

November 8, 2009

"Kingdom Confusion"

Perspectives on the Significance of the Life & Death of Christ

Jn. 18:1-11

- The crucifixion of Jesus was at once the worst crime perpetrated in history and the most glorious display of the wisdom, love, and power of God.

German liberal theologian, Albert Schweitzer, comments on the significance of Jesus' life and death:

"There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that he is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and he throws himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, he has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to his purpose, is hanging upon it still. [His attempted eulogy] That is his victory and his reign." -**Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus***

- Schweitzer's fatal flaw was to assume that Jesus expected to usher in a revolution of society during his earthly ministry, and apart from His death and resurrection. Like Peter and the Pharisees, Schweitzer had 'kingdom confusion'.

Kingdom Opposition (vs 1-9)

A 'together against the gospel' conference

- Did Jerusalem ever witness such a diverse yet unified parade?
- One of the kingdom realities that Jesus was ready for was simply this: in this age, the kingdom of God advances under opposition. He expected nothing less.

Ps. 2:1-8

- Notice Jesus' demeanor and movement. He is pushing forward, *toward* the opposition. He opens the conversation.
- These opposers are acting within the sovereign purpose of God (Acts 2:23-24), but, at the same time, they will be held accountable.
- Jesus asks them twice "Whom do you seek?" Their specific answer – Jesus of Nazareth – will come up again in Peter's apostolic preaching as a witness and a call to repentance (Acts 2:22; 4:10).
 - What one does with Jesus Christ's claims and works will also be the standard by which God judges the world (Acts 17:31).

Judas was standing *with them*

- All sin is a betrayal of Christ. All sin stands us in functional opposition to Christ. We, for a moment, side with those who hate Him.
- Opposition can assume a hundred faces.

▶ Glory pushed back

- "I AM" is the sacred name of God in the Old Testament. When Jesus invokes it here, His glory breaks through for a brief moment. (Ps. 29)

Kingdom Miscues (vs. 10-11)

- Peter strikes again!

- What would they all have done had they only *known* who Jesus was and what He had come, this time, to do?

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **(I Cor 2:6-8)**

Modern Confusion (vs. 36)

- Kingdom confusion blurs our discernment. It makes us dull where we should be sharp, angry where we should be broken. It leads to false expectations, disillusionment, pretense, and temporally-focused, self-absorbed lives.

- What would our lives look like if we were rescued from 'kingdom confusion'?

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. **(1 Peter 4:1-2, 12-14)**

▶ So expect *nothing* glorious – only suffering?

Expectations & exhortations

"So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore [let us rejoice that we don't have to suffer – no] let us to go him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come." **(Hebrews 13:12-13)**

"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed... Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you." **(1 Pet 5:1, 6)**