

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

To preach Jesus is to proclaim the rule and reign of Christ. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Pontius Pilate before pronouncing his sentence upon Jesus asked, “Are you a king then?” “Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.’” (John 18:36, 37) The truth of God testifies that the only begotten Son is now King. On a Pentecost long ago the apostle Peter stood before a Jewish audience and explained that God raised up Jesus and exalted Him to His right hand to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:30, 33).

Since Christ Jesus is now reigning on His heavenly throne, what is His kingdom? Where is His kingdom? Saints and faithful brethren in Christ are delivered “from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son” (Colossians 1:13) The redeemed of the Lord are in the kingdom – the kingdom over which the Lord now rules. It is not a worldly kingdom with geographical boundaries. Before Jesus was crucified, He said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36) He reigns in the hearts and lives of His disciples. Answering Pharisees’ inquiry the Lord taught, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:20-21).

The kingdom of Christ is the spiritual domain in which Christians become fellow citizens in the God-ordained relationship wherein Jesus orders and establishes justice and judgment. Those citizens place their allegiance in the Son; they sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts (1 Peter 3:15). Nationality, race and economic class are meaningless in the kingdom because all citizens of Christ share oneness. Believers become citizens the same way – by redemption through the King’s blood (Colossians 1:14). They are held accountable to the same standard – the authority of Christ communicated in the gospel (Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9). They are also all judged impartially by their exalted King (John 12:48; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Although personal abilities and roles may vary among citizens of the kingdom, they share a spiritual equality because they share a heavenly citizenship (Philippians 3:20).

Subjects of the Anointed One of God daily seek to obey and to uphold the commandments of Jesus Christ. Their motivation is not only faith but love, too. The Lord said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word” (John 14:23). Jesus learned obedience as He submitted to the heavenly Father’s will. Christians must likewise be imitators of Christ, walking in true righteousness, holiness and love. Citizens serve their King acceptably by living “soberly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12).

Jesus has made those whom He has washed with His blood a kingdom of priests to God (Revelation 1:6). The kingdom is God’s “own special people” (1 Peter 2:9) – a purified people, a zealous people (Titus 2:14). His people “are being built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). That house of God is both “a holy priesthood” and “a royal priesthood.” Thus the kingdom of Christ is a priesthood of Christ. Therefore, citizens of this spiritual kingdom ought to be offering “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” The apostle Paul beseeched Christians to present their bodies “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1). Priests not only live sanctified lives but also offer sacred worship, proclaiming praises of the One who called them out of

darkness into light. “Therefore by Him, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15)