

Who Will Sit There?

Mark 10:40,41

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When James and John asked Jesus for the seats of highest honor in His kingdom, He refused with this explanation: "...to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

Out of human ambition, the two apostles asked for special consideration. Perhaps their love for the Master caused them to believe He had a special affection for them, something more than He felt for the others. I'm not sure that He did, but suppose it were true. If Jesus honored their request out of personal favoritism, the others would have reason to be jealous. Verse 41 tells us they were very displeased with James and John just for asking. To grant their request likely would have been the beginning of jealousy, bickering, suspicion, and retaliation. Unity would have been destroyed. Jesus' answer avoided all of that, yet still held out hope of reward to all, including the two who asked. Notice what we can learn from the Lord's response.

First, special seats of honor will be given. Special places in glory have been prepared. Next, those seats will not be taken before the appointed time. Now is a time for testing and proving the faith of those who aspire to sit there, but who will occupy them will not be known until the appointed time. Third, those seats will go to the ones qualified to receive them. Special places of glory will be given not on the basis of personal preference, even the Lord's preference, but rather on the basis of moral laws set down by the heavenly Father. God is no respecter of persons; He shows no partiality. Acts 10:34 Nor does His Son. Those who will be saved are those who submit to and obey divine laws ordained by God the Father. Those who receive special honor in glory are those who, by moral character, show themselves fitted for the honor.

A few verses down the Lord states clearly who they will be. Verse 43 says, "...whoever desires to be great among you shall be your servant." And the next verse: "...whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all."

Here are important lessons to nail down. What we have here are prepared places for a prepared people to be given at a prepared time. God is not the author of feelings and whims any more than He is the author of confusion. God has predetermined salvation for mankind on the basis of predetermined laws. That salvation goes to those who are willing to submit. His glory is bestowed upon those who are willing to serve. He asks no more than His Son gave. It is a glorious reward that awaits. The question now is, "Who will receive it?" Are you willing to submit? Are you willing to serve?