

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

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It is true of the church, collectively or severally, that Christ loved it enough to sacrifice himself on the cross that each one might be made pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He died to make people holy by redeeming them from all iniquity. We are separated and purified unto God for a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

The blood that was shed on the cross was the power that cleansed us from sin. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7). The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7; Heb. 1:3; 9:14). We are delivered from the power of darkness, and have been translated into the kingdom of Christ: "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14). The death of Christ is the power to obtain forgiveness of sins, thus be made pure and clean.

Preaching the Kingdom of God

Philip preached "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," in the city of Samaria, and those who heard "were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). That the kingdom of Christ is the same as the church is shown in Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." When Christ ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of his Father, he received his kingdom and began to rule. He was seated upon HIS throne with HIS scepter of HIS kingdom (Heb. 1:8).

Jesus said he would build HIS church upon the foundation that he was the Christ the Son of God, and he would give unto Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18). The church he would build was his kingdom. Evil and wicked people would have no inheritance "in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5). "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). The "general assembly" is the kingdom which cannot be moved. The apostle John said: "I John, your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom" (Rev. 1:9). John was in the kingdom, Christians are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, and Christ is sitting on his throne reigning in his kingdom right now. This reign began on Pentecost following his resurrection and will continue until he comes again to receive his disciples unto himself. Then he will end his reign and turn the kingdom back to the Father (1 Cor. 15:26).

The Kingdom Is Used in Two Senses

The word "kingdom" is used to designate baptized believers who have been added to the church Jesus established. It is used interchangeably with the word "church." Philip preached in the city of Samaria the things concerning the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). Baptized believers are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13).

But Luke said: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:23). Here the kingdom means the eternal state of baptized believers who continue faithful to the end; it refers to heaven. Peter also referred to the heavenly reward when he said: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11).

The Reign of Christ

Christ began his reign in his kingdom when he arose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God (Acts 2:34-35). He will reign until the last enemy is destroyed, and that enemy is death which is destroyed in the resurrection (1 Cor.15:28). After the resurrection Christ will deliver the kingdom back to the Father, and will be subject to the Father. If Christians reign with Christ, they must reign when he reigns, or between their addition to the kingdom and Christ's second coming. He will not reign on his throne after the judgment. (1 Cor. 15:28). They reign with Christ, so they must reign when he reigns.

The church is described as a chosen generation, a royal or kingly priesthood, an holy nation, a chosen generation (Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:9). We reign now by living through righteousness (Rom. 5:17). We reign with the apostles by obeying their doctrine (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 4:8). We reign by enduring (2 Tim. 2:12). We reign by overcoming (Rev. 3:21). Christ is on his throne of glory now (Luke 24:26), and his apostles are sitting upon twelve thrones ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. It is the throne of glory and the throne of authority now. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus said those who followed him would be given thrones, and Luke 22:28 those who continued with him would be appointed a kingdom in the regeneration. This is the dispensation of regeneration - born again. This reign of Christ began when he entered into his glory (Luke 24:26) until he comes in his glory (Matt. 25:31). As Christians reign with him as he sits upon the throne of his glory, so shall they share his glory, and that is now.

Acts 3:19-21 says that heaven, (where Christ is seated at the right hand of God-Acts 2:32-33) must receive (retain) Christ UNTIL the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began. Christ will stay on his throne at the right hand of God until the end of the world, the last day when all that are in the graves are raised, and the day of judgment comes (John 11:24; Acts 17:30-31).

The church is the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22-23). "Ye are complete in him" (Col. 2:10). If we are complete in Christ, and the church is the fullness of Christ, then to be complete in Christ is to be in the church, his kingdom.

