

LENEXA EDIFIER

“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

November 19, 2023

THE ETERNAL NATURE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Jim Stauffer

God's people have always had a beneficent Monarch ruling over them. Even under the Law of Moses when they decided to have a king like the nations around them, God explained to Samuel they had not rejected him but rather they rejected God, Himself (**1 Samuel 8**). Even though God allowed them to have an earthly king, their history is filled with acts of the Almighty either blessing or cursing them for faithfulness or infidelity.

The prophets began to formulate the concept of God's eternal kingdom as they spoke of the Messianic Age, when God's Son would rule on His throne (**Isaiah 9:6,7**). Isaiah told us of a time when all nations would flow into the mountain of the house of the Lord (**Isaiah 2:1-4**). From this house of the Lord would go forth the law for those in it to obey.

Daniel then speaks of this same thing in terms of a kingdom. He tells us it will be a kingdom more powerful than all kingdoms. One that rules over them all (**Daniel 2:44,45**). Later he shows us the king reigning on the throne of this kingdom is the Son of God (**Daniel 7:13,14**). This kingdom and this king will never be destroyed according to Daniel. This we see coming to pass when Jesus Who is raised from the dead ascends into heaven to sit on God's throne at God's right hand (**Acts 2:33-36; Ephesians 1:20-23**). He now reigns over all rule and authority.

Do not be deceived. These prophecies and their fulfillment never said there would not be authority on earth. They are telling us earthly powers are subject to the authority of Christ. You see, He rules over a kingdom they cannot touch with their power. His kingdom offers benefits they cannot alter in any way. This is what Jesus told Pilate in **John 18:36,37**. His kingdom is not of this realm. It is an eternal kingdom, spiritual in nature and therefore outside the realm and power of any earthly kingdom.

When we speak of an eternal kingdom we see the illustration by the writer of Hebrews. (**See 12:18-29**) Here he contrasts the two kingdoms arranged by covenant with God. First he explains the physical nature of the kingdom enacted at Mount Sinai. They witnessed a mountain on fire and a powerful voice out of heaven that frightened them so they pleaded with Moses to intervene between them and God. He contrasts this with the kingdom where Jesus reigns, *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.* (**Hebrews 12:22-24**) He then explains the eternal nature of this kingdom mediated by Christ as a kingdom that cannot be shaken (**see verses 25-28**) as will all those earthly, created kingdoms. This, you see was what Jesus came to provide for you and me. Eternal security. We are citizens in the kingdom that is indestructible due to its spiritual and eternal nature (**Philippians 3:20,21**). An eternal (spiritual) kingdom then deals with the eternal nature of its citizens. The blessings we receive are spiritual, not physical. Oh yes, God does provide for us if and when we seek Him and His kingdom first (**Matthew 6:33**), but those blessings that were promised through the seed of Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18**) and realized through Christ the Messiah (**Galatians 3:16**) are spiritual in nature (**Ephesians 1:3**).

We are not of this world even though we live in it. Our kingdom is spiritual and thus eternal in nature and is ruled over by an eternal King. We receive the blessing of salvation from sin due to the sacrifice He made for us on the cross. Every other blessing we receive from God through Christ are *...spiritual blessings in the heavenly places....*

When we fail to receive the promotion at work or suffer from illness even unto death, He has not failed to bless

us in Christ. These are not things to cause us to doubt His promises or things that should receive the priority in our lives. He has as we would say, doubled down on His promise. *In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.* (Hebrews 6:17–20)

We, brethren are citizens in the kingdom of God where His Son Jesus Christ sits on the throne over all rule and authority. This kingdom and therefore its citizens cannot be shaken.

"THE WORK OF THE CHURCH" #3

"The organization of the New Testament church is simple, not complex. Look at the local church with her elders, deacons, and members. No other organization is known in the New Testament. The local church with elders and deacons is a complete and perfect organization; it is capable to do everything God has commanded the church as such to do. It follows that any organization larger than or smaller than the local church, designed to do the work of the church, is an infringement upon the divine arrangement and is unscriptural. The truth of this principle is so evident as not to require proof to one who is familiar with New Testament teaching." (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Gospel Advocate, May 13, 1931).

The church of Jesus Christ is a divine institution with a divine purpose. A failure to respect this fact introduces human wisdom and authority into the work of the church and perverts the mission the Lord has given to His people. It is God's plan that His people might be gathered in one body, the church; the existence of the church is the result of the wisdom and planning of God (Ephesians 3:8-10). At one time but only for a time did God's wisdom remain a mystery (Ephesians 3:9).

In the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4), the revelation of the mystery was made known; the plan from all eternity culminated in God's Son coming to this earth, gathering all to Him who seek only the divine way.

Just as the beauty and strength of a great building exhibits the wisdom of the architect, the church of Jesus Christ in its nature and existence, shows the wisdom of God who planned it. Ephesians 3:10 says: *"to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God "* God gave Noah a pattern for building the ark (Genesis 6). He also gave instructions for the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 25). When ancient Israel departed from the divine way, their apostasy brought spiritual ruin (Acts 7:37-42). This pattern principle is applied to the church. The church was foreshadowed by the building of the tabernacle (Hebrews 8:1-5); whatever the Lord *"pitches"* men must be satisfied with. Attempts to improve upon the wisdom of the ages brings us in direct conflict with the Lord.

Randy Harshbarger

Pen Knife Religion

And it came to pass that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the pen knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth (Jeremiah 36:23).

Words that the Lord has spoken against Israel and Judah through Jeremiah have been recorded in a scroll (Jer. 36:1). These words are read to the people in Jeremiah 36:10-19. King Jehoiakim hears about this and now commands Jehudi to get the scroll and read the words to him. As Jehudi reads, the king becomes furious at what he is hearing and with a pen knife begins to cut up the scroll, tossing it into the fire. King Jehoiakim must have foolishly thought he could take a knife and just cut out of God's word anything he didn't like or disagreed with so he practiced pen knife religion.

Tragically, penknife religion is the curse of our day. Countless numbers of people think they can simply cut out of God's word anything they don't like or disagree

with. All those people who practice pen knife religion would do well to consider diligently **Luke 6:46**. *“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord’, and do not do what I say?”* And how about the words of Jesus spoken in **Matthew 7:21**, *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father who is heaven will enter.”* Many are the people who say they are followers of Christ when in reality they only follow his steps when those steps go where they want to go. Encountering a commandment they don’t like or one they disagree with or one they just don’t want to follow, they grab that knife and begin cutting away. God says but I believe, is a phrase many people are living by, all the while expecting to be saved eternally—it won’t happen. Practicing pen knife religion will only lead to one day hearing, *“I never knew you; Depart From Me, You Who Practice Lawlessness”* **Matt. 7:23**).

I do not want to be known as an extremist or a fanatic but neither do I want to be known as a spineless creature standing for nothing. Having said that, I do not believe you can stand fast in the faith and have some kind of pen knife religion accepting what you like and cutting out what you don’t like (**Jer. 36:23**). Those who dare do this show nothing but contempt for God’s word. Standing fast in the faith means to embrace, believe and put into practice with zeal and enthusiasm everything that God has said whether it be his plan for saving us or his plan for remaining saved. This rules out adding to or taking from his word. It rules out compromising any of his word. It rules out substituting man’s word for his word (**Proverbs 30:5-6, Rev. 22:18-19, Gal. 1:6-9, 2 John 9**). Standing fast in the faith means being unmovable when it comes to the word of God. You either believe it or you don’t. You accept all that is said in the inspired word as truth (**2 Tim 3:16-17, John 8:32, 17:17**) and do not attempt to insert your own feelings, thoughts or philosophies into it (**Rom.10:1-3, Matt. 7:21-23, Luke 6:46-49**). My friends, it does not matter what I think. What matters is what God says. If God says it, I believe it and that settles the matter for me. To God be the glory forever and ever!

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Love

Kenny Chumbley

No authority is obeyed more readily than the authority of love.

Motorists who ignore the speed limit when approaching a school will slow down if they see children present. Their concern for children and their fear of harming a child will affect them when a speed limit sign won’t. They may ignore the law, but they cannot ignore their love for a child. No law in this world carries more clout than love.

How Love Begins

“We love Him because He first loved us” (**1 John 4:19**). The reality of our love for God rests on the certainty of His love for us. If you want proof of God’s love, here it is: *“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us”* (**1 John 3:16**). Our love for God should be the natural response when we learn how He loved us.

What Love Becomes

“For the love of Christ compels us” (**2 Corinthians 5:14**). Love becomes the motive for service. What job is more tiring than a mother’s, yet what job is more happily fulfilled than a mother’s? Love compels our service even under the most unfavorable conditions.

How Love Behaves

Love’s behavior is described in **1 Corinthians 13:4–8**. It’s a standard of behavior that takes us far beyond what anyone expects of us (**Matthew 5:41**; who hasn’t known a marriage where a wife stays with a brute of a husband long after most think she should leave?). It’s when our love takes us beyond the expect to selfless, sacrificial service that *“all will know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”* (**John 13:35**).

Christ-like love in us sends a message as powerful as a good sermon. For isn’t it the case that actions speak louder than words? Even to God. May He be patient with us until that happens.

Market Street Messenger, Athens AI

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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SUNDAY SERMON: **BILL MILLER**

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10