

The Nature of the Kingdom of God on Earth

From the title you know that the intent of this essay is to discuss the nature of the kingdom of God on earth. But this could lead our thoughts in a number of different directions. For the sake of clarity and brevity, it might be helpful to give some preliminary explanations as we work toward understanding the essence of God's *Kingdom*, including what it is and how it is established.

Kingdom of God does not refer primarily to geographical boundaries. While the word *kingdom* may be used in reference to the realm or country of a king, it is primarily used in Scripture to identify rule or dominion. Jehovah promised to King David: *And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever* (2 Samuel 7:16). While land boundaries are associated with the throne of a kingdom, it is the reign or rule of the king that is the dominant idea in this term. Isaiah prophesied *the government* would be upon the shoulder of the Child that would be born and the Son that would be given (Isaiah 9:6). He continued in Isaiah 9:7 to prophesy: *Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.* Luke records the words of the Angel who spoke to Mary regarding this prophesied child: *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David, and **he will reign** over the house of Jacob forever, and of **his kingdom** there will be no end* (Luke 1:32,33). This is the same *kingdom* to which John the Baptist referred when he preached: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matthew 3:2)! It is also the *kingdom* Jesus proclaimed: *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel* (Mark 1:15). (Note: Matthew, writing to a primarily Jewish

audience, records Jesus preaching in 4:17, *Repent, for the kingdom **heaven** is at hand*. This is the same kingdom.)

As we think about the *Kingdom of God* on earth, it is important to note that the nature of this *Kingdom* is everlasting. The goal of the *Kingdom* will not be fully realized until the end of this age, when this *Kingdom* will be fully displayed upon a new earth. Luke has already been quoted: *of his kingdom there will be no end*. This was the message of Daniel as he was led by Jehovah in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream: *And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever*; (Daniel 2:44). The Apostle Peter writes that believers will be supplied an entrance into *the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 1:11). This is the *kingdom of His dear Son* (Colossians 1:13, kjv) that Paul says believers are translated into when we are delivered from the power of darkness. So, as others have properly evaluated, this *Kingdom* is now and not yet. It has a present existence and a future fulfillment. So, when we pray as Jesus taught us: *Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, we are asking for something impactful now in this present life that will be fully realized when Jesus comes again to restore all things and establishes *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells* (2 Peter 3:13).

Another point of significance is that this *Kingdom* is spiritual. This means that it is not established by or dependent upon human hands. Now this does not mean there is no visible impact or physical expression, which will be explained as we move along. The way Jesus spoke

of His kingdom when answering the question as to whether or not He was *King of the Jews* indicates that this *Kingdom* is not synonymous with the physical nation of Israel in the Old Testament. John 18:36, *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."* The *Kingdom of God* that Jesus came to establish does not depend upon the ordinary battle strategies of the kingdoms of this world. His kingdom is different. The Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote something that would not have fit well in an Old Testament context: *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit* (Romans 14:17). In another place, writing to the troubled Corinthian Church, he contended: *For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power* (1 Corinthians 4:20). The *Kingdom of God* is not established or advanced by human words or external rules and regulations, nor by physical aggression or use of physical instruments. The *Kingdom of God* is established and advanced under the reign and authority of Jesus Christ as He establishes His rule in the hearts of His people. The *Kingdom of God* is the rule of God mediated through Jesus Christ the King, through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit in His people as we proclaim His Word.

There are numerous pertinent matters that simply cannot be discussed in a short essay. Lest anyone think that the great host of God's elect are or will be divided by Jew and Gentile (ethnicity), it needs to be stated that Scripture teaches that there is one Shepherd and one sheepfold. From Adam to Christ there were saints of God who believed God and were purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24-26). From Moses until the coming of Christ, these saints were part of the nation of Israel, distinguished from the nations of the world by the Mosaic

law. But John the Baptist and Jesus both declared, *the kingdom of God/heaven is at hand*. Something new. Something better. **Someone** better! The King of this kingdom was on earth to fulfill all that was necessary to bring to pass all to which the law and the prophets pointed (Matthew 5:17). Jesus did not come as a revolutionary to lead some kind of militant encounter to Jewish or Roman rule. Jesus came to fulfill the eternal purpose of God to establish a kingdom that would never end, made up of souls from *every tribe and tongue and people and nation*. All who are in heaven understand God's purpose in Christ (Revelation 5:9,10):

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

Later, John records another song in Revelation 15:3,4, that expresses the full purpose of God to be worshiped by all nations from the Old and the New Testament ages:

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!

Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

While we understand that the *Kingdom of God* ultimately consists of all who are under the reign of Christ, and will realize its visible fulfillment upon the future new earth, our concern in this essay is the nature of this *Kingdom* upon the present earth. Some of our Baptist forefathers

equated the *Kingdom of God* with the Church, or what many call the “invisible Church.” Article 23 of the 1644 London Baptist Confession of Faith:

That Christ has here on earth a spiritual Kingdom, which is the Church, which He has purchased and redeemed to Himself, as a particular inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world, by the Word and the Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel, being baptized into the faith, and joined to the Lord, and each other, by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.

<https://www.reformedreader.org/ccf/h.htm>

It seems to this writer that it may be more helpful to think of the *Kingdom of God* as the spiritual, invisible rule of Christ by the Spirit in the hearts of His people, and the *Church* as the visible expression of that *Kingdom*. The New Testament uses *Church* most often to identify those who have confessed their faith in Christ through baptism and are functioning in a given location.

George Ladd has been helpful to bring proper clarity to this New Testament distinction:

The Kingdom of God is working in the world through the disciples of Jesus Christ who have surrendered to the demand of the Kingdom and constitute the new people of God, the Church. The Kingdom of God has invaded the realm of Satan in the person and mission of Christ to deliver men from the bondage of darkness; and the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the powers of darkness continues as the Church bears the good news of God's Kingdom to the nations of the earth.

While the Kingdom of God will not be realized as a state of perfect blessedness until Christ returns, God's Kingdom is at work in the world and is engaged in a mortal struggle with evil. The Church is the instrument of this struggle. (The Gospel of the Kingdom, George Eldon Ladd, Wm. B. Eerdmans, pg. 121)

While there is a distinction to be made between the *Kingdom of God* and *the Church*, there is also an inseparable link. One cannot enter or see the *Kingdom of God* unless he is born again; and only born again ones are candidates to be added to the *Church*. While the old Baptist confession acknowledges the *Church* to be inclusive of all who are born again and made visible to us in what we call "local churches," it seems best to speak of the *Kingdom of God* being visibly seen in the churches. George Ladd summarizes the distinction as follows: *the church is the fellowship of those who have experienced God's reign and entered into the enjoyment of its blessings. The Kingdom creates the church, works through the church, and is proclaimed in the world by the church. There can be no Kingdom without a church—those who have acknowledged God's rule—and there can be no church without God's Kingdom; but they remain two distinguishable concepts: the rule of God and the fellowship of men. (The Presence of the Kingdom, Ladd, pg. 277)*

Jesus, speaking to Nicodemus, said, *unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3). Of course, this would not be true of a church. Anyone can see a church, or the gathering of baptized believers. Jesus then said, *unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God* (John 3:5). It seems to this writer that the following verse is helpful to our interpretation of what Jesus meant by *born of water and the Spirit*. He said in verse 6, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Born of*

flesh is parallel with *born of water*, and *born of the Spirit* is repeated. There is a natural birth and a spiritual birth. Unless one has a spiritual birth, he is no more than flesh and cannot *see* or *enter the kingdom of God*. Those whose eyes are opened by the Spirit through faith see what the natural eyes of the mind cannot. These are those who *gladly receive the Word*, are baptized and then *added to* a body of believers. This is what unfolded on the day of Pentecost, as it is described for us in Acts 2:40-42. The *Church* at Jerusalem grew as the *Kingdom of God* came to the hearts of Jews and they joined together with other disciples. Believers enter the *Kingdom* by way of the new birth and are added to the *Church* by way of baptism.

The Development of the Kingdom of God on Earth

Now we are ready to consider the development of the *Kingdom of God* as it is seen upon the earth now. This is what is revealed to us in the New Testament. Jesus' resurrection and subsequent sending of the Spirit from His exalted position, with all authority given Him in heaven and on earth (John 17:3; Matt. 28:18), was critical to the development of the *Kingdom of God* in this present age. In the forty days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, He spoke to His Apostles *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God* (Acts 1:3). Their understanding at that time led them to ask of Jesus, *Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel* (Acts 1:6). Jesus' answer goes directly to the fundamental issue for them and the *Kingdom of God* on the earth in this present age: *"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:7,8) The *Kingdom of God* is dependent upon the exaltation of Jesus Christ. It was following His obedience unto death that He was highly exalted (Philippians 2:9); and it was

from His exalted position as the mediatorial King of the *Kingdom of God* that the Holy Spirit was sent to empower His *Church* as His instrument in the advancement of His *Kingdom*.

Phillip the Evangelist later *preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ* (Acts 8:12). We also find the Apostle Paul's ministry in his Roman imprisonment summarized by Luke in Acts 28:31, *preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him*. We see that the message of the early church was the message of the *Kingdom of God*. It is just as Jesus said to Peter, who was representative of the Apostles and the church Jesus promised to build: *And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven* (Matthew 16:19). George Ladd writes, *In Jesus, the reign of God manifested itself in a new redemptive event, displaying in an unexpected way within history the power of the eschatological Kingdom. (The Presence of the Future, pg. 274)*

The Pharisees were guilty of shutting the door and locking out any who might enter the *Kingdom* (Matthew 23:13). Jesus tells His church through the Apostles that *the keys of the kingdom* are given to them. This is administrative authority that is exercised in this world by the church. The church, as it is defined in the New Testament, is built upon *the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone* (Ephesians 2:20). We are dependent for our authority in this world upon the One who gives us the keys. We are the representative of Christ in this world. We are His body on earth. We are His ambassadors, responsible to act with

authority in this world as we minister the message of reconciliation. We stand in behalf of Christ on earth pleading with a sinful world to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20).

George Ladd, commenting on the church being custodian of the *Kingdom of God* writes:

Through the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom in the world will be decided who will enter into the eschatological Kingdom and who will be excluded. (The Presence of the Kingdom, Ladd, pg. 277) So then, what the Church does with the Gospel has greater significance ultimately than the decisions of the Kremlin. (The Gospel of the Kingdom, Ladd, pg. 135) The kingdoms of this world are temporary. The Kingdom of God is now and forever.

What King Jesus Expects of the Subjects of His Kingdom

If it is true that the *Kingdom of God* is not a visible sphere, but an invisible power or rule that is manifested in the born again ones who comprise the Church, visibly seen in local assemblies of baptized believers: what is our purpose in the world? What does King Jesus expect of the subjects of His kingdom?

Were we to draw our answers from Old Testament revelation, our approach in the advancement of the *Kingdom of God* would be very different. The visible manifestation of God's kingdom prior to the New Testament Church was directly associated with a people who physically descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. From the New Testament record it is clear that a fundamental change occurred when *the fullness of the time had come and God sent forth His Son* (Galatians 4:4). This was the *time of reformation* the writer of Hebrews indicates marked the end of the physical and symbolic regulations of the old system under Moses. This also marked the

change from a kingdom that was identified by genealogy, land boundaries, and covenant specific laws to a kingdom that is identified by relationship in and to Jesus Christ.

The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old, ushering in a new and better way that will culminate in the everlasting expression of the *Kingdom of God*. While there is continuity from the Old Testament to the New, there are significant changes that impact our view of this *Kingdom of God* on earth presently. There are three notable changes that determine the nature of the *Kingdom of God*. First, the *Kingdom of God* visibly manifested in the Church is not dependent upon any genealogy past that of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1 and Luke 3, record the final genealogies in Scripture, both of which identify Jesus as the promised seed of the woman, Abraham and David. Secondly, the promise of the *Kingdom of God* is not limited to a small tract of land in Palestine, but reaches to the whole earth, as God's elect from every nation are brought in. As Peter states, a *holy nation* is formed by believers from every ethnicity who have obtained mercy and become "sojourners and pilgrims" in this world. (1 Peter 2:9-11) Finally, the laws that govern the *Kingdom of God* are expressed through Jesus Christ, beginning in the *Sermon on the Mount*, and continuing through the further instruction given to and through the Apostles (Acts 1:2).

Just to be clear, note that Jesus describes the citizens of the *Kingdom of God* in what is popularly called "the beatitudes." Matthew 5:3-10, records the characteristics of the citizens of the kingdom whom Jesus goes on to instruct regarding life in His Kingdom. Only those who are born again of the Spirit have these characteristics in them and are fit to function in the Church as citizens of His Kingdom. It is beyond the scope of this essay to explain each of the characteristics Jesus names, but the list describes what no sinner in the flesh or under the law can

produce: *poor in spirit, mourn (over sin), meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and persecuted for righteousness*. A kingdom that manifests these characteristics is the result of a power at work that is beyond any human, fleshly effort. The *gospel of the kingdom* is the good news that transforms hearts and translates sinners, Jew and Gentile, from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13).

The citizens of the *Kingdom of God* are called upon by King Jesus to be salt and light in this world: *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5:13-16) As salt, the citizens of God's *Kingdom* preserve and flavor the world by our presence. As light, the citizens of God's *Kingdom* shine the truth of the gospel and influence righteousness in the world. We do not accomplish our purpose in this world by isolation any more than salt and light accomplish its purpose by remaining separated or hidden. But we also do not accomplish our purpose by blending in so that there is no distinction. In such a case, like salt, we lose our impact.

The earth is affected by the *Kingdom of God*, seen through the Church, as we function according to who we are together in Christ. Our lives impact the world as we live and engage with the distinct characteristics that identify us as citizens of His Kingdom. Because we are salt our lives will sting a sinful, God-hating world, and will bring some degree of persecution; but the world

will be impacted as we display Christ. Our goal is not inciting, but impacting as Christ's preserving agent to keep the world from total decay and moral destruction. Sinclair Ferguson comments: *More frequently it will happen on a small scale: your companions will moderate their language; the name of Jesus will not be so easily blasphemed; those with whom you work will develop something of a conscience about the standard of their work; the conversations of men or women will be brought under control; respect for others will be more common. Your life will save others from yielding to the immoral pressures by which our contemporary world is characterised. When you are the salt of the earth, you preserve society.* (Sermon on the Mount, Banner of Truth, Ferguson)

Jesus also identifies the citizens of the *Kingdom of God* as *the light of the world*. He is the source and we are His reflection in this world. His Kingdom on earth is His light in this world of moral and spiritual darkness. Jesus says, *Let your light so shine before men.* (Matt. 5:16) He is appealing to the citizens of His kingdom to not conceal our light! By *good works* that others can see we are to bring attention to our Father in heaven. *Good works* are those works that are prompted by the Spirit of Christ in us: righteousness, mercy, peacemaking, etc.. In Ephesians 5:8,9, the Apostle Paul identifies *goodness, righteousness and truth* as evidence of the fruit of the Spirit shining forth from the *children of light*. These are works that come forth from a new spirit and new heart formed by the Holy Spirit, that is conforming to Jesus. *Good works* is a general expression encompassing all that conforms to the life of Christ and obedience to the commands of God. Good works are the fruit of genuine faith in Christ: *faith working through love* (Galatians 5:6). Spurgeon said, *I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen.* *Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.*

(www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-clean-and-the-unclean/#flipbook/ *The Clean and the Unclean*, Charles Haddon Spurgeon 1863, Leviticus 11:2-3, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 9)

Jesus is very clear about the goal of His light shining through our good works: *that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven*. Pharisees were full of works, but they were not good because they did them to be seen of men! (Matthew 23:5) Jesus intends for the works of His Kingdom on earth to glorify our Father in heaven, who is also His Father! He loves His Father as much as His Father loves Him. And all who are citizens of His Kingdom possess this love that motivates us to *shine as lights in the world* (Philippians 2:15). The *Kingdom of God* on earth is to be a reflection of our Father in heaven. One way we accomplish this is by loving our enemies as our Father does, described by Jesus in Matthew 5:43-45. Note especially vs. 45, *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust*.

Of course, all will not glorify our Father as they see our good works, especially if our lives reprove and expose their works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). But we should desire that the world see our works and talk favorably about our Father in heaven. One day, according to 1 Peter 2:12, because of our good works, even our enemies will glorify God in *the day of visitation*, which is the day of judgment.

The Greatest Task of the Church in Promoting the Kingdom

While the *Kingdom of God* as seen through the churches of Jesus Christ on earth has a preserving and purifying effect upon the world, and presents to the world a visible expression of the invisible God, our greatest task on earth is to participate in calling out of this world those who will make up the everlasting *Kingdom of God*. Scripture is clear that until the final consummation of His Kingdom at the second coming of Christ, His Kingdom on earth is going to encounter resistance, difficulty, trials, and even persecution. It is not God's plan for His *Kingdom* by way of the *Church* to transform the earth into the *new earth* that is promised at His coming. That is a work that He intends to personally fulfill: *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* (2 Peter 3:10-13)

Until Jesus Christ returns to bring all human history to its climactic end, including the final judgment of the wicked and the final salvation of all the righteous in Christ and their entrance into the *everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 1:11), the Church is responsible to proclaim the gospel of the *Kingdom of God*. We have already discussed the nature of this kingdom and its message. Following His resurrection, Jesus made His expectations of His visible Kingdom in this world very clear. Appearing on different occasions, He repeated His Kingdom mandate for His Church in relation to the world. He spoke to His bewildered Apostles

as they were all gathered secretly in fear, upbraiding them for their unbelief, and yet commanding them to *go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned* (Mark 15:15,16). Luke records His words to the Apostles that leave no doubt what their primary message in their mission to the world was to be: *Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things* (Luke 24:46-48). And then Matthew records words spoken at a later occasion, summarizing with precision the mission of the Church as the custodian of the *Kingdom of God* on earth: *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:19,20). This is how Jesus intends for the Church to impact the world. As we preach the message that our King has given us to proclaim, disciples are made and baptized, and then taught all that King Jesus commanded.

The Power Necessary to Establish the Kingdom of God On Earth

While the work of the *Kingdom* is done visibly by the Church, it is only effectual because of the power exercised by the invisible King and His Spirit. Before Jesus gave His mandate to the Church, He said, *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth* (Matthew 28:18). He told His disciples, including the Apostles, *tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49). The work of the Church in relation to the *Kingdom of God* on earth is dependent upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us.

We are fulfilling our part as we faithfully give ourselves to the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom. George Ladd emphasizes this point in an encouraging manner as he comments on Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14, *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* He writes: *Our responsibility is not to save the world. We are not required to transform This Age. The very paragraph of which this verse is the conclusion tells us that there will be wars and troubles, persecutions and martyrdoms until the very end. I am glad these words are in the Bible. They give me stability. They provide sanity. They keep me from an unrealistic optimism. We are not to be discouraged when evil times come.* (*The Gospel of the Kingdom*, Ladd, pg. 137)

As we noted earlier, the *Kingdom of God* under the reign of King Jesus is not concerned with land boundaries and a physical nation. His *Kingdom* is not advanced through conquering cities, states or nations through political dominance. His *Kingdom* is not formed externally, by human coercion and force. His *Kingdom* does not depend upon generation, but upon regeneration. It depends upon Him. It depends upon the operation of the Spirit whom He sends forth, who works in and through the witness of His Church in this world.

Preaching upon Psalm 2:8,9, C.H. Spurgeon spoke of how God's kingdom, or His dominion would be advanced on this earth during this age. His words are so clear and helpful that it seems proper to conclude this essay with words from that sermon.

Notice the text, for it is very explicit—"Ask of Me and I shall give You." The power and Grace of God will be conspicuously seen in the subjugation of this world to Christ. Every heart shall know that it was worked by the power of God in answer to

the prayer of Christ and His Church. I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that the length of time spent in the accomplishment of the Divine plan has, much of it, been occupied with getting rid of those many forms of human power which have intruded into the place of the Spirit. If you and I had been about in our Lord's day and could have had everything managed to our hand, we should have converted Caesar straight away by argument or by oratory. We should then have converted all his legions by every means within our reach. And, I guarantee you, with Caesar and his legions at our back we would have Christianized the world in no time, would we not? Yes, but that is not God's way at all, nor the right and effectual way to set up a spiritual kingdom! Bribes and threats are, alike, unlawful. Eloquence and carnal reasoning are out of court. The power of Divine Love is the one weapon for this campaign. Long ago the Prophet wrote, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord." The fact is that such conversions as could be brought about by physical force, or by mere mental energy, or by the prestige of rank and pomp are not conversions at all! The kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of this world, otherwise would His servants fight! It rests on a spiritual basis and is to be advanced by spiritual means. Yet Christ's servants gradually slipped down into the notion that His kingdom was of this world and could be upheld by human power. A Roman emperor professed to be converted, using a deep policy to settle himself upon the throne. Then Christianity became the religion patronized by the State—it seemed that the world was Christianized, whereas, indeed, the Church was heathenized! Hence sprang the monster of a State Church, a conjunction ill-assorted and fraught with untold ills.

The might of the Omnipotent One shall work out His purposes of Grace and as for us, we will use the simple processes of prayer and faith. “Ask of Me and I shall give You.” Oh, that we could keep in perpetual motion the machinery of prayer! Pray, pray, pray and God will give, give, give—abundantly and supernaturally above all that we ask, or even think! He must do all things in the conquering work of the Lord Jesus. We cannot convert a single child, nor bring to Christ the humblest peasant, nor lead to peace the most hopeful youth! All must be done by the Spirit of God, alone, and if ever nations are to be born in a day and crowds are to come humbly to Jesus’ feet, it is Yours, Eternal Spirit, YOURS to do it! God must give the dominion or the rebels will remain unsubdued!

www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/christs-universal-kingdom-and-how-it-cometh/#flipbook/ Christ’s Universal Kingdom, and how it cometh, Charles Haddon Spurgeon April 25, 1880, Psalms 2:8-9, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 26

CONCLUDE:

Amen to the truth and emphasis of our dear brother Spurgeon. Let us in our day be renewed in our understanding of the Church in relation to the *Kingdom of God* on earth. Let us give ourselves afresh to building up the saints to be *fellow workers for the kingdom of God* (Colossians 4:11). And by our *good works* in this world let us glorify our Father in heaven as salt and light in the midst of a crooked, perverse and dark generation. And let us faithfully proclaim the good news of the gospel of the kingdom and *the things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence* (Acts 28:31).

Jesus Christ will not fail to establish that for which He came to earth. He will come again: *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule*

and all authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24). *Even so, come, Lord Jesus* (Revelation 22:20); and we will reign with Him forever!