

## Matthew 20:24-26 The Congregational Form of Church Government

Introduction: The congregation votes and decides the questions on all issues. This is the kind of government that Baptist churches have. Did you ever wonder why? The way Jesus solved two problems in this text explains why.

### I. The problem of the power struggle for top position in the millennial kingdom.

- A. Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem where He will be crucified. (He informed them of His crucifixion and resurrection.)
- B. Jesus has promised the apostles each a throne ruling a tribe of Israel.
- C. James and John wanted more: they wanted the two top positions under Jesus. (They had their mother to ask that they be given these positions.)
- D. The ten were angry.
  - 1. They were not present, but somebody ran straight to them.
  - 2. This opened up old wounds, Matthew 18:1.
  - 3. Matthew admitted that he too was angry.

### II. The problem of a power struggle as soon as Jesus was gone.

- A. Jesus was soon to be gone from them.
- B. The disciples probably did not know He would be gone.
- C. But it was certain that once He was gone they would soon be in a struggle for top position.
- D. If the Lord had appointed Peter as pope, this would solve this problem, but Jesus never appointed Peter as pope.

### III. One solution for both problems.

- A. Jesus called attention to the type government which the Romans used.
  - 1. They had a caesar at the top to govern the empire.
  - 2. They had a senate elected by the people to share in the ruling power.
  - 3. Kings were appointed in each nation.
  - 4. Each king had various officers in his kingdom.
  - 5. There was a constant struggle for power.
  - 6. Jesus forbid this type of government to His disciples.
- B. By this Jesus let them know that He would not tolerate a power struggle within His millennial kingdom.
  - 1. Each of them would occupy a throne of equal rank and no one of them would rule over the others.
  - 2. Jesus would rule them all.
- C. By this Jesus let them know that He would not tolerate a power struggle in the church after He was gone.
  - 1. No one man was to rule over them.
  - 2. There was to be no chain of command reaching from top to bottom.
  - 3. There was to be no senate (board, committee, presbytery) to rule over them.
  - 4. The entire congregation was to make decisions.
- D. This is not to ignore the offices of pastor and deacon which would be set up later, but it does set up the principle of congregation rule.
  - 1. Pastors fill an important position, but they are not caesars nor kings, I Peter 5:1-3.
  - 2. Likewise deacons fill an important position, but neither are they rulers. (The word deacon means servant.)
  - 3. Both occupy a position of leadership.

Conclusion: It is vital:

1. That every church have a congregational rule form of government.
2. That every church member attend business meetings.
3. That pastors and deacons remember that they do not exercise control of a church.
4. That churches give serious consideration to the recommendations made by pastors and deacons.
5. That every person be saved.
6. That every saved seek membership in a doctrinally sound church that has congregational rule.  
(It is a rare thing to find congregational rule outside of a Baptist church.)

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