

**Home : Sermons : December 10, 2006****The Kingdom of the God of the Living – Luke 20:27-21:4**

Introduction – Luke has placed these scenes from the time of the overturning of the tables in an eye-catching order (19:45-21:4). Jesus' authority is questioned and we go back to John the Baptist. Then, the story of Israel and the Son of God returning is told in the parable of the vinedressers. We are then told about the kingdoms of Caesar and its interaction with the kingdom of God; this question of tribute being brought by Jews who hoped to deliver Jesus over to the Romans for execution. We now have a question about the resurrection and a question by Jesus about the reign of the David's Son on a throne. Finally, a widow is commended for her faithful sacrifice while the temple and its rulers are condemned to destruction (Chapter 21). This is the story of the Messiah; this is the gospel in miniature.

"Then, some of the Sadducees..." (vv27-40) – The Pharisees are shown up by Jesus (vv20-26) and now the Sadducees decide to take a shot. Unlike the Pharisees, they denied a future resurrection. Socially, they were the members of aristocracy and many of the priests were in this party. Not unlike today, they couldn't be in the upper-crust of society (the wealthy, the academia, the political) and publicly hold to such old-world ideas like miracles (i.e. a bodily resurrection) in the Bible being true. They give a long-winded "reason" for the ludicrousness of such a view, again, in order to test Jesus. Their general principle is this – if we cannot understand how a doctrine can be true, we must reject that doctrine as being false. Consider how people today reject the virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, His full humanity and full divinity, or Free Will with Exhaustive Predestination.

God of the Living (vv34-41) – In His answer, Jesus teaches us many things, and leaves other things we might want to know unanswered. First, He reveals that resurrection life will not be the same as life prior to the resurrection. For instance, there will be no longer a need to reproduce human life in order to keep the race in existence. This raises some additional questions about marital relationships in heaven; Jesus is nearly silent on this. Secondly, He proves from Exodus, which the Sadducees acknowledged as authoritative, that the patriarchs, while not yet resurrected, are alive after death and in the presence of God. They have a living God, and so they live.

David's Son is David's Lord (vv41-44) – While these scribes claim to know their scripture, denying the resurrection means they do not understand the scriptures at all. Psalm 110 is meaningless without a resurrection, and so they cannot answer Jesus' question. And because of the resurrection, Psalm 110 becomes the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. Christmas, the Incarnation, and Easter, the Resurrection, are the only answers to this question. Jesus is our Emmanuel, God with us. He is the Son of David and yet He is also David's Lord. And Psalm 110 tells us, like Isaiah 9:6-7, that of the increase of His government, there will be no end. It also tells us where Jesus will remain until His enemies are all put down. And this must be understood to understand Luke 21 as well.

The Scribes and the Widow (20:45-21:4) – Remember, Luke did not write the chapters and verses – these came centuries later. Jesus openly condemns the scribes now – there is another reason they don't "get" the scriptures; they are far too interested in exploiting the weak with their powerful positions. He condemns their pride and hypocrisy and the fact that they prey on widows, the kind of people that God has singled out for special care. The widow in 21:1-4 is pious and generous, putting her last coins, little as they are, in one of the trumpet-shaped collection tubs in the temple courts. Pride and hypocrisy versus piety and sacrifice. Exploitation versus humble trust. Instead of taking care of her, the temple authorities receive all that she has to live on. Jesus condemns the scribes and exalts this lowly, sacrificial woman. Then, in the next scene, He will turn upon the temple as though He has had it. She represents the faithful remnant of the kingdom which will see her vindication along with Jesus, the new kingdom, the new Israel. And she gives everything to God.

The Kingdom of the God of the Living: Resurrected What? – The gospel of Luke is not simply about how an individual who is lost in his sins can be saved, because that is not all the gospel is about. The gospel is the story of a kingdom and a King and His subjects, disloyal and loyal. It is a story of a kingdom resurrected, remade, renewed, and therefore affects every aspect of existence.

Life – We are only prepared to live our lives in the kingdom of God when we are first prepared to die. Personal faith in the Son of God, in His sacrificial, atoning death, in His resurrection life, and in the hope of the final resurrection, is the beginning of kingdom-living.

Community – Personal faith is required, but faith in this God places one in a community, a kingdom, a church – and this is manifest in a local body, whether clustered close together, or a commuter-church, as we have right now. Regardless, our corporate worship is central to all that we do from that point on in our week.

Sacrifice – Life in this community-kingdom is a life of sacrificial joy. Jesus said that we are to pick up our own crosses and follow Him into this community, into this kingdom, and into this world. Like Jesus, with the joy set before us, we are to give ourselves away.

History/Future – We are a people, a kingdom, with a history going back to the Garden and continuing on to the Final Day of Judgment. Of the increase of His government there will be no end. Confident that we have met with the King of Seattle/Bellevue/Eastside, we are sent to go into the world and act like we own the place. Like Jesus, we are to cause trouble in the established places of power, not for ourselves, but to join with Jesus who “*has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” (Luke 19:10).

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