

Matthew 21:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Analysis

This text illustrates key Reformed principles: *sola Scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*. The passage demonstrates how God's Word speaks authoritatively to human need, revealing both our depravity and God's merciful provision through Christ.

Historical Context

The historical setting involved complex religious and political dynamics. Jewish leaders maintained authority through Roman tolerance while common people sought deliverance. Jesus' teaching addressed both immediate concerns and eternal truths.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your appreciation for Christ?

2. What false beliefs or practices does this text correct?
3. How should you share this truth with others?

Interlinear Text

τίς	ἐκ	τῶν	δύο	ἐποίησεν	τὸ	θέλημα	τοῦ
Whether	of	G3588	them twain	did	G3588	the will	G3588
G5101	G1537		G1417	G4160		G2307	
πατρός; λέγω αὐτοῖς Ὁ πρῶτος.				λέγω αὐτοῖς ὁ			
of his father	I say	unto him	G3588	The first	I say	unto him	G3588
G3962	G3004	G846		G4413	G3004	G846	
Ἰησοῦς, Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ							
Jesus	Verily	I say	unto you	That	G3588	the publicans	and
G2424	G281	G3004	G5213	G3754		G5057	G2532
πόρναι προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ				of God			
the harlots	before	you	into	G3588	the kingdom	G932	G2316
G4204	G4254	G5209	G1519				

Additional Cross-References

Luke 7:29 (References God): And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

2 Peter 3:9 (Parallel theme): The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Romans 5:20 (Parallel theme): Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Matthew 7:21 (Kingdom): Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Romans 3:19 (References God): Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Matthew 20:16 (Parallel theme): So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

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