

STRIFE AMONG THE APOSTLES

TEXT: LUKE 22:24-30

INTRODUCTION:

1. There was strife among the apostles as to who should be the greatest (22:24).
2. This was not the first time they argued over this (cf. Luke 9:46-48).
3. This reminds us that a Christian can be in church regularly and still be very selfish and worldly-minded. These disciples lived and traveled with our Lord every day for three years, and here they were on the night before His crucifixion bickering over “which of them should be accounted the greatest” (22:24).
4. The apostles, like all of the Jews at that time, were thinking that that the Messiah would come as a temporal prince. And they imagined that, like all other earthly princes, He would appoint officers and ministers of state for His new government.
5. Albert Barnes said, “Their contention was founded on this expectation, and they were disputing which of them should be raised to the highest office. They had before had a similar contention (See Matthew 18:1; 20:20-28). Nothing can be more humiliating than that the disciples should have had *such* contentions, and in such a time and place. That just as Jesus was contemplating his own death, and laboring to prepare them for it, they should strive and contend about office and rank, shows how deeply seated is the love of power; how ambition will find its way into the most secret and sacred places; and how even the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are sometimes actuated by this most base and wicked feeling.”

1. **THE CAUSE OF STRIFE: SELFISH PRIDE**
2. **THE REMEDY FOR PRIDE: HUMBLE SERVICE**
3. **THE REWARD FOR HUMBLE SERVICE: A THRONE IN THE KINGDOM**

1. **THE CAUSE OF STRIFE: SELFISH PRIDE (22:24)**

1. There are many warnings in the Bible about the sin of pride (cf. Daniel 4:28-31; Acts 12:21-24).

2. First Timothy 3:6 says a bishop must not be a novice, “lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”
3. Satan’s pride is vividly described in Isaiah 14.
4. “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isa. 14:13, 14).
5. Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”
6. Proverbs 29:23 says, “A man's pride shall bring him low.”
7. The Bible says, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6; I Peter 5:5).
8. Proverbs 13:10 says, “Only by pride cometh contention” (strife).
9. Our Lord responded to their quarreling by telling them that this type of pride is to be expected from the Gentiles (heathen), “but ye shall not be so” (22:25, 26).

II. THE REMEDY FOR PRIDE: HUMBLE SERVICE

1. “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship...” (22:25). It is to be expected of them, and it is right. The principle of “lordship” (22:25) was familiar to the Jews. They were subject to the Roman government.
2. Furthermore, the Jewish religious leaders had their own hierarchy.
3. Our Lord did not say that it was wrong that there should be such authority. What He said was that his kingdom was to be of a different character. That is why Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). God’s kingdom is established on different principles from those of the world.
4. The rulers were looked up to as “benefactors” if they governed fairly, and they were given that term even if they did not govern fairly (22:25).
5. But this desire for worldly titles and prominence and power is unsuitable for a follower of Christ (22:26).
6. In Christ’s kingdom, greatness is demonstrated by lowly and humble service (22:26, 27).
7. The kingdom of God is the only kingdom ever known to man where the greatest are those who take the lowest place (22:27).
8. Our Lord Himself has set the example. He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7).

9. He that would be most advanced in God's kingdom would be he that was the humblest. And in order to show them this, our Lord took a towel and girded himself after the manner of a servant, and washed their feet (cf. John 13:1-5).
10. In our text, we see selflessness overlooked (22:24), selflessness rejected (22:25), selflessness commended (22:26), and selflessness exemplified (22:27-30). {From W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Outline Studies in Luke*}

III. THE REWARD FOR HUMBLE SERVICE: A THRONE IN THE KINGDOM

1. When our Lord returns to earth at the end of the great tribulation, He will establish His millennial kingdom here on earth (22:29, 30). Our Lord has promised that those who share in His rejection now will participate with Him in His triumph (Luke 22:28-30).
2. "Temptations" (22:28) refer to trials. Barnes says this would include His humiliations, and His assaults from the power of Satan and a wicked world.
3. Our Lord said in Matthew 19:28, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration (Messianic restoration; millennial kingdom) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
4. Second Timothy 2:11 and 12 says, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."
5. Our Lord said in Revelation 2:26 and 27, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."
6. This is very interesting because several prophecies say that Christ will rule with a rod of iron, and here the same promise is given to faithful Christians.
7. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9; cf. Rev. 12:5; 19:15).
8. Our Lord said in Revelation 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

CONCLUSION:

1. In his book, *The Person of Christ*, Philip Schaff records a conversation between Napoleon Bonaparte and one of his generals, a man named Bertrand.
2. General Bertrand said to Napoleon, "I cannot conceive, sir, how a great man like you can believe that (Jesus is God)."
3. Napoleon gave a very long answer, and it has been published in many books over the years. This is a small part of it:
"Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity...Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love; and, at this hour, millions of men would die for him."
4. For a moment the emperor was silent. As General Bertrand made no reply, he solemnly added, "If you do not perceive that Jesus Christ is God, very well: then I did wrong to make you a general."