

● THE Gospel Part 17 – The Price for Paul’s Obedience – Study Guide

This study guide explores the **absolute scriptural definition of "cost"** and the price paid for obedience to Jesus Christ. It challenges the modern "comfort gospel" by asserting that the cost of following Christ is not relative to one's means but is a **level playing field requiring the sacrifice of one's entire life, possessions, and family priorities**. Through the account of the **Rich Young Ruler**, the text illustrates the immense difficulty the wealthy face in entering the Kingdom, while promising a **magnificent future inheritance** for those who endure. The **Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard** is used to show that all faithful redeemed—whether called early (Israel) or late (Gentiles)—receive the same reward of "age-lasting life," provided they do not succumb to **grumbling**. Finally, the source uses the **Apostle Paul’s life of extreme suffering** as the ultimate model for the redeemed, reinforcing that **suffering is a mandatory prerequisite for future glorification**.

Definitions of Key Words

- **Cost:** A non-relative, level playing field in the scriptures that demands the **renunciation of all possessions and the placing of Christ above family**.
- **Kingdom of God / Kingdom of Heaven:** **Synonymous terms** used interchangeably by Jesus to describe the coming earthly reign.
- **Saved / Salvation:** In the context of the Kingdom, this is a **future inheritance event** rather than a one-time past experience.
- **Denarius:** The standard reward in the Parable of the Labourers, representing the **equal inheritance of age-lasting life** given to all faithful redeemed.
- **Grumbling:** A wicked trait that God "hates with a passion"; it led to the downfall of the wilderness generation and is warned against in the Kingdom parables.
- **Regeneration / New World:** The **renewal or renewal of the earth** that occurs when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne.
- **Ecclesia (Church):** A Greek word often claimed to have started at Pentecost, though the sources challenge students to find scriptural proof

for this traditional start date.

Expansion of Key Points

1. Shattering the "Cost Model"

Most people superimpose their own "cost models" onto the scripture, deciding for themselves what price is sufficient to pay. However, the sources argue that the cost is **not relative** to a person's wealth; while a Rolls-Royce is loose change to a billionaire, the cost Jesus demands is the same for everyone: **your entire life**. This includes putting family and possessions aside so they are no longer the priority.

2. The Difficulty of the Rich

Jesus stated that it is **easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle** than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom. This is because great possessions often prevent a person from being willing to pay the cost of following Christ in the present tense. The disciples were **"greatly astonished"** by this, asking who then could be saved, which Jesus clarified is only possible through the **grace of God**.

3. The Promise of Future Reward

In response to the cost of obedience, Peter asked what the disciples would receive for leaving everything. Jesus promised that in the **new world (regeneration)**, the twelve apostles would **sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel**. This confirms that "salvation" is a future event linked to the **coming earthly kingdom**.

4. The Level Playing Field: First and Last

The **Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20)** illustrates that God gives the same "denarius" (inheritance) to those called early and those called late. This lays the groundwork for the **mystery revealed to Paul**: that Gentiles (those "last" in the pecking order) are made **equal** to the faithful of Israel in the inheritance.

5. The Mandatory Prerequisite of Suffering

Modern theology often promotes a "comfort gospel" that avoids the topic of suffering. However, the sources state that **suffering is a conditional requirement for glory**; according to **Romans 8:17**, we are fellow heirs with Christ **"provided we suffer with him"**. This is not a "free ride," and those who do not prepare for trial and persecution will be "history" when it arrives.

6. Paul's Model of Obedience

The Apostle Paul is presented as the primary example for the redeemed to imitate. His life of obedience was marked by **"far greater labours," countless beatings, being stoned, and three shipwrecks**. Despite this, he called his experiences **"light momentary affliction"** because his eyes were fixed firmly on the **unseen glory of the coming Kingdom**.

7. Denying Christ and Family Division

The Gospel does not always bring peace; Jesus stated He came to bring a **sword**, setting family members against one another over the message of the Kingdom. The sources warn that **if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before the Father**, regardless of any past religious formulas or "verses" performed.

Biblical References

- **Matthew 10:32–36**: Acknowledging vs denying Christ; family division and the sword.
- **Matthew 19:22–30**: The Rich Young Ruler; the eye of the needle; the 12 thrones; first and last [8–26].
- **Matthew 20:1–16**: The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard [27–34].
- **Numbers 14:27**: God's hatred of the grumbling of the people.
- **Romans 8:17**: Heirs with Christ provided we suffer with Him.
- **1 Corinthians 15:17–51**: Context of the resurrection.
- **2 Corinthians 11:23–28**: Paul's list of sufferings and daily pressures.
- **Philippians 3:17 / 4:9**: Command to imitate Paul and practice what he taught.
- **1 Thessalonians 3:3–5**: Being destined for affliction; fear of the tempter.
- **1 Peter 2:19–21**: Suffering for doing good as a calling; following Christ's steps.
- **1 Peter 4:12–13**: Not being surprised by fiery trials; sharing Christ's suffering.

Study Questions

- **Non-Relative Cost**: Why does the speaker use the analogy of a Rolls-Royce to describe the cost of following Christ?
- **Kingdom Synonymy**: According to the text, what proves that "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" refer to the same thing?

- **The Rich Young Ruler:** What was the specific "standard" Jesus demanded of the rich man that he was unwilling to pay?
- **Peter's Question:** What did Jesus promise the apostles as their specific "wage" for following Him?
- **The Grumbling Warning:** Why is the word "grumbled" highlighted as significant in the Parable of the Labourers?
- **Paul's Perspective:** How could Paul describe "countless beatings" and "hunger and thirst" as "light momentary affliction"?

Answer Key

- To show that while monetary cost is relative to wealth, **Jesus's cost is absolute**; He demands a person's whole life, which is a level playing field for both rich and poor.
- Jesus used the terms **interchangeably** in the same context regarding the rich man and the camel.
- Jesus asked him to **renounce his great possessions**, give to the poor, and **follow Him in the present tense**.
- They will **sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel** in the new world (the Kingdom).
- Because **God hates grumbling** with a passion; it was a primary reason the wilderness generation failed, and it indicates a heart that begrudges God's generosity.
- Because his eyes were not on his current circumstances but were **fixed on the coming earthly Kingdom** and his future glorification.

Exhortations

- **Shatter Your Mold:** Stop superimposing your own "cost model" on the Gospel. Accept the scriptural truth that **He demands your life**, not just an hour on Sunday morning.
- **Prepare Your Root System:** If you do not build the **structure of Christ** in your heart now, you will be "history" when trials hit. Do not be surprised by the "fiery trial"—it is part of your destiny.
- **Stop Grumbling:** Be very careful with your attitude towards God's dealings. Grumbling is a **wicked trait** that can disqualify you from the inheritance of the generous Master.

- **Imitate Paul:** Look at the example of the Apostle Paul. If your walk is a "comfort gospel" without rejection or suffering, ask yourself if you are truly **following in the steps of the Messiah**.
- **Focus on the Glorification:** When you go through persecution or rejection from family, do not look at the sword—**look at the glory** that will be revealed in the coming Kingdom.