



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Kingdom of God

David Clayton



EARTH'S ORIGINAL LORD

From the beginning, when God first created the earth, He established man as the ruler of the planet. In Genesis 1:28 He told Adam,

... replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Gen 1:28)

We find the same truth expressed by the psalmist David in Psalm 8:4-6,

... thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: (Ps 8:4-6)

This is how it was in the beginning; man was made lord of planet Earth and everything was under his dominion and control. When he spoke to the animals, to the birds, to the fish, they would obey. Perhaps even the elements were

under his control, as David said, he was made to have dominion over the works of God's hands.

This was the original kingdom of God on this earth—God's dominion placed under the control of man. It was a place where there was only peace and happiness, and everything was good.

MAN'S DOMINION LOST

Unfortunately, not too long after his creation and his inauguration as lord of all, Adam lost his dominion. In a terrible moment of carelessness and misjudgment, he listened to the voice of God's great enemy, rejected God's control over his life, and gave his dominion to Satan. God had given this dominion to Adam; he was the legal ruler of the planet, and when he chose to submit to the principles of Satan, what he actually did was hand over this dominion to Satan. Satan became the legitimate lord and ruler of the planet. The same dominion that God had given to Adam now passed to Satan, and he became lord of the earth.

The Bible describes the new status of Adam and his wife Eve—no longer lords and rulers in full control of everything on earth; now they became subject to evil circumstances, and the earth itself turned against them.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the

days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen 3:17-19)

The idea that Satan is now lord of the earth is something that is clearly taught in several places in the Bible. For example, in Luke 4:5-6 we have an account of Jesus' experience when He was tempted by Satan. Notice Satan's words:

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. (Luke 4:5-6)

The devil claimed to have the authority to give all the power and the glory of the world to anybody that he chose, and in fact he offered to give it to Jesus. This was not an idle claim. Notice that Jesus did not contradict nor correct him, because it was the truth. Adam had

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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given Satan this dominion, and now, as lord of the earth, he had it in his power to give these things to whomever he chose.

PROMISE OF A RESTORED KINGDOM

Of course, God knows all things. Before man was even created, God knew what would happen and had a plan to deal with the situation when it came. Right there in the garden, immediately after man sinned, God made a promise which foretold the solution He had provided for the problem. He told Satan:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Gen 3:15)

Adam and Eve did not understand exactly what God meant by those words, but as ages and generations passed, it became more and more clear what He meant by that promise. Sometime in the future there would be a child born, a special child who would destroy and overcome the principles of Satan and return the kingdom to its rightful owner. In the promise itself there was a suggestion that this child would be badly hurt in the process of gaining his victory - Satan would bruise his heel - but nevertheless he would bruise Satan's head.

Many years later the prophet Isaiah spoke about this coming child, the one who would reclaim the kingdom that had been usurped by Satan. We read about him in Isaiah 9:6-7.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa 9:6-7)

It is worth taking a little time to look at the information we have been given about this child. Isaiah tells us that he was to be given a name, but this name is made up of several parts, and in actual fact we understand that this name does not refer to the title by which he would be addressed, but rather to the many different characteristics which he would possess.

So he would be a Wonderful Counsellor - somebody who would be able to counsel, to direct, and to guide in an amazing way; obviously in a different way than anybody else would be able to do. That is why his portfolio as a counsellor is said to be "wonderful."

Secondly it says he would be The mighty God. Not God the Father, not God the Almighty, but God in the sense that he would be a divine being. In actual fact we have come to understand that it means he would be the begotten Son of God—one who was God in essence because he was born from God; one who came from the very substance of God Himself. This child is, of course, Jesus Christ. Peter explained this in Acts chapter 2, when he said:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)

Thirdly it says that he would be The

everlasting Father. Again, this is not referring to him being God the Father; it is referring to him being the father of redeemed humanity. The Scriptures declare that he is the last Adam, and what this means is that he is also the father of a race of people, just as Adam was the father of the human race. Jesus, as the last Adam, provided a victorious life - a life which had conquered sin and Satan - and he passes on this life to all who are born again of the Spirit. So in this sense he is the father of all who are born again. He is not only their father in a temporary sense, but he is their father everlastingly. Of course he is the Prince of Peace because he is the one who will bring everlasting peace to the planet, and indeed has already brought it to all who are born again into his life.

This is the promised child who would restore the kingdom of God. Isaiah said that his government would have no end.

NEW LORD, NEW KINGDOM

The restoration of this original kingdom is a process that involves many different things. Adam lost the kingdom in one moment, but it would take a very long time and great sacrifice on the part of God, and great loss to the human race, before it would eventually be restored to its rightful state.

In the Bible this kingdom is sometimes referred to as "the kingdom of God," and sometimes as "the kingdom of heaven." Over the centuries after Adam sinned, humanity became so confused and so depraved that nobody really understood the nature of that original kingdom.

When God called the nation of Israel and set them aside for a special purpose, He established them as a kingdom, and of course they believed that their nation was the true kingdom of God. Their idea of God's kingdom was a nation that was stronger and that ruled over all other nations. They thought of it as a kingdom that was militarily superior to all others. God worked with this misconception, but only for a time. Eventually the time came when the true nature of His kingdom was to be re-

vealed, and that time was marked by the arrival of Jesus Christ on this planet.

WAS ISRAEL THE KINGDOM?

One of the things which Jesus tried very hard to get the people to understand was that the kingdom of God was about to be set up. The people embraced this idea eagerly, but he also tried to make them understand that the kingdom was different from what they had expected - not a worldly political empire dominating and overthrowing all other kingdoms, but a strange entity which began first of all in the hearts of men and women.

On one occasion when the Pharisees asked him when the kingdom of God would appear, his answer was very strange to them. It was the truth, but not a truth that they could understand.

Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:21)

Jesus made it absolutely clear that he had not come to this earth to establish a political kingdom based on the expectations of the Jews.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. (John 18:36)

There we see one of the great realities of this kingdom of God: it is not something established by force of arms, by warfare or political intrigue. It is first of all a kingdom that is based upon something established within the hearts of men and women.

From the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, the most outstanding characteristic of the kingdom of God was the holy nature of those who made up the kingdom. The kingdom was lost physically - handed over to Satan - when the nature of Adam and Eve changed. When they lost their holiness and purity of character, then they lost their kingdom. They had embraced the principles of Satan and so they came under his government.

This is one of the truths that Jesus emphasized: the first step in establishing the kingdom of God, God's new system of government, was to have a new principle, a new life, established in the hearts of men.

Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. (Matt 9:17)

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

It is important that we understand the fundamental differences between the



government of God and the government of Satan. Yes, God is good and Satan is evil - that is something everybody is aware of. However, the reason why Satan has been able to establish his government, and why it is so popular with human beings and even some angels, is not because it is presented as something evil.

If Satan openly advertised his kingdom as being based on wickedness, hatred, murder, theft and all the other obvious forms of evil, many of those who today are under his government would reject it. In fact, there are many who abhor those kinds of practices, yet who are

very much under the government of Satan because they live by his principles without realizing it.

The great truth of the Christian faith is that we cannot do good without Christ. The only way to live a life which is holy and good is to surrender to Christ and allow him to live his life through us. In other words, to allow ourselves to become the dwelling place of God through Christ, to have His Spirit live within us and direct our lives. The apostle Paul highlighted this truth when he stated that our bodies are the temples, or dwelling places, of the living God (2 Cor 6:16).

This was God's intent for all intelligent creation from the moment He first created intelligent beings. All of us, through our own willing choice, would submit ourselves to God so He could live through us. In this way the universe would be perfect, and love and happiness would be present everywhere.

Satan introduced another idea into the universe, and it was on this idea that he built his kingdom. This new principle was the opposite of God's governing principle. It was the idea that created beings were quite capable of governing themselves and did not need God to be integrated into their lives in order for them to be good. This great, unrecognized principle of Satan's kingdom is the principle of **self-government**.

When we look at his temptation to Eve in the Garden of Eden, we see that this is what he presented to her—the idea that she could live a life that was satisfactory, that was good, without needing to submit to God. She could be her own god, the god of her life. In fact, all she needed was the knowledge of good and evil.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Gen 3:4-5)

So Satan's kingdom is the kingdom of self.

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The Sabbath Rest



Many of those who were once Seventh day Adventists, rejected the denomination primarily because of objections to the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. However, I have discovered that many of them have also rejected observance of the literal Seventh day Sabbath stating that it is no longer a necessary part of the Christian experience.

The main basis for this objections seems to be the teaching found in Hebrews chapter 4, where the Seventh day Sabbath is represented as being a type, or an illustration representing the rest we find in Christ.

Now we who have believed enter that rest, . . . And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "On the seventh day God rested from all his works." . . . There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. (Heb 4:3-10 NIV)

The argument is, Christ is the true Sabbath rest and therefore, since Christ arrived and brought this rest, there is no longer any need for the observance of the type, which is, the literal Seventh day Sabbath. Instead, we walk in a continual state of rest in Christ, not on any one day in particular, but every day, every moment.

I, personally, agree that Jesus is our true rest and that the Seventh day Sabbath was used as a symbol of this rest which we find in Christ. However, I don't agree that this means the original, literal, Seventh day Sabbath has been abolished by God, and is not longer relevant to the Christian.

God blessed the Seventh day and set it apart for a holy purpose. This is what it tells us in Genesis chapter 2: 2-3 and this is something which he did from the very beginning, long before the law was given on Mount Sinai. At this time, there was no sin, there were no types or antitypes. Everything which was established on that first week of creation represented God's perfect will for mankind. This included the observance of the literal Seventh day Sabbath which was sanctified (set apart for a holy purpose), from that time, before man sinned.

After man sinned, the system of types and shadows were put in place. Some thing which are eternal changed their meaning to some extent. One of them was marriage. Marriage is an aspect of God's perfect plan for mankind in this earth and this was established before there was sin. However, God later used the marriage relationship as a type of the relationship between Christ and the church. Paul speaks of this in Ephesians 5. However, the fact that marriage is a type of Christ's relationship with the church does not mean that literal marriage has been abolished.

The same applies to the Sabbath. When God put the Sabbath in the law on Mount Sinai, it was used as an illustration of the relationship of rest which Christians would find in Christ. However, this does not mean that the literal Sabbath which goes back to a time before there was sin, is now abolished and no longer relevant.

Recently I had discussions with a good

Christian friend of mine on the subject. We agree on most things as it relates to Christianity, but he feels that the observance of the Seventh day Sabbath is not necessary. I have shared some parts of the correspondence below, in the hope that it will help our readers to have a better understanding of the issues involved in the discussion. I have prefaced his comments with the words, "**You said,**" and my responses with the words, "**my response.**"

You said: You (David Clayton) mentioned that God was refreshed on the seventh day because it was the time He spent enjoying fellowship with Adam and Eve. But does that mean that this kind of relationship and joy was not available during the rest of the week?

My response: No, it was not that the relationship would have diminished, but the fact is that Adam and Eve like all of us were physical beings and as such they operated with the limitations of the physical. We can have fellowship with God 24/7, but if we are honest, this is not, and cannot be **undistracted** fellowship. You cannot be watching the news and consciously communicating with God at the same time. You cannot be having a discussion with your neighbor and be consciously communicating with God at the same time. It is similar to how we are constantly aware of our wives when we are in the same home or the same room, but it is very different when we focus on being intimate. I believe the Sabbath was designed as a time for undistracted focus and even in a perfect world, that is still a valuable benefit.

You said: Second, you pointed out that God specifically blessed the seventh day and because of that blessing it must contain something special that the other days do not.

But when parents bring their child to be blessed by an elder, is that moment itself what truly blesses the child, or is the real blessing found in parents raising their child in the knowledge and fear of the Lord and according to His principles? It seems to me that the act of blessing is more a declaration before heaven and before the community of believers, a commitment to follow God and to place the child within a community that can support and encourage both the parents and the child on that journey.

My response: I have to disagree with you here. This is the human view of blessing. We have come to accept this understanding because we misuse the concept of blessing so much. It has been a practice of church people to offer a blessing on many different occasions and in such a superficial way, that over the ages humanity has come to regard it as just a formality, like saying grace over a meal. There is nothing that God does which should ever be regarded in this way.

When God blesses, it is not an appeal to man to work, it is not a token statement of some vague benefit. Man cannot bless anything or anybody, to say that he does would be a misrepresentation of reality. If a blessing only comes because we work to bring the blessing ourselves, then we wouldn't need to pray for a blessing, it would be the same if we just encourage a person to try harder to do the things which he is asking for.

Man may pronounce a blessing which means he speaks of behalf of God – if he is a true servant of God. His words express the mind of God, nothing more. When God blesses, something changes, supernatural influence is brought to bear upon the thing or the person blessed and whether we discern it or not, it exists, it is true.

If the seventh day was itself blessed, infused with special benefit, then it makes all the difference in the world. What matters is not whether or not we can understand the way of that blessing,

what would matter is whether or not we believe what God says. This is the real issue.

You said: Third, if the seventh day truly has something special that the other days do not, how can we be completely sure that what we now identify as Saturday is the exact seventh day from creation? Considering the long span of history, can we be certain that the calendar has remained perfectly accurate the whole time?

My response: I am very much convinced that there has been no change in the sequence of days since creation and here are my reasons for this conviction:

First of all, the Jews have kept a strict record of the sequence of days at least, from the time of Moses and Mount Sinai. For them it was very important as Sabbath keeping has been regarded as a special indication that they are the people of God. Wherever Jews are, anywhere in the world, Sabbath-keeping is strictly regarded and observed. They surely never lost sight of the true seventh day. All one has to do today is ask a Jew which day is the seventh, you will see that it is the same as our Saturday.

Secondly, today, everybody in the world is very much aware that it is a Friday. I, as an individual might awaken one day and be confused as to which day it really is, but the other 8 billion people in the world will not make the same mistake. The whole world could not have forgotten the sequence of the days, therefore, any change in the sequence would have had to be a deliberate, global decision. Such an event could not have escaped the record of history, but history tells us of no such event.

You said: I tend to think that God blessed the seventh day because of that first, initial experience He had fellowshiping with Adam and Eve.

Nothing new was created on that day, there was nothing left to accomplish. It was simply a day of delighting in one another, like the example you gave of spending time with your grandchild at

the beach, where the joy comes from being together and seeing them discovering things.

So it's hard for me to imagine God ending that first sabbath and saying, "I enjoyed spending time with you today, but now we will only have this again next week on the seventh day." It seems more natural to think that this kind of fellowship would continue freely and not be limited to just one particular day of the week.

My response: I tried to address this in my response to your first point. There is normal fellowship and then there is special fellowship. Not all fellowship is equal.

Look at what the Bible says, it removes some of the grounds for our uncertainty:

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Gen 2:3)

Why did God bless the Seventh day? He blessed it BECAUSE He rested on it. It was because of something which he experienced why he blessed it. God did not bless the day at the beginning of the day, according to the Bible, he blessed it at the end AFTER he had experienced rest on that day. This is why it says in Exodus 31:17 that he blessed it because he rested and WAS REFRESHED.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. (Exod 31:17)

So while God, and Adam and Eve were experiencing this fellowship, the day was not yet blessed. The day was blessed at the end of the day, BECAUSE of what God experienced on that day.

Two thousand years later, the day was still blessed. This is the reason God gave to the Israelites as to why they should observe the day (although it was then put in a legalistic framework). God says he blessed and sanctified it, therefore they were to observe it. So it was

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not just that first Seventh day that was blessed, but every subsequent 7th day. Therefore, the Jews were to acknowledge that sanctified and blessed nature of the seventh day by treating it differently than other days.

You said: That might also be why the sabbath later appears in the Ten Commandments, it reflects something at the core of God's nature: His love for us and His desire to spend time with us.

Maybe it was the time when God wanted to introduce to his people the principle of what happened on the 7th day in the garden (rather than a focus on the day itself).

My response: I am more or less in agreement with you on this point. The ten commandments were a collection of basic moral principles stated as ten unchangeable rules. Every single one of those ten commandments existed as a self-evident fact of moral behavior before God gave it as a stated rule. What God did was put together 10 pre-existing rules and codify them as a governing document so that the Israelites could become aware of their own perversity and of their need for Christ.

What is interesting is the fact that the Sabbath is right in the heart of those other nine commandments. What was the need of placing it in the heart of behavioral rules which are very clearly eternally true, if it itself is not also an eternally relevant rule (at least for us living here on earth)? My point is, the idea that the Seventh day was sacred was not an afterthought which God invented at Mount Sinai, it was something which went all the way back to Eden and which already existed 2000 years before Mount Sinai.

You said: So I can understand the value of a Sabbath day when believers want to gather together and focus on God at the same time. But if a group of believers chooses to do this on another day, or even more than once a week, would that really affect God?

If the blessing originally came because

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He presents the idea that submitting our will to God is a kind of slavery. He suggests that if we allow God to live instead of ourselves, we become puppets - slaves dominated by a dictator. This argument makes sense to those who do not know God.

But this is a complete distortion of the truth. Loving parents must govern their children—not because they are selfish tyrants, but because they care. In the same way, God desires control of our lives, not for His benefit, but for ours.

Satan calls self-government “freedom,” but it is freedom from all that is good. It is freedom that leads to misery, suffering and corruption. That is Satan's government in its true form.

DIFFERENT PRINCIPLES

When we come to the heart of the matter, we discover that there are really only two kinds of government in the universe. Satan's government is built on one central idea: self in control. God's government is built on one central idea: God in control. Everything else flows from these two principles.

Under Satan's system, the individual is the final authority. Self determines each action. Self decides what is right, what is acceptable, what is necessary. Even when a person speaks about morality or religion, if self remains in charge, that person is still functioning under Satan's principle. It may look religious. It may look disciplined. But if self is governing, it belongs to the kingdom of Satan.

GOVERNMENT BY RULES

Under this system, behavior must be restrained by rules. Because self is naturally inclined toward selfishness, pride, and independence, it must be controlled from the outside. Laws are written. Regulations are enforced. Threats are made. Rewards are offered. The struggle is always centered on actions. “Try harder.” “Do better.” “Correct your behav-

ior.” Yet the root remains untouched.

This is why many sincere people live in constant frustration. They try to change their conduct, but the heart remains the same. They are governed from the outside, not transformed on the inside.

That is Satan's kingdom in its true form - self ruling under the appearance of freedom.

GOD'S DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT

In God's kingdom, the question is not first, “What are the rules?” The question is, “Who is in charge?” If God is in charge, then everything changes at the root.

Under God's system, self does not remain as ruler. Self must die. This is why Jesus said that the true Christian experience involved taking up the cross. This is why Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20). The problem is not merely wrong actions. The problem is self-government.

When self is surrendered, when self is placed under the authority of Christ, then the entire source of behavior changes. Instead of struggling to restrain self by external rules, the believer receives a new life. God governs from within. God does not rule merely by command; He rules by presence. His Spirit lives in the heart. His life becomes the governing principle.

The kingdom of God is not self improved. It is self replaced. To leave self in charge and then attempt to obey God's laws is like asking the fox to guard the hen house. The problem is not lack of instruction. The problem is the nature of the ruler.

A NEW REPRESENTATIVE

When Jesus came to earth, He did not come as a teacher, only. More importantly, he came as a new representative for the human race. Adam had represented humanity under Satan's dominion. But Jesus came as the last Adam -

a new head, a new beginning.

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus said,

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John 12:31)

Notice the timing. “Now.” Something decisive was about to happen. The cross was not only about forgiveness. It was about overthrowing a ruler.

Revelation 12:10 describes the same victory:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Rev 12:10)

Satan, the accuser, had exercised authority by holding humanity under sin and death. But at the cross, his claim was broken. Christ experienced the full consequence of sin — separation, darkness, the weight of death itself. He entered fully into the experience of what sin produces. But He did not remain there. In the resurrection, He emerged victorious. In doing so, He opened the door for humanity to come under a new Head.

SATAN'S REMAINING CLAIM

Yet if Satan has been defeated, why does his kingdom still appear so strong?

The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 4:4:

. . . . the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

His authority continues wherever blindness remains. He no longer holds legitimate dominion over those who are in Christ, but he blinds those who do not believe. His power operates through deception. He keeps people focused on rules instead of rulers. He keeps them thinking in terms of moral effort instead of new life. He persuades them that religion is about managing behavior rather than surrendering self.

But the gospel reveals a mystery that had been hidden for ages.

Colossians 1:26–27 says,

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (Col 1:26-27)

This is the heart of the kingdom. Not merely Christ for you. Not merely Christ beside you, but Christ in you.

OUR MESSAGE

If Christ lives in the believer, then the kingdom is not external. It is internal. The government of God is not imposed from outside; it operates from within. Satan cannot rule where Christ lives, so the real question is not whether Christ defeated him. The question is whether Christ reigns in the heart.

The message is not simply about forgiveness. It is about a change of government.

Jesus sent His disciples and us to preach the good news, He said,

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

The word gospel means good news. The good news is that Satan's dominion has been broken and a new kingdom has been established.

Paul understood this clearly. He said, “For Christ sent me... to preach the gospel... For the preaching of the cross is... the power of God” (1 Cor 1:17–18). The cross is power because it breaks the rule of self and opens the way for the rule of Christ.

MINISTERS OF THE SPIRIT

Paul describes believers as,

. . . . able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor 3:6).

The “letter” refers to external law. Law written on stone exposes sin but cannot produce life. It tells us what we should be but cannot make us that way.

But the Spirit gives life.

Verse 3 says we are

....the epistle of Christ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. (2 Cor 3:6)

Under the old system, God wrote His law on stone tablets. Under the new system, He writes His life on human hearts. This is the difference between the two kingdoms. One operates from outside in. The other operates from inside out.

THE FINAL QUESTION

In the end, the issue is simple, though its implications are profound.

Who is in charge?

If self remains in charge, even under the guise of religion, then a person remains under Satan's principle. Rules may restrain behavior, but the root remains unchanged.

But if Christ is in charge - if His life governs from within - then that person belongs to the kingdom of God. The kingdom was lost when man chose self-rule. It is restored when man surrenders self-rule.

The kingdom of God is not merely a future political event. It continues wherever Christ lives within a surrendered life. And it will one day be fully manifested when the outward world reflects the inward reality.

From Eden to the cross to the final restoration, the issue has never changed. The question has always been, who will govern, who will be in charge, self - or God?

When we understand and experience the true answer, then the kingdom will be finally established forever.



Colossians 2



Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (Col 2:16-19)

In this passage in Colossians, the point Paul is making is that we should be careful that we don't allow human philosophy and deception to cause us to lose the simplicity of what it means to be in Christ. This is the entire context and purpose of the passage. If we get diverted from this point, then of course we end up with all kinds of distorted interpretation. I have even seen Feast keepers try to make out that the passage supports the keeping of feast-days when in fact the passage is doing the exact opposite.

When Paul wrote to the Colossian believers, he was concerned that they might lose sight of something fundamental to the Christian life. The believers had already received Christ, but there was a danger that they might now try to improve upon that foundation by adopting additional systems of religious regulation. So Paul begins with a simple but clear instruction:

As ye have therefore received

Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him (Colossians 2:6).

The way we begin our relationship with Christ is the same way we continue it. We did not begin by achieving righteousness through rituals and ceremonies. We began by receiving Christ. Faith was the doorway. Paul's point is that the same principle must continue. The Christian life does not begin with faith and then continue by ritualism or works. It continues in the same way it began - by living in union with Christ through a faith relationship.

Paul says we are to be "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith" (v.7). A plant is rooted in the soil from which it draws life. A building is established upon a foundation that supports it. In both cases the strength of the structure depends on what it is connected to. Our stability does not come from religious regulations or philosophical systems, but from union with Christ. As long as the believer remains rooted in Him, spiritual life continues to grow.

This is why Paul warns:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (v.8).

Paul is warning that religious ideas can sometimes enslave believers rather than strengthen them. The danger is not only in secular philosophy, it also exists in perverted religious teachings which replace dependence on Christ with dependence on rules, traditions, or religious rituals. Why are such systems unnecessary and useless? The reason becomes clear in the next statement:

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him" (vv.9-10).

If the fullness of the divine nature is in Christ, and believers are joined to Christ, then nothing is lacking. The word 'complete' means that nothing

further needs to be added in order to make the believer acceptable before God. In their relationship to Christ they already possess everything necessary for a complete relationship with God.

Through Christ we have been brought into new life. This life is possible because our sins have been forgiven and because something else has been removed—"the handwriting of ordinances that was against us." The phrase refers to the written law with all its rules, ceremonies and rituals that stood as a witness against human failure. The law exposed sin and declared the guilt of those who violated it. Paul says that this tool has been "blotted out" and "taken out of the way." It has been nailed to the cross. The cross therefore represents more than the forgiveness of individual sins; it represents the removal of the legal tool and all the accompanying rituals which constantly brought condemnation.

Because this law has been removed, Paul explains that we can only come to one important conclusion. Believers must not allow others to place them back under systems of religious ritualism. This is the meaning of verses 16-17:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.

These practices belonged to the ceremonial system that pointed forward to Christ. Paul describes them as "a shadow of things to come."

What is a shadow? A shadow is not the reality itself; it is only a representation of something greater. Once the reality has arrived, the shadow no longer is valid, Paul says the reality, "is Christ." This is why observance of feasts and all the ritualism of the law is not for Christians. In fact, those who practice them reveal that their understanding of the Christian life is limited and so also is their relationship with Christ. They

are involved with SHADOWS , but the time for those things are long past. It is time to come to the reality.

This is why Paul says in verse 20:

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why... are ye subject to ordinances?

The phrase rudiments of the world refers to the basic religious principles that govern life apart from Christ. These systems attempt to control behavior through external rules, rules which instruct us to, “touch not, taste not, handle not.” But Paul reminds the believers that they have died with Christ to that entire system. If they have been transferred into a new life in Him, why return to the old method of external regulations?

The believer’s completeness is not found in religious rules, human traditions, or philosophical systems. It is found in Christ Himself. The Christian life begins by receiving Christ, and it continues by living in Him. Everything that God intends for His people flows out of that union. The only question is, “Am I living in Christ?”

BIBLE CENTER

- 1) Psalm 118 is the middle chapter of the entire bible?
- 2) Psalm 117, before Psalm 118 is the shortest chapter in the bible?
- 3) Psalm 119, after Psalm 118 is the longest chapter in the bible?
- 4) The Bible has 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and 594 chapters after Psalm 118?
- 5) If you add up all the chapters except Psalm 118, you get a total of 1188 chapters.
- 6) 1188 or Psalm 118 verse 8 is the middle verse of the entire bible? Should the central verse not have a fairly important message?

“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.” -

The Sabbath Rest

Continued from page 6

of the fellowship God experienced, then it seems that whenever that same kind of fellowship happens again, the same principle is being fulfilled.

So my main question remains: is the blessing tied to the principle of undistracted fellowship with God, or is it permanently tied to one specific day of the week?

My response: That is a good question and one which I have considered many times. First of all I would say that the safest approach is simply to accept things just as they are stated unless there is a good reason to believe that some other meaning is intended. I believe that the commandments as stated in the law have symbolic meaning attached to them and this includes the observance of the Seventh day Sabbath with its



stipulations. This is why I try to examine the Genesis account and to be as careful as I can be in analyzing what happened there.

Why is there a week? Why does it possess seven days? Was this a consequence of how human culture developed, or was it a divinely ordained institution? There only one reason why the week possesses seven days rather than 6, or 8. That reason is that God added an extra day to the week. I think the Bible makes it clear that God designed and instituted the week.

Though we are not under the law, yet the facts stated by God in the ten commandments really explain that he ordained the week and determined that it should have 7 days.

So what is the reason for day number 7? There is only one reason, it is the fact that God added it to the week as a weekly opportunity for the same undistracted fellowship with him, which he and man experienced on the first 7th day of earth’s history. The seven day week as described in Genesis was not a cycle pre-arranged by God, it was the result of the events of those first seven days. 6 days of work, creating the planet, and then an added day of rest, enjoying fellowship with his creation. After the event, then the week was finalized with that extra day – added for ONLY ONE reason. Without the understanding that it is a divinely ordained appointment, there really is no reason why there should be a seventh day in the week, it really serves no purpose.

God foreknew what he would do. But that does not really change anything, God deliberately explained the events of creation week as He did in the Bible, because he wanted to make a point and he wants us to operate according to the point that he made.

BLESSED

1. God blessed the Seventh day (imparted special benefit to it)
2. He also sanctified it (set it apart for a holy purpose)

Was it any day which we choose which was blessed? Was it any day which we choose which is set aside for a holy purpose? This would mean that the Sabbath blessing depends on man and that the day is only set aside if man chooses to set it aside. This would make it simply something dependent on man. But it is God who sets the time of the Sabbath, not man.

Walking for better Health

Lenworth Frankson



Walking is one of the most accessible forms of exercise, requiring no special equipment, and supports your health whether you stroll around your neighborhood or simply walk to get a few errands done.

While many people track daily step counts or minutes of activity, new evidence suggests that the speed of your walking may play an even greater role in health outcomes.

A large study in the USA revealed that brisk walking, even as little as 15 minutes daily, reduced your overall mortality risk by nearly 20%. Brisk walking delivered the strongest protection to cardiovascular health.

Beyond longevity, walking supports nearly every system in your body, from improving blood sugar control to boosting mood, strengthening bones, and enhancing immune resilience.

Other ways to maximize the benefits of walking include incorporating interval walking training, using a weighted vest or Nordic poles (*Nordic pole walking is a full-body, low-impact, cardiovascular workout that uses specially designed poles to engage the arms, shoulders, and core, burning up to 20% more calories than regular walking. It enhances stability, balance, and posture*

by engaging the upper body in a cross-country skiing-like motion)

Walking is one of the most accessible ways to care for one's health. You don't need special gear, a gym membership, or a carefully planned routine. One can simply walk on your way to the store, around your neighborhood, or during a short break in your day. With every step, you're engaging your body in a movement that has supported human health for generations.

Much of the interest and conversation around walking has centered on how many minutes you log or whether you hit targets like 10,000 steps or more a day. These measures are useful for keeping track, however they overlook an equally important aspect of walking that influences how much you actually gain from it, the speed of your stride. The speed of one's stride was the subject of a study recently published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Nearly 80,000 adults from different backgrounds were followed for almost twenty years. The researchers looked beyond step counts to the pace of the participants' walk which revealed more about its impact on one's health and longevity than time alone.

PACE CHANGES THE PAYOFF

To explore whether speed matters as much as time on your feet, researchers asked participants to report how long they walked each day and whether it was at a slow or brisk pace. Over years of follow-up, they compared walking patterns with health outcomes to see which approach offered greater protection. The study showed that brisk walking lowered the risk of early death. Participants who reported brisk, deliberate walking in their daily routine showed a clear survival advantage compared to those who walked only at slower paces.

What stood out most was that the benefit

did not require an extreme level of effort. According to the report, "Fast walking as little as 15 minutes a day was associated with a nearly 20% reduction in total mortality."

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

The protective effect of brisk walking was strongest against deaths caused by cardiovascular conditions, particularly ischemic heart disease and heart failure (*coronary artery disease*) These diseases remain the leading causes of death worldwide, and the study showed that even a modest daily practice of brisk walking provided meaningful protection against them.

SLOW WALKING

Participants who reported more than three hours of slow walking per day had only a small, statistically borderline reduction in overall mortality, and the results were not as consistent as those for brisk walking. However, in a secondary analysis, longer durations of slow walking were associated with reduced risk of ischemic heart disease, supporting prior studies that suggest light-intensity walking still supports cardiometabolic health.

BRISK WALKING

Walking at a faster pace was described in the study as a form of aerobic exercise that improves cardiac output, increases oxygen delivery to muscles, and makes the heart pump more efficiently. These changes strengthen cardiovascular health, help regulate weight and blood pressure, and reduce the risks tied to obesity and poor metabolic function. Brisk walking reduced mortality risk regardless of how much other leisure-time physical activity participants engaged in, including activities such as bowling, dancing, golfing, softball, jogging, aerobics, cycling, tennis, swimming, weightlifting, or basketball. This means walking briskly adds another

layer of protection for those who already lead active lives.

WHO GAINED THE MOST

The improvements from brisk walking were particularly pronounced in participants who entered the study with chronic health issues such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or obesity. For these individuals, walking faster helped restore lost ground, improving circulation, metabolism, and cardiac function in ways that offered big benefits when compared to healthier participants.

But how fast exactly is brisk walking? In the study, brisk walking was defined by the participants' own sense of moving at a faster, deliberate pace' enough that your heart works harder and your breathing deepens compared to casual strolling. Public health guidelines describe this as the level of effort where you're able to talk but not sing comfortably, which typically falls in the range of 2.5 to 3 miles per hour.

OTHER BENEFITS

While the study highlights that brisk walking delivers the greatest protection, it's important to remember that walking in any form remains one of the most valuable habits to build into your life. Beyond its effect on longevity, walking is a low-impact activity that supports nearly every system. Here are some of the key ways walking strengthens and protects your health:

- Improves blood sugar control and metabolic health — Regular walking helps your muscles absorb glucose more efficiently, which lowers blood sugar levels and improves insulin sensitivity. This makes walking particularly important for preventing or managing Type 2 diabetes. Studies also show that daily walking lowers the risk of developing metabolic syndrome and helps regulate weight by increasing energy expenditure. *(Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of at least three co-occurring conditions—large waistline, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high triglycerides, and low HDL cholesterol—that signifi-*

cantly increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes)

It is closely linked to obesity and insulin resistance, with management focusing on lifestyle changes.

- Strengthens bones and muscles — Walking strengthens your bones and muscles by providing weight-bearing stimulation each time your feet strike the ground. That impact signals bone cells to build and maintain density, lowering your risk of osteoporosis.

At the same time, the repeated contraction of your leg and core muscles keeps them active, improving protein turnover and preserving muscle fibers. This ongoing engagement helps prevent sarcopenia, the gradual loss of strength and muscle mass that accelerates with age.

- Enhances mitochondrial function and slows aging — Walking stimulates the creation of new mitochondria and enhances the function of existing ones, improving how efficiently your cells produce energy. This boost in mitochondrial health increases resilience against age-related decline, with research showing that regular walking activates genes linked to slowing the aging process.

- Supports mental health and cognitive function — Walking supports brain function by increasing blood and oxygen flow, encouraging the growth of new neurons, and enhancing connections between brain regions. It also nurtures your emotional health, reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, sharpens memory, and improves overall mood.

- Boosts immune resilience — Walking stimulates the production and circulation of key immune cells such as natural killer cells and lymphocytes, which strengthen your body's ability to fight infections and reduce inflammation.

- Promotes better sleep — Walking, especially when done outdoors with

natural light exposure, helps regulate your circadian rhythm and melatonin production, resulting in deeper, more restorative sleep.

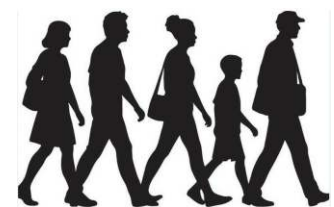
Whether taken as short daily outings or incorporated into routines with greater intensity, walking builds resilience step by step. Aside from picking up your pace, there are other ways to make walking an even more powerful practice. How you vary your routine, the environment you choose, and the way you use your walking time all add meaningful benefits. Here are some recommendations to make each step work harder for your health:

1. Incorporate interval walking
2. Use a weighted vest or backpack for added resistance
3. Try Nordic walking to involve your upper body
4. Walk outdoors for mental and physical renewal
5. Use walking time for creativity and reflection
6. Bring a social element to your walks
7. Track your steps and progress

E G White comments

"There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. By it the circulation of the blood is greatly improved. Walking, in all cases where it is possible, is the best remedy for the diseased bodies, because in this, all of the organs of the body are brought into use"

"Morning exercise, walking in the free, invigorating air of heaven... is the surest safeguard against colds, coughs, congestion of the brain, inflammation of the liver, the kidneys, and the lungs, and a hundred other diseases"





For more info, please call 1 (876) 361-8555 or email vidclay@gmail.com

Campmeeting in Jamaica this year will be from Thursday evening, April 2, until Monday morning, April 6. As usual the meeting will be held at our Open Face campsite in the hills of Manchester. The theme this year will be, "The God of Grace."

The main speakers this year will include Gregory Maxwell, Joseph Williams, David Clayton and Daniel Clayton. Ken Corklin will be missing this year, due to the turmoil and uncertainty caused by the war. There will also be other speakers, as well as social activities and special meetings for the children.

There are two dormitories available for accommodations for males and females exclusively. Married couples who wish to camp together, will have to make personal arrangements by camping in a tent, or making arrangements to stay elsewhere at night.

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