

Matthew 19:24

Introduction.

1. Another difficult Bible passage is Matthew 19:16-26.

MAT 19:16 And behold, one came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

MAT 19:17 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."

MAT 19:18 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;

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

MAT 19:20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

MAT 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

MAT 19:22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property.

2. Jesus affirmed it would be "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Matt. 19:24).

1. The Meaning Of A Needle's Eye

- a. Some try to identify it with a gate.

- 1) Some modern commentators have attempted to make the needle's eye a small gate in Jerusalem; thus a camel would have to be unburdened to pass through.

- 2) Other modern commentators have attempted to make the needle's eye a small door, a little over 2 feet square, in the large heavy gate of a walled city.

- 3) These interpretations are based on imagination - not fact.

- 4) No ancient biblical scholar suggests these interpretations

- b. It is more likely a figurative statement - a hyperbole.

- 1) The camel was the largest beast of burden in Palestine. See Matthew 23:24.

- 2) The eye of a needle (Gr. raphis) is one of the smallest openings. (Matt. 19:24; Mk. 10:25).

- 3) Luke uses the Greek word "belone". (Lk. 18:25).

- 4) There is no difference in the words.

- c. If one takes it literally, it would mean it is impossible for a rich man to enter heaven.

2. Meaning Is Very Difficult

- a. If one takes it figuratively, it would mean it is very difficult for a rich man to enter heaven.
- b. It is not impossible for a rich man to be saved. (Matt. 19:26).
- c. It is exceedingly difficult for a rich man to be saved.

3. **Why Is It Difficult For A Rich Man To Be Saved?**

- a. The affluent often feel no need for God.
- b. The rich often become indifferent to the needs of others.
- c. The wealthy often make riches their god.
- d. The rich often will not accept the simplicity of the gospel - a poor crucified Jew as Savior.
- e. The rich often become corrupt. (1 Tim. 6:10).

4. **Who Are The Rich?**

- a. We usually think the other person is rich.
- b. Rich is a relative term.
 - 1) To the person who is hungry the person who has food is rich.
 - 2) To the person who is sick the person who can receive medical treatment is rich.
 - 3) To the person who lives in a 50,000 house the person who lives in a 100,000 house is rich.
 - 4) To the person who has no transportation the person who has a bicycle or automobile is very rich.
- c. Most of us are very rich by the world's standard.
 - 1) A person who has even a 50,000 dollar a year income is in the top 10% of the world's wealthiest people.
 - 2) Those with a 25,000 a year income are in the upper 25% of the world's wealthiest people.
 - 3) Those who with a 100,000 a year income are in the top 2% of the world's wealthiest people.

5. **Who Can Be Saved?**

- a. Riches were, then and now, interpreted to mean God's favor.
- b. If those who are in God's favor cannot be saved, who can?
- c. Jesus affirmed it was not impossible.
- d. Jesus did attract some rich.
 - 1) Matthew (Matt. 9:9).

2) Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57).

3) Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:9).

5. Instructions were given to rich Christians. (1 Tim. 6:17- 19).

1TI 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

1TI 6:18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 1TI 6:19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Conclusion.

1. Most of us are much richer than we think.
2. Most of us could not list all of our possessions in a day if we named them one by one.
3. We have so much compared to the masses of the world.
4. We must trust God and share our wealth if we expect to see heaven.
5. We should pray the Lord will always help us obey Paul's instructions to the rich. (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

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