

Foxes have Holes and Birds have Nests

Matthew 8:19-20 (NKJV) – Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.”

Ian Clayton states that this isn't about Jesus being poor or a complaint that he didn't have a house of his own. Ian responds to this verse as follows:

“Jesus’ garment was worth one year’s wage. Kings are very rich...that’s why he had an accountant¹. Only people that are rich have accountants (or have money). He had his own personal accountant.”²

Ian interprets Jesus' reply in the way he believes that Jews would have as they heard him (a Jew) speaking it. We Greek thinkers consider the head to be an anatomical structure, but the Capernaum Jews who heard Jesus speaking his metaphor in Hebrew got a different message. To them the head speaks of headship or leadership, because Hebrews think relationship and function, not structure. We don't get his message because we don't think like a Jew and we interpret scripture out of cultural context.

We are also confused in the way we interpret this passage because 'laying our head' is an archaic English expression meaning that we don't have anywhere to sleep – i.e. we don't own a home.

In regards to the animals referenced, country Jews would have known that foxes don't live in holes, but that holes are a place of reproduction. They would also know that birds live in trees, not nests. They roost on branches, while nests are only for reproduction.

“When Jesus says that foxes have holes...foxes don't live in holes, they have babies in holes. A fox doesn't live in a foxhole. Birds lays eggs and hatches babies but they don't live in nests.”³

So what was Jesus trying to convey to this scribe?

Jesus was a rabbi and a rabbi's job was to reproduce themselves. They trained disciples who would become rabbis themselves, young men who would replace them when they died. Jesus wasn't interested in this scribe following him, he was looking for disciples who he could train to maturity. At the point in time when the scribe made his declaration, Jesus hadn't succeeded in doing that – he had to wait until the Spirit was released at Pentecost.

“What Jesus was saying is “I, as the son of man have not raised anyone up into a place maturity that I can put my head upon.”⁴

Laurence
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1 – Judas Iscariot

2 – Del writes in a summary of Ian's talk in her article “Ian Clayton – Courts of Heaven (part 1)” (www.nowinterpretthis.com/threads/ian-clayton-notes.1182)

3 – Del writes in a summary of Ian's talk in her article “Ian Clayton – Courts of Heaven (part 1)” (www.nowinterpretthis.com/threads/ian-clayton-notes.1182)

4 – Del writes in a summary of Ian's talk in her article “Ian Clayton – Courts of Heaven (part 1)” (www.nowinterpretthis.com/threads/ian-clayton-notes.1182)