

**Home : Sermons : October 22, 2006**

The Days of the Son of Man - Luke 17:20-37

Introduction – The idea, that Jesus could actually be the Messiah who would bring in the promised kingdom of God, was laughable to the Pharisees. Their conception was of a super-Jew who would bring in a military overthrow of the enemies of Israel and reestablish the throne of David. This king would bring the other nations to their knees in submission to Israel. Jesus was only good for a few miracles and a lot of headaches for the religious leaders.

Jesus, however, was preaching the glad tidings of a new kingdom (8:1) and establishing this new Israel meant that He was taking over the world, putting a sinful and shattered world back together. Through His preaching and healing, Jesus enacts this restoration. This King was at work, pressing on to His greatest act of service and victory in Jerusalem. But that work would bring the greatest power of judgment that unbelieving Israel had ever seen.

The Kingdom is Among You (vv20-21) – Following the miracle of healing 10 lepers, the Pharisees, quite ironically, ask Jesus when this so-called kingdom of God was going to come. Jesus answers that it does not come in a way that they are expecting to observe. The kingdom doesn't come like an advancing army, but rather like a mustard seed or a peck of leaven (Luke 13:18-21). They have been "watching" Jesus closely (6:7, 14:1, 20:20) and yet they miss these "observations" (same word), missing the fact that He is the Expected One and that the kingdom has come through Him. The NKJV translates Jesus saying that "*the kingdom of God is within you.*" "*You,*" is plural and so it couldn't be speaking of the unbelieving hearts of the Pharisees having the kingdom of God within them. Rather, it means, "*the kingdom of God is among you.*" "*Open your eyes,*" Jesus is saying, "*the kingdom is right here.*"

The Days of the Son of Man (vv22-25) – Some try to take the teachings of the latter part of Luke 17 as a prophecy of Jesus' second coming at the end of the world. The Scriptures do teach that Jesus will physically come again and the dead will be raised in judgment (1 Cor 15, Rev 20). But that is not what Jesus is talking about here; that is not the context of what He has been addressing. He has been warning unbelieving Israel of the consequences of their unbelief (i.e. Luke 16, 17:1-2), and He is turning to the disciples, instructing them as to how they should act when this judgment comes.

He calls those days, "the days of the Son of Man," recalling the words of Daniel 7(esp. vv13-14). Jerusalem will reject this Son of Man (Luke 17:25), and when the city is demolished, it will be a testimony to Jesus' exaltation and authority.

In another passage, Jesus quotes Dan 7:13-14 and refers to Himself as that Son of Man (Matt 26:64). The chief priest considers this blasphemy – Jesus is making Himself to be God.

Lightning Flash (vv 22-24) – Because of the distress and trials that the disciples will undergo, they may wish for the days of God's judgment to come sooner than it does. They may be tempted to listen to the rumors (that ran rampant up until 70AD) that the Messiah had come in obscure appearances. But His coming (in Judgment in 70AD) will be as clear to all as lightning in the sky.

Presumption in the Midst of Wickedness (vv26-30) – In the days of Noah and Lot, life was good. The economy was up, families were living large, and God was forgotten. Jesus doesn't speak of the wickedness of those days, although the biblical accounts do. He emphasizes the presumption of those generations, receiving good things from the Creator, but failing to acknowledge and thank that same Giver. This is the way of presumptive, thankless societies (Rom 1:17-23). This is what Jerusalem looked like (Luke 17:11-19).

The Suddenness and Separation of the Coming Judgment (vv31-36) – The Flood and the Fire that came down upon Noah's earth and Sodom's city came down, it seemed, without warning to those who would not listen to God. Here, Jesus begins to give a dire warning to those who will need to discern the times and flee Jerusalem before the fiery judgment came upon that city (v31-33). When they flee the judgment, they must do so without longing for the pleasures or power or prestige they might have enjoyed there before (v32, 9:62). And so it is for all who flee to Christ for refuge (Phil 3:13).

Us and Them (vv33-37) – Jerusalem is a dead carcass and the eagles (vultures) will soon encircle and devour. The "eagle" emblem may cryptically refer to the Roman standard. This is not jumping ahead in time, referring to a rapture thousands of years after Christ. This is still a warning to the generation to whom Christ is speaking. Regardless of the closeness of relationships (husband/wife, close friends/workers), a new us and them is being established, and those who have faith in Christ will not be plucked out into this oncoming judgment. It may be that Jesus was telling us that it would be a good thing to be "left

behind.”

These apocalyptic sayings are often difficult to fully interpret. But one thing comes clear in this passage. The Days of the Son of Man would be the days of His vindication for Himself and His people. Those who presumptuously thought they were God’s people and yet rejected the Messiah would find themselves suddenly cut off and destroyed; and a new humanity, a new Adam’s race, would be established.

Dave Hatcher – October 22, 2006