

# Faith and Works LXIII

The Contemporary and Biblical Contexts

Col. 2:8

# His Kingdom

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## **Introduction**

When the topic of the Kingdom of God is raised, our own present age, which is in increasing political, economic and social disorder, no less than the time of Jesus ministry on earth in the midst of the Roman occupation of the Jews, there are concepts that are foreign to our natural way of thinking.

Often we are looking for a King to rule and take responsibility for keeping order in society. Yet in an age of increasing lawlessness, there is a continual need for the state to gain ever more power over the lives of its subjects. People today seem to increasingly want freedom from responsibility, rather than the freedom to be responsible before God.

And so we increasingly relinquish freedoms we no longer deem necessary in favor of maintaining the necessary conditions in society to allow us to focus on our narcissistic lifestyles. When the sum of man's endeavors is the consumption and possessions of materialism, the treasures of beauty for its own sake, morality, equality, and obeying ones conscience rather than ones passions will soon be surrendered.

*"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."*

**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

*Inaugural Address, January 20, 1953*

**Mark 8:36**

*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

## **The Kings and Kingdoms of Men**

The Lord's prayer tells us to say "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven." Until the return of the true King physically to this earth, we can respond to eternity and allow our actions to be influenced in the temporal, but we cannot, as fallen beings, rule in place of God to bring about His Kingdom by centralized authoritarian rule.

In the United States, the founding documents of government were influenced by the momentum that still continued after centuries of Judeo-Christian belief. There was built into the constitution of the United States mechanisms of checks and balances to ensure limited government, structured to avoid centralized authoritarian political and religious power.

The concept of limited government came not out of uncertainty of human ingenuity, but rather from the certainty that man was created by God. Due to the fallen condition of mankind, however, man's motives and narcissistic tendencies made inevitable that the rule of any one individual or authority over others would always lead to tyranny and the loss of individual liberty.

This, along with providential circumstances and a continent rich in natural resources, lead to great prosperity and power. But while the government was cautiously balanced by systems designed to insure that power would never exceed certain limits over the individual citizens, the citizens themselves, everyone in pursuit of more personal affluence, began to follow philosophies which, at their base, absolved man from responsibility to any higher authority than himself.

The principles that were derived from a knowledge of God's revealed truth that were applied in the process of forming a more perfect union of governmental powers unfortunately often fails to be applied by its citizens in their own personal lives.

So while government was structured with limitations due to past understandings of the weaknesses and tendencies of the fallen nature of man, the citizens themselves, in growing numbers as generations passed, followed new and evolving philosophies that allowed man the freedom, and even mandated him, to define his own morals and absolutes, if he chose any.

The economic power of the continents' resources required cheap and plentiful labor. To justify the enslavement of one race of man, materialistic philosophies that defined mankind as races at different stages of development due to impersonal forces such as those defined by the theory of evolution became popular. People spent much time seeking scientific proof for their validity. The outcome of these ideas, and the inequality that resulted, were challenged by those who were still influenced by the previous traditions of morality and belief.

This resulted in internal war at the cost of a tremendous loss of human life. Yet the ideals fought for were only partially realized, and other laws were introduced that perpetuated a new breed of inequality, which was increasingly justified as man defined himself apart from the value once bestowed to all men by their creator. The second World War was fought on behalf of ideologies that grew on the foundation of these trends in thinking.

Limited government cannot be for the sake of unlimited individual citizens, for self interest will inevitably lead to one persons actions limiting another's. But authoritarian government, when sought as a means to address the chaos and break down in the social contract, will result in the loss of individual liberty, and the ability to question the validity and legitimacy of the state's rules, by any except those rules made by the state for its own sake. Therefore, a document such as the Declaration of Independence would not be possible due to the inability to appeal to any authority higher than the state itself.

True Biblical change through the Gospel does not come about by men who know how to force others to act in order to be right with God, but rather it comes

from the change of each individual as they respond to having been made right with God by God Himself.

One can make an offer of the Gospel to the multitudes, but it is to the end that each individual in that multitude would personally believe, receive and rest in the promise of the Gospel. One can then provide a community experience where based upon groups of believers coming together to help each other reinforce their mutual identity of being complete in Christ rather than incomplete and always striving to perfect themselves and measure each other by the standards of the world system.

## **By Whose Authority?**

The Bible in Romans chapter 13 says that rulers hold no terror for those who do right. The conflict comes when the ruling temporal authority defines "right" as contrary to the righteousness of God, which is revealed both in scripture and through the knowledge of Him that comes through the things He has made.

So then, is this passage advocating blind obedience and submission to whatever authority figure of government that one happens to find oneself under, simply for the sake of being approved through the action of obedience - regardless of the qualifications before God - by the submission of the authority in question?

If we exclusively focus on this passage of scripture as the final and complete Biblical mandate for submission to authority for the sake of submitting to authority, one cannot account for the actions we see described in the Biblical narrative, and indeed, in the lives of those who have been influenced by the Gospel and who were compelled to become significant agents of change in realizing the justice of God in society.

To operate as a believer in the authority of Jesus does not mean we have unrestricted access to His power in order to accomplish our own wills. Our authority is only legitimate when it represents, and is an expression of, His will. We do not have the right to call fire down on our enemies, for as Jesus said, we do not know what spirit we are of (Luke 9:54-56). Jesus Himself, when He humbled Himself and came as a man, said He could do nothing on His own initiative, but only that which He saw His Father doing.

Jesus insisted, despite the protests of John, to submitting to the baptism of repentance that John was offering to those who recognized that their religious works were insufficient to cover the sin produced by their innate fallen condition (Matthew 3:13-15). Jesus did so not on behalf of any sin of His own, for He was without sin. He was the perfect Lamb of God. He was identifying with the sinful condition from which mankind needed to be saved. He who knew no sin became

sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). This was God's plan: a cup that, if possible, Jesus would have had the Father remove from Him, but a plan to which He willingly submitted, in accordance with the will of the Father (Luke 22:42).

So all authority needs to be understood and qualified under the ultimate final authority, which is God Himself.

We are to test the spirits (1 John 4:1); if they are truly speaking by the Spirit of God and are inspired by the Holy Spirit, then what is said will be in accord with what the Holy Spirit has already inspired in the scriptures of the Bible.

Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets, not add to it, change it, or start something new.

**Matthew 5:17**

*“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”*

The early church was completely capable of understanding and validating the claims of the Gospel using, as a reference, the written law and the prophets (Acts 17:11). Once they had the key, they were able to bring forth treasures both old and new.

**Matthew 13:52**

*Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”*

**Luke 24 :25-27**

*Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

The life we have in Christ is indeed new. It is the new birth. It is being born again into a new and living way, but the Gospel is completely congruent and in accord with the plan foreshadowed in the law and the prophets. It is not a contradiction to them, but rather it is the fulfillment.

**Matthew 5:18**

*For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

And so those currently speaking in the name of God should have their words confirmed as to whether or not they are in accord with what the scriptures already teach. So called "new revelations", "new bread", "new inspired prophecies" or "words of knowledge" that change or redefine established teachings and what has already been revealed in the word of God are to be rejected, as the authority of the modern teachers is superseded by the authority of what God has already communicated.

**Proverbs 24:21**

*My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those given to change*

### **Galatians 1:6-10**

*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

*For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*

## **Does the Christian Have a Voice in Social Issues?**

What we can say is that when the will and actions of one group of men against another that is clearly immoral or unjust in the sight of God and that is sanctioned, aided and protected by a law or government, that same law or government is wrong in the sight of God. Laws and governments can be made to be just or unjust.

We cannot however, say that we can make men just by the given states laws and government. It is wrong for government to force it's will in place of the individual's will in personal matters that do not place the same rights and freedoms of another in jeopardy. God shows His love that those who are fearful and those who are secretly at war deep in their hearts with their Creator might come out of hiding, into the light of His presence, and receive the grace and mercy He offers in Christ.

What God demands is not that people earn the right to be blessed nor damned by their religious works and good deeds; instead, He looks for the fruit of repentance from those who know they need salvation, have received it in Christ, and now have the same compassion they have received for their fellow human beings.

This will transform a society from one where everyone's hand is against his or her neighbor, and where everyone competes to beat the other at whatever standard is being used to measure success, to a society where each seeks to serve the other, where pride and ego do not need to seek the first place at all times, and where there is sincere love, forgiveness and charity.

Yet, this requires humility and submitting to God's righteousness. There is no pride or boasting, for all is of the Grace of God. We are to find ourselves complete in Him.

But to those who seek to dominate the weak, who seek to raise themselves above all other competition and authority, who have come to the place that any means justify the end, and who see themselves as the center of the world, with their own interests and concerns being more important than the interests and concerns of their fellow man - to such as these the message of the cross of Christ is foolishness. One seeks greater power, greater self achievement, and greater works that God Himself may be humbled and in debt to our account.

Once a group momentum is established whether through fear, or promise of rewards, or implied association and a shared association through devotion and unquestioned allegiance with the person and assumed success of the leader. To question those ideals and practices places one into the unknown, and by controlling man through fear of death, Satan will lead men, through a false promise of security into following the group consensus.

Satan works with some of mankind to delude them into thinking that following his agenda they will achieve the god hood that Adam thought he would realize when he separated himself from God and sought to sustain himself by becoming god by knowing as God and acting on that knowledge. Some of mankind will be lead to believe that they are becoming or have become Gods. And the rest Satan will seek to destroy out of his own hatred for God because his victims are made in the image of God.

## **Seeking the Kingdom First**

Jesus told His followers that they were to seek first the Kingdom of God, and that all the other things that the Gentiles sought would be added to them. If we come to the topic of the Kingdom of God simply seeking a better way to supply ourselves with all the things the Gentiles seek, we are not seeking the Kingdom of God for itself. It is therefore important to identify and distinguish the Biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God from alternative definitions that often use the same terminology, but are not based on the teachings of the Bible.

We note that Biblically speaking, the Kingdom of God was never presented as a top down social force that through imposition of a theocratic government would then lead man through controlled behavior out of mankind's fallen condition. Salvation is still a matter of the individual heart receiving and responding to the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ, the testimony of salvation through faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

And while those who have been translated into the Kingdom of God's Son through faith in Christ and who abide in Him are said to be the "salt of the earth", and that their influence of sharing the love and grace of God that they themselves have received can indeed have a positive influence on society, society itself would never come to a place where it no longer needed the influence of that salt, of those who are truly disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is why it has been so damaging that the media has been commandeered by those profiteering in the name of God or seeking followers for a political agenda. There are very few representations of the Biblical Gospel in the commercial religious media. Instead we see men preaching, as the Bible said would be the case, that godliness is a means of great gain.

Instead of seeking first the kingdom of god and trusting god for one's daily needs, instead the Kingdom of God is often presented as just a short cut for those who are not seeking the Kingdom of God, but the things the Gentiles seek, their

daily needs and more, in short, to bring about heaven on earth so that man should no longer need to seek the things above, but remain focused on temporal concerns and issues, the very things Jesus said would choke the seed of the word of the Gospel.

### **Matthew 6:19-32**

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

*“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

*“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

*“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

*“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

## **Where is the Kingdom of God?**

They asked Jesus when would come the Kingdom of God? He replied that it was in their midst, or within them. What the Pharisees had been asking about was the physical rule and reign of the prophesied Messiah King, yet Jesus was still to fulfill that which was prophesied concerning the suffering servant (Isa. 53).

Jesus in the answer He give recorded in Luke 17 makes therefore a distinction between the Kingdom of God and the actual rule and reign of Messiah King over the kingdoms of man.

### **Luke 17:20-30**

*Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "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."*

*Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."*

It is important to distinguish between the two so as not to confuse the distinction being made between the kingdom of God, which is all who abide in Christ and bear the fruit of love and forgiveness to one another, and the physical rule of Messiah Jesus when He returns and subdues all human authority under His authority. Confusion in this area not only prevents us from seeing the Biblical picture the Bible presents concerning the Kingdom of God, but as is too often the case, when the concept of the Kingdom of God is misunderstood, the foundations necessary for understanding and responding to the Gospel are lost as well.

For the Bible teaches that we have been translated into the Kingdom of God's Son when we confess with our mouth, and believe in our heart that Jesus is Lord and Savior, and we are then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise that witnesses with our own spirit that, as a joint heir in Christ, we are members of His household, even members of His body, and through Christ in union with God we can now cry out to Him as our Father.

### **Ephesians 1:13**

*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

### **Romans 8:15-17**

*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

**John 14:15-17**

*“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

**John 15:26**

*“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

**John 16:12-15**

*“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

We cannot see this looking at the external vessel, the earthen vessel of clay, for the treasure is within. We do not see this by looking at the external appearance of ourselves and each other, which is only that which is temporal, fading away. Instead we are to look at the treasure in the earthen vessel, the unseen things which are eternal. We are to see ourselves by faith seated with Christ at the right hand of the. In Him we are complete and gladly let go of all the temporal things, including ourselves, to build anew on the foundation of Christ.

**Galatians 2:19-21**

*For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”*

**2 Corinthians 4:6-7**

*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

**2 Corinthians 5:14-19**

*For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

*Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

### **John 17:20-23**

*“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

### **Galatians 3:27-29**

*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

## **Living in the Kingdom**

All that Jesus taught concerning the Kingdom of God, such are found in His sermon on the mount which is recorded in a number of Gospels, concerned how people with changed hearts would love and forgive in response to true saving faith and assurance in the finished work of Christ.

### **Luke 7:47**

*Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”*

### **2 Thessalonians 1:3**

*We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other*

### **Colossians 1:3-6**

*We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth*

### **1 Peter 1:22**

*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart*

### **John 13:35**

*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

### **1 John 3:16-23**

*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

Any religious teaching, therefore, that places the gift of God as a future reward or payment for religious works has fundamentally undermined the power of the Gospel to transform man from the inside to the outward. God intends that fruit is to be produced from the seed of the Gospel planted in good soil that will not choke the Gospel's growth by weeds or lack of depth. It is with the heart man believes, then confession is made.

## **Transforming Society From Within**

And so when there is a Biblical consideration of the effect on society by the Kingdom of God, for the present age, it is not primarily concerned with changing the external structure of political power and its functions, though it is by Gods Law and righteousness that we can discern whether a given political system or leadership is operating in a moral and just manner.

The Gospel is concerned with making disciples, not political kingdoms. It is a matter of the transformation of the individual members by the power of the Gospel that in turn will transform society from within. It is only in the liberty of new life in Christ that principles of true freedom, rather than the brute force of authoritarian rule, can provide the political and economic structures of a truly free and harmonious society.

*"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."*

### **John Adams**

*In an address to the military on Oct. 11, 1798*

The cumulative effect of the Gospel begins one heart at a time, one neighbor showing love and compassion to the next, until true equality and harmony are not produced by the force of authoritarian rule, but by the moral convictions of each member. It is when authoritarian political and religious institutions seek at all costs to maintain dominance and control over their subjects that independent thought, and the eternal rule of God's law over the temporal decrees of human institutions come into conflict. Free independent thought is a threat to authoritarian

institutions, and none more so than the laws of the Creator that transcend those made by His creation.

When those following Jesus for the loaves and the fishes tried to make Jesus a King after the fashion of the kingdoms of man, Jesus withdrew for He knew what was in the heart of Man. When God gave Moses the Law, the people had said they would do all that was commanded, yet God told Moses, would that they had a heart to do it.

When we hear of attempts to realize divine order and structure in society by imposing a top down theocracy, we are not seeing the application of the Biblical Gospel, nor is there provision in the Biblical Gospel for such measures. The Gospel transforms society by one changed heart at a time.

There was slavery in both the old and new Testaments that was not based or justified on modern evolutionary theories of racism, but rather it was simply an option within the opportunities for participation within the existing system of economics, and at that time the practice did not diminish the dignity and worth of a man or women serving in that station or role in society.

In our present culture, those who seek to derive all value based on a concept of a materialistic universe that operates by blind chance have by doing so undermined the basic and essential foundations and structures of Government that were once based on the principle of man having certain inalienable rights endowed by their Creator, rights above the jurisdiction of manmade government.

When there are social injustice and inequalities inherent in the laws or operation of society, it is not the government that is to decide the best course of action based upon what is in its own best interest, for justice and mercy, love and compassion are mandates that they themselves must be accountable to sustain and support in accord to the divine decrees made known to man both through the

knowledge that can be known of Him through what He has made, and by the historic record of His interaction through His chosen law givers and prophets.

Real change therefore, must come from within the hearts and minds of those who make up the members of society, and they in turn will influence its systems of justice. When justice and law are merely derived from situational ethics, the pragmatism of the state, individual rights and freedoms will always be set aside. When love is not an action performed as a means of earning favor, but is instead the natural response of a heart that has received the grace of God, we see charity and compassion being exercised between members of society.

**Luke 19:8-9**

*Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."*

*And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham"*

**Luke 10:25-37**

*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"*

*So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"*

*And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."*

*But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

*Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”*

*And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.”*

*Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”*

### **Matthew 18:21-35**

*Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”*

*Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.*

*“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.*

*“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”*

### **Luke 7:47**

*Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”*

### **James 2:1-13**

*My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?*

*Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?*

*If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

**Matthew 6:12**

*And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.*

## **When Man Rejects God's Law**

God holds man accountable to His law. If these things were not plainly understood by men, they would have no need to hide behind masks in the darkness of their innermost thoughts and intentions of man's heart, which the Bible says is deceitful and wicked, is unknown by man himself (Jeremiah 17:9).

The wrath of God comes when the knowledge of Him is totally rejected by men who are seared in their conscious past feeling guilt or shame, unwilling to acknowledge their need of salvation and who choose instead to sin against God's law and design for creation and openly live in rebellion.

We note however, that even in choosing to rebel against the witness of God both in the historical revealed scriptures of the Bible, and the witness He has left of Himself in the things He has made in His Creation, that even in man's rebellion, we see that man is in opposition to an established standard that man intuitively knows are the limitations he must disobey.

And here the Gospel finds relevance, for the condition that required God to become one with us in order to participate in our death from sin and provide a new living union between fallen man and Himself, also requires an understanding and self revelation of our innate fallen nature and need for a savior.

Those who deny man's innate need for a savior place themselves not only in opposition to the Gospel, but now commit themselves to pursue and fashion a life style that will validate their claim to be free from the need to accept the salvation that God offers in Christ to sinners.

There are movements today that refuse to acknowledge man's responsibility for his actions. Instead, they say that man is not a free agent, that he is helpless before the forces of biology and environmental conditioning. Therefore in order to realize a perfect society, the state is to be given absolute control of all of man's affairs including education, commerce, transportation, political and social opinion

including religious thought. As long as one adopts the politically correct opinion that all religious doctrine is simply ignorantly expressing a religious experience common to all men, and that the experience itself is the object of faith, not an objective being or deity, then one has arrived at the approved understanding of why there is such a shift today to group all religions under a common banner.

Thus even in man's rejection of God, man acknowledges his albeit unconscious or deliberately suppressed knowledge of God. When man is in open rebellion and denial of the knowledge of God he sides with Satan in seeking to destroy within himself and others the image of God as intended in God's design of Creation. For man himself is the final witness to the true of God that must be silenced.

## **The Conflict of Kingdoms**

A life based on the Gospel including humility, love, a servants heart in showing charity to others, self esteem based not on the praise of men, or on winning competitions with others, but instead based on the completeness God gives all those who become His children in Christ, and finally, respect for those in authority should not be confused with pacifism or unresisting submission to social injustice.

For there is only one final law giver, one King of kings. The Declaration of Independence cited the superior law of God over the arbitrary laws of mortal government.

The apostles, Peter and John, when ordered by the authorities of their day to cease preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, said they must listen obey what God has said over what man has said (Acts 4:18-20).

Martin Luther defied the authority of the religious power of his day. He did so appealing to the authority of God's word as contained in the Bible, and questioned the legitimacy and authority of a religious and political system based on the word of man.

John Newton, with William Wilberforce and others, worked tirelessly to abolish the slave trade in England insisting that laws that permitted such were immoral in the sight of God.

Corrie ten Boom and her family become very active in the Dutch underground, hiding refugees. They rescued many Jews from the Nazi SS because they believed the Jews were God's chosen people.

And finally Jesus Himself, whose ministry and very life was a threat to the foundation that supported the political and religious power structures of His day, was crucified by the rulers and authorities.

The final reality of our age is that there is a present kingdom of darkness ruled by principalities and authorities who seek power they can hold only if the true King is rejected and defeated. And they well know who is the true King (James 2:19). In the darkened minds of men who do as their fallen natures bid, they follow the father of the fall of man, Satan, in seeking to become as God, and must therefore be in conflict with God, or at best, seek to obligate God into debt to man by man's religious works.

But God's light reveals that by the works of the law of God no flesh will be justified. So man will need to invent his own laws by determining good and evil. Those who follow the true King, and are through Christ members of God's household, will show humility, love and charity as fruits of the Gospel, but they will never betray their Father and King, and fail to do good when they know by God's law the good to do.

**Luke 21:10-17**

*Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.*

## **The Return of the True King**

The Bible consistently teaches that there is a time coming when the kingdoms of man will become the Kingdom of God, when Christ physically returns to reign on earth, but that man himself will not realize what Jesus Himself is alone appointed to accomplish. It will be man's last great kingdom that will be most opposed to the return of Christ and in open opposition to His followers.

### **Matthew 24:3-14**

*Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

*And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

*"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

**Matthew 24:29-31**

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

**Colossians 3:4**

*When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

**Romans 8:18-25**

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

**1 John 2:28**

*And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*

*For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

### **Revelation 11:15**

*Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

### **1 Corinthians 15:20-28**

*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.*

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