

Christ's Kingdom & the Law

Memory Text: Jer. 31:33 – “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Key Thought: God will establish a new and eternal world where 1) His law, written in the minds and hearts of the saved, will govern their interactions; and 2) all the results of the violation of God's law will no longer exist. Each of us is called to accept the offer of citizenship in God's kingdom.

Illustration/Setting The Stage: In 2011, the founder of Apple died. Steve Jobs was 56. Years earlier, after a bout with cancer, Jobs called death “the single best invention of life,” because it (death's inevitability) forced people to achieve the best they can here. Should death be the motivating force to succeed in life? While Jobs accomplished a lot, what is that compared to eternity? There is more beyond the grave.

Not too long ago I read an article about Dr. Stephen Hawking, the world-renowned theoretical physicist. In that article Hawking said that was no room for heaven in his vision of the cosmos. In other words, this is the only life we get to live and there's no eternity beyond. In the same article I was reading he bemoaned, "I'm in no hurry to die. I have so much I want to do first." Dr. Hawking's desire to live longer to accomplish more brings to light a great truth that no one really wants to die...that we really want to live forever if we could.

C. S. Lewis once said that for every human desire there is a corresponding reality in nature. For example, we get thirsty because there is such a thing as water. We crave

physical intimacy because there is sex. The reason we desire immortality might just be because it actually exist.

There is more – eternity – Christ’s kingdom – What is the role of the law there?
(Briefly review past quarter)

Sunday – The Kingdom of God

John 12:31

The prayer of God’s people has always been, “Thy kingdom come,” and “Lord remember me when you come in your kingdom.” Christ’s kingdom is yet to come.

For now we live in enemy territory. What happened? Adam had dominion – it was lost because of disobedience – Satan claimed rulership (Job 1:6 – representative of this world; 2 Cor. 4:4 – god of this world in the sense that he wants dominion, he rules in the hearts of many, and has limited control over earth’s elements; Eph. 2:2 – prince v. crown prince – heir to throne; **John 12:31** – not by right, ruled as usurper, de facto ruler) – Jesus came to claim the kingdom back from Satan (Matt. 4:8, 9 – “all these things” were stolen property as Christ was true ruler) – He was victorious!

Can we be sure Christ’s kingdom will come? Refer to Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:27 – We can be as sure as knowing that the greater part of these prophecies have been fulfilled. The best is definitely yet to come!

Monday – Citizens of the Kingdom

Matthew 12:30

Dual citizenship – not in the great controversy (1 Pet. 2:11 – “strangers (alien – one who does not enjoy the rights of citizenship) and pilgrims (sojourners or exiles)” cp. Heb. 11:13; Eph. 2:12 – outside of Christ we are aliens to the kingdom of God; Col. 1:13 – “either or” proposition; Deut. 30:19 – blessings or curses; **Matt. 12:30** –

either a patriot or traitor – “To be almost, but not wholly, with Christ is to be, not almost, but wholly against Him.”

Citizenship means obedience to country’s rules (drive on right v. left, etc.).

Foreigners should stand out (tourist, camera, etc.). How should we stand out as pilgrims and strangers here? Or do we? Will it happen if we are obedient to God’s will or do we try to be different for being different sake? Refer to Rev. 14:12. God’s people, who keep His commandments, will stand out in a lawless world.

Tuesday – Faith & the Law

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 & Revelation 22:14, 15

Love & justice – those who respond to God’s love enter the kingdom, while those who don’t get what they ultimately want. God is fair and will not take a person to heaven who doesn’t want to be there.

1 Cor. 6:9-11 – “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [delicate or tender – homosexuals], nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers [slanderers] , nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified [“apart from the deeds of the law” – Rom. 3:28] in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Rev. 22:14, 15 – “Blessed are they that do his commandments [although justified], that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs [vile or shameless person], and sorcerers, and whoremongers [fornicators, or harlots], and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

“The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there --every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love --would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there.

He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.” (Steps to Christ, p. 18)

Wednesday – The Everlasting Kingdom

Jeremiah 31:33

Could evil rise again in a perfect world? God created a perfect world – sin marred God’s plan – Jesus came to restore the perfection where love reigns supreme – For love to reign once must choose to love and to choose means one is free to do so – Could evil rise again (see John 3:16; Rev. 21:4; Dan. 7:27 – everlasting kingdom)?

Everlasting – eternal, endless, never-ending, perpetual, undying, abiding, enduring, infinite, boundless, timeless

Love has removed all possibilities that sin would rise again – **Jer. 31:33** – the gospel has been effective to the extent that we would rather die than to sin against God.

Thursday – The Law in the Kingdom

1 Corinthians 15:26

“Have the courage to live. Anyone can die.” Death has been the most persistent out of the harsh consequences of sin – Satan can be resisted and sin overcome but who has escaped the inevitability of death?

Death will be destroyed – Rev. 20:14; **1 Cor. 15:26** - good news!

Will God’s law be needed in His kingdom? Death comes because of sin and sin exists because there’s a law. If death is destroyed will there be any use for the law?

Law existed in heaven before sin entered there. It would not have been sin unless a law had deemed it as such.

“But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy.”
(Thoughts from The Mount Of Blessings, p. 108) – love for wife or child.

What is the purpose of the law in God’s kingdom? To govern the life as it is written in the mind and heart.

Appeal: Friends, there’s nothing wrong with God’s law. The problem is with us. Let’s allow God to work the miracle of inscribing His law in our hearts and minds so that with King David we can say, “I delight to do Thy will O my God: yea Thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:8)