

The King Who is Lord over Time

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[0 : 00] Right, we're going to turn to our Bibles now for our reading this morning, and you'll find that in Luke chapter 20, page 880, if you have one of our church Bibles.

And let me just say that if you're new, we're just coming towards the end of quite a long study in Luke's Gospel that we've been in over the last year, on and off. Luke's Gospel falls mainly into two halves.

The first nine chapters are full of the revelation of the Savior's glory from heaven in Jesus' mighty words, Jesus' mighty works. Then from verse 51 of chapter 9, it's all about the road to the Savior's glory in heaven.

Jesus is on the road to glory, and he's teaching his disciples to be followers on that road. It's a road that must be via Jerusalem and via the cross and his suffering and death.

And Jesus tells all his followers, if they would follow him to glory, they too must take up their cross and follow him. And so we're now in the very last section of Luke's Gospel. It's all around Jerusalem.

[1 : 15] And Luke orders this material around two entrances to Jerusalem from Jesus. When we come to chapter 22, we'll see that Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Lamb of God.

He's the Savior come to achieve his gracious redemption. But last time we saw, beginning at chapter 19, verse 28, he comes as the Lion of Judah.

He comes first as the sovereign to announce his glorious rule. And to call people to submit to his rule and to his lordship now, before it's too late.

And so we saw last time that Jesus is the king who pronounces himself to be lord of his temple. He insists on his sovereign rule over his household, over his gathered people, his church.

He insists on that in this kingdom age that he has begun. But as we're going to see today, the rest of chapter 20 tells us that not only is Jesus lord over his temple, he is lord over all time.

[2 : 20] He is lord of the ages. He is the ruler of this age and the age to come. The age of resurrection life that will be eternal. And so this is all about Jesus, who is the lord over time itself.

And we'll explain that a little later. So let's read Luke 20, beginning at verse 19. The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour.

For they perceived that he had told this parable against them. But they feared the people. So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

So they asked him, Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not?

But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have? And they said, Caesar's.

[3 : 34] He said to them, Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said.

But marveling at his answer, they became silent. There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.

Now, there were seven brothers. The first took a wife and died without children. And the second and the third took her. And likewise, all seven left no children and died.

Afterward, the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife. And Jesus said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

For those who are considered worthy to attain that age and to the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. For they cannot die anymore because they are equal to angels and are sons of God being sons of the resurrection.

[4 : 56] But that the dead are raised. Even Moses showed in the passage about the bush, where he called the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Now, he is not God of the dead, but of the living. For all live to him. And some of the scribes answered, Teacher, you have spoken well.

For they no longer dared to ask him any question. But he said to them, How can they say that the Christ is just David's son? But David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord, that is Yahweh, Jehovah, the God of Israel, the Lord said to my Lord, my master, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

David thus calls him Lord. So how is he his son? And in the hearing of all the people, he said to his disciples, Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the churches and the place of honor at feasts who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

They will receive the greater condemnation. And Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box. And he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.

[6 : 22] And he said, Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they contributed out of their abundance. But she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on.

Amen. And may God bless to us this his word. Well do take up your Bible if you would at Luke chapter 20.

And we're looking at verses 20 through to chapter 21 verse 4. Page 880 I think in the church Bible. And it's all about as I said Jesus the king who is lord over time.

Lord of the ages. It'll help I think if we home in first of all in verses 41 to 44. That's where we get the key question really in our passage this morning.

And it's this. Is Jesus Christ just earthbound? Is he just a figure of human history? Or is he from beyond merely this world?

[7 : 39] Indeed is he the ruler over time and history? Now that is a huge question and Jesus answers it very clearly of himself in the affirmative. Jesus answers those who say that the Christ the Jewish Messiah is merely human that he's merely a descendant of David.

He answers with a quote from David himself from Psalm 110 where David clearly is speaking of the coming Messiah and David calls him my lord my master.

The lord that's Yahweh the God of Israel says to my lord the Messiah sit at my right hand that is having ascended to the throne in heaven sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

Put them all under your feet. Now do you see Jesus' logic there? He's saying that Psalm 110 makes no sense at all if the Messiah is not yet even in existence during David's earthly life when he wrote these words if he was only to be a future descendant of David makes no sense nor would it make sense if David were no longer in existence when this son of David ascends the heavenly throne to rule the world long after David's earthly life is over.

But Jesus says in verse 44 that David calls him lord so how can he just be his son his descendant in earthly terms? He must be more than merely an earthly human descendant.

[9 : 18] And of course that is exactly what the scriptures promised. In Isaiah the great prophet Isaiah chapter 11 it spoke of a coming one who would both be a shoot from the family of David from the stump of Jesse that's David's father but also he would be the root the very origin of David himself.

And that's what the risen Lord Jesus calls himself in Revelation chapter 22 verse 16 I Jesus am the root and the descendant of David. He existed long long before David.

Indeed David existed only through him he is David's lord he is eternal. Jesus is saying he is lord of time he is over and above time and yet he invades time and becomes part of time and pursues a program of salvation of human beings in time until all his enemies are under his footstool.

And that's the consistent teaching of the New Testament. Listen to this from Hebrews chapter 10 when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet for by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified being made holy.

Notice all the references to time there. By one great act in time Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension into glory he achieves for all time his saving purposes.

[11 : 03] He is Lord over all time over this age and over the age to come which has already begun with Christ's ascension to reign but is not yet fully and finally perfected and consummated until as the psalm says every last enemy including death itself is destroyed and the age of resurrection life begins for all Christ's people when he comes again.

Jesus Christ is Lord of the ages. He is the king and ruler over time and eternity. That's his claim. But what does that mean then for those of us living in this age still?

How are we to think of Jesus' lordship Jesus' rule over all the world and over all our lives in this world until every enemy is finally under his feet? Until the age when as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 he delivers the kingdom over to his father and we are all changed we are all raised imperishable in resurrection bodies forever.

What does it mean until then? Does it mean for example the fact that Jesus is lord over this age that Christian people should overthrow all the institutions of this world and replace them with a theocratic state ISIS style with biblical law totally replacing civil law with a direct rule of Christ over the nations of the world in that way rather as Jesus said last time we saw he would overthrow the temple and the cultus of Jerusalem and rule directly over his people his church in this new age is that what we're to expect some Christians have thought that through the ages some Christians today would still say that of course in Jesus day the expectation was among many if not all that when the Messiah came that's exactly what he would do overthrow the Roman rule and establish direct earthly kingship again these these and other issues that

Jesus addresses here in this passage today and they are very important issues for us to think about today Jesus wants us to understand clearly that we need to think not only about the life of the world to come as though it was here already but also about our lives still in this age on this earth and yet he wants us always to think about our life on this earth in the light of the age that is to come and never without it and Christians also today are very often confused about these two things many Christians expect far too much now in this age and Jesus contradicts that but often Christians think far too little of what is to be in the age to come and Jesus corrects that too so let's look at some of the detail that Jesus gives us here he speaks about the place of the institutions of

[14 : 18] God's common grace in this world relating to the preservation of this world and to the population of this world and he shows how only right thinking about these things will give us a proper perspective on life in this world living in this world but for the world to come so first of all look at verses 19 or 20 to 26 where the issue is the preservation of this world what the Bible teaches is that human government is a God given institution for this age for the preservation of this world until Jesus comes again that is it is primarily a means to an end it serves the age to come and therefore Jesus tells us that our attitude to these things should be not rebellion but rendering we owe a proper duty and allegiance to earthly rulers and kings but above all we owe total allegiance and total duty to the king of kings to God himself verse 25 render to

Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's now the question in verse 21 is a malicious question we're told they pretended to be sincere but Jesus saw right through them verse 23 and so he answered them accordingly it was a sting operation you know it was the kind of hidden camera and recorder that's designed to catch politicians on the kickback you know like poor Malcolm Rifkind and Jack Straw were caught recently although I exonerated or maybe to catch the car manufacturer with a squeaky clean image that is the pin-up of all the environmentalists my how the rarefied air of German moral high ground has been rather dusted with diesel fumes this week hasn't it a lot of schadenfreude I should think among gas guzzling American drivers this week but it was that kind of question a malicious one aimed to catch out and expose and notice verse 20 the strange alliances we have the leaders here of the national religious institution but they're right in hock with the state governor whom they all hated and distrusted and yet they're prepared to join forces against

Jesus Christ and that again is so often the way is it not because all human institutions even religious ones are threatened by the authority of Jesus Christ but behind their question lies blindness and ignorance about God's whole purpose for this world and his priorities for people in this world in this age in which human institutions clearly do have a place in God's plan for eternity they choose of course a very contentious issue it was the Roman poll tax well anybody who can remember the poll tax riots here in the 1990s will remember immediately what an inflammatory

issue that sort of thing is if Jesus said no don't pay the tax well they had him immediately for treason he'd be the Tommy Sheridan of Palestine immediately carted off to prison a people's hero but utterly silenced or more likely in fact executed but if on the other hand he said yes pay it well that would be the end of his popularity with all the people he'd be rejected just as Margaret Thatcher was toppled over the poll tax here so it was a win-win situation for the spies whatever he said he was a goner but of course Jesus saw it coming and he not only dodged the bullet he fired it straight back at them his answer in verse 25 is quite brilliant and it silenced them they're utterly outsmarted verse 26 they couldn't catch him out but they marveled and they fell silent and just notice friends that we don't have to be ashamed of Jesus Christ no one ever has been able to get the better of him and if we simply let Jesus speak he will be able to silence even the most hostile critics so don't be afraid to open your Bibles and let Jesus speak in answer to hostile people's questions you cannot floor the Lord Jesus Christ but Jesus answers he was much more here than merely clever he challenges their whole understanding of the world and their whole priorities and perspectives about religion the whole question you see turns on the issue of ownership just as we saw last time in the parable in verses 1 to 19 it's about what is owed to the owner by his servants it's about who is owed what by whom in this world and Jesus says that the institutions of this world are owed allegiance from us but above all so also is God the ultimate owner with our ultimate allegiance look at verse 25 Jesus says they do have to do duty to Caesar whose image is stamped on their coins because government in this world is a gift of God's grace it's for our blessing in order to restrain evil and to preserve the world and its people now that goes right right back to God's covenant with Noah do you remember and his promise to preserve the earth right through to the end of this age and this world must be preserved or else man's wickedness man's folly would destroy it and would have destroyed it long ago look at the chaos of states that have failed today large swathes of Syria and Iraq for example where human government has totally broken down that's the root of the whole of the migrant crisis that we're facing either there is no government there's anarchy and chaos like Syria and some of these other places or there is government however flawed but upholding law and order punishing evil and preserving that which is good that's why the apostle [20 : 42] Paul writes in Romans 13 he says we're to be subject to governing authorities because there is no authority except from God and Paul is saying to the Romans that even Caesars like Nero are God's servant for your good isn't that astonishing and you see Jesus here is saying it's not a matter of tribute it's not a matter of voluntary gifts to Caesar it's a matter of duty the word render means to give back what is owed to the owner means to give him his due and civil government is God's appointed authority for this age because the world needs to be preserved with a measure of order with a measure of rule and restraint it must be if God's redeeming plan for all eternity is to be fulfilled if the gospel is to go out into all the world if God is to fulfill his purpose for the age to come and so we're not to rebel says Jesus we're to render to this world's power what we duly owe and in fact as Christians we're to do so out of an enlightened love and gratitude to

God for these institutions and you see what ramifications that has for all of our lives far too many for us to dwell on this morning but for example think of public service in state institutions like government like the judiciary or law or education or medicine or social work or architecture and all these things these are all part of God's common grace to this world for our health for our preservation and we shouldn't scorn opportunities to serve in these ways nor scorn the use of them unless they're specifically Christian some people are very confused we don't need to seek specifically Christian political parties for example we can't refuse to pay our taxes because it's not a specifically Christian government nor do we need specifically Christian schools although those can be helpful of course nor do we need specifically Christian doctors or lawyers or psychiatrists or anything else no you see we're to render to

Caesar to the civil state and its institutions all that rightly belongs to them to honor them support them to fund them as we should not to undermine them not to rebel against them and we should be ready and willing to do our proper duty to these institutions of state as God's servants for our good and by the way since Paul clearly states in Romans 13 there that the state carries from God the right of the power of the sword and that surely means no Christians need to shrink either from serving in the military or in the police or MI5 or whatever it might be people have not done that duty 75 years ago in the battle of Britain we'd have been living in a very grim world today would we not in this country render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's that's Christ's command there's more

to say on that of course on this issue of the state and Jesus doesn't address here directly what to do when the state demands something that is deliberately and absolutely opposed to God's commands what Peter tells us in Acts 5 in that situation it's very clear we must obey God rather than men if it comes to that but in fact in verse 25 here Jesus is actually very clear it's not just about duty to Caesar it's about an overwhelming duty to God himself render give back your due service to God all that is owed to him now Caesar's image is on the coin but God's image is stamped upon our whole human life body and soul is it not and that means that we owe him everything everything we are so duty to Caesar and to the institutions of this world can never be everything for the Christian believer concerns of the state or politics or economics or tax or social affairs or the environment and so on these can never be the primary thing for followers of Jesus that's the great mistake liberal

Christianity makes isn't it it's all about this world it's all about this age it's all about the here and now but it's very easy to slip into being practical liberals just think about your own politics for example think about how you will vote isn't the decision usually based almost totally upon this world's concerns whether you think tax should go down or up or whatever whether you think this policy should be pursued whether this will be better for you and your family and your community and so on of course these things matter and of course we've got a duty to play our part and in the privilege of democracy we must play our part but how often does our thinking render to God what is God's how often do we think about things like voting or anything else in our public life in terms of the gospel's progress in our nation or in our continent or in the world or think about another thing so often

[26 : 22] Christians reduce their moral and ethical thinking to just tick box in questions isn't it is it right for a Christian to do this or not is it wrong for a Christian to do that or go there or do this but you see Jesus' challenge here is far far bigger than that amid all the duties of our earthly citizenship his question is are we giving to God all that is his right over our whole lives am I giving back into God's service for his heavenly kingdom all that he has given me in this gift of earthly life here in this age am I living so as to recognize that all the gifts from God in the institutions of this world are given to serve as indeed everything in this world is given to serve his greater eternal purpose not just this age but the age to come see that's what Jesus wants us to be thinking about all the time in this world as we give to

Caesar what is his we are to be giving God all that is his as a matter of overriding importance so just one example we prayed earlier quoting 1st Timothy 2 where Paul commands us to pray for kings and for rulers and for peace in our society which pleases God but why well Paul says because God desires all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth here to pray for Caesar's earthly empire says Paul so that Christ's eternal empire will be built more and more and more through the church's vision in the world throughout the empires you see it's all about perspective don't reject or rebel against government and authority no do your duty and pray for it to be good and just and see all of that in the light of God's eternal purpose not just for this world but for where it's all leading which is the age to come the age of resurrection life and glory and that's the link you see to the next paragraph from verse 27 where the issue is the place of another institution of the present age the institution of marriage because along with preservation of this world for the glory of the world to come

God is concerned with the population of this world for the glory of the world to come see do you see what Jesus is saying in these verses just as clear he's saying that human marriage is an institution for this age but again it is given above all to serve the age to come by filling this world with those who will become sons of God sons of the resurrection and therefore our attitude should be not to see marriage itself as a goal but to see human marriage as an institution that serves that goal the goal which is the glory of the resurrection age of the kingdom filled with multitudes of the kingdom of God multitudes of the sons of God in verses 27 to 33 see Jesus answers another malicious question in fact a very long and complicated question somebody has said it was a frivolous flippant irreverent concoction which did only one thing it revealed these men for what they were frivolous flippant and irreverent men and that's true but

Matthew Mark and Luke all record this question because Jesus answer is so very important about the whole issue of resurrection and the age to come which is absolutely central to Jesus whole message about the kingdom of God the questioners we're told are Sadducees those who deny that there is a resurrection by the way it's worth noticing that skepticism about these things didn't begin with the modern atheists in the 21st century in some ways the Sadducees are like the secularists of

today the liberals the materialists or people who just see religion as just a sort of moral force for this world but nothing more their only authority was the law of Moses the first five books of the Bible what we call the Pentateuch and they rejected the authority of the rest of the scripture the prophets and so on they rejected all things supernatural there was no resurrection no angels no spirit world it does make you wonder what on earth their concept of

God was given that God is a spirit but that's what they believed so at any rate their question was a sort of stock question of the skeptics of their day it was a bit like you know Richard Dawkins and the celestial flying teapot argument just because you can't prove it's not there doesn't mean it exists that sort of thing it was a stock question comes from the whole issue in the Bible of Levi right marriage you can read about that in Deuteronomy chapter 25 it was a provision for a childless widow to have her future inheritance protected by being taken to wife by her levier that's just a Latin word for brother-in-law her dead husband's brother he had to take her so that she would conceive children and that way the deceased brother's inheritance in the land of promise wouldn't be lost it would be preserved because God's purpose was to preserve every clan of his people in his promised land and so they asked this question it's meant to raise a laugh ha ha ha here she is the bride of seven brothers whose bride is she going to be in the resurrection but you see [32 : 24] Jesus tells them that they're just utterly ignorant in this whole matter they don't understand the purpose of that command scripture above all it was to show that God's wanted his kingdom to be populated with every clan of his chosen ones that God wouldn't let anything in this fallen world even disease and death prevent that the whole focus of levirate marriage shows that the purpose of marriage itself is bound up not only with the procreation of children but with the preservation of his people for their spiritual destiny as well as just their earthly relationship which is temporary so they're ignorant about the purpose of scriptures they're also ignorant about the power of God they assumed that if there was to be a resurrection age well it would just be a continuation with everything exactly the same as it is in this age but that's not at all what the bible teaches they're wrong both about the scriptures and about the power of

God both Matthew and Mark by the way in their passages quote Jesus saying exactly those things you're wrong about the scriptures and the power of God but Luke's words here of Jesus show that Jesus says exactly the same thing they're totally wrong about God's power about his clear plan and purpose which is heading to the consummation of this age in the age to come in the age of resurrection look at verses 34 to 36 absolutely clear marriage as we know it says Jesus is an institution for this age verse 34 but it's given to serve the age to come because the ultimate purpose of marriage is not just offspring for this age but for the resurrection age in that age verse 36 he says they can't die anymore so of course there'll be no more need will there for procreation god's kingdom will be fully populated every one of his sons sons of the resurrection as he calls them here that's how god has planned a purpose that it will be notice all the way through this passage both in the question in verses 27 to 33 and in

Jesus answer notice that the main focus on the purpose of marriage is procreation that's why these seven marriages take place because each left no children and Jesus answer is based around the whole issue of offspring sons of the resurrection sons of God so in our modern age where we've separated marriage from children where we've even separated marriage from sex that we've started to think in a very different way but Jesus won't let us think like that these things are bound up together I'll come back to that in a second but notice how in verses 37 and 38 Jesus shows us that the Sadducees are also ignorant about the scriptures even the ones they do themselves recognize in Moses even Moses bears testimony to the fact of resurrection says Jesus at the burning bush God says I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob he's the God of those who are still living not those they still had a living relationship with

God long after their earthly bodies were buried so they're utterly wrong in their thinking they fail to grasp the scriptures true message and they fail to reckon on God's true power and his determined plan and purpose for this world and for its people they are totally earth bound in their thinking and it's so easy to be like that they saw marriage only in terms of this age had no sense of its true purpose no sense of its ultimate purpose like every institution of this world its ultimate purpose is to serve the kingdom of God in the age to come and they just can't imagine the transformation that Jesus is talking about here anything like the magnitude of the glory of the kingdom that he is trying to describe to them that will occur through his redeeming work

Jesus is talking about nothing less than the rebirth and the recreation of this whole universe he's talking about darkness defeated utterly Eden restored in fact more than Eden restored because he says here that human beings will become far more than even Adam was they'll be like the glorious angels of God says Jesus and Jesus is saying you see that present human life and present human marriage is but a shadow it's but a prophecy of something far far greater still that is to come in the age of resurrection and that human life and human marriage and all these other things are simply preparing us for something more wonderful something more real than anything that we've ever known in this world now people who are married sometimes get very worried about verse 35 here look at it does it worry you they think that it may mean loss of the marriage that they've rejoiced in here on earth in heaven won't we still be married in heaven people have asked me that often but friends

[38 : 13] Jesus' answer here is that there will be no loss for the sons and daughters of the resurrection you certainly will not be less than married but more than married in the glory of the resurrection age just as our bodily life will not be less than these physical earthly existence but more more solid more real more truly human more physical and more deeply intimate with God himself and with all God's people so don't fret about that marriage in heaven is not so much abolished marriage in heaven is superseded by what we might call real marriage what Jesus promises will so eclipse will so overshadow with splendor the joys of marriage as we have known it here on earth but then we'll wonder how we ever thought anything of it at all all the joy all the intimacy that we associate with marriage and

I will think that was nothing it'll be like looking back to those fuzzy days of black and white TV when I was young and we thought this was the absolute cutting edge of technology and now we look at it in the age of high definition surround sound and we think how could we ever sit and watch that for hours that's what it will be like in the glorious kingdom of the resurrection and do you see how practical and how encouraging Jesus words are for all of us then whether we're married or whether we're not or never will be because the true goal of earthly marriage is not something that is fulfilled in this age but in the age to come it's prophetic for all of us it points us all to the greater reality of the unbroken covenant bond between Christ and his people Christ and his bride which is a living illustration the marriage that we have now is but a living illustration of the beauty and the joy of intimacy with the joy we'll have with all his people forever marriage yes is preparatory it exists on earth in order to populate the world to come with sons and daughters of

God in the age of the resurrection to populate glorious heaven with children in his wonderful image of course before the fall for Adam and Eve that simply consisted in obeying the command of God to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth literally through procreation of course since the fall since the curse of sin and death supervened it means much more than that filling the world not just with those who are naturally born but those who are reborn by the spirit of God those will be the sons and daughters of the resurrection so the chief task of marriage of course if you have natural children is to bring forth and to raise up children of the resurrection teaching our children the ways not only of this age but the ways of the age to come leading them to Jesus feet leading them in Jesus way but not just our own natural children isn't it's part of the promise of the gospel age as

Isaiah spoke so wonderfully in these later chapters that the barren woman and the eunuchs will share in the joy of heavenly offspring of God's eternal offspring sing oh barren woman who did not bear for the children of the desolate will be more than the children of her who was married isn't that wonderful you see some of us will not share in the possession of earthly marriage some of us will remain single for whatever reason some of us will perhaps lose a partner in very sad circumstances and live without them for many many years some of us who are married in this age won't be able to have our own earthly children we don't possess that fruit of earthly marriage marriage but all God's people all God's people can and will share in the purpose of earthly marriage in its true purpose in its fulfillment in the age to come none none of

God's people will miss out on that and from that perspective I think we'll look back on their lives in this age and feel that well all they really missed out on was the film trailer but now they're seeing the whole movie in bright technicolor forever and ever and what did it matter that little thing and all married couples even those who aren't blessed with earthly natural offspring all married couples can take part in the ultimate procreation not in you and in the nurturing and the maturing of sons and daughters of God children of the resurrection like the angels that's the ultimate parenting task of all God's people of his whole church in this world to bring forth children of the resurrection sons

and daughters of the living

[43 : 53] God doesn't that make all the difference to the whole way that we think about marriage in this world and in this age see that brings us to Jesus' final thing which is our whole perspective on this world he wants us to understand that human bodily life in this age and in the age to come is a gift of God and it's to be rendered to be given back to God for all live to him he says and so our attitude in this earthly life in all of these things must not be one of devouring consumption for ourselves in this age but of devoted consecration to God and for the age to come and that's the simple contrast Jesus shows us in these last two paragraphs in verses 45 to 47 and then in verses 1 to 4 of chapter 21 if we truly recognize that Jesus is the Lord and the King of our lives and Lord of the ages then how will we live in our earthly lives here well not verse 45 like the scribes with a mere religion of show loving to be seen and known and greeted by all and have a reputation with all and have prominent places in the church but all just pretends says Jesus pretend piety that just cloaks underneath it a worldly attitude of consumption for self that will even devour others even the weak and the vulnerable for me that's the great danger isn't it always of outwardly impressive religion think of the history of enriching and empowering institutions at the expense of exploiting the vulnerable think of how much we see it today with the prosperity gospel movement prosperous for whom for the pastor and his private jet it's easy to say oh how terrible that is but how often how often is what we do governed by what we want people to think of us or not think of us verse 47 is a real warning isn't it

God hates pretend piety they'll receive the greater condemnation says Jesus how do we live not like the scribes with a religion of show but rather verses 1 to 4 like this poor widow with a relationship of real sincerity with God she cares nothing about being seen or misunderstood as so often real Christian devotion and service is scorned by this world is of no value oh a couple of farthings what use is that how different is Jesus' estimation of her sincere faith and service because she is rendering to God all that she had she understands verse 25 doesn't she where the scribes and the Pharisees had no idea and she understands verse 38 that all live to him both in this world and in the world to come while the clever Sadducees were absolutely blind the very opposite isn't it of so many alas who profess to wear the badge of God the badge of religion but are willing to devour others for their own earthly gain no she deprives herself for heavenly gain for they all contributed out of their abundance says Jesus their giving of themselves to God was just at the margin their contribution to church life was just squeezed out of what the rest of life left over but hers as someone has put it was giving with a red streak of blood she gave God everything real piety in the midst of great pretense but Jesus saw it and Jesus knew wonder what Jesus sees as he looks at our lives yours and mine and our life together here as the Tron Church what perspective does he see us living with in this age in our attitude to the world's institutions our marriages our family life our work life our career aspirations our studies our thinking about politics about government about economics all of these things our financial giving to God and the church does he see just earthbound thinking living for this age consuming consuming for ourselves in this age what does he see of people living to him consecrating all things in this world for the glory of the world that is to come

Jesus said to them render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's let's pray heavenly father we pray that you would open our eyes to the glory of the age to come of which you are king and ruler so that we might walk by the light streaming from Emmanuel's land and lighten our path in this age that we might give you thanks for all that you provide for our blessing and for our fruitfulness that we might give it back to you that in your hands you might use us for a glory that will never fade and for blessing that will be eternal in Jesus name we pray amen amen amen amen