

Of Silver Bullets and Black Helicopters

The Inauguration, Continuation, and Consummation of the Kingdom of God

Mark 4:26-34

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I. Building for the Future

II. Metaphors of the Kingdom

A. Introduction

When we speak of God's Kingdom, we speak of God's _____ manifest in human history in His Messiah. Jesus' parables challenged prevailing notions of God's Kingdom. If you had asked the average Jew of Jesus' day, "*To what shall we liken the Kingdom of God?*", he would have said, "*It is like a swift militaristic conquest.*"

B. The Growing Seed (26-29)

Jesus' parable of the Growing Seed declares that *the Kingdom is not like a swift militaristic conquest but a gradually growing crop*. God's rule involves three phases:

First, _____. In Christ, the Kingdom of God has intruded into human history. Jesus declared to the Pharisees, "*If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you*" (Mt 12:28).

Second, _____. During the present time, we live under Christ's rule. Peter explains declares on the day of Pentecost: "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ*" (Acts 2:36).

Finally, _____. Jesus shall continue to reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, "*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*"

C. The Mustard Seed (cf. Ezek 17:22-24)

So how fruitful will the kingdom be? Remarkably fruitful. While it has a humble beginning, it will have a glorious end: the mustard seed becomes a massive tree.

Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done it." (Ezek 17:22-24)

III. Application

A. Of Silver Bullets – Gradualism

Let us consider first the parable about the Growing Seed. The kingdom is like a seed planted in the field, it begins in the blade, proceeds to the head, then the full grain and harvest. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the kingdom grows. Parable of the growing seed encourages us to patience and steady plodding. Gradualism.

What this means, therefore, is that we need to beware relying or anticipating some type of silver bullet that will make our problems disappear. A “silver bullet” is a metaphor for a simple, almost magical, solution to a difficult problem. The evangelical hope for the _____ is just such a silver bullet.

Gradualism characterizes both the history of the world and God’s work in our lives. God works slowly and steadily to sanctify us. While God occasionally intrudes in a remarkable and surprising manner to help us overcome some sin, the solution to our problems is most often patience, unflagging zeal, and steady resolution:

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

B. Of Black Helicopters – Optimism

Secondly, let us consider the parable of the Mustard Seed. It encourages us to look forward in _____ – the long-term future of the Kingdom of God is bright. The kingdom shall be like a great tree in which the birds of the air make their nests. It shall be, Ezekiel tells us, a majestic cedar acknowledged by all the other trees of the forest. It shall be, Daniel tells us (2:44), a great mountain that fills the entire earth. Jesus will so reign that all nations shall serve Him, all kings bow before Him, confessing that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

All these pictures of the future of the kingdom of God help dispel the mist that has clouded our vision for the last century because of the doom and gloom prophetic poison that many evangelicals have been taking.

¹ “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. ² He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴ He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.” (Is 42:1-4)

IV. Conclusion