

The Last Shall be First, and the First Last

Matthew 19:30-20:16

I. The S_____ :

- a. **But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.** = regardless of how long or how well you serve, every Believer will receive the exact same Salvation, because it is NOT based on you, but instead on the Grace of God!
 - i. This is not about Crowns or the Rewards of Jesus' Bema Seat (cf. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; & Matt 5:12; 6:4; 10:42; 16:27; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 4:5; Rev. 22:12)
- b. **the kingdom of heaven** = Jesus' Already & Not Yet Reign
- c. **landowner** = God
- d. **early in the morning** = 6am (Roman time)
- e. **laborers** = Believers (when they are hired)
- f. **his vineyard** = Jesus' kingdom here on earth (cf. Isa. 5:1-7, Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Ps. 80:8-16; Luke 20:9-16; John 15:1-8)
- g. **denarius = dēnarion (δηνάριον)** = "a Roman silver coin equivalent to a day's wage of a common laborer"
 - i. It represents = **Eternal Life** (cf. Matt. 20:2, 9; Mark 14:5; Luke 10:35; 20:24; John 6:7; Rev. 6:6)
- h. **the third hour** = 9am
- i. **standing idle = argos (ἀργός)** = "unemployed, idle, not working"
- j. **whatever is right** = perhaps 3/4 of a denarius?
- k. **the sixth** = noon
- l. **the ninth hour** = 3pm
- m. **the eleventh hour** = 5pm (only 1 hour left in the workday)

II. The S_____ :

- a. **For many are called, but few chosen** = a scribal insertion from Matt. 22:14
 - i. It is not found in many of the oldest manuscripts, and it doesn't fit the context of this passage.
- b. **his foreman** = Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 11:27; John 3:35; 5:27; Heb 3:6)
- c. **beginning with the last group to the first** = not the normal way to pay your employees
- d. **the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius** = a blessing 12 times what they probably expected
- e. **When those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more** = they did not think it was "fair"
- f. Jesus' answer is the main meaning of this parable:
 - i. **Friend** = **hetairos (ἕταιρος)** = "companion, friend...though not necessarily involving personal affection"
 - ii. Before His offer these laborers had nothing!
 - 1. Just like you and me before we were saved (cf. Eph. 2:1-3)
 - iii. He paid them exactly what He promised them!
 - 1. Just as Jesus has promised us Eternal Life (cf. John 3:16)
 - iv. He reminded them that it was His money, and He could use anyway He saw fit!
 - 1. Just as we don't have the power to save ourselves; we fully depend on God's Grace (cf. Eph. 2:8-9)
- g. **So the last shall be first, and the first last** = we will enter eternal life sharing an equal salvation.