all* the servants of Christ, whom He has laid under the weightiest obligation to work in His service.²

1–16 The parable of unexpected wages. Following a discussion about rewards, and framed by two declarations that *the last will be first and the first last* (19:30; 20:16), this parable underlines the paradoxical values of *the kingdom of heaven*. In a society with no welfare provision or trade unions, where unemployment meant starvation, the action of the *landowner* in employing extra workers whom he did not really need so late in the day was an act of generosity. But even more extraordinary was the rate of pay, which made no economic sense, and understandably provoked grumbling among those who felt unfairly treated. It was not *unfair*, of course. No-one was underpaid; it was just that some were treated with ‘unreasonable’ generosity. That is what the kingdom of heaven is like. God’s grace is not limited by our ideas of fairness; his gifts are far beyond what we can deserve. But, like the elder brother in the story of the Prodigal Son, we find it hard to abandon our human scale of values (especially when comparing ourselves with others!) and to accept the large-heartedness of God towards those we regard as undeserving. Thus the disciples’ re-education went one stage further, to embrace the divine principle of the first being last and the last first.³

Yashanet.com: This parable can be taken on a literal (*p'shat*) level, as well as a *remez* (hint) at something else. On the *p'shat* level, the lesson here is that salvation (represented by the payment the workers receive) is not based on how long you serve God. However, it would be incorrect to draw from this parable the idea that everyone gets the same reward in heaven. God rewards and punishes fairly, based on our works in this life.

The parable does hint (*remez*) at another truth, one of the mysteries that was to make itself known to those who Yeshua revealed it to. In this case, the workers of the morning,

²Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 20:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Mt 20:1). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

(the first called) could be considered Israel, the Jewish people. Those coming later in the day represent gentiles.

Paul alludes to this in his Ephesians letter, where he says that gentile salvation through the Messiah was a mystery revealed:

Ephesians 3:3-6 - *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

ESV: the kingdom of heaven is like. See note on 13:24. **vineyard.** Grapes were one of ancient Israel's most important crops, and thus Israel was often referred to as the "vine" or "vineyard" of God (e.g., Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; Hos. 10:1; cf. Matt. 21:28-46). "Vineyard" represents the activity of the kingdom in this world (cf. Matt. 21:28-46).

Matthew 20:2

And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

[penny] "denarius": *denarion*, the principal silver coin of the Roman empire. = "containing ten." It took its name from it being equal to ten "asses"; the number after 217 B.C. increased to sixteen (about 3.898 grams or .1375 oz.). In those days it was basically a day's wage.

ESV: 2-15 denarius. A typical day's wage for a laborer. third hour. 9:00 a.m. The workday was typically divided into four three-hour increments, running from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. eleventh hour. 5:00 p.m., near the end of the workday. These workers are desperate enough to continue waiting for work. each of them received a denarius. Surprisingly, the last laborers to be hired are paid a complete denarius, the same as those who had worked all day. Friend, I am doing you no wrong. The landowner addresses the worker gently, explaining the fairness of his actions. do you begrudge. Literally, "Is your eye evil?" The laborer failed to be thankful for his own wage because he was blinded by his self-interested lack of compassion for his fellow worker.

Spurgeon: A PARABLE OF THE KINGDOM

The kingdom of heaven, is all of grace, and so is the service connected with it. Let thin be remembered in the exposition of this parable. The call to work, the ability, and the reward, are all on the principle of grace, and not upon that of merit. This was no common man that is an householder, and his going out to hire laborers into his vineyards was not after the usual manner of men, for they will have a full day's work for a full day's wage. This householder considered the laborers rather than himself. He was up before the dew was gone from the grass, and found laborers, and sent them into his vineyard. It was

a choice privilege to be allowed to begin holy service so early in the morning. They agreed with the householder, and went to work on his terms. They might well be content, since they were promised a full day's hire, and were sure to get it: a penny a day represented the usual and accepted wage. The householder and the laborers agreed upon the amount; and this is the point which has to be noted further on. Young believers have a blessed prospect: they may well be happy to do good work, in a good place, for good Master, and on good terms.

Matthew 20:3

And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

About the third hour. The Jews divided their days into *twelve* equal parts, or hours, beginning at sunrise, and ending at sunset. This was, therefore, about nine o'clock in the morning.

This was about nine o'clock, or after a fourth of the working day had expired: the day of twelve hours was reckoned from six to six.

[marketplace] Men gathered here daily to be hired.

Standing idle in the marketplace. A place where provisions are sold in towns. Of course many resort to such places; and it would be the readiest place to meet persons, and find employers. They were not, therefore, *disposed* to be idle, but were waiting in the proper place to find employers.⁴

Matthew 20:4

And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

Whatever is right. Whatsoever it shall appear you can earn. The contract with the first was definite; with this one it depended on the judgment of the employer. Something that was just, equitable, in proportion to their time.

Matthew 20:5

Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

“3rd hour”: 9 a.m.; “6th hour”: noon; “9th hour” : 3 p.m.
hiring and sending into his vineyard fresh laborers each time.

⁴ Barnes' Notes

Matthew 20:6

And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

Eleventh—Five o'clock in the evening, when there was only one hour before the end of the Jewish day, which, in matters of labor, closed at six. 11th hour is one hour short of quitting time. This was a unusual hour both for offering and engaging

They had not been there, or not been disposed to offer themselves at the proper time; but as they were now willing, and the day was not over, and “yet there was room,” they also are engaged, and on similar terms with all the rest.⁵

Matthew 20:7

They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

[and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive] Only at 6:00 a.m. the wage was named. At the other hours it was "whatsoever is right," which answered Peter's question of Matthew 19:27. They were willing to work.

Matthew 20:8

So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

[even was come] At 6:00 p.m. wages were paid for the day (Leviticus 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15).

The steward. A *steward* is one who transacts business in the place of another. He was one who had the administration of affairs in the absence of the householder; who provided for the family; and who was entrusted with the payment of labourers and servants. He was commonly the most trusty and faithful of the servants, raised to that station as a reward for his fidelity.

Beginning from the last unto the first. It was immaterial where he *began* to pay, provided he dealt justly by them. In the parable, this order is mentioned to give opportunity for the remarks which follow. Had those first hired been first paid, they would have departed satisfied, and the point of the parable would have been lost.

May have been a remarkable direction—last hired, first paid.

⁵Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 20:6). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Matthew 20:9

And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

They received every man a penny. There was no agreement how much they should receive, but merely that justice should be done, Matthew 20:4,5,7. The householder supposed they had earned it, or chose to make a present to them to compensate for the loss of the first part of the day, when they were willing to work but could not find employment.

They received a full day's wage.

Spurgeon: Our Lord's pay is not a hire of deservings, but a gift of bounty. He paid on the scale of grace, and not at the rate of merit. He commenced in superb style, and to those who began to work at the eleventh hour, he gave every man a penny: here was a full day's pay for one hour's work. Herein was displayed the boundless bounty of the lord of the vineyard. That some, who have served the Lord but a very brief time, have equaled and even excelled those who have been for many years believers, is clear, for many short but blessed lives attest it. Converted late in life, they have been singularly diligent, specially consecrated, and memorably holy, and thus they have obtained the full result of grace at a speedy rate. God will place in heavenly glory those who turn to Christ even at the last. Did not our Lord say even to the dying thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"? To what better place could any venerable saint have been taken? Oh, the riches of the grace of God!

Matthew 20:10

But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

They reasoned that they should receive more, but they also received 65 cents.

They supposed that they should have received more. They had worked longer; they had been in the heat; they supposed that it was his intention to pay them, not according to contract, but according to the time of the labour.

This is that calculating, mercenary spirit which had peeped out—though perhaps very slightly—in Peter's question (Mt 19:27), and which this parable was designed once for all to put down among the servants of Christ.⁶

Spurgeon: Possibly the first felt their vanity wounded by being paid after the others.

⁶Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 20:10). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

They used their waiting time in considering their own superiority to the late-comers. Filled with legal principles, they kicked at the sovereignty of grace, and virtually in this matter rebelled against justice also. Those who are not friends to any one attribute of God are not in love with the others. Sooner or later, those who rage at sovereignty resist justice also. They had what was promised them: what more would they have a fair wage was given: they received every man a penny. What more could they expect? But they supposed — there was the difficulty: they had a theory to support, a supposition to justify; and so they were aggrieved because their supposition did not develop into a fact. God will not be bound by our supposings; and we do but deceive ourselves if we think he will.

Matthew 20:11

And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

They murmured, forgetting they had agreed to work all day for 65 cents.

The good man of the house. The original here is the same word which, Matthew 20:1, is translated *householder*, and should have been so translated here. It is the old English way of denoting the father of a family. It expresses no *moral* quality.

Matthew 20:12

Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Sounds like a union problem. First reaction is to be sympathetic towards the ones who worked all day.

The burden and the heat of the day. The burden means the heavy labour, the severe toil. We have continued at that toil, in the heat of the day. The others had worked only a little while, and that in the cool of the evening, and when it was far more pleasant and much less fatiguing.

They have worked not only longer but during a more trying period of the day.

Matthew 20:13

But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

Did not do anyone wrong. Gave to everyone that which was bargained for. They are not earning their salvation. It doesn't matter if one worked all day or one hour, one can NOT earn your salvation. Jesus is simply saying that God will deal as He will.

The salvation of the Gentiles can in itself become no impediment to the Jews; there is the same Jesus both for the Jew and for the Greek. Eternal life is offered to both through the blood of the cross; and there is room enough in heaven for all.

Matthew 20:14

Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Matthew 20:15

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

Is it not lawful for me—As eternal life is the free gift of God, he has a right to give it in whatever proportions, at whatever times, and on whatever conditions he pleases.

Is thine eye evil because I am good? The Hebrews used the word *evil*, when applied to the eye, to denote one envious and malicious, Deuteronomy 15:9, Proverbs 23:6. The eye is called *evil* in such cases, because envy and malice show themselves directly in the eye. No passions are so fully expressed by the eye as these. "Does *envy* show itself in the eye; is thine eye so soon turned to express envy and malice, because I have chosen to do good?"⁷

This parable is not about rewards but about salvation. It is a strong teaching about *grace*, God's generosity. We shouldn't begrudge those who turn to God in the last moments of life, because, in reality, *no one* deserves eternal life.

Many people we don't expect to see in the kingdom will be there. The criminal who repented as he was dying (Luke 23:40-43) will be there along with people who have believed and served God for many years. Do you resent God's gracious acceptance of the despised, the outcast, and the sinners who have turned to him for forgiveness? Are you ever jealous of what God has given to another person? Instead, focus on God's gracious benefits to you, and be thankful for what you have.⁸

"You appeal to *justice*, and by that your mouth is shut; for the sum you agreed for is paid you. Your case being disposed of, with the terms I make with other laborers you have nothing to do; and to grudge the benevolence shown to others, when by your own admission you have been honorably dealt with, is both unworthy envy of your neighbor, and discontent with the goodness that engaged and rewarded you in his service at all."⁹

⁷ Barnes' Notes

⁸ Life Application Notes

⁹ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 20:15). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Yashanet.com: We are not the ones to question God:

Romans 9:18-21 - *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*

The "evil" eye is an idiom for "stinginess," as mentioned in our notes to Matthew 6:23. If this parallel is taken to be that of the Jews and gentiles, then the "complaint" of the Jews would be that they have been God's chosen people, the people of the Torah, for far longer than the gentiles. The reply to this would be that although the Jew has an advantage in that they have the Torah (Romans 3:2), a great part of this advantage is in knowing that God is no respecter of persons, and thus no one has an "advantage" toward salvation in this sense.

Matthew 20:16

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

[the last shall be first, and the first last] The same as, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased" (Matthew 20:15; Matthew 19:30; Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11). This is the point illustrated by the parable and any interpretation of the details such as making the vineyard the world or the church, the laborers different classes of Christians, the hours different ages, the penny salvation, etc. is all out of harmony with Scripture. Nor does this mean that the Jews will be last and the Gentiles first.¹⁰

[for many be called] All are called to salvation (Matthew 11:28; John 3:16; Rev. 22:17), but few will finally be saved (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-30).

Four Elect's of God

1. Christ (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 2:6)
2. All Christians (Romans 8:33; Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1; John 15:16; Ephes. 1:4; Ephes. 2:10; 2 Thes. 2:13; 2 John 1:1,13)
3. Israel (Isaiah 45:4; Isaiah 65:9,22; Matthew 24:21-31; Mark 13:22,27; 1 Peter 1:2)
4. Angels (1 Tim. 5:21)

Anyone chosen of God at any time, Jew or Gentile, is the elect of God (Romans 9:11; Romans 11:5,7,28; 1 Thes. 1:4; 1 Peter 5:13; 2 Peter 1:10). All men are called to become God's elect or chosen ones and can be if they will choose God (Matthew 11:28-30; Matthew 20:16; John 1:12; John 3:16-20; John 6:37; Ephes. 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13; James 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 22:17).¹¹

¹⁰ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

¹¹ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

for many be called, but few chosen—This is another of our Lord’s terse and pregnant sayings, more than once uttered in different connections. (See Mt 19:30; 22:14). The “calling” of which the New Testament almost invariably speaks is what divines call *effectual* calling, carrying with it a supernatural operation on the will to secure its consent. But that cannot be the meaning of it here; the “called” being emphatically distinguished from the “chosen.” It can only mean here the “invited.” And so the sense is, Many receive the invitations of the Gospel whom God has never “chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2Th 2:13). But what, it may be asked, has this to do with the subject of our parable? Probably this—to teach us that men who have wrought in Christ’s service all their days may, by the spirit which they manifest at the last, make it too evident that, as between God and their own souls, they never were chosen workmen at all.¹²

Jewish teachers employed a similar folk story about the day of judgment, but they used it to make the opposite point. Israel, who had worked hard, would receive high wages; the Gentiles, who had labored little, would receive little. In this context, however, Jesus’ point challenges those who have wealth and status in this world, Jewish or Gentile, and promises that in the world to come God will redress those who have been oppressed in this world.¹³

God, Grace—Grace is sometimes defined as unmerited favor. God’s grace goes beyond our understanding. It is the very nature of God, who is defined as love, to pour out His love upon His people in a way and in a measure that is both undeserved and unexpected. Why did the landowner give so much to those who had not worked for it? He had the resources to do it, on the one hand, and the sovereign right to do it, on the other hand. Most of all, he had a loving nature that sought to reach out to all that he could in bestowing blessings upon them. The grace of God does not defraud anyone of anything. No one earns the grace of God. That any of these had a job was an evidence of grace. Each got at least what he was promised. Most who worked in the vineyard received much more than they expected, much more than they deserved. God’s grace is not bestowed on a merit system basis. God’s grace is given on the basis of overflowing love out of the free and generous heart of God.

Nelson: In the context of Matthew, the workers with the contract represent Israel; they had the promises and the covenants (see Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4; Eph. 2:11, 12). Those without an agreement represent the Gentiles, who would be made equal with the Jewish people when salvation became available to all through faith in Jesus Christ (see Rom. 11:16, 17; Eph 2:13–15; 3:6).¹⁴

¹²Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 20:16). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Gentiles ***Gentile**. Anyone who is not Jewish. In ancient Jewish parlance, this was often the equivalent of “pagan.”

¹³Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 20:9). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

¹⁴The Nelson Study Bible

ESV: So the last will be first, and the first last. A disciple of Jesus should not measure his or her worth by comparing it with the accomplishments and sacrifices of others, but should focus on serving from a heart of gratitude in response to God's grace. Jesus is not denying degrees of reward in heaven (see note on 1 Cor. 3:14–15) but is affirming that God's generosity is more abundant than anyone would expect: all the laborers except the very first got more than they deserved. It is probably correct also to see here a warning that Jesus' early followers (such as the Twelve) should not despise those who would come later.

Matthew 20:17

And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

Took the twelve disciples apart. All the *males* of the Jews were required to be at this feast, Exodus 23:17. The roads, therefore, on such occasions, would probably be thronged. It is probable also, that they would travel in companies, or that whole neighbourhoods would go together. See Luke 2:44. By his *taking them apart* is meant his taking them aside from the company. He had something to communicate which he did not wish the others to hear. Mark adds, "And Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid," Matthew 10:32. He led the way, He had told them before, (Matthew 17:22) that he should be betrayed into the hands of men, and be put to death. They began how to be afraid that this would happen, and to be solicitous for his life and for their own safety.

Third prediction of Jesus' death (see Mk. 10:32–34; Lk. 18:31–34). The repeated mention of *Jerusalem* underlines what lay ahead, and this time the prediction is more detailed, including being *condemned* to death (*i.e.* an official execution), *turned over to the Gentiles, mocked, flogged and crucified*. This is the first time crucifixion has been explicitly mentioned (though 16:24 implied it). The whole catalogue of humiliation and suffering leaves no room for visions of earthly glory for *the Son of Man*.¹⁵

Matthew 20:18

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

And they shall condemn him to death. They had not power to *inflict* death, as that was taken away by the Romans; but they had the power of *expressing an opinion*, and of delivering him to the Romans to be put to death. This they did, Matthew 26:66, 27:2.

¹⁵Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Mt 20:17). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

Matthew 20:19

And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Jesus lays out His crucifixion and resurrection. Nothing came as a surprise. For the third time, Jesus announced His arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection (see Mt 16:21; 17:22). In the previous announcements, He had not specified how He would die. But now He clearly mentioned the **cross**. Did they understand Him? (No. Lk 18:34.)

Both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of His sufferings and death (Acts 2:23,36; Acts 3:14-15; Acts 4:27).

To scourge, and to crucify—This was done by Pilate, the Roman governor. The punishment of the cross was Roman not Jewish; but the chief priests condemned him to it, and the Romans executed the sentence. How little did they know that they were, by this process, jointly offering up that sacrifice which was to make an atonement for the Gentiles and for the Jews; an atonement for the sin of the whole world? How often may it be literally said, The wrath of man shall praise thee!¹⁶

McGee: Notice the physical and geographical movement of this section. Jesus and His disciples are going up out of the Jordan Valley and are approaching Jerusalem where He is to die upon the cross. Our Lord couldn't spell it out any plainer than that. This is the fourth time He is telling them—in *detail* at this juncture—exactly what is going to happen to Him. Somehow or other the disciples didn't comprehend it—it just didn't fit into their program. However, as you and I read it now, we see very clearly that it was Christ's avowed intention to go to Jerusalem to die. Let's ponder the significance of this. He went there deliberately to die for you and for me. That is something to think about. The disciples of Jesus just couldn't believe it!¹⁷

JNTC: For the third time Yeshua predicts his coming death. This time he mentions the role of the *Goyim* (see 5:47N), which he avoided before, possibly because he wanted to be able to broach the subject without having his *talmidim* try to dissuade him (16:21–23) or become overwhelmed by grief (17:21–22), even though they might still be terrified at the prospect (Mk 10:32&N). The following incident also helps them understand why the Messiah must die (below, v. 28).

Going up to Yerushalayim here and at Mk 10:32–33, 15:41; Lk 2:42, 18:31, 19:28; Yn 5:1, 11:55; Ac 11:2, 13:31, 15:2, 21:4, 21:12, 21:15, 24:11, 25:1, 25:9; Ga 1:17, 2:1; and compare Yn 7:8; while Lk 10:30–31, Ac 8:26, 15:1, 25:7 report “coming down” from Yerushalayim. Jerusalem is located on top of the Judean hills, some 2,500 feet above sea level and higher than most inhabited places in Israel. This particular ascent was being made from Jericho, 900 feet below sea level. But “going up to Jerusalem” has a spiritual dimension which does not depend on altitude—the earth's spiritual geography is such that from the summit of Mount Everest one still “goes up” to Jerusalem. Today when

¹⁶ Adam Clarke's Commentary

¹⁷ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:108). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jews come to live in Israel they do not “immigrate” but “make *aliyah*” (the word means “going up”), even if they plan to live on the shore of the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth.¹⁸

ESV: the Son of Man will be delivered over. This is the third of four predictions of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. See note on 16:21; cf. 17:22–23 and 26:2. The reference to Jerusalem, the religious leaders, and the Gentiles heightens the drama; for the first time in the narrative, Jesus gives additional clues about his betrayal and who will carry out his arrest and crucifixion.

Matthew 20:20

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

The Mother of Zebedee’s children; i.e., the mother of James and John (Salome was her name). Not James the brother of Jesus.

With her sons. The names of these were James and John, Mark 10:35. Mark says *they* came and made the request. That is, they made it through the medium of their mother; they requested *her* to ask it for them. It is not improbable that she was an ambitious woman, and was desirous to see her sons honoured.

Worshipping him. Showing him respect; respectfully saluting him. In the original, *kneeling*. Matthew 8:2.

The mother of James and John came to Jesus and “kneeling down, asked a favor of him.” She gave Jesus worship, but her real motive was to get something from him. Too often this happens in our churches and in our lives. We play religious games, expecting God to give us something in return. True worship, however, adores and praises Christ for who he is and for what he has done.

The mother of James and John asked Jesus to give her sons special positions in his kingdom. Parents naturally want to see their children promoted and honored, but this desire is dangerous if it causes them to lose sight of God’s specific will for their children. God may have different work in mind—not as glamorous, but just as important. Thus parents’ desires for their children’s advancement must be held in check as they pray that God’s will be done in their children’s lives.

According to Matthew 27:56, the mother of James and John was at the cross when Jesus was crucified. Some have suggested that she was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. A close family relationship could have prompted her to make this request for her sons.

¹⁸Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 20:17). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

The indirect intercession of a motherly woman was often more effective than a man's direct petition for himself, in both Jewish and Roman circles (see also 2 Sam 14:2–20; 1 Kings 1:15–21; cf. 2 Sam 20:16–22). In this case, however, it does not work.¹⁹

ESV: Salome (cf. 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1) was not only the mother of the sons of Zebedee, she was also in all probability the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother (cf. John 19:25), so that James and John were in fact Jesus' cousins. She was among the women who stayed with Jesus at the cross and later witnessed the empty tomb, with her sons. Mark 10:35–37 focuses on the sons themselves and reports her request as their words. Two solutions to this apparent inconsistency are possible: (1) Based on the principle that an agent of a person counts as the person himself (see note on John 3:17), Mark may be reporting the mother's words as the words of James and John, who had told her to ask this; or (2) Matthew and Mark may be reporting different aspects of a longer conversation, in which the mother first asked Jesus the question and then Jesus asked the brothers if that was actually what they wanted. In either case, beginning in Matt. 20:22, the plural “you” shows that Jesus is speaking directly to James and John, as well as to their mother. kneeling. Salome shows respect to Jesus as her messianic Master, but she also evidently hopes to use her and her sons' earthly kinship with Jesus to her sons' advantage.

Matthew 20:21

And he said unto her, *What wilt thou?* She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

The account that occurs in Mark 10:35 indicates that James and John were of the same mind. So this was not a case of the mother embarrassing her two sons.

Grant that these my two sons—James and John. See Mark 15:40. In the preceding chapter, Matthew 19:28, our Lord had promised his disciples, that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes. Salome, probably hearing of this, and understanding it literally, came to request the chief dignities in this new government for her sons; and it appears it was at their instigation that she made this request, for Mark, Mark 10:35, informs us that these brethren themselves made the request, i.e. they made it through the medium of their mother.²⁰

ESV: these two sons of mine are to sit. Salome's petition was likely inspired by Jesus' remarks in 19:28, where he had announced the Twelve's rulership with him in his future kingdom. right hand. A place of honor (1 Kings 2:19; Ps. 16:11; 110:1, 5; cf. Matt. 22:44).

¹⁹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 20:20). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

²⁰Adam Clarke's Commentary

Matthew 20:22

But Jesus answered and said, *Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* They say unto him, *We are able.*

Some texts omit that last phrase about being baptized with the baptism.

“We are able”: They have no idea what He is going to do, the cup that He is about to drink of.

[Ye know not what ye ask] This is like much asking today. They knew Jesus had taught against seeking to become the greatest (Matthew 18:1-10; Matthew 20:16; cp. Matthew 20:24-28; Matthew 23:12; Luke 22:24-27).

James, John, and their mother failed to grasp Jesus’ previous teachings on rewards (Matthew 19:16-30) and eternal life (Matthew 20:1-16). They failed to understand the suffering they must face before living in the glory of God’s kingdom. The “cup” was the suffering and crucifixion that Christ faced. Both James and John would also face great suffering. James would be put to death for his faith, and John would be exiled.

Matthew 20:23

And he saith unto them, *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

[prepared of my Father] The Father had certain rights that the Son did not have (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7; John 8:28).

Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, You are truly attached to me, you will follow me, and you will partake of my afflictions, and will suffer as *I* shall. This was fulfilled. James was slain with the sword by Herod, Acts 12:2. John lived many years. But he attended the Saviour through his sufferings, and was himself banished to Patmos, a solitary island, for the testimony of Jesus Christ -a companion of others in tribulation, Revelation 1:9.

Jesus was showing that he was under the authority of the Father, who alone makes the decisions about leadership in heaven. Such rewards are not granted as favors. They are for those who have maintained their commitment to Jesus in spite of severe trials.

ESV: You. The plural pronoun indicates that Jesus addressed the mother and the brothers directly. The **cup** in Scripture is symbolic of one's divinely determined destiny, whether blessing (Ps. 16:5) or disaster (Jer. 25:15), salvation (Ps. 116:13) or wrath (Isa. 51:17). Here it refers to Jesus' forthcoming suffering (Matt. 26:39).

ESV: You will drink my cup. James became the first apostolic martyr (Acts 12:2), and John suffered persecution and exile (Rev. 1:9). for whom it has been prepared by my Father. They must submit to the Father's will for their future, just as Jesus does.

Matthew 20:24

And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

[moved with indignation against the two brethren] Moved with deep resentment. Satan attempted to break apostolic unity.

The other disciples were upset with James and John for trying to grab the top positions. *All* the disciples wanted to be the greatest (Matthew 18:1), but Jesus taught them that the greatest person in God's kingdom is the servant of all. Authority is given not for self-importance, ambition, or respect, but for useful service to God and his creation.

24-28. When the 10 disciples heard about the request by James and John's mother, they became indignant. They were probably sorry they had not thought of it first! (cf. 18:1) Jesus was of course aware of the friction evident within the group. So He called the Twelve together and reminded them of some important principles. While some people (rulers and high officials) lord it over others, the disciples were not to do so. Greatness in the Lord's kingdom does not come through rulership or authority but through service (20:26-27). Their goal should be serving, not ruling. Those most highly esteemed will be those who serve, those who are humble.

There was no greater example of this principle than the Lord Himself. He did not come into the world to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Here was the first clue as to what the death of Christ would accomplish. He had told them on a number of occasions He would die. But He had not indicated the reason for His death. Now it was clear that His death would be to provide a "ransom" (*lytron*, "payment") "for" (*anti*, "in place of") "many" (see the chart, "New Testament Words for Redemption" at Mark 10:45). His death would take the place of many deaths, for only His death could truly atone for sin (John 1:29; Rom. 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). He was the perfect Sacrifice, whose substitutionary death paid the price for sin.²¹

ESV: indignant. They were perhaps not as upset by the immodesty of the request as by the brothers' attempt to use their family relationship to Jesus to gain an unfair advantage in obtaining what they themselves also wanted.

Matthew 20:25

But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, **Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.**

[exercise dominion over] Literally, tyrannize and oppress. Compare the true Christian spirit (Phil. 2:1-2; 1 Peter 5:1-9).

cf. *confer*, compare

²¹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:66). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matthew 20:26

But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

This was the original and eternal purpose, not a historical fact.

[**minister**] Greek: *diakonos* (GSN-1249), one who executes the command of another.

It is used of:

1. Servants of kings (Matthew 22:13)
2. Servants at feasts (John 2:5,9)
3. Ministers or officers of civil governments (Romans 13:4)
4. Men and women servants of churches (Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:35; Romans 16:1)
5. Deacons of churches or business elders and distinct from bishops or preaching elders (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:10-13; Acts 6:1-7)
6. Jesus Christ as a minister to the Jews in the work of preaching, teaching and healing (Romans 15:8; Galatians 2:17; Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 9:35; Acts 10:38)
7. Ministers of churches (Matthew 20:26; Mark 10:43). See Marks of a Good Pastor.
8. Preachers of the gospel (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; Ephes. 3:7; Col. 1:23,25; 1 Thes. 3:2)
9. Ministers of Christ and of God (John 12:26; 2 Cor. 6:4-10; 2 Cor. 11:23; Ephes. 6:21; Col. 1:7; Col. 4:7; 1 Tim. 4:6)
10. Also used of ministers of Satan to counterfeit the work of true ministers and to deceive (2 Cor. 11:15)²²

Minister. A servant. The original word is *deacon*-a word meaning a servant of any kind; one especially who served at the table; and, in the New Testament, one who serves the church, Acts 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:8. Preachers of the gospel are called ministers because they are the servants of God and the church, 1 Corinthians 3:6, 4:1, 2 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4, Ephesians 4:12; an office, therefore, which forbids them to lord it over God's heritage; which is the very opposite of a station of superiority, and which demands the very lowest degree of humility.

The measure of greatness is not position, power, or prestige; it is service.

Matthew 20:27

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Mentions here, what He demonstrates later at the last supper when He washes their feet. Jesus mentions here (and demonstrates later with deeds) what the Church should view in terms of its organization. Not a hierarchy. Church was to be organized with a shepherd.

[**servant**] Greek: *doulos* (GSN-1401), one giving himself wholly to another's will. It is used of:

1. Bondservants of men (Galatians 3:28; Ephes. 6:8; Col. 3:11; Rev. 6:15)

²² Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

2. Servants to kings (Matthew 18:23-26; Matthew 23:1-14) and others including hired servants (Luke 15:17-22)
3. Civil officers (John 18:18)
4. Sinners who serve sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:16-22; 2 Peter 2:19)
5. All disciples of Christ (Matthew 10:24-25; Romans 6:16-22; Rev. 19:5)
6. Christ the servant of God (Phil. 2:7; Isaiah 42:1; Isaiah 52:11)
7. Moses and all the prophets (Hebrews 3:5; Rev. 10:7; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 15:3)
8. All ministers and deacons (Matthew 20:27; Mark 10:44; Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1)

Both ministers and servants of Matthew 20:26-28 refer to the lowest secular and ecclesiastical office among Christians, as exemplified by Christ Himself. No minister has a right to be a lord over God's people (1 Peter 5:1-9). He is to be least of all and servant of all (Mark 9:35).²³

Jesus described leadership from a new perspective. Instead of using people, we are to serve them. Jesus' mission was to serve others and to give his life away. A real leader has a servant's heart. Servant leaders appreciate others' worth and realize that they're not above any job. If you see something that needs to be done, don't wait to be asked. Take the initiative and do it like a faithful servant.

ESV: A **servant** was a hired worker who maintained the master's household, and a **slave** was someone forced into service. These were two of the lowest positions in Jewish society, yet Jesus reverses their status in the community of disciples to indicate prominence and greatness.

Matthew 20:28

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

[ransom] Greek: *lutron* (GSN-3083), redeeming price of man:

1. From death (Exodus 21:30; Psalm 49:7-9; Hosea 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:51-58)
2. From sickness (Exodus 30:12-16; Job 33:14-30; 2 Cor. 6:19)
3. From sin (Matthew 20:28; Matthew 26:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephes. 1:7)
4. From the enemy (Jeremiah 31:11; Isaiah 35:10; Isaiah 51:10; 1 Tim. 2:6)

[for many] Instead of many. Christ became a substitute for man—a change of victims, a new sacrifice to God to taste death for all (Isaiah 53; Matthew 26:28; John 6:51; John 10:11,15; John 11:50-52; Romans 4:25; Romans 5:6-11; Romans 14:15; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Cor. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Galatians 1:4; Galatians 2:20-21; Ephes. 5:2,25; 1 Thes. 5:9; 1 Tim. 2:6; Hebrews 2:9-18; Hebrews 9:15,16,28; Hebrews 10:5-23; 1 Peter 2:21-24; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 4:1; 1 John 3:16; Rev. 5:8-10).

²³ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

A ransom was the price paid to release a slave from bondage. Jesus often told his disciples that he must die, but here he told them why—to redeem all people from the bondage of sin and death. The disciples thought that as long as Jesus was alive, he could save them. But Jesus revealed that only his death would save them and the world.

ESV: Son of Man. came not to be served but to serve. Jesus himself is the primary example of servanthood. Jesus will give his life as a ransom (Gk. *lutron*, the price of release, often used of the money paid to release slaves) for many. “For” (Gk. *anti*) means “in place of” and signifies the notion of the exchange and substitution of Jesus' life on the cross for all those who accept his payment for their sins (see notes on 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).

Matthew 20:29

And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

Jesus and His disciples are going from Jericho to Jerusalem, which is the opposite direction from the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. The Lord is going from Jericho up to Jerusalem to *die* with thieves. That's on the other side of the freeway, and on that side you and I can never go. We can only come to Him in faith, for He died in our stead.

By the way, some folk think that because at His trial He did not defend Himself, He *never* defended Himself, and that Christians should follow the same policy. However, at other times He did defend Himself. When He went to Jerusalem to die, He did not defend Himself because He was taking *my* place, and I'm guilty. Believe me, there was no defense! That is the reason He did not open His mouth at that time. He was bearing my sin, and He was bearing your sin at that time.²⁴

29-34. In a final display of His authority before He reached Jerusalem, Jesus healed two blind men near the city of Jericho. The other Synoptic writers (Mark and Luke) repeat this story with a few differences. Matthew wrote of two men; Mark and Luke spoke of one. Mark included the name of the blind man, Bartimaeus. Undoubtedly two men were there and Bartimaeus was the more noticeable of the two. Matthew and Mark said the men were healed when Jesus left Jericho, but Luke said the healing occurred when Jesus approached Jericho. This can be explained by the fact that there were two Jerichos then, an old city and a new one. Jesus was leaving old Jericho (Matt. and Mark) and approaching new Jericho (Luke) when the miracle occurred.

The blind men cried out for help when they heard . . . Jesus was passing by. Their appeal to Him was based on the fact that He is the Lord, Son of David. Earlier two other blind men called Jesus “Son of David” (Matt. 9:27; cf. 15:22). By using this title, they were appealing to Him as Messiah. They persisted in spite of the rebuke from the crowd until Jesus stopped and called them out. When He asked what they wanted, they simply replied they wanted their sight. Jesus had compassion (*splanchnistheis*; cf. comments on 9:36) on them and exercising His authority as the Messiah, the Son of David, He healed them immediately. It is interesting that this extended section (17:14-20:34), in which

²⁴McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:109). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
cf. *confer*, compare

Jesus was teaching the disciples things they would need after His death, ended with a demonstration of His authority. Truly He is to be believed for He is the Son of David, the Messiah of Israel.²⁵

ESV: Jericho. Not the ancient city of OT fame (e.g., Joshua 5–6), but the new Jericho nearby, about a mile (1.6 km) to the south. This new Jericho surrounded a huge palace complex first built by the Hasmoneans (2nd century b.c.), which Herod the Great expanded. Matthew says the healing of the blind men took place as they went out of Jericho (and Mark 10:46 agrees), but Luke 18:35 says it was “as he drew near to Jericho.” It is possible that Matthew and Mark refer to the new Jericho, and Luke to the old Jericho nearby, or vice versa. Another possibility is that the blind men cried out to Jesus first as he was entering the city (Luke 18:35), but he did not respond and heal them until he was leaving the city. Since none of the accounts tells everything about the event, this may simply reflect the selection of different details about the event by the different Gospel writers. None of the accounts tells everything about the event.

Matthew 20:30

And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

Two Blind Men: If you compare this with the same accounts in Luke (18:35-43) and Mark (10:46-52) they are a bit different. Luke describes this as they came to Jericho and Mark describes the healing of the blind men when they depart from Jericho. The idea that they don’t quite agree exactly refutes the idea that they are colluding. Yet, if you read it carefully you will discover that what Luke is really saying is that they met the one beggar as they got to the city. Both Matthew and Mark indicate that the healing took place as they were leaving.

Both Mark and Luke describe one blind man, while Matthew describes two. How many were there? Two. Mark and Luke focus on the one who had a better witness, while there still were two. Also in Chapter 9 there were two blind men healed just before the twelve were sent out to the Kingdom of Israel. Here Matthew highlights two blind men healed at the close of the Galilean ministry and just before the Triumphal entry.

The blind men called Jesus “Son of David” because the Jews knew that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (see Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6). These blind beggars could *see* that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, while the religious leaders who witnessed Jesus’ miracles were blind to his identity, refusing to open their eyes to the truth. Seeing with your eyes doesn’t guarantee seeing with your heart.

JNTC: As they were leaving Yericho ... two blind men. Compare the descriptions at Mk 10:46, Lk 18:35. When Gospel witnesses differ, often there is a reasonable way to explain the discrepancies. Only Mattityahu notes the second blind man; presumably there

²⁵Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:67). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

were two, but the one was more prominent than the other—Mark even tells us his name, *Bar-Timai*. Luke places the incident “As Yeshua approached Jericho.” But there were two Jerichos; Yeshua may have been leaving the site of still inhabited ancient Jericho, with its archeological remains going back to 7,000 B.C.E., and approaching the more recently developed Roman spa several kilometers nearer Jerusalem.²⁶

Nelson: Only Matthew mentions **two blind men**; Mark and Luke refer to one, probably the one who spoke. The fact that Matthew records that there were actually two men especially suits his Gospel, which was written primarily for Jews who would have desired two witnesses (see Deut. 17:6). **Son of David**, a messianic title (see 2 Sam. 7:12–16), identifies Jesus as the heir to David’s throne. This cry, repeated in v. 31, shows the spiritual insight of these blind men.²⁷

Matthew 20:31

And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

They cried the more. Jesus standing still, ordered them to be brought to him, (Mark.) They *then* addressed the blind men, and told them that Jesus called. Mark adds, that Bartimeus cast away his garment, and rose and came to Jesus. The garment was not his only raiment, but was the *outer* garment, thrown loosely over him, and commonly laid aside when persons laboured or ran. Matthew 5:40. His doing it denoted haste, and earnestness, in order to come to Jesus.

Those believing that their trek to Jerusalem was leading to the establishment of the kingdom could well feel that Jesus had more important things to do than to be stopped by these beggars, whether they just want alms or are seeking something more.

ESV: two blind men. Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35 mention only one blind man, and Mark gives his name (“Bartimaeus”). This does not mean that Matthew’s report of two blind men is inaccurate, only that Mark and Luke focused on the one. The blind men recognize Jesus as the Son of David (cf. note on Matt. 9:27).

Matthew 20:32

And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, **What will ye that I shall do unto you?**

Matthew 20:33

They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

²⁶Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 20:29). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

²⁷ The Nelson Study Bible

Although Jesus was concerned about the coming events in Jerusalem, he demonstrated what he had just told the disciples about service (Matthew 20:28) by stopping to care for the blind men.

Matthew 20:34

So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

ESV: Jesus in pity touched their eyes. In the face of rejection by his own people, and impending betrayal as he enters Jerusalem, Jesus continues to show compassion for those in great need.