

Text: Matt 23:5-12 - Rabbi's, Father's & Other "So Called" Forbidden Titles - ①

These verses are some of the most controversial and misunderstood verses in all the bible. Many teachings and doctrines have been falsely built upon a poor exegesis and poor hermeneutic application to these ~~verses~~ verses. Several different types of peoples have been alienated, mistreated and ostracized for adopting these titles. Most disturbing is the anti-semitic interpretation of these verses. Lets study.

**\*\*** Misinterpretations of these verses had 3 main victim groupings: 1) Traditional Jews 2) Catholics 3) Protestants. Jesus appears to be clearly teaching that 3 titles are forbidden for new covenant leadership. He appears to be teaching that any human use of these 3 titles, is prideful and biblically forbidden. It appears to be the case, especially in light of who He is addressing His remarks to. (Prideful, Self seeking - Self righteous, religious leaders).

**\*\*** Careful rendering and study of the text shows no such forbiddance.

Are Messiah's children and especially His leaders in the Church, forbidden from using the titles of Rabbi, Father or Teacher?

Answer: Surprise. No!

Truth-

V.5 - Jesus is rebuking all self exaltation & pride & self righteousness.

V.6 - He rebukes the seeking and use of titles to promote self.

All man made self promotion and man made position seeking are condemned as sinful. He is clearly condemning a practice not 3 titles. He is condemning wrong stinkin thinking. He is not specifically condemning 3 specific titles above all others. He is simply making these 3 or using these 3 as an example,

that all of the leaders of His day, could clearly understand. ②

If their were Mormons or Masons or J.W's standing in front of Him, being addressed, ~~or~~ there is no doubt, that the wisdom of God would have chosen 3 different examples. His audience and the customs of the day, demanded that as a "Master Teacher", He would use relatable examples.

#1. Rabbi - (v. 788) Do not call yourself Rabbi. You are all brothers in the Lord. Brothers in the Lord have no power to appoint Rabbi's to oversee God's people. Only God appoints Rabbi's. Conclusion: Let God call you and ordain you as a Rabbi or <sup>overseer</sup> instructor. The N.T. equivalent of the Rabbi's position is the "episkopos" or overseer. There is no difference, between the job of an Old Covenant Rabbi or N.T. "episkopos." 1 Tim 3:1 and Titus teach that these titles and jobs are good. Why would Teshua say being a Rabbi is forbidden when Raul Shaul teaches the opposite. Answer: Both the Rabbi & episkopos are blessed titles when given by God. Both are wrong when self imposed or self appointed. If Teshua was addressing Episkopians he would have said,

② You don't call any man Episkopian, pastor. Is it Biblical for an episkopos in a Messianic Jewish synagogue to be called Rabbi? Absolutely. (Eph 4:11 - A Rabbi is a gift to the body!!)

#2. Father - Teshua is not teaching us that calling other believers, "Father" is wrong. He does it Himself in 1 John. Why would He first forbid this title, and later on in the N.T. give this exact title to mature, seasoned and stable believers? 1 John 2:13-14. Answer: The same as the previous answer. Messianic brothers cannot nor should not bestow titles on one another. God, only God can give a title in the Kingdom of His Son. Wrong understanding of this admonition, has led to much anti-Catholic biased.

#3. Teacher - v. 10 - Teshua is not teaching that being called a teacher or leader is forbidden. Again He is forbidding any self exaltation, because He Himself is the greatest teacher who ever lived. By appointing ourselves as Teachers we dishonor His leadership & greatness. In Eph. 4:11 teachers are called gifts to the body by the risen Lord. Again we see that calling someone teacher is fine, as long as the title was self-imposed.