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MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

Steven Lloyd

I would summarize the Story of the Bible in this way: it opens with God as the King of the universe. He establishes a special relationship with the nation of Israel. This special nation eventually rejects God from being King and asks for a man to rule over them in order to be like the nations around them (1 Sam. 8). God gives them a king. He gives them many kings, and the kings end up becoming the problem. Even the best of them are flawed. The books of 1 & 2 Kings tell that sordid story, but the prophets announce that God will rule as King once again. This is what Israel longed for during their years of exile.

When Jesus came on the scene, He seemed to be the likely candidate—the one who would deliver them from their oppressors and create a sovereign nation. The Gospel accounts support their expectations, but the disciples of our Lord were thrown for a loop because the kingdom God established was not the kingdom they expected. When Jesus stood before Pilate, he said,

My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world (John 18:36).

Twice, Jesus emphasizes the point that His kingdom is not of this world.

This is not to say that the kingdom had nothing to do with the world. John makes the striking statement, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). When Jesus says that

His kingdom is not of this world, He is saying that the source or origin of His kingdom are not of this world. The disciples were right about Jesus. He was the One through whom God would rule. He was seated on David’s throne when He ascended and was exalted to sit at His Father’s right hand. This is one of the main points of Peter’s sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36).

The supernatural activity that accompanied Jesus’ ministry is another indicator that His kingdom was not of this world. When Nicodemus approached Jesus by night, he said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him” (Jn. 3:2). We often think of the signs Jesus performed as evidence that He was God in the flesh, and that is fine (Jn 20:30, 31), but it is evidence of more, in particular, of the otherworldly nature of the kingdom. One of the many supernatural activities of our Lord was casting out demons. On one occasion, He was accused of having done so by the prince of demons. After reasoning with His accusers, Jesus informed them, “If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Lk. 11:20). Jesus’ power over the demonic world was evidence that the kingdom is come.

Jesus implied the same thing when disciples of John came asking if He was the one to come or whether they should look for another. Jesus said,

Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached

to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me. (Matt. 11:4-6)

This echoes what Isaiah wrote in 35:5-6 and 61:1. Anyone familiar with Isaiah would have recognized Jesus' response as a prophetic indicator concerning the kingdom.

There are other aspects of Jesus' kingdom that distinguish it as otherworldly, but one final aspect is its permanence. Kingdoms of men come and go. They have been removed, or "shaken" (Hag. 2:6, 21). We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:27). It cannot be shaken precisely because it is not of this world.

SW

PROVING YOUR FAITH

Wayne Jackson

How do we know that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God? Is our faith based merely upon tradition? Is faith the result of religious fanaticism? No, genuine faith stands firmly upon evidence.

After the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the newly appointed apostle entered the Jewish synagogues and "proclaimed Jesus, that he is the son of God" (Acts 9:20). His message continually amazed those who heard it. It seemed incredible that one who had so opposed the Christian Way could now be one of its most zealous advocates.

The historian Luke informed his readers that Saul increased in strength, and he "confounded the Jews that lived in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (Acts 9:22).

Of interest in this passage is the term "proving." It is a translation of the Greek word *sumbibazon*. It is a present tense participle form, which suggests that Paul's preaching was characterized consistently by a demonstrative line of argumentation. The original term, from an etymological viewpoint means "to bring together," as when, for example, parts of the body are brought together (i.e., tied together) by sinew, ligament, etc. (see Ephesians 4:16).

In the context of Acts 9:22, the word connotes bringing together pieces of information from which a logical conclusion is drawn. In "proving" to the Jews that Jesus is the "Christ" (i.e., the promised Old Testament Messiah), Paul would have: (1) introduced specific Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah; (2) compared those predictions with factual data that pertained to Jesus of Nazareth; and, (3) from the

preceding, he would have drawn irresistible conclusions that no rational and honest person could deny.

The critic who alleges that Christianity is merely emotional, and not intellectual, simply does not know the facts.

Lake Country Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, February 3, 2019.

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"AND THEY WERE ASTONISHED"

Tom Wacaster

Near the close of His earthly ministry our Lord made one final journey to Galilee. His first stop on that tour was in Nazareth, the city where He grew up. Matthew's record of this visit to Nazareth appears in 13:54-58. Upon entering into the city it is said that our Lord "taught them in their synagogue, inasmuch that they were astonished" (13:54). Should that surprise us? Do you recall that moment recorded by John when the officers were sent by the Pharisees and chief priests to arrest Jesus, and those men returned and declared, "Never man so spake" (John 7:46). The opinion of those officers was not borne out of hearsay, or conjecture, or mere guess. They heard Jesus for themselves, and from that experience they boldly declared that there was no one who ever spoke as did Jesus. No one!

Over the centuries there have been great orators who have gained the respect of those who heard them. Among those are Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, orator and writer. He is ranked #18 on the list of the most enlightened leaders in world history. Marcus Cicero, Roman philosopher, politician, and lawyer. According to one writer, "the influence of Cicero upon the history of European literature and ideas greatly exceeds that of any other prose writer in language." Other great orators might include men like John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Ronald Reagan, known as "the great communicator." One of the most well-known statesmen of the closing years of the 1800's and early 1900's was William Jennings Bryan, well known Senator, author, and candidate for the Presidency. Time and space would fail us if we were to tell of Pericles, Abraham Lincoln, Patrick Henry, Daniel Webster, and others. No doubt the officers who came to arrest Jesus on that occasion were familiar with the famous orators of their age, and likely had studied those of the past who

had influenced Roman and Jewish thinking alike. Now, take the lump sum of all of the famous orators of any and every age. Cull from their speeches and writings the best of the best, put it in a volume of philosophy and human wisdom and advice, and it would pale in comparison to the wisdom and communication ability of our Lord. Truly, "Never man so spake"!

One of the best known tributes to our Lord was that offered by Napoleon Bonaparte: "I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."

Albert Einstein is credited with having said this about Jesus: "No man can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life. Theseus and other heroes of his type lack the authentic vitality of Jesus." Here is an amazing quote from Vincent van Gogh:

It is a very good thing that you read the Bible. The Bible is Christ, for the Old Testament leads up to this culminating point. Christ alone has affirmed as a principal certainty, eternal life, the infinity of time, the nothingness of death, the necessity and the *raison d'être* of serenity and devotion. He lived serenely, as a greater artist than all other artists, despising marble and clay as well as color, working in living flesh. That is to say, this matchless artist made neither statues nor pictures nor books; he loudly proclaimed that he made living men, immortals.

Sholem Asch, a Jewish author wrote concerning Jesus:

Everything he ever said or did has value for us today and that is something you can say of no other man, dead or alive. There is no easy middle ground to stroll upon. You either accept Jesus or reject him.

Among my favorite is this tribute by Philip Schaff:

Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander the Great, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning,

he shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of school, he spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, he set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

If the student desires a good sampling of the amazing wisdom of Jesus, let him spend time meditating on the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. In my notes on chapter five I provided you with a beautiful quote from John T. Fisher. It bears repeating here:

If you were to take the sum total of all the authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene - 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 would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably by comparison.

What Fisher had to say about the Sermon on the Mount could be said about every word that ever came out of the mouth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He spoke with wisdom, for He is the very embodiment of heavenly Wisdom. Let us listen, respect, and obey His words that we might have the life He has promised to the faithful.

The Forest Hill News, Forest Hill Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, August 21, 2019.

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Tuesday Morning Bible Classes

10:00 am

Classes Resume January 7th
(ALL ARE WELCOME)

Record for the Week of December 29, 2019

Bible Class	132
Morning Assembly	186
Evening Assembly	137
Iglesia de Cristo	
Morning Assembly	N/A
Contribution	\$N/A

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

Bud Wade continues to receive weekly treatments in San Antonio and is very weak at this time.

Health Concerns: Lucile Johnson, Diana Rodriguez, Sue Shamburger, Bonnie Thetford, Bud Wade, Teresa Williams, Angela Young, Jo Young.

Shut-ins: Jeannette Hansen, Rosemary Garrett, Jon & Caroline Little, Bobby Johnson, Elvira Martinez, Ginny Oswald, Jan Smith.

Others: Ronald Adkisson, Lee Barr, Rodney Boes, Olivia Carson, Caleb Crouchet, Mark DeAvila, Bill Ellison, Bonnie Gomer, CK Holt, Deborah Hoover, June Lee, Pearce Lewis, Nell McCown, Bill & Nancy Ponds, Cynthia Puente, Max Stanley, Kay Westbrook, Gib Young.

We're Going Paperless!

January 1, 2020

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Steven Lloyd

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Clay Bond

WORSHIP AND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES: Sunday, Bible Classes 9:30 am, Worship 10:30 am and 6:00 pm

Tuesday, 10:00 am (September-May), Men's and Ladies' Bible Classes | Wednesday, Bible Classes, 7:00 pm

RADIO PROGRAM – *The Word of Life* | Sunday, 7:30 am | KLBJ, 590-AM and 99.7 FM | online at swcofc.org/word-of-life