

Matthew 20:20-28 **Positions in the Kingdom of Heaven**

Request for special place in the Kingdom

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. 21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able."

23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink 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 is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

24 And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." NKJV

Facts Revealed:

- ✚ Positions of honor in the Kingdom of Heaven. [[Matthew 20:20-28](#), [Mark 10:35-45](#)]
- ✚ The mother of James and John the sons of Zebedee like many mothers today was seeking a special place for her sons, and thinking them to be too intimidated by the presence of Christ to ask for themselves, she approached Jesus with her sons and spoke for them.
 - ✧ In the book of Mark, she is not mentioned because the request was indeed for the sons and on their behalf, with the mother only acting as their spokesperson.
 - ✧ To be on His right hand and on the left hand would place them closest to the King and be a seat of highest honor.
 - ✧ John was the one found beside Jesus at the Last Supper, because he was leaning on Jesus' breast. [[John 13:23-25](#)]
- ✚ Jesus said, "You do not know what you ask." [[Matthew 20:22](#), [Mark 10:38](#)]
 - ✧ Great figures of all time will be in the Kingdom including;
 - ✧ Enoch who never died because God took him [[Genesis 5:24](#)],
 - ✧ Noah who was called perfect in his generation [[Genesis 6:9](#)] whom God included among the three who might be able to save themselves by their righteousness [[Ezekiel 14:14](#)],
 - ✧ Job whom God included among the three who might be able to save themselves by their righteousness [[Ezekiel 14:14](#)]
 - ✧ Abraham, Isaac, Jacob the Patriarchs of the Children of Israel whom Jesus said would be in the Kingdom [[Matthew 8:11](#)],
 - ✧ Moses who was known as the man of God [[Deuteronomy 33:1](#), [Joshua 14:6](#), [1 Chronicles 23:14](#), [2 Chronicles 30:16](#), [Ezra 3:2](#)],
 - ✧ Elijah who did not die because he was taken to heaven in a whirlwind [[2 Kings 2:1](#), [11](#)],
 - ✧ David who will be the ruling prince in the Kingdom [[Ezekiel 34:23-24](#)]
 - ✧ Daniel whom God included among the three who might be able to save themselves by their righteousness [[Ezekiel 14:14](#)],

- ✧ John the Baptist whom Jesus said was the greatest among those born of women [Matthew 11:11],
- ✧ Those who overcome the great Tribulation and face victoriously the **beast, his mark and his image.** [Revelation 15:2]
- ✧ And all the other Saints of God of all ages.
- ✧ From among them the position at the right or left hand of Jesus the King might be chosen. Who is most worthy?
- ✧ Jesus asked, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" [Matthew 20:22, Mark 10:38]
 - ✧ They said, "We are able." [Matthew 20:22, Mark 10:39]
- ✧ Jesus said, "You will indeed drink 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 is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." [Matthew 20:23, Mark 10:39-40]
 - ✧ There was no doubt that they would indeed suffer and die at the hands of men as Jesus did, but that alone is not what qualifies one to sit at the right or left hand of Jesus in the Kingdom.
 - ✧ That position is prepared by the Father in Heaven.
- ✧ Jesus had already promised the twelve that they would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:28-30]

Indignation of the Other Disciples

- ✧ Of course as is natural for human emotional response, the ten were greatly displeased with the two brothers when they heard it. [Matthew 20:24, Mark 10:41]

Greatest is Servant of All

- ✧ Jesus called them to Himself and gave them God's perspective on the matter.
 - ✧ You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. [Matthew 20:25, Mark 10:42, Luke 22:25]
 - ✧ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. [Matthew 20:26, Mark 10:43, Luke 22:26]
 - ✧ And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. [Matthew 20:27, Mark 10:44]
- ✧ Jesus is the greatest example of proper leadership attitude.
 - ✧ Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. [Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45, Luke 22:27]
 - ✧ This is the ultimate expression of loving leadership, greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends. [John 13:15]
 - ✧ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [Romans 5:8]