

PART 51: PRONOUNCED DOUBT: THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE AUTONOMOUS IN TIME, 10:46-52.

#1. Bartimaeus, once sighted, had lost his vision, 10:51. Blindness was the imposing circumstance in which he suffered and with which Bartimaeus had to daily contend. It affected his ability to make a living: "a blind beggar", 10:46. Such a condition has psychological implications; he being swept aside by others, 10:48. #2. Bartimaeus might have resigned himself to an incurable state of being and made an unnecessary calculation. #3. However, this man had heard, earlier, the irreducible truth of Jesus and His powers of contraction over historical conditions of every kind. #4. At the appearance of Jesus in Jericho, in proximity to Bartimaeus, something happened. "When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'", 10:47. #5. While the faith of Bartimaeus' in the Lord might have appeared to be obvious and rudimentary, it was very advanced. This man, contending with the physical and social realities of his state of affairs and having heard about Jesus, had used his time wisely. We can know that, because before the Lord came his way, Bartimaeus had developed a substantial doubt about material conditions. #6. Bartimaeus was doubtful that such a physical condition as blindness was autonomous (untouchable) in time. From the moment that Bartimaeus first heard about Jesus until the time they finally met, this man began to question the assumptions regarding nature and such afflictions. #7. He began generalizing from what he had heard about the Lord and correspondingly developed serious doubts about the autonomy of his personal malady. Bartimaeus had thereby developed the belief that all human conditions are leverageable by the will of God and the powers of contraction. #8. "Many were telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'", 10:48. His faith, firm, insistent and fixed. #9. Bartimaeus simply announced to Jesus: "Rabboni, I want to regain my sight", 10:51. In the context, then, of Bartimaeus' faith, the Lord said, "Go; your faith has made you well", 10:52. #10. Faith in God, conduces to doubts about many other things in time and materiality!

PART 52: THE FUTURE IS FORCED CONTRACTION, 11:1-14.

#1. Things were going to happen in the immediate and near future. All of that was to be the product of only one thing: forced contraction. #2. Jesus had exercised the powers of contraction on the past and the present through all His miraculous deeds. #3. The Lord certified that after His personal ordeal of suffering, humiliation and death, that "...three days later He will rise again", 10:34. So, we are told that the future depends upon the powers of supernatural contraction! #4. Jesus and followers had set the course for Jerusalem, 11:1. Contraction has curious ways. At a specific place, on a specific day, there was a specific "colt"; waiting for the Master, 11:2. #5. There was no pretense; Jesus was not the known owner of the colt. Just the same, He was the true owner! And the Lord would prove that He alone is the unquestioned owner of time, life, events, history and the future. #6. Even "bystanders" (11:3-6) who inquired about the colt acquiesced to its contracted purpose. "...and they gave them permission", 11:6. Specific people were contracting back upon the eternal will. #7. This is how history is made; things, people and contraction. Jesus "sat on it" (colt) (11:7) and the road was covered

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with items of clothing and with "leafy branches which they had cut from the fields", 11:8. #8. Some people knew, surmised that history was in the act of supernatural contraction. "...shouting: Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!", 11:9, 10. #9. The Lord "...became hungry...", (11:12), a natural function. And the "fig tree" (11:13) was "leafy", but was without fruit. However, "...it was not the season for "figs", 11:13. #10. Then, the Lord pronounced: "...May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening", 11:14. #11. He knew there was no natural reason to expect figs. It was not about the tree. There were men in power who looked leafy but bore no fruit. Jesus was going to confront them. He decided that those men and those like them had no future. #12. Today, as always, evil people plot against God. But they will find their proposed future in a state of contraction! Like the fig tree, they have no future!

PART 53: SPIRITUAL CAUSATION and THE SIN OF COMPROMISE, 11:15-26.

#1. Jesus marched to the temple and "...began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple", 11:15, 16. The Lord was angry that the purpose and symbolism of the temple had been compromised; "...But you have made it a robber's den", 11:17. #2. This state of affairs was more than ceremonial; it was the compromise of a spiritual system of causation! All causation is spiritual and what is called natural causation is only borrowed. #3. "...Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?', 11:17 (Isaiah 56:7). Causation was thought, by "the chief priests and scribes" (11:18), to be a purely temporal phenomenon; they wanted direct action "...to destroy Him...", 11:18. #4. The disciples noticed the fig tree cursed by Jesus the previous day (11:20), it was "withered from the roots up". Spiritual causation had done it. #5. Upon noticing the fig tree, Jesus warned them all: "...Have faith in God" (11:22), an object lesson. That, the Jews did not have. #6. Prayer is a different cause to effect system. But it had been compromised away by the crass materialism of the Jews; true belief in God expunged. #7. The Lord instructs: Belief is not constrained by temporal reality; "...whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted to him", 11:23. #8. This means that prayer has no direct effect upon nature; it has direct effect upon God! There was the problem. If we are going to "...pray and ask...", then, we must "...believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you", 11:24. We cannot compromise spiritual causation and realize answer to prayer. #9. Unwillingness to forgive others is an equal route to compromise that silences God. 11:25, 26. Forgiveness is the hand maiden of prayer; "...forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive your transgressions". #10. The baggage of unaddressed sin had compromised the people of God. #11. Those Jews had no conception of spiritual causation; they were humanists!

PART 54: TWO WORLDS APART, 11:27-33.

#1. The Lord was bringing a different universe of meaning to bear upon the world and starting with the Jews. #2. "The chief priests and the scribes heard this and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching", 11:18. #3. They were rightly "afraid"; Jesus was a mortal threat to their standing. With that concern in mind, "...the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him", 11:27. #4. They tried to frame the situation within the parentheses of, they thought, a strategic question: "...By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority...?", 11:28. #5. That issue was ludicrous; it amounted to a contest between the demonstrated wisdom and power of God and a rationalized religious system. The power of God against a Jewish legalized system. #6. But at the core of issue was the fear of powerful men losing their positions of eminence. #7. Jesus was closing with those worldly, corrupted, darkened minds. It was no contest. #8. The Lord laid the issue at risk, the work of God, squarely upon the foundation of revelation. "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?", 11:30. "...Answer Me" He said to them. #9. If from heaven, then, the chief priests, scribes and elders were in abject disobedience to God. If from men they were in abject denial of John's ministry. And that against the perceptions of "the people", 11:31, 32. #10. At the heart of the Lord's point was the issue of belief! Two worlds and their meanings, divided by revealed truth and belief in it! #11. This is the forever case! In this world this precise division over revealed truth and trust in it is the point. The Lord took a stand in the middle of this contentious issue. Many men were/are against the interference of God in their ambitious affairs. Jesus respects no such limitations on His authority. He came to Jerusalem to bring things to a head. The Lord was pushing things toward crisis! #12. The churches, charged with preaching revealed truth, must not be intimidated by the likelihood of such crisis! Jesus was not contextual; He was/is the Son of God. Nor can we be satisfied with the temporal context. This difference can lead to crisis between believers and the world!

PART 55: THE HISTORY OF THE ANTI-CONTRACTION, 12:1-12.

#1. "And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. So they left Him and went away", 12:12. #2. Those Jews were angry enough to kill Jesus because He used their own documented history in the Old Testament to convict them. They did not perceive the parable as an approximation, but as a conviction of guilt. #3. The motivation of the parabolic "vine-growers" (12:2,3,5,7,8) was their motivation, identically. So they saw themselves in the parable! #4. Here is a key to understanding such virulent rejection of revealed truth: People can see themselves in the word of God. Often, they do not like what they see. #5. In the moment, the Jews were forced to consider Psalm 118:22,23; cited in 12:10,11. Jesus had become "...the chief corner stone". "This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes". #6. One can see the contracting force of Providence in the text. This contracting force works before time and outside of and beyond human reason. Which explains the phrase, "...and it is marvelous in our eyes". #7. If the Lord's opponents could see themselves in the parable and in the biblical record, then they could see the present in the past. #8. As it usually happens, human

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beings comprehend scripture in the light of whatever and whenever the present is. #9. The behavior of the Jewish leaders and men of political power in Jesus' day was hardly new. Seeing ourselves and our times in the text of scripture might be referred to as a parabolic truth. To do so is not to map the present on to the Bible, but to read the Scripture as enlightening the present. #10. To see our behavior, language, our reasoning, our history, our attitudes, our sins in the light of the Bible is to recognize ourselves as parables of textual teaching. #11. Progressive religion reads the Bible in the light of the present, thus obscuring parabolic understanding of ourselves in the present contemporary time. #12. The Lord's opponents were right to hear the parable as they did.