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The Crisis of the Kingdom Come – *Luke 12:35-59*

Introduction – We continue this discourse of our Lord where He is speaking of an imminent crisis because the kingdom of God has been brought in the Presence and Person of the King. Jesus is pressing upon men to come into that kingdom and longs for the work of His fiery “baptism” to bring this about – the salvation of Israel. But with that baptism comes a great division between those who will follow Him and those who will not.

Overview –

As a Servant – Jesus charged his disciples (and the crowd) to be ready, always ready, for His return (vv35-40). When He comes, He will come to serve rather than be served (v37). Jesus promises great rewards to those He finds faithful and wise upon His return (vv42-44). But if Israel is not willing to take advantage of His delay, great judgment will fall upon them. Open rebellion will be punished more severely than ignorant disobedience (vv45-48).

Divisions – Jesus likens His impending death on the cross as a baptism of fire and longs for it to occur (vv49-50). But this baptism will divide those who are His from those who are not, dividing even the most intimate relationships (vv51-53).

Discern the Times – Jesus calls that generation hypocrites, for they know how to discern the signs of the weather, but they cannot/will not discern the signs of His coming (vv54-56). Israel ought to take advantage of this momentary delay to settle out of court before the judgment (vv57-59).

Living in Times of Crises – Jesus’ instructions about readiness explicitly are connected to the threat of the coming of the Son of Man (v 40). The Son of Man came to Israel in judgment in 70AD because she crucified her Messiah and blasphemed the Holy Spirit. She beat the servants of her Master as the first and great persecutor of the church and refused to be reconciled with God before His designated court-date.

But Jesus “comes” to us in many different ways as well, both personally and corporately. He comes each week to visit, inspect and feed us in our service of worship. He comes at times of turmoil and crisis in the church. He comes to nations in judgment as He controls the rising and falling of civilizations. Of course, He comes to each of us upon our death. In each case, we too need to be ready for His coming.

Gird Up Your Waist – This phrase (v35) is borrowed language from Ex 12:11 where the people of God are about to go on a journey and are to be dressed for action. Peter will use this same language and then explains how we are to be girded (1 Pet 1:13-16) resting our hope as obedient children and not conforming ourselves to our former lusts. This is to be our constant state until His coming.

When He Comes – During those times when Jesus does come to us, He takes the robe and towel of the Servant and serves the faithful servants (John 13). Then, He tells us to go and do likewise. Shepherds, elders, teachers, and those in authority over Christ’s flock must particularly heed this command.

Exploiting His Delay – There are always so-called servants who, apathetic about their Lord’s commands, take advantage of His delayed judgment. These are the ones who find His coming as a great surprise – they are never ready for Him. Do not delay your pursuit of holiness or you will find Jesus coming like a thief in the night.

Family Divisions – Jesus came to bring peace, but not peace with those who refuse Him. And in the crisis of reformation or awakenings there will be divisions that will go all the way down to the most intimate of relations. Jesus must be loved first. However, we also know that this is not the norm for multi-generations as it is often for first-generation Christians. Vv 52-53 ought not to be understood as the norm for covenant families who are living according to the promises of God. Remember: Jesus has come to a disobedient and rebellious Israel and is establishing the New Israel. That is a time of division and fire.

Discern the Times – But do we not find ourselves living in somewhat similar times. The decline of honest Christianity in our homes, in our schools, in our government should cause us to look carefully at what is before us. God has and is judging our nation. We endorse sodomy and call it tolerance. We kill babies and call it merciful choice. We ridicule mothers who ‘just’ stay at home and call it “Women’s Lib,” and throw our children into day-care centers. We refuse to protect our women from

violence (in pornography and on the battlefield) and call it freedom of speech and equality. Discern the times (Rom 1:28-31) and cry out to Him for repentance.

To Whom Much is Given (v48b) – Still, we have a Christian heritage that lasted for generations. We have more financial riches than ever in the history of the world. We have more freedom to preach the gospel, and more resources and technological opportunities than ever before. We have more leisure time than men have ever known. We have more Bibles and Christian literature at our disposal than men could have imagined. All of this is before us that we might gird up our waist and keep our lamps burning, ready to serve and set upon our journey. Much is required because much has been given.

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