

THE KINGDOM

By

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“The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14–15). The time set by God was fulfilled and the Kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures was ready to be realized. Jesus preached the founding of His Kingdom, the Kingdom of God! It was to be a kingdom which men entered by what Jesus termed a “birth.” “Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Jesus repeatedly stated that the Kingdom of God was “at hand,” was “nigh” and “was come upon you.” In His explanation of the Sower and the Seed, He said that what He sowed in His field was “the word of the Kingdom” (Mt. 13:19). He said that “this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.” His private teaching to the apostles warned of the opposition they were to expect from people in the world who were not to be a part of His Kingdom.

After His resurrection Jesus spent 40 days with the apostles, “speaking of things concerning the Kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). When Philip went into Samaria, fulfilling the great commission, he went preaching “good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12). Paul, to the end of his ministry, continued “preaching the Kingdom of God” (Acts 28:31).

For some 2000 years it was understood by Christian scholars that when a person was converted to Christ he was added to the church (the assembly of “called out” people) and became a part of God’s eternal Kingdom. Then in the latter part of the 19th century a rabbinical doctrine was revived and given wide publicity. To support it notes were added to the King James Version of the Bible by a man named Scofield. According to the Scofield Bible, the scriptures concerning the Kingdom which Jesus and the apostle preached do not apply to our day, but to some day in the future when Jesus will establish a political kingdom on this earth where the Jews will at last have their earthly Zion and rule the world.

But, in spite of this modern reinterpretation of scripture the Kingdom which Christ established stands NOW, and has stood since it was established at Pentecost.

Paul writes that “the Father...delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13). “And being asked by the Pharisees, ‘when does the Kingdom of God come?’, Jesus answered them and said, ‘The Kingdom of God comes not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! Or there!, the Kingdom of God is within you.’” (Luke 17:20–21). In other words, the Kingdom was not the political power which the Jews were expecting. There would be nothing startling or sensational about it and it would not be polarized into a particular geographical location, but it was a Kingdom then in existence made up of those who were subject to the Lord, Jesus the Anointed One of God.

This agrees with what Paul said about it; “For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). This

is what was meant by Jesus when He declared, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” It is not organized and run as world kingdoms are.

We who are redeemed, who have believed in and received Jesus Christ as our Lord, who have been immersed (baptized) for the remission of sins and received the holy Spirit, are the subjects of the Kingdom of God, and are ruled by Jesus who has been exalted to the right hand of God and made to sit on David’s Throne (Acts 2:29–36).

There stands in diametric opposition to this Kingdom, the kingdoms of this world which give consent to the power and work of Satan, who is described by Jesus as the Prince of this world. One of the strong temptations of Jesus was when Satan “showed Him all the kingdoms of the world” ... and then said, “All these things will I give you if you will fall down and worship me” (Mt. 4:8–9). Paul writes that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against the “principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). John describes Satan as “the deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

It was in prospect of these two opposing realms, that Jesus said, “If you were of the world, the world would love its own but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:18–27). Clearly Jesus expected Christians in the present world and in the present age (also spoken of as the Last Days and the end of the ages) to recognize themselves as part of a Kingdom that is NOT in harmony with the kingdoms and things of this world. As the time for Christ’s return draws near we might expect an even deeper cleavage between the two, so much so that the world kingdoms try to totally erase the Kingdom of God from the earth (Rev. 13:7). Efforts to this effect began with the crucifixion of Jesus, have continued with the slaying of Stephen and other Christians, and have continued down to this day when millions of Christians have been slain to make way for socialism and the ultimate ideal of humanism: a world socialist government.

In view of the distinctive differences between God’s Kingdom and the kingdoms of this world which follow Satan’s devices, it is imperative that Christians deliberately make a distinction between the two, maintaining loyalty to God’s Kingdom but separation from the world. Jesus prayed, that we be kept from the evil one while in this world. He said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:15–16). We are enjoined by the apostles, “Come out from among them...” (II Cor. 6:7). In the Revelation of Jesus the world system of government and religion is symbolized by the city called Babylon. Concerning the Christians in this symbolic city, God says, “Come forth my people, out of her, that you have no fellowship with her sins, and that you receive not her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

Christians are citizens of a heavenly Kingdom with our names enrolled in Heaven (Phil. 3:20, Heb. 12:23). We have already been “raised with Him through faith in the working of God” (Col. 2:12, 3:1, Rom. 6:4–6). Therefore our first loyalty and allegiance is to the Kingdom of God.

Two things stand out in urgent need of exposure, for the nurture and benefit of believers. First, that a vast amount of religion is definitely of the kingdom of darkness, rather than the Kingdom of God. Celebrated and popular preachers and Leaders of institutionalized churches are preaching a social gospel in keeping with the purpose of this world and Satan’s goal instead of the good news of redemption in Christ. Through

the National Council of Churches and Ecumenical movements, members of these churches are actually supporting revolutionary groups such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and many other Christ-opposing forces. By such action they are thus supporting the “prince of this world” in opposition to the Kingdom of God.

Second, there are multitudes of people who denounce the works of the National Council of Churches and participants in the social gospel, but who are just as busy building an institutional organization for the purpose of supporting and “saving” the economy of the nation. A great many of these put the kingdom of the USA first, and seek it above the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. For years I have sought to call attention to the destroyers of our republic. But it now appears that we no longer have a republic, but a socialist democracy, which is actually opposed to Christian teachings. Regardless of the form of government we live under, our first allegiance must be to the Kingdom of God. Let those who insist on using the church for the advancement of political aims beware, lest in the end they find themselves upholding a system that has evolved into anti-Christ Socialism.

Civil government and God’s government are two different things. God’s Kingdom knows no geographical boundaries. It is an absolute monarchy. It is engaged in spiritual warfare to overthrow Satan by the truth, the “sword of the spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). It demands the absolute loyalty of each citizen. “You cannot serve God and Mammon” (Mt. 6:24).

The kingdoms of this world will perish. In judgment every person who is not a citizen of God’s Kingdom shall be destroyed in the Lake of Fire. The entire world-system, the power of nations and all their riches will melt away, obliterated forever. What then shall we think of this world and its treasures which we have laid up and so jealously protected? How then shall the kingdoms of the world compare with that Kingdom of Christ which has no end? (Isa. 9:7, Rev. 11:15).

Then we shall find rejoicing, not in the honors that men of the world heaped upon us, but in the fact that we were reproached for the sake of Christ’s Kingdom; not in the unity and harmony we had with unbelievers in the world, but in the fact that we were a “peculiar” and “separate” people, a holy nation, despised by the world but beloved of God; not because we gained friends among those who had wealth and power in this world, but because we have a Friend in thee Court of God — Jesus Christ our Mediator; not because we enjoyed luxuries in the richest nation on earth, but because we have counted all such to be refuse that we might gain Christ; not because we were sheltered within the limited concepts of a particular “fellowship,” but because we have been redeemed by the death of Jesus and sheltered in the Father’s hand.

Christ died for us that “He might deliver us out of this present evil world...” (Gal. 1:4). Unfailing loyalty to Christ’s Kingdom will bring one into conflict with the powers and kingdoms of the world. So be it. Such was the case with Jesus, Paul and all faithful saints. “But seek you first His Kingdom, and his righteousness” (Mt. 6:33).

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