



The Three Kingdoms The Enemy's Kingdom

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Intro

We welcome you to this special live stream experience of Chew On This.

You are about to enter a discussion on how to actually live out faith in Christ. Living it out loud within our messy lives. The content of this discussion comes from The Pastoral Preaching notes and this live, small group discussion these notes will prompt here tonight. Something we call: A Community Based Learning Experience. Come, Chew On This with us.

Opening Question(s): [Pertains to Subject being discussed. Pulls listener in.]

Introduction: This is Pr. Robin Bjornson filling in for Pr. Orleen Haseltine, along with Sam Beamond & Bruce Nelson (and our very own Otto Steve Lunde joining us remotely.)

Date/Topic:

We thank you for joining us for this week's discussion on Chew On This. This week's topic **The Three Kingdoms: The Enemy's Kingdom**

Access/Website: All sermon/discussion, raw notes, and handouts are available at:
realchurch.org/wednesdaynight

Discussion

Closing Statement [Gives application of the topic. How do I apply to my life what was just talked about?]

Ephesians 6:10-13 NKJV

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Closing Question: how are we standing?

Outro (Steve)

Thank you for joining us for this week's discussion wrapping up **The Three Kingdoms.**

To enjoy this process live, come join us and the Wednesday Night Crew every Wednesday night @ Maranatha's Forest Lake Campus @ 6:30PM. This is Steve Lunde, ALWAYS BE KIND.



The Three Kingdoms

We live in a spiritual world.

RECAP:

This world can be divided into three kingdoms:

1. Your Kingdom, which was given at creation. (shown by the gift of freewill)
2. God's kingdom, which He has bequeathed to Jesus Christ, who is placed as King
3. The Enemy's Kingdom, which has boundaries set by God, is temporary, and exists on this present earth.

[Please check out our previous podcasts to dive into Your Kingdom & God's kingdom.]

It is essential that we know the rules of these kingdoms so we know how to navigate within them.

Tonight, we focus on the Enemy's Kingdom, how we interact with his kingdom, and some final thoughts.

Listener question: what do you do that keeps the enemy in check?

We need to realize:

- We have an enemy
- He hates us
- We are living in his world

The Kingdom Triad...The Enemy's Kingdom

Mention the Kingdom Chart

I. We Have An Enemy

You mean he's real?

Not just the opposite balance of good in us, but a literal real entity?

SATAN: (sah-tahn);

- An opponent, or the Opponent

the hater; the accuser; adversary, enemy; one who resists, obstructs, and hinders whatever is good.

- Wanted to be God, was thrown down from heaven with a third of the angels. Which are now called demons, demonic spirits.

(Revelation 12:7-9 "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angles fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angles with him.") (Also in Isaiah 14:12-15)

- Hell was created for them.

(Matthew 25:41...Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.)

- Satan comes from the verb which means "to be an opponent," or "to withstand."

As a noun, *satan* can describe any "opponent" (2 Sam. 19:21-22).

However, when the form *ha-satan* (the Adversary) occurs, the translation is usually "Satan," **not his name, but his accurate description: hateful enemy**



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- Since Satan is the Hater, he is all the more opposed to God, who is love.

(1 John 4:7-8

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 3:10 & 14c

“This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of god; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. 14c “Anyone who does not love remains in death.”)

- Mankind did not witness Satan's beginning, but by God's design shall see his end, one of ceaseless torment and humiliation

(Isaiah. 14:16a “Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate:”

Ezek. 28:12c-19

“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz, and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper; sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching all the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”

Rev. 20:10

“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”).

- Unbelief is a product or fruit of belong to the enemy

John 8:42-45

“Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but He sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

II. He Hates Us [we who are loved by God]

John 10:10a

“The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy...”

1 Peter 5:8

“Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Luke 22:31

“And the lord said, “Simon! Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.”



- e.g. ADAM&EVE

Genesis 1 overview

Gen. 1:26

“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the earth

27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male & female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Vs. 31a And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

Genesis 2 details

Gen 2:15

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** it and **take care** of it.

- ❖ Work: abad (aw-bad') to work, implied to serve, enslave, bond servant, compel, husbandman, keep, labor, bring to pass, servant, service, be wrought, worshipper.
- ❖ Take care: shamar (shaw-mar') to hedge about as with thorns, beware, be circumspect, **guard**, **protect**, attend to, take heed, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, save, sure wait, watch.

Vs 16

“And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Created Eve, as it was not good for man to be alone

Gen 3:1-6

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’

Vs. 4

You will not surely die” the serpent said to the woman. (5) For God knows that when u eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Vs 6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

ASK: Why was the enemy in the garden to begin with?

Had Adam forsaken his duties?

Why would God ever tell Adam to guard and take care of something unless guarding and taking care were very important?

The Enemy's methods:

- The encounter with the enemy

Step #1: Dons a disguise (angel of light) that the woman would find acceptable

Step #2: Outwits the inexperienced woman through confusion & distortion.

Did He really say?

Do you think that is what He really meant?

QUESTIONING God's motives.

Step #3: Satan redefines God to Eve.



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He cast doubt on God's plan/order/instructions.

QUESTIONING God's character.

(A process he personally knows, he is seeking to distort her image of God.

"He would not want you to do without.")

Step #4: He reconstructed God's directives.

("You will not surely die! You will become....

Step #5: He elevated the role of humanity to be like God.

(Which was his sin = self aggrandizement)

("You will become LIKE HIM!")

Appeals to our flesh, our human nature

1 John 2:16 (Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life)

("For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.")

!Tried same method w/Jesus: (see Matt. 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4).

Temptation of Christ

III. We Are Living In His World

➤ 1 John 5: 19

"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

➤ 2 Corinthians 11: 14

"And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness."

➤ John 12:31 (Jesus speaking with the Greeks)

"Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out."

➤ 2 Corinthians 4:4

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Where are you today with this information?

1 John 4:4 He that is in you is GREATER than he that is in the world

The enemy has his kingdom.

God has His kingdom.

You have yours.

What are you going to do?

- You may be questioning if what we've been talking about is real. [salvation]
- Or, you may have had an interaction with evil and you know beyond a shadow of a doubt it's real, you just don't know what to do about it.
- Maybe you are a Christian who wants to grow in putting biblical principles into practice.

Concept I like to call: proactive spiritual warfare.

(the compound interest of Christianity, lol.)

Staying close to Jesus through reading the word and prayer,

Obedying the eternal biblical principles He shares in the Bible,

Being in authentic relationship with people putting these principles into daily practice,

Including ones we may struggle in, i.e. forgiveness, tithing, loving others, putting others needs before our own, conflict resolution, etc.

These are all yielding into God's kingdom.



Mention the handout:

- B. characteristics of members, a-m
- C. 2. Believer's warfare with Satan

While Jesus began teaching His disciples about the authority He was giving them, the victory was not fully realized until the Cross. Look up these verses on our authority in Christ: Luke 10:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 1:20–22; 2:6. Where are we seated? Colossians 2:10, 13–15

KINGDOM EXTRA

Colossians 2:13–15 tells us that Jesus Christ's triumph over sin and evil powers was accomplished in "it"—that is, in *the Cross*. This text, joined to and studied beside others (Eph. 2:13–16; Gal. 3:13, 14; 2 Cor. 5:14–17; Rom. 5:6–15; and Rev. 12:10, 11), firmly establishes Jesus' suffering, shed blood, sacrificial death, and resurrection triumph as the only adequate and available ground for ransom from sin, reconciliation to God, redemption from slavery, and restoration. The Cross is the sole hope and means for full reinstatement to relationship with God and rulership under Him—to "reign in life" (Rom. 5:17). To avoid presumption or imbalance regarding the message and ministry of the present power of the kingdom of God, we must focus on and regularly review two points; the source and the grounds for the delegation of such authority and power. 1) God's sovereign authority and almighty power is the source from which mankind derives any ability to share in the exercise of God's kingdom power. 2) But even more important, seeing sinful, fallen man had lost all claim to his early privilege of rulership under God, let us remember the *grounds* upon which all kingdom privilege or power may be restored and by which such spiritual ministry with authority may be exercised.⁸

1

Jesus gave us dominion over the demonic realm

To those who feel that we should not use the personal pronoun "I" but instead ask the Lord to silence evil spirits, my answer is simple and biblical: Nowhere in Scripture is that procedure taught nor practiced. It sounds very pious but it is erroneous.

Jesus gives us authority over the demonic realm. We do not need to ask for what is already given. That such authority is given to all God's servants is clear in that it was not only given to the twelve apostles (Luke 9:4) but also to the seventy other disciples (Luke 10:1f). Since they were disciples of Jesus but not part of the apostolic band, they can be seen as representatives of Christians in general.¹⁰

When the seventy returned from their witnessing ministry, they were not bashful in referring to *their* authority over demons as it was evidenced in their ministry. They exclaimed, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17).

Jesus, far from rebuking them for "arrogance," affirmed their words. After declaring the fall of Satan that He beheld in the spirit realm, which was evidently directly connected to their ministry (v. 18), He joyfully declared, "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents [interesting in light of Genesis 3!] and scorpions [Rev. 9:1–11], and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (v. 19). Their authority, *exousia*, delegated to them by Jesus Himself, was greater than the power, *dunamis*, of the enemy. They had nothing to fear (v. 19).

The only caution Jesus laid upon them was to maintain balance in their life, ministry, and priorities. While it was a cause of rejoicing to know that the enemy was subject to them (vv. 17–18), it was more important to rejoice in their relationship to God and His kingdom (v. 20).

In the only case outside of the Gospels where the Scriptures describe a one-on-one deliverance "session" from demonization (Acts 16), the apostle Paul followed the exact pattern of deliverance ministry practiced by the seventy. To the demons afflicting the slave girl of Philippi he declared, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Luke writes, "And he came out that very hour."

2

**RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE KINGDOM
(Matthew 5:17–48)**

The "Sermon on the Mount" is for "sons of the kingdom." What Jesus taught was for His disciples who had "ears to hear" (Matt. 5:1, 2). Therefore, this "sermon" is *not* a set of noble ethics for an ideal religious society. Nor is it a prescription for successful living based on this world's philosophies. Rather, the "Sermon on the Mount" is a description of *God's* standard of righteousness characterizing the citizens of *His* kingdom. And it stands in stark contrast to the self-centered, prideful, unchildlike religious righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, which was artificial, external, legalistic, and burdensome. Let's look how Jesus compared such

¹Hayford, J. W. 1997, c1996. *Praying in the Spirit : Heavenly resources for praise and intercession*. C1996 by Jack W. Hayford. Spirit-Filled Life Kingdom Dynamics Study Guides. Thomas Nelson: Nashville

²Murphy, E. F. 1997, c1996. *Handbook for spiritual warfare* (Page 36). Thomas Nelson: Nashville



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“righteousness” with the true righteousness of God’s kingdom. Write down the six contrasts He gives in Matthew 5:

Matthew 5	RELIGIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS (keeps the “letter of the Law”)	KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS (fulfills the “spirit of the Law”)
vv. 21–26		
vv. 27–30		
vv. 31, 32		
vv. 33–37		
vv. 38–42		
vv. 43–48		

What does such religious righteousness add up to? What does such kingdom righteousness add up to? Turn to Galatians 5:19–25 and write down the apostle Paul’s conclusions (note especially the end of verse 21 and all of verse 22).

3

Beyond unveiling the kingdom’s dominion over darkness, including its dynamic to heal and deliver, the King also introduces the personal implications of *life* in the kingdom. It calls people:

- to character (5:1–12)
- to credible service and witness (5:13–16)
- to obedience to God’s laws (5:17–20)
- to renunciation of anger (5:21–26)
- to physical and mental purity (5:27–30)
- to marital commitment (5:31–32)
- to control of the tongue (5:33–37)
- to a non-retaliatory spirit (5:38–42)
- to a love for all humankind (5:43–48)

Jesus’ “Kingdom Manifesto” (the Sermon on the Mount, chs. 5–7) points away from the empty traditions of humanly generated religion (6:1–8, 16–18) and toward vital, faith-filled prayer (6:9–15; 7:7–12).

The kingdom lifestyle is power-filled but not power-hungry.

Unselfish (6:19–24) and non-judgmental living (7:1–6), free from slavery to material concerns (6:25–34), will characterize true kingdom people (7:13–14, 24–29), in contrast to kingdom pretenders (7:15–23). The former walk in obedience, while the latter’s claims to prophecy and power are contradicted by a lack of kingdom character.

B. Discourse: Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29; see Kingdom of God).

The Beatitudes (5:1–12). Jesus introduces a new set of values by which His followers are to live. The values run counter to the values found in human societies and cultures. It only makes sense to try to live by these values if we truly believe that God rules in our lives and that He governs our circumstances.

Values expressed in action (5:13–16). Any true value will find some expression in behavior. Jesus is not presenting a morality to which we can give lip service. He is teaching a morality that is to shape our lives!

“To fulfill the Law” (5:17–48). It is the ambition of every rabbi (teacher) to give the true and full interpretation of God’s Word, something the first century rabbis call fulfilling it. Jesus promises this revelation!

Jesus now moves on to give illustrations. The Law focuses on behavior (see Judgment). The Law says, “Do not murder,” but God’s deeper concern is with human motives and intent. Thus anger, which leads to the harming of a brother, is also God’s concern!

Each case Jesus cites follows this pattern. Law regulates acts of adultery; God is concerned with lust (27–30). Law permits divorce; God is concerned with lifelong faithfulness (31–32). The Pharisees’ traditions demanded binding oaths; God wants a people so honest that their word is their bond (33–37). The Law permits revenge; God seeks a people who will act lovingly (see Brotherly Love) even to those who are enemies (38–48; see Compels).

The kind of lifestyle Jesus describes is impossible for mere men. But those who have a personal relationship with God as Father (48) will find His kingdom power at work within them.

³Hayford, J. W. 1997, c1993. *Life in the Kingdom : Foundations of the Faith*. Spirit-Filled Life Kingdom Dynamics Study Guides. Thomas Nelson: Nashville



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The kingdom misplaced (6:1–7:23). Jesus warns His listeners against pathways that appear to lead to God but that in fact lead a person further and further from personal experience of the kingdom's presence in our lives.

(1) *The path of visible piety (6:1–18)*. Jesus warns that outward religion (see Hypocrites) is not the issue. An inner sensitivity to God, and a desire to please Him, is the secret to life in Jesus' present kingdom. The "Lord's Prayer" guides Jesus' disciples to an understanding of the relationship between *prayer (see also Pray) and the coming of the kingdom with power.

(2) *The pathway of material success (6:19–34)*. In Jesus' day the people believe that wealth is a sign of God's blessing. Jesus warns against focusing on wealth as an evidence of spiritual prosperity. God, a loving Father, meets the daily needs of His children (6:25–31; see Worry).

(3) *The pathway of authority over others (7:1–14)*. This warning is for those who see the kingdom of God as an opportunity to exalt themselves over others. (see Ask.)

Understanding these pathways helps us to recognize false leaders (7:15–23). They may speak in Jesus' name (21–23), but their character unmask them.

"Therefore by their fruits you will know them"

(7:16–20). Beware of false prophets: while their outward appearance may suggest propriety, their inward motives can be impure (v. 15). We can discern these imitators on the basis of their fruit—their lifestyle, character, and teaching. False prophets are energized by spirits of error, their bad fruit the work of darkness; true teachers and prophets are energized by the Holy Spirit, their good fruit the product of the Spirit of truth (vv. 17–18). True Spirit-filled leaders will be Christlike in character, and integrity will be the watchword of their ministry. Behavior is as important as belief.

The kingdom discovered (7:24–27). What then is the way to find God's kingdom? We are to look to the King and follow His words. The wise man, whose life is built on solid rock, "hears these words of mine and puts them into practice."

JAMES:

Beginning in the first verse and throughout the letter, James recognizes Jesus' lordship over him, referring to himself as the Lord's "bondservant" or slave. That term applies to all Christians who acknowledge Jesus' sovereignty over their lives and willingly commit themselves to His service. Christ is the object of our faith (2:1), the One in whose name and by whose power we minister (5:14–15). He is the rewarder of those who are steadfast in the midst of trials (1:12) and the Coming One for whom we patiently wait (5:7–9). James identifies Christ as the "glory" (2:1), referring to the Shekinah, the glorious manifestation of God's presence among His people. He is also the divine Glory, the presence of God on earth (see Luke 2:30–32; John 1:14; Heb. 1:3).

Of considerable interest is the close parallel between the content of this letter and the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Sermon on the Mount. Although James does not quote any statement of Jesus exactly, there are more reminiscences of the Lord's teachings in this letter than in all the other New Testament epistles combined. These allusions indicate a close association between James and Jesus and a strong influence of the Lord in the author's life.

4

Psychiatrist J. T. Fisher put it this way:

If you were to take the total of all authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene—if you were to combine them and refine them and cleave out the excess verbiage—if you were to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you were to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably through comparison. For nearly two thousand years the Christian world has been holding in its hands the complete answer to its restless and fruitless yearnings.⁸

The wonderful, life-transforming power of the Bible is a fact.

5

The Gospels and Epistles contain many passages that use well-known poetical devices or appear in smooth-flowing, highly intense language. All of these characteristics were exemplified in the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus appeared

⁴Hayford, J. W. 1995. *Hayford's Bible handbook*. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville

⁵McDowell, J. 1997, c1991. *Josh McDowell's handbook on apologetics* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson: Nashville



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as an Old Testament wisdom teacher. He attacked the prevailing religious abuses, holding them up for ridicule (i.e., He used *satire*). The opening section of His sermon (the Beatitudes) employed the parallelism so well-known from Old Testament poetry. The entire mood of His presentation ran counter to what is ordinarily found in classical literature. "It is obvious that Jesus is setting up ideals that differ from those espoused in literature."

Several of the verses in the Book of James recall the cadence and literary qualities of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount. The most famous of all the discourses of Jesus is his Sermon on the Mount. It was delivered to Jesus' disciples and crowds of followers on a mountainside in Galilee. Jesus begins by pronouncing blessings on certain classes of people (the "poor in spirit," the "mourners," the "meek," and others). He then gives his thoughts about the law, teaching the eternal nature of the law and his coming as its fulfillment. The sermon also deals with matters of personal piety, including giving, prayer, judging, and anxiety. The Lord's Prayer is found in the Sermon on the Mount. The message concludes with the two foundations upon which people can build their faith: one compared to sand, which shifts, slides, and is completely unstable; the other compared to rock, which is a firm and stable foundation. Those who build their faith on the "rock" of God's Word need never fear anything. When Jesus concluded his sermon, "the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29).⁶

The Beatitudes of Matthew 5: 3-12 (List character quality and pronouncement of blessing):

Write down the six contrasts Christ gives in Matthew 5:

Matthew 5	RELIGIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS (keeps the "letter of the Law")	KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS (fulfills the "spirit of the Law")
vv. 21-26		
vv. 27-30		
vv. 31, 32		
vv. 33-37		
vv. 38-42		
vv. 43-48		

What does such religious righteousness add up to?

What does such kingdom righteousness add up to?

KINGDOM OF GOD, THE. The whole of Jesus' own preaching, teaching, and ministry centered in these words: "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). He came as the Savior-Lamb to rescue and redeem mankind to know his original estate in the divine order. The dynamic of Christian life and ministry is found in understanding the kingdom of God, which is not in "eating and drinking" (that is, ritual performance), but in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). In a thoroughgoing development constituting 39 brief articles under eight headings, the (1) foundations, (2) terminology, (3) message, (4) character, (5) ministry, (6) conflict, (7) worship, and (8) prophecy of the kingdom are elaborated. Here is a wealth of material to establish a full-orbed perspective on the kingdom of God, the essence of the church's message and life. This study unfolds the balance that calls us to kingdom life and power in the present, while still anticipating the kingdom's final fullness and consummation in the future.

Foundations of the Kingdom

⁶McDowell, J. 1997, c1991. *Josh McDowell's handbook on apologetics* (electronic ed.). Thomas Nelson: Nashville



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1. God's Sovereignty (Gen. 1:1). The necessary beginning point in studying the theme of "the kingdom of God" is the Bible's opening verse. Here we meet the Sovereign of all the universe, whose *realm*, *reign*, and *regency* are described at the outset. (1) His *realm* (or scope of His rule) is transcendent; that is, not only does it include the entire physical universe, it exceeds it. He existed before all creation, He expands beyond it, and by virtue of having begotten it, He encompasses all that it is. (2) His *reign* (or the power by which He rules) is exercised by His will, His word, and His works. By His own will He creatively decides and designs; by His own word He speaks creation into being; and by His own works, His Spirit displays His unlimited power. (3) His *regency* (or authority to rule) is in His preexistence and holiness. He is there *before* creation "in the beginning." Thus, as its Creator, He deserves to be its Potentate. His benevolent intent in creating things "good" reveals His holy nature (that is, complete and perfect), and thus His moral right to be creation's King. All kingdom power and authority flow from Him.
2. Man's Delegated "Dominion" (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:16-17). In creating man, the Sovereign of the universe makes a choice to delegate to man "dominion...on the earth" (v. 28). Man's power and authority for exercising this rule originate in God's intent to make man in His own image and likeness. Man's ability to sustain his role as delegated ruler of earth will rest in his continued obedience to God's rule as King of all. His power to reign in life will extend only as far as his faithfulness to obey God's law. (See also 1 Chr. 29:10-16.)
3. Before the Fall (Gen. 1:31). The original order of man's environment on earth must be distinguished from what it became following the impact of man's Fall, the Curse, and the eventual Deluge (Is. 45:18; Rom. 8:20; 2 Pet. 3:4-7). The agricultural, zoological, geological, and meteorological disharmony to which creation became subject must not be attributed to God. The perfect will of God, as founding King of creation, is *not* manifest in the presence of death, disease, discord, and disaster any more than it is manifest in human sin. Our present world does not reflect the kingdom order He originally intended for man's enjoyment on earth, nor does it reflect God's kingdom as it shall ultimately be experienced on this planet. Understanding this, we should be cautious not to attribute to "God's will" or to "acts of God" those characteristics of our world that resulted from the ruin of God's original order by reason of man's Fall.
4. Impact of the Fall (Gen. 3:16-24). Through disobedience to the terms of his rule, man "falls," thus experiencing the loss of his "dominion" (vv. 22-23). Everything of his delegated realm (earth) comes under a curse as his relationship with God, the fountainhead of his power to rule, is severed (vv. 17-18). Thus man loses the "life" power essential to ruling in God's kingdom (vv. 19, 22). Beyond the tragedy of man's loss, two other facts unfold. First, through his disobedience to God and submission to the Serpent's suggestions, man's rule has been forfeited to the Serpent. Revelation 12:9 verifies that the spirit employing the snake's form was Satan himself. The domain originally delegated to man now falls to Satan, who becomes administrator of this now-cursed realm. The Serpent's "seed" and "head" indicate a continual line (seed) of evil offspring extending Satan's rule (head) (v. 15). However, a second fact offers hope. Amid the tragedy of this sequence of events, God begins to move redemptively, and a plan for recovering man's lost estate is promised (v. 15) and set in motion with the first sacrifice (v. 21).
5. After the Flood (Gen. 8:20-9:17). Following the Deluge, a renewed order is established. Noah's faith, which occasioned his deliverance, is now manifest in an expression of worship to God as he disembarks from the ark (8:20-22). God declares His covenant with Noah (9:8-17) after restating His purpose to make man to be fruitful and multiply, as at the beginning. However, other factors are not as at the beginning; notably the relationship of God with man, as well as of man with creation. The Flood has not reversed the loss of man's original dominion. He is still fallen, though thankfully a recipient of God's mercy. Further, the animals will fear mankind from this time on (9:2), which was not characteristic of their relationship prior to this. In the ultimate restoration of God's kingdom on earth, the original fearless order will be regained (Is. 11:6-9). Notwithstanding these deficiencies, a cleansed realm for seeking God's kingdom first is newly available to man, and again God asserts man's responsibility for administering earth with an accountability to Him (9:1-7). The Flood has not neutralized the influence of the Serpent, nor has it changed mankind's capacity for rebellion against God's rule. Nevertheless, new hope dawns with promise for the eventual recovery of what was lost of his first estate.
6. Prototype "Kingdom" Person (Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham is shown in both Old and New Testaments as the prototype of all who experience God's processes of seeking to reinstate man through redemption, first and foremost, in his relationship to God by faith, without works (Rom. 4:1-25). But too seldom is the second facet of redemption noted. Abraham is also shown as a case of God's program to recover man's "reign in life" (Rom. 5:17). Abraham is designated as the "father" of all who walk his pathway of faith (Rom. 4:12). As such, he is God's revealed example of His plan to eventually reestablish His kingdom's rule in all the earth through people of His covenant. Through Abraham, whom He wills to become "a great nation" (restoring rule) and to whom He chooses to give a "great name" (restoring authority), God declares His plans to



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beget innumerable children who will be modeled after this prototypical “father of faith.” This truth is confirmed in Romans 4:13, where Abraham’s designation as “heir of the world” parallels Jesus’ promise that His followers, who humble themselves in faith, shall also be recipients of “the kingdom” and shall “inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:3-5).

7. Patriarchal Examples (Gen. 26:1-5; 28:1-22). The promise of God to Abraham that he would be “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13) is repeated to his offspring, Isaac and Jacob, in succession. God’s words and dealings in the lives of the patriarchs reveal that His unfolding program of redemption is dual: (1) restoring relationship *to* God to establish fellowship with Him and (2) restoring rulership in life *under* God to reestablish human ability to “rule” in life’s practical details of family and business. Thus, under His covenant, God promised these patriarchs both *progeny*—a family line—and *property*—an economic base. This illustrates God’s progressive processing of His redemptive promise. He not only provides for restored fellowship with Himself (relationship), but covenants for human fulfillment and personal fruitfulness in life. This plan is geared not only to bless His people, but to make them a blessing to others. Joseph’s life elaborates this principle. God redeems him from the pit by His merciful providence, then raises him to rulership in Egypt, for the saving of nations (Genesis 37-50).

The “kingdom” concept of God’s delegating His rule on earth to be administrated through those who walk with Him is birthed at creation. Although damaged at man’s Fall, it is progressively being reinstated as a redemptive goal and is demonstrated in those who accept His covenant.

8. Human Responsibility (1 Chr. 29:10-16). No text in the Bible more magnificently declares God’s sovereign power: there is no one like the Lord, the Almighty One, whose glory fills the universe. And yet, in the center of this grand anthem of acknowledgment to that towering truth, David asserts that although the kingdom is God’s (v. 11), God gives resources that are man’s to administrate. Verse 14 literally reads, “Everything that exists is from You, and we administer it from Your hand.” God is the fountainhead of all life and power; man is the appointed heir for its management. Psalms 8:6 and 115:16 affirm that while the created universe and the glory of the heavens are God’s and God’s alone, He has delegated the stewardship of earth’s affairs to mankind. Noble views of God’s sovereignty must be balanced with a complementary view of man’s duties and redeemed capacities. Neglect of this balance, while seeming to extol God’s greatness, can produce apathy or irresponsible attitudes. For example, God does not predestine mismanaged resources, families, politics, and so on, any more than He does human sinning. Man is responsible and accountable for earth’s problems and—reinstated under God—is intended to become the agent for their solution. He can only become such by drawing on God’s sovereign wisdom, power, and resource—that is, on God’s “kingdom.” Just as man’s sin and Fall have damaged the potential partnership between the Creator and His appointed heir to this planet, redemption has set the recovery in motion. Renewed under God, the redeemed may, in fact, partner with God and thereby decisively assist in the reestablishment of God’s rule over circumstances and situations on earth. But this only operates under the divine order within redemption’s plan under divine grace and through man’s receiving divine power by God’s Spirit.

Terminology of the Kingdom

9. Defining the Hope (Matt. 3:1-2). The New Testament records 137 references to “the kingdom,” and over one hundred of these are during Jesus’ ministry, as His entire teaching and approach as Messiah—the Savior-King—center on this theme. To what does “the kingdom” refer? It refers to God’s sovereign rule in the universe—He is the King of the heavens. (See Gen. 1:1.) But more specifically, here it refers to the entry of God’s long-anticipated Anointed One—the prophesied Messiah, the promised Son of David who would not be the Savior, Deliverer, and King of only Israel, but of all mankind. “The Gentiles” (or all nations)—*all flesh*—were promised recipients of this hope (Is. 9:6-7; 11:10; 40:5). Declaring the kingdom “at hand,” that is, “drawing near,” John was announcing that the rule of God’s King was about to overthrow the power and rule of all evil—both human and hellish. The “kingdom” was near because the King was here. And His presence, introducing the power of “the kingdom of God,” meant a new world of potential hope to mankind. Man would no more need be held hostage to either the rule of *death* over mankind, resultant from human sin and sinning, or to the *deadening* rule of oppressive human systems, political or otherwise. Further, the kingdom of darkness would be confronted and the death, deprivation, disease, and destruction levied by satanic power would begin to be overthrown. As God’s King, Jesus offers the blessing of God’s rule, now available to bring life to every human experience, as well as deliverance from the dominance of either flesh or the Devil.

10. Synonymous Expressions (Matt. 19:23-24). This text uses the phrases “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” interchangeably. In doing so, it sufficiently demonstrates that the two terms are meant to refer to one and the same thing: the kingdom. Although some make a labored distinction between them, this text and ten others in the Gospels



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clearly show that the “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” are verifiably synonyms. Matthew is the only New Testament writer who used the term “kingdom of heaven.” In doing so, he showed a sensitivity toward his originally intended audience of Jewish readers, for whom too frequent a use of the name of “God” would have seemed irreverent. By a variety of terms Matthew refers to “the kingdom” fifty times in his Gospel: thirty-two times as “kingdom of heaven”; five times as “kingdom of God”; four times as the “Father’s” kingdom; and twice as the kingdom of “the Son of Man.” The remaining seven references are simply to “the kingdom” without other designation. This variety in the usage, made by the only one using the phrase “kingdom of heaven,” surely shows these terms to be synonyms for the kingdom.

11. John’s Writings (John 18:36). John is the only Gospel writer who records these words of Jesus: “My kingdom is not of this world.” Near the end of the first century, when John was writing his Gospel, Christians were often assailed with the accusation that their goals were not spiritual, but political. The Roman Empire was being filled with reborn citizens of a heavenly kingdom, but their “kingdom of God” terminology could be misunderstood. Thus, John adopts the phrase “eternal life,” as much to show the new *quality* of life Jesus Christ has brought as to describe its *quantity*. The idea of “eternal life” describes a divine *dimension* of life available to mankind, as well as a destined *duration* of “everlasting” endlessness. The words “eternal life” occur fifteen times in John’s writings, “the kingdom of God” only six. Some have thought John’s relatively infrequent use of “kingdom of God” suggested this message application was confined only to the time of Jesus’ ministry and the birth of “the church age.” Notwithstanding the fact that the birth of the church did introduce a new era in human history, the message of “the gospel of the kingdom” was not changed. For example, see the thrust of its being taught and preached throughout Acts (20:25; 28:23, 30-31).

12. Paul’s Writings (Col. 1:27-28). “In Christ” is the expression Paul most frequently uses to designate the new life potential through the gospel. The Messiah (Christ) being King, the term clearly places the believer in the circle of all that is represented and contained in the King, His salvation conquest, and His personal rule. The essential truth is that the Savior-King has come, and in Him the rule of God has altered the limits sin has heretofore placed on individuals. People no longer need be ruled by their carnality (flesh) or controlled by evil (the devil). Being freed, that is, transferred to a new kingdom, they can know the joy of a relationship with God through the power of the Cross and can realize a beginning reinstatement of their rulership under God, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thereby, living in the King’s kingdom brings a dual hope: eternity with Christ and the promise of grace to begin “reigning in life.” Now, “in Christ” designates the new life that may be lived in the benefits of, and by the power of, the King Jesus, “who has brought life [reigning in life presently in Christ—Rom. 5:17] and immortality [reigning forever with Christ—Rev. 22:5] to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

The Message of the Kingdom

13. The Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15). The synoptic Gospels and Acts make at least twenty direct references to the preaching of “the gospel of the kingdom” from John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2), throughout Jesus’ ministry (Mark 1:14-15), in the disciples’ ministry during Jesus’ ministry (Luke 9:1-2), and throughout Acts. Jesus prophesied this same message shall be taken to the ends of the world (Matt. 24:14), commissioning His disciples to do this and promising the Holy Spirit’s power for the task (Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:3-8).

It is clear that the early church proclaimed the same message Jesus preached, that is, “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 30-31). Also, they experienced the same confirming evidences present in His ministry.

There is only one gospel: Jesus preached it, transmitted it to His disciples, and has committed it to His church. Paul warned against ever receiving any other gospel. “Any other” may be either a message of outright error or an argument for a diluted message, devoid of power though nominally Christian. Jude 3 urges us always to contend for the original, “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Hold to the full “gospel of the kingdom,” and expect the Lord to confirm that “word” with the signs He promised (Mark 16:15-18).

14. Repentance (Matt. 3:1-2; 4:17). The first call of the kingdom is to repentance. The implications of biblical repentance are threefold: (1) renunciation and reversal, (2) submission and teachability, and (3) continual shapeability. There is no *birth* into the kingdom without hearing the call to salvation, renouncing one’s sin, and turning from sin toward Christ the Savior (Acts 3:19).

There is no *growth* in the kingdom without obedience to Jesus’ commandments and a childlike responsiveness as a disciple of Jesus, yielding to the teaching of God’s Word (James 1:21-25).

There is no lifelong increase of *fruit* as a citizen of the kingdom without a willingness to accept the Holy Spirit’s correction and guidance (Eph. 5:30).



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15. New Birth (John 3:1-5). Upon repentance, a new order of life opens to the believer in Jesus Christ. Jesus used the figure of “new birth” to dramatically indicate three things: (1) Without new birth, there is no life and no relationship with God (14:6). (2) In new birth, new perspective comes as we “see the kingdom of God” (3:3), God’s Word becomes clear, and the Holy Spirit’s works and wonders are believed and experienced—faith is alive. (3) Through new birth we are introduced—literally we “enter” (v. 5)—to a new realm, where God’s new kingdom order can be realized (2 Cor. 5:17). New birth is more than simply being “saved.” It is a requalifying experience, opening up the possibilities of our whole being to the supernatural dimension of life and fitting us for a beginning in God’s kingdom order.

16. A Present and Future Kingdom (Matt. 13:1-52). In this chapter, Jesus introduces parables as a means of teaching “kingdom” truths (vv. 10-11). Of the forty parables Jesus gave, He made direct references to the kingdom in nineteen. These stories clearly relate to different time frames. Some impact the present, teaching (1) the need for kingdom people to have hearing ears (vv. 3-23); (2) the breadth of the kingdom’s spread (vv. 31-35); and (3) the cost of the kingdom’s acquisition (vv. 44-46). Others relate to the future, teaching (1) the final disposing of the fruit of the Adversary’s hindrance (vv. 36-43) and (2) the final disposition of the mixed ingathering from kingdom outreach (vv. 47-51). In mixing these two aspects of the “kingdom,” Jesus helps us appreciate the kingdoms as both present and prospective. The message of the kingdom is two-edged and relates to two frames of *time*: First, God, in Christ, is *now* recovering man from his double loss—relationship *with* God and of rulership *under* God. He promised this at man’s Fall, illustrated it in the patriarchs and Israel’s history, and *now* the King has come to begin fully bringing it about. The kingdom is being realized *presently*, in partial and personal ways, as it is spread *through* all the earth by the Holy Spirit’s power in the church. Second, the kingdom will be realized *finally* in consummate and conclusive ways only at the return of Jesus Christ and by His reign *over* all the earth. What we experience of His triumph now, in part, will then be fully manifest (1 Cor. 13:9-10; 15:24; Rev. 11:15). This complete view allows for our understanding and applying the principles of “kingdom come” without falling into the confusion of expecting *now* what the Bible says will only be *then*.

17. People of the Kingdom (Col. 1:13). The “transference” of the believer, from under Satan’s authority to Christ’s, is described as movement into another “kingdom.” Ensuing verses describe Christ’s redemption as bringing us to a place of “completeness,” that is, of spiritual adequacy, authority, or ability to live victoriously over and above the invisible powers of darkness (vv. 14-16; 2:6-10). This becomes functionally true, as opposed to merely theoretically so, when we (1) live and love as *citizens* of the heavenly kingdom (Phil. 3:20); (2) utilize this kingdom’s *currency*, which is of irresistible value (Acts 3:6); (3) operate as *ambassadors* authorized to offer kingdom peace and reconciliation to those yet unrenewed in Christ (2 Cor. 5:20); and (4) serve as the kingdom *militia*, girded for prayerful conflict against the dark powers controlling so much of this present world (Eph. 6:10-20). The terminology of “the kingdom” holds more than poetic pictures. It is practically applicable to all our living.

18. Kingdom within You (Luke 17:20-21). Fundamental to New Testament truth is that the kingdom of God is the spiritual reality and dynamic available to each person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. To receive Him—the King—is to receive His kingly rule, not only *in* your life and *over* your affairs, but *through* your life and *by* your service and love. “The kingdom of God is within you,” Jesus said.

This will never be possible if we operate independently of God’s power and grace. The possibility of reinstatement to rulership is brought about only through the forgiveness of sins and full redemption in Christ through the Cross. The Bible never suggests either (1) that there exists in man a divine spark, which may be fanned to flame by noble human efforts, or (2) that godlikeness is somehow resident in man’s potential, as though human beings are or may become “gods.” To the contrary, man is lost in darkness and alienated from God (Eph. 4:18; 2:12).

However, full salvation brings restored relationship to God and a full potential for His kingdom’s ruling “within us” as we walk with Him. Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to cause the anointing of His messiahship to be transmitted to us (Is. 61:1-3; Luke 4:18; John 1:16; 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:17). So it is only on these terms that a human being can say, “The kingdom of God is within me.”

Character and the Kingdom

19. Basic Traits (Matt. 5:1-7:27). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus outlines the primary attributes of people who receive the rule of the kingdom He brings. Nine direct references to “the kingdom” are in this sermon, calling for: humility (5:3), willingness to suffer persecution (5:10), earnest attention to God’s commandments (5:19), refusal to substitute false piety for genuinely right behavior (5:20), a life of prayer (6:10, 13), prioritizing spiritual over material values (6:33), and above all, acknowledging Christ’s lordship by obeying the revealed will of God (7:21). Clearly, the authority Christ hopes to delegate to His own is intended to be exercised by disciples willing to accept renewal in soul and behavior, as well as



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rebirth through forgiveness of sin. To these, obviously, the call to “kingdom” living and ministry includes the expectation that Holy Spirit-begotten fruit and gifts will develop in the believer. The same Spirit that distributes gifts of power for kingdom service also works in us to beget kingly qualities of life, love, and a holy character (John 15:1-17; Gal. 5:22-23).

20. Childlikeness (Matt. 18:1-4). Jesus confronts the tendency of humanity to associate authority with an exercise of dominance over others. The dominion or authority in kingdom life God wants to reinstate in us is for victorious, fruitful living and for the overthrow of hellish powers, not for gaining control of others or for serving our own interests. His call to childlike humility and a servantlike heart (John 13:1-17) establishes the spirit and style by which the authority of the believer is to be exercised as an agent of God's kingdom power. (See Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14-15; Luke 18:16-17.)

21. Forgiveness (Matt. 18:18-35). Jesus' prefacing words make this “kingdom” parable of the unforgiving servant especially crucial. He warns against the human capacity to forget God's gracious gift of forgiveness and allow smallness of soul to breed unforgiveness. (1) Jesus showed how unforgiveness can restrict what God would do in others. (Note: The jailed fellow-servant is still in prison at the story's end, revealing the power of unforgiveness to “bind” circumstances to an undesirable level of perpetual problem.) (2) Jesus teaches how the spirit of unforgiveness (the torturers, literally “bill collectors”) exacts its toll on our bodies, minds, and emotions. Finally, every “kingdom” person is advised to sustain a forgiving heart toward all other persons. Kingdom privileges and power must not be mishandled. The “binding” power of unforgiveness is potentially dangerous to any of us.

Matthew 18:18-19 is frequently quoted to assert the believer's authority in prayer. But the power to “bind and loose” is quickly shown to be as much of a liability as an asset if unforgiveness remains in the people of God's kingdom.

22. Integrity and Morality (1 Cor. 6:9-10). The privilege of becoming an authorized and empowered representative of God's kingdom and of ministering Christ's life and the Holy Spirit's gifts to others is not the heritage of the unholy. Twice the text says certain people will not “inherit the kingdom of God,” and then designates broad categories of people who are excluded from enjoying the resources and rewards of righteousness. (See also Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5.)

Although our righteousness before God is through Christ's work alone, and while it remains timelessly true that we cannot earn any spiritual gift or right to function in the power of the Holy Spirit, integrity and morality of character are nonetheless essential to the “kingdom person.”

Holiness of heart and life keeps the lines of communication with God unjumbled, by keeping any private or carnal agenda out of the way. They also insure the Holy Spirit free access for distributing His gifts and fulfilling the Father's will in any situation.

Ministry of the Kingdom

23. The Holy Spirit (Mark 1:15). Jesus' ministry did not begin until He received His “anointing” as Messiah—the empowering that came through the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him (v. 10). Though conceived and born by the Spirit's power (Luke 1:35) and sinless His whole lifetime (John 8:46), He did not attempt ministry without the Spirit's power. He insisted John baptize Him, not for repentance, but because He knew the Holy Spirit would come upon Him at that time (Matt. 3:13-17). From that time, He is led of the Spirit (v. 12) and moves into ministry—declaring the presence of God's kingdom and manifesting its miracles, signs, and wonders (Luke 4:14-15; Matt. 4:23-25).

This pathway points each believer to the need for power, if kingdom ministry is to be advanced through us—His church. Like Him, we, too, are “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5-6). Though our spiritual birth is not as His biological Virgin Birth, the point remains. Spiritual rebirth saves, but spiritual endowment is needed for ministering in kingdom power. Similarly, our justification in Christ—being declared sinless (2 Cor. 5:21)—does not qualify for kingdom power in ministry. In His incarnation Jesus' Person and perfection exceeded ours in every way, yet Jesus still acknowledged the need for His *own* receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit to pursue His ministry. What more needs to be said? Let each of us *personally* hear His command: “Receive the Holy Spirit!” (John 20:22).

24. Authority for Ministry (Luke 9:1-2). Luke shows the flow of power of Jesus the King, who extends the delivering and benevolent rule of the kingdom of God over hell's works (demon power) and human hurt (disease). The order of ministry that began with Jesus (8:1) continues to be exercised by His disciples as He trained them for ministry (9:1-2), and later will issue in the same type of ministry in the church as it spreads the gospel message (Acts 8:4-12). This Gospel throbs with confidence in the full transparency of power and authority for ministry by Jesus to His disciples, then and now:

- We may expect victory over the powers of darkness and their operations (10:19).
- We are assigned to “do business” as authorized representatives of our Lord until He returns (19:13).



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- We are promised the Father's pleasure "to give" us the kingdom, that is, to supply us with His peace and power (12:32).

Dominion over evil has been given, but we can expect to see spiritual breakthrough to the degree we receive and apply that authority in prayer, preaching, teaching, and personal ministry.

25. Prayer and Intercession (Luke 11:2-4). Jesus' words "Your kingdom come" are more than a suggestion to pray for a distant millennial day, for everything in this prayer is current. This prayer is not a formula for repetition so much as it is an outline for expansion. Worship is to be longer than a sentence. Petitions are not confined to bread. Forgiveness is to be requested in specifics, not generalities, and prayer for the entry of God's kingdom into present earthborn situations is not accomplished in a momentary utterance. The verb mood and tense of "Your kingdom come" essentially says, "Father, let Your kingdom come here and now!"

Such prayerful *intervention* is called *intercession*. Motivation toward such prayer occurs when we recognize the importance Jesus placed on prayer in helping us serve in our roles as "kingdom administrators." Without the intervention of God's kingdom rule through prayer, earth's circumstances will succumb to inevitable consequences. Earthly scenes of need must be penetrated by God's "will here as in heaven." Either the weakness of man's rule (the flesh) or the viciousness of the devil's works will prevail. God's power alone can change things and bring heaven's rule (kingdom) instead, and the honor and the glory for prayer's answers are His. However, the praying is ours to do: unless we ask for the intervention of His kingdom and obey His prayer-lessons, nothing will change. All kingdom ministry begins with, is sustained by, and will triumph through prayer.

26. Casting Out Demons (Luke 11:20). Jesus indicates that one signal of a true ministry of the kingdom includes the casting out of demons. He models this in His ministry and promises it as a timeless sign confirming the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 16:17). He also balances this aspect of ministry for His disciples, who at first were amazed to experience such power, exclaiming, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17). While affirming the place and value of this ministry (vv. 18-19), Jesus still reminds them of a foundational truth. Power over demons is not the central reason for rejoicing; rather, their salvation has registered them as heaven's representatives. That is the real grounds for authority in the spiritual realm.

27. Receiving Kingdom Power (Acts 1:3-8). As Jesus presented post-Resurrection teaching "pertaining to the kingdom of God" (v. 3), His disciples asked if now—with the Cross behind—the ultimate messianic kingdom would come. "It is not yours to know the future," He says, "but it is yours to receive the Spirit's power!" With those words, He makes three points: (1) The Holy Spirit is the Person and the power by which assistance and ability are given for serving, for sharing the life and power of God's kingdom with others. (2) The Holy Spirit's power must be "received"; it is not an automatic experience. As surely as the Holy Spirit indwells each believer (Rom. 8:9), so surely will He fill and overflow (John 7:37-39) each who receives the Holy Spirit in childlike faith. (3) When the Holy Spirit fills you, you will know it. Jesus said it and the disciples found it true (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4). Have you received the Holy Spirit? (19:1-6). You may, for the promise is as fully yours today as at any time in the past (2:38-39).

Conflict and the Kingdom

28. Earth's Evil "Ruler" (Luke 4:14-32). As Jesus confronts Satan, He dramatically exposes the Adversary's relationship to this present world. Note the significance in Satan's offer to Jesus of "all the kingdoms of the world." Here we see the Adversary as administrator of the curse on this planet, a role he has held since man's dominion was lost and forfeited at the Fall. Because of this, Jesus does not contest the devil's right to make that offer of this world's kingdoms and glory, but He pointedly denies the terms for their being gained. Jesus knows He is here to regain and ultimately win them, but He will do so on the Father's terms, not the Adversary's. Still, the present world systems are largely grounded by the limited but powerful and destructive rule of the one Jesus calls "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 16:30). Understanding these facts, we are wise not to attribute to God anything of the disorder of our confused, sin-riddled, diseased, tragedy-ridden, and tormented planet. "This present evil age" (Gal. 1:4) "lies *under the sway of* the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). But Jesus also said that Satan's rule "will be cast down," and that he "has nothing in Me," that is, no control over Christ or Christ's own. "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

29. Taking It by Force (Matt. 11:12). Jesus asserts the "violence" of the kingdom. The unique grammatical construction of the text does not make clear if the kingdom of God is the victim of violence or if, as the kingdom advances in victory, it does so through violent spiritual conflict and warfare—but the context does. Jesus' references to the nonreligious style of John and the confrontive, miraculous ministry of Elijah teach that the kingdom of God makes its penetration by a kind of violent entry opposing the human status quo. It transcends the "softness" (v. 8) of staid religious formalism and exceeds



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the pretension of child's play (vv. 16-17). It refuses to "dance to the music" of society's expectation that the religious community provide either entertainment ("We played the flute") or dead traditionalism ("We mourned").

Jesus defines the "violence" of His kingdom's expansion by defining the "sword" and "fire" He has brought as different from the battle techniques of political or military warfare (compare Matt. 10:34-39 and Luke 12:49-53 with John 18:36). The upheaval caused by the kingdom of God is not caused by political provocation or armed advance. It is the result of God's order, shaking relationships, households, cities, and nations by the entry of the Holy Spirit's power working in people. (See also Luke 16:16.)

30. Grounds of Authority (Col. 2:13-15). Jesus Christ's triumph over sin and evil powers was accomplished in "it"—that is, in *the Cross*. This text, joined to and studied beside others (Eph. 2:13-16; Gal. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:14-17; Rom. 5:6-15; and Rev. 12:10-11), firmly establishes Jesus' suffering, shed blood, sacrificial death, and resurrection triumph as the only adequate and available grounds for ransom from sin, reconciliation to God, redemption from slavery, and restoration. The Cross is the sole hope and means for full reinstatement to relationship with God and rulership under Him—to "reign in life" (Rom. 5:17). To avoid presumption or imbalance regarding the message and ministry of the present power of the kingdom of God, we must focus on and regularly review two points: the source and the grounds for the delegation of such authority and power. (1) God's sovereign authority and almighty power is the *source* from which mankind derives any ability to share in the exercise of God's kingdom power. (2) But even more important, seeing sinful, fallen man had lost all claim to his early privilege of rulership under God, let us remember the *grounds* upon which all kingdom privilege or power may be restored and by which such spiritual ministry with authority may be exercised.

31. Pressing In (Luke 16:16). Jesus declares the advance of the kingdom of God is the result of two things: *preaching* and *pressing in*. He shows the gospel of the kingdom must be proclaimed with spiritual passion. In every generation believers have to determine whether they will respond to this truth with sensible minds and sensitive hearts. To overlook it will bring a passivity that limits the ministry of God's kingdom to extending the terms of truth and love—that is, teaching or educating and engaging in acts of kindness. Without question, we must do these things. However, apart from (1) an impassioned pursuit of prayer, (2) confrontation with the demonic, (3) expectation of the miraculous, and (4) a burning heart for evangelism, the kingdom of God makes little penetration in the world.

At the same time, overstatement of "pressing" is likely to produce rabid fanatics who justify any behavior in Jesus' name as applying the boldness spoken of here. Such travesties in church history as the Crusades and various efforts at politicizing in a quest to produce righteousness in society through earth-level rule are extremes we must learn to reject. "Pressing in" is accomplished first in prayer warfare, coupled with a will to surrender one's life and self-interests in order to gain God's kingdom goals.

32. Suffering, Tribulation (Acts 14:21-22). Paul not only taught the joy and peace of the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:7), its power (1 Cor. 14:20), and its present authority to cause the believer to triumph over evil (2 Tim. 4:8; Rom. 16:20). He also taught that "kingdom people" experience trial, suffering, and not always an "instant victory" (2 Thess. 1:5). Triumph and victory may characterize the attitude of each citizen of the kingdom of God, and Holy Spirit-empowered authority is given to be applied to realize results. Yet, God did not promise life without struggle. The "dominion" being recovered through the presence of the King within us and ministered by the Holy Spirit's power through us is never taught by the apostles as preempting all suffering.

This text reminds us that victory only comes through battle, and triumph only follows trial. Only a weak view of the truth of the kingdom of God pretends otherwise. Another weak view surrenders to negative circumstances on the proposition that we are predestined to problems and therefore should merely tolerate them. The Bible teaches that suffering, trial, and all order of human difficulty are unavoidable; but God's Word also teaches they may all be overcome. The presence of the King and the power of His kingdom in our lives make us neither invulnerable nor immune to life's struggles. But they do bring the promise of victory: provision in need, strength for the day, and healing, comfort, and saving help.

Worship and the Kingdom

33. A Kingdom of Priests (Ex. 19:5-7). In these verses the Lord indicates His objective for His delivered people. His purpose for their destiny requires their understanding His essential priority for them: worship—His redemptive goal and kingdom reinstatement. As they learn to worship as a nation of priests, they will discover His foundational means for their possessing their future victories (as ones whose domain, or "kingdom," He has promised). Their restored rule, from sharing to "kingdom" possession, extends from their walk before God in worship. Israel's deliverance from Egypt is not only a triumphant testimony; it is God's timeless type, showing His plans and methods for the church's deliverance and intended conquest (1 Cor. 10:11).



34. “Establishing” God’s Throne (Ps. 22:3). The Psalms were the praise hymnal of the early church, and as such are laden with principles fully applicable for New Testament living today. Few principles are more essential to our understanding than this one: the *presence* of God’s kingdom power is directly related to the practice of God’s *praise*. The verb “enthroned” indicates that wherever God’s people exalt His name, He is ready to manifest His kingdom’s power in the way most appropriate to the situation, as His rule is invited to invade our setting.

It is this fact that properly leads many to conclude that in a very real way, praise prepares a *specific* and *present* place for God among His people. Some have chosen the term “establish His throne” to describe this “enthroning” of God in our midst by our worshiping and praising welcome. God awaits the prayerful and praise-filled worship of His people as an entry point for His kingdom to “come”—to enter, that *His* “will be done” in human circumstances. (See Luke 11:2-4 and Ps. 93:2.) We do not manipulate God, but align ourselves with the great kingdom truth: *His* is the power, ours is the privilege (and responsibility) to welcome Him into our world—our private, present world or the circumstances of our society.

35. Inviting God’s Rule (Ps. 93:2). “Your throne is established from of old.” The notion that kingdom advance “establishes” God’s throne needs clearer understanding. It is foolish to think man could add to or diminish the power or glory of God’s kingdom rule. However, it is equally unwise to overlook the responsible place the redeemed have been given. We are to *welcome* the kingdom and administer situations on earth by inviting the overarching might of God’s Spirit to move into difficult or impossible circumstances and transform them. This is done by praise: “In everything [not “for” everything] give thanks [fill the situation with praise], for this is God’s will for you” (1 Thess. 5:17). Thus we welcome the overruling power of God’s presence into any situation we face. Pray, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done—here.” Then, set up a place for God’s throne to enter by filling your life’s settings with praise. As Gideon’s trumpeters (Judg. 7:17-22) and Jehoshaphat’s choir (2 Chr. 20:20-22) confounded their enemies and paved the way for the victory the Lord said He would give, so praise brings the same entry of the King’s kingdom today.

36. Worship and Praise (Rev. 1:5-6). In the opening of Revelation, John introduces himself as a brother and companion in the struggle we all face (v. 9). His words “in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” point to the dual facts of Christ’s present kingdom triumph and the ongoing presence of evil and warfare that exact the patience of the church as the kingdom advances among and through us. In prefacing the broad arenas of prophecy about to be unfolded, John addresses two very important *present* truths: (1) We, Christ’s redeemed, are loved and are washed from our sins—a present state (v. 6). (2) We, through His glorious dominion, have been designated “kings and priests” to God—also a present calling. Thus, these dual offices give perspective on our authority and duty and how we most effectively may advance the kingdom of God.

First, we are said to be kings in the sense that under the King of kings we are the new breed—the reborn, to whom God has delegated authority to extend and administer the powers of His rule. Of course, this involves faithful witness to the gospel in the power of the Spirit and loving service to humanity in the love of God. But it also involves confrontation with dark powers of hell, assertive prayer warfare, and an expectation of the miraculous works of God (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Cor. 2:4.). Further, this authority is only fully accomplished in the spirit of praiseful worship, as we exercise the office of “priests.” Some translations read, “a kingdom of priests,” which emphasizes that the rule is only effective when the priestly mission is faithfully attended. Worship is foundational to kingdom advance. The power of the believer before God’s throne, worshiping the Lamb and exalting in the Holy Spirit of praise, is mightily confounding to the Adversary. (See Ex. 19:5-7 and Ps. 22:3.)

37. Priority of Worship (1 Pet. 2:9). As a “royal” priesthood, the kingly nature of the redeemed worshiper is noted. This passage is rooted in God’s call to ancient Israel (see Ex. 19:5-7). Peter and John (Rev. 1:5-6) draw this truth to full application and prophetic fulfillment in the New Testament believer. As with Israel, deliverance through the blood of the Lamb is but the beginning. As promised, dominion and destiny will unfold as their priestly duty is fulfilled. True authority is always related to a walk in purity and a constancy in worship. The spirit of worship is essential to all advance of the kingdom. Just as ancient Israel will only take the Promised Land while doing battle from a foundation of righteous worship before the Lord, so with the contemporary church. We will only experience promised power for evangelism and spiritual victories as we prioritize and grow in our worship of the living God. Kingdom power is kept from pollution this way, as kingdom people keep humbly praiseful before the King—and witness His works of power with joy. (See also Rev. 1:5-6.)



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38. Old Testament: Possessing the Kingdom (Dan. 7:21-22). Daniel's prophecy in chapter 7 not only spans the spiritual struggle covering the ages through Messiah's First and Second Coming, but it uses two terms important to perceiving the biblical truth of the kingdom of God: "dominion" and "possess." "Dominion" (from Chaldee, *shelet*, "to govern, prevail, dominate") is in the hands of world powers (vv. 6, 12) until the Coming of the Son of Man, at which time it is taken by Him forever (vv. 13-14). But an interim struggle is seen between the First and Second Coming of Messiah. During this season, the saints "possess" (Chaldee, *chacan*, "to hold on or occupy") the kingdom. This communicates a process of long struggle as the redeemed ("saints") "possess" what they have "received" (v. 18). The scenario reads: (1) After the "judgment was made in favor of the saints" (a forecast of the pivotal impact of Christ's Cross upon which hinged both man's redemption as well as his reinstatement to the potential of his rule under God), an extended struggle ensues. (2) This struggle is described as the "time [which] came for the saints to possess the kingdom." They do battle against sinister adversaries and experience a mix of victories and apparent defeats (v. 25). The prophecy unveils the present age of the kingdom, which is one of ongoing struggle—with victory upon victory for the church. Yet it withholds its conclusive triumph until Christ comes again.

This prophecy also balances the question of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. (1) God's sovereignty accomplishes the foundational victory (v. 22) and in the Cross achieves the decisive victory allowing the saints new dimensions for advance and conquest. (2) He entrusts the responsibility for that advance to His own to "possess the kingdom," entering into conflict with the adversary, at times at the expense of their apparent defeat (v. 26). (3) However, movement toward victory is theirs as they press the "judgment" of the "court" (vv. 22, 26) and seize realms controlled by evil. They wrestle the dominion from hellish powers, continuing in warfare until the ultimate seating of the Son of Man (vv. 14, 27).

Prophetic systems vary as to how and when these words unfold on the calendar of church history, for the passage is subject to different schemes of interpretation, each with different projected chronologies. But the foundational fact remains that an agelong struggle between "the saints" and the power of evil in the world calls each believer to a commitment to steadfast battle, a mixture of victories with setbacks, and a consummate triumph anticipated at Christ's Coming. In the meantime, we "receive" the kingdom and pursue victories for our King, by His power, making intermittent gains—all of which are based on "the judgment" achieved through the Cross.

39. New Testament: Agelong Warfare (Rev. 12:10-11). John's prophecy in chapter 12 conveys the same essential message as Daniel 7, the primary difference being that John writes *after* Christ's first coming, victorious death, resurrection, and ascension (v. 5). Verses 1-17 relate: (1) the ongoing warfare on earth (v. 9); (2) the overcoming ability of the redeemed because "the kingdom" has come (v. 10); (3) the two-edged truth that their victories often cost martyrdom (v. 11); and (4) the basis of their triumph: the Cross ("the blood of the Lamb") and the authority of God's Word ("the word of their testimony"—v. 12). Various interpretive systems see this at different times within redemptive history. The mixture of pre-, a-, and postmillennial viewpoints has often fragmented the church, rather than providing a common base of wisdom for each group to receive while embracing one another as we all face a common Adversary (v. 9). Seeing that no complete interpretive scheme will be verified until after Christ comes, our wisdom is to embrace the Cross as our salvation and our source of overcoming victory. Then we can enter the conflict in confidence, knowing we shall triumph even though circumstances temporarily set us back. In the time of conflict, it will make no difference who was "right," but only that we were on the Messiah's side in this agelong spiritual struggle.

The text provides two indisputable facts: (1) the kingdom of God has already established triumph over the Serpent (vv. 9-10) and (2) still, those engaged in conflict in the name of the Lamb sometimes are vanquished to death (v. 11). Breadth and balance are given to our perspective. The *presence* of the kingdom at this time calls each believer to responsible spiritual warfare and anticipated victories. Yet, at the same time, the presence of evil struggles for survival; though "cast down," the Serpent writhes viciously. Thus our temporal situation is often a fierce and sometimes painful struggle, seeming to issue in an indeterminate standoff before our Enemy. But he only has "a short time," until finally the kingdom *to come* (v. 10) shall become the kingdom *accomplished* (Revelation 19-22). Let us do battle in faith and with faithfulness and, looking to that day of His ultimate kingdom, know the Holy Spirit is preparing us for kingdom victories *today*. J.W.H.

KINSMAN-REDEEMER. There were four specific tasks that the kinsman-redeemer (*go.el*) was to perform as his help was needed: (1) If his kinsman sold his property to pay his debts, the kinsman redeemed or bought back the property (Lev. 25:25; Ruth 4:1-6; Jer. 32:6-15); (2) the person who was captured, enslaved or sold into slavery had every right to expect his kinsman to redeem him and set him free (Lev. 25:47-49); (3) if a person died childless, the redeemer married the dead man's widow and raised up a son to carry on the family line and to honor the deceased person, in a custom known as



levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10). There also appears to be a role of a kinsman-redeemer to track down the killer in vengeance. In passages noting that custom, *go'el* is translated as “avenger of blood” (Deut. 19:12).

The term kinsman-redeemer is used of God to express His intimate relationship with His people (Is. 41:14; 43:14; 44:24). He is their “next of kin” who ransoms them from bondage (Is. 43:1-3); He pays the price to set them free. Paul reminded the believers at Corinth that God had bought them at a price; therefore, they were to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20).⁷

SATAN

Meeting and Beating Satan

Who is Satan (Zech. 3:1–2)? Scripture instructs us about the nature and activity of this evil, fallen angel, who is ceaselessly opposed to God, God’s creation, and God’s people. God wants us to be aware and be alert so that we are not caught off guard by his schemes.

1. He is called “the devil,” which means a false witness or malicious accuser. (This term occurs thirty-five times in the New King James translation of the Bible, always in the New Testament). Satan regularly accuses believers before God, seeking to tear down their sense of well-being and wear down their strength through guilt (Job 1:6–11; Eph. 4:27; 6:11; Rev. 12:10).

2. He specializes in deceit (Gen. 3:1–7), sometimes masquerading as an “angel of light,” as though he were representing God (2 Cor. 11:14). Jesus called him the father of lies (John 8:44). Paul and John further illuminate this characteristic deception (1 Tim. 3:6–7; Rev. 20:10).

3. He is a tempter, seeking to draw people into activities that are disobedient to God and destructive to them (Matt. 4:1–11; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:5).

4. He has a great deal of influence on this world. Three times Jesus described him in Scripture as the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Paul used similar expressions (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).

How, then, should we as believers respond to this dangerous enemy?

1. We need to remind ourselves that Satan has been defeated by the death and resurrection of Christ, and therefore we need not submit to him or fear him (Heb. 2:14–15; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 20:10). Our Lord Jesus is familiar with his enticements and has met him head on—and won (Luke 4:1–13; Heb. 4:15).

2. We need to remember that Satan’s power and impact are limited by God. Ultimately he is not free to do whatever he wants (Job 1:7–12; 2:6; John 14:30–31; 2 Thess. 2:7–8).

3. We are to stand opposed to Satan at all times. He will flee when we do (1 Pet. 5:8–9; James 4:7).

4. We are to equip ourselves for this constant battle (Eph. 6:13–18).

5. We need to lean on God, who gives us the power to escape Satan’s various temptations and enticements (Eph. 6:11; 1 Cor. 10:13).

⁷ Hayford, J. W., Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). [Hayford's Bible handbook](#). Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers.



6. We must maintain a healthy respect for the power of the evil one and for the constant battle that he wages against us. This is not a game; it is a life-and-death struggle in which there will be casualties (1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; Jude 9)⁸

THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF SATAN

Satan has some legal rights which have imposed upon them a definite time element. Those rights are exercised in two realms. He is called PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, because of his right in the heavenly realm. He is a usurper in the realm of the heavenlies and all this by the permissive will of God. It may be difficult to understand, but it is true nevertheless, that while the devil has certain rights, God has granted to Jesus, and Him to us, all authority. Satan has certain rights because the authority of Christ allows them.

His designation THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD or THE GOD OF THIS WORLD tells us that he has rights in the world as well. He gained these rights when Adam forfeited them and kept them until Jesus stripped him through His work on Calvary and through the resurrection. We will deal with this later, but one word from God's Word will suffice to describe what Jesus did to the devil through His sacrifice at Calvary. "That through death he might destroy [render powerless] him that had the power of death, that is the devil (Hebrews. 2:14)."

A foe needlessly feared, usually has a decisive advantage. Our foe is already defeated. He knows it. I know he knows it. He knows I know he knows it. He is a foe who has fallen, but is not finally done away with. This is all in the economy of God.

THE VICTORY IS OURS, BECAUSE THE VICTOR HAS COME.

SATAN HAS BECOME THE VICTIM ...

THE VICTIM HAS BECOME THE VEHICLE ...

FOR THE ADVENT OF THE VICTOR ...

Who would ultimately destroy the works of the devil, and cleanse the heavens and the earth from every trace of his handiwork.

PRAISE THE LORD!

Outline of Ephesians *Opening greeting 1:1, 2*

- I. The believer's position in Christ 1:3–14
 - A. Blessings of full redemption 1:3–8
 - B. Partnership in God's purpose 1:9–14
- II. The apostle's prayer for insight 1:15–23
 - A. For hearts that see with hope 1:15–18
 - B. For experience that shares Christ's victory 1:19–21
 - C. The church: Christ's body 1:22, 23
- III. The believer's past, present, and future 2:1–22

⁸ Thomas Nelson Publishers. (2001). In [*What does the Bible say about... The ultimate A to Z resource fully illustrated*](#) (p. 356). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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- A. The past order of the living dead 2:1–3
- B. The new order of God's loving life 2:4–10
- C. The past separation and hopelessness 2:11, 12
- D. The new union and present peace 2:13–18
- E. The church: Christ's building 2:19–22
- IV. The apostle's ministry and message 3:1–13
 - A. The stewardship Paul has been given 3:1–7
 - B. The stewardship each believer is given 3:8–13
- V. The apostle's prayer for power 3:14–21
 - A. For strength by the Holy Spirit 3:14–16
 - B. For faith and love by Christ's indwelling 3:17–19
 - C. The church and God's glory 3:20, 21
- VI. The believer's call to responsibility 4:1–16
 - A. To pursue unity with diligence 4:1–6
 - B. To accept grace and gifts humbly 4:7–11
 - C. To grow in ministry as part of the body 4:12–16
- VII. The believer's call to purity 4:7–5:14
 - A. To refuse worldly mindedness 4:17–19
 - B. To put off the old and put on the new 4:20–32
 - C. To progress in untainted love 5:1–7
 - D. To shine as undimmed light bearers 5:8–14
- VIII. The believer's call to Spirit-filled living 5:5–6:9
 - A. To pursue God's will and wisdom 5:15–17
 - B. To maintain the fullness of the Holy Spirit through worship and humility 5:18–21
 - C. To conduct all relationships according to God's order 5:2–6:9
- IX. The believer's call to spiritual warfare 6:10–20
 - A. The reality of the invisible conflict 6:10–12
 - B. Armor for the warrior 6:13–17
 - C. The action involved in warfare 6:18–20 *Concluding remarks 6:21–24⁹*

6:10 Spiritual Warfare, FAITH'S WARFARE. Paul admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God in order to stand against the forces of hell. It is clear that our warfare is not against physical forces, but against invisible powers who have clearly defined levels of authority in a real, though invisible, sphere of activity. Paul, however, not only warns us of a clearly defined structure in the invisible realm, he instructs us to take up the whole armor of God in order to maintain a "battle-stance" against this unseen satanic structure. All of this armor is not just a passive protection in facing the enemy; it is to be used offensively against these satanic forces. Note Paul's final directive: we are to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (v. 18). Thus, prayer is not so much a weapon, or even a part of the armor, as it is the means by which we engage in the battle itself and the purpose

⁹ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). [*Spirit filled life study Bible*](#) (electronic ed., Eph 1:1). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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for which we are armed. To put on the armor of God is to prepare for battle. Prayer is the battle itself, with God's Word being our chief weapon employed against Satan during our struggle. ¹⁰

¹⁰ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). [*Spirit filled life study Bible*](#) (electronic ed., Eph 6:5). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.