

# Faith and Works XX

*The Contemporary and Biblical Contexts*

Col. 2:8

## Two Kingdoms

The battle between two kingdom's, one present and visible, and one witnessed to in the lives of those who are in spirit even now its citizens, yet a kingdom not yet visible that is physically coming at a future time, is perhaps more intensely engaged today than at any other time. On all fronts, religious, political, spiritual, social, these kingdoms are in opposition. But disinformation is one of the weapons used effectively by those seeking to advance this present kingdom.

There is great confusion being deliberately sown by those who would seek to advance their own rule in this present darkness. Some of the ways the Kingdom of God are being redefined will have great impact on the faith of believers as it changes the very nature of what it means to be a member of God's household. Modern interpretations of the Bible are attempting to repackage Christian faith in the terms of the world's approach to spiritual issues.

Those following the path of the "New Spirituality" often cite the following verse to support the view that Jesus was the teacher of a way of self enlightenment and that when we have all enlightened ourselves we will be able to transform the world, to redeem all that was lost in the Fall.

Luke 17:21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

The word "within" is probably better translated from the Greek as "among" you, or in the midst of you.

We are not finding a truth within ourselves that we forgot, we are forgetting ourselves and finding the truth in Christ.

Col. 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Notice we did not deliver ourselves and create a kingdom here. When Jesus taught, His teaching was different because man made religion tries to teach how to get into the Kingdom, or create one here, whereas Jesus taught how those who are already in the Kingdom, through faith in Him, were to then act not to gain salvation, but to rest in it. That rest is in things not yet seen which are yet eternal. Hebrews 2:8 reminds us that "we do not yet see all things put under Him", that there is still a day to come.

Rev. 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!"

For instance, in another place Jesus makes clear His kingdom has not arrived yet, and indicates we watch for the signs the He and the prophets spoke of that that day might not come upon us as a thief. He tells Pilot that He is indeed a King, but that His kingdom is not of this Earth. The kingdoms of man are not going to be reformed, they are going to be done away with when His Kingdom is brought forcibly by His physical return as King at the end of this present Age, and that ultimately, there will be an entirely new Heavens and Earth.

Luke 21:31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

We also note, that the prophecies of the last days before His return indicate that His followers are not ruling and reigning in the kingdom of men. The Anti-Christ is, aided by the False Prophet. The true followers of Jesus are not part of the global religious and political movement and are in fact experiencing tribulation as strangers and aliens in this present darkness.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him (the Anti-Christ) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

In fact, it is Jesus Himself who returns and finally subdues the kingdoms of men.

Rev. 19:11-15 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Those who are preaching a reign of god-like men who themselves deliver the Earth from its curse freely use verses from the Bible in their man made theologies, yet the scriptures have been removed from their Biblical context; they are interpreted entirely by the interpretations of men whose hearts have not bowed in humility before the Word of God, but who are even today following the sin of Lucifer, to seek by their own means to exalt themselves and reign as kings in the world of men. Did not Lucifer tempt Jesus in the wilderness, that if He would seek to win the world by the means of the devil, that the devil would allow Him to reign? And so even today the same lie is leading many into darkness where ultimately they will stumble over what they know not.

Over all one has to say that not only is the theology wrong, but the character of those taken with these doctrines of Dominionism and "Kingdom Now" seems far removed from that attitude that Jesus sought to teach His disciples.

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

We seek great causes, because we can become great when we participate in them. That is the natural way of thinking. But when the disciples said they would call fire down from heaven on unbelievers, Jesus said they did not know what spirit they were of. He speaks of the cross, of losing our lower life to find our higher. And when the modern preachers who present Jesus as a shower of a way rather than the way are confronted with the Jesus of the New Testament, they like Peter say "I do not know the Man!".

Matthew 26:72 But again he denied with an oath,  
"I do not know the Man!"

"Not only does the Kingdom of God have a different King to the kingdom of this world, but it has different citizens, has a different future and it operates and is motivated by different principles. One of the principles that makes God's Kingdom radically different to that of the world is the lust for power as opposed to the willingness to serve.

John 13:12-17 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant

is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

There is great emphasis on leadership today. The reason they think they need to be good leaders is because they think they know what the sheep should be doing and where the sheep should be led for the next big move of "God" to improve man's kingdom here on Earth.

They will not be leading them to abide in Christ, and let the fruits of that new life bring about change through the hearts that have become obedient and responsive to the true faith.

Their disciples will be known by their political activism. Those of the Savior, by their love for one another. When those whose hearts are in heaven are able to bear witness in the darkness of this kingdom, there will be fruit that will remain.

It is not about transforming this earthly kingdom, it is about being translated into the kingdom of God's Son. This world is not yet under His rule, but when He returns, it will be to put an end to the kingdoms of man once and for all, not take them over.

Daniel 2: 44-45 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Note that the stone was not made by human hands. That is the sure interpretation, that Christ Himself, just as He became the means of our salvation, will Himself return to establish His kingdom.

This is the unmistakable position of Jesus and the Apostles:

Heb. 12:25-29 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

However, this does not seem to be a popular message with those seeking to have their ears tickled. The gentiles are seeking the loaves and the fishes, not the bread of life.

These days the Gospel is more often defined as the good news that we are gods and can achieve not just contentment, but satiation in this life, not that we have been delivered from the body of this death, our old nature crucified with Him, and through faith in His promises partakers of His divine nature, with a hope that is anchored beyond the veil, not in the circumstances of this world.

Those circumstances can change when we make our requests known to God, coming to Him in the right standing of those of the righteousness of His Son, but to be in that state, we have to first seek His kingdom as the pearl of great price, and gladly let go and sell all that we would have held on to if we were still seeking our lower life through our own works.

It is very easy, and indeed proper, to draw a straight line from where the majority of Christian teaching is today back to the original deception in the garden which

was sold to Eve on the presupposition that man, if he knew the right knowledge and acted on it, would himself be as God.

A major problem with the average Christian of today is that they often have forgotten, or never learned from the scriptures, the lesson of the fall, and now many often think the problem with man today is just the wrong kind of knowledge from the tree, and that the latest teaching will correct that. This of course elevates knowledge to the level of the Gnostics, and man's potential within himself elevated as well since restoration from the fall now rests on man's ability to utilize that knowledge.

And the failure with this kind of self based system is that while it preaches a kind of faith, it is actually a killer of true Biblical faith, for when things don't work in our lives, when there is temptation, when we must choose to forgive and love against our natural feelings, there is a tendency to look inward as if we ourselves are to blame.

If we are depending on ourselves to "operate" faith, If everything it is still all about us, then often there is the tendency to become Pharisaical and point to those less well off and say it is because they didn't do something correctly, that when we fail to achieve the current ideal of the kingdom of God being the sum total of what the gentiles seek, that it's our fault. Faith becomes something taught to unrepentant sinners as a means of avoiding the cross, rather than confidence that when we lose our lower life and find our higher life in Him we are complete.

In this kind of system, we still rest on our own foundation (not the only one, Christ, that Paul taught could be laid), and Jesus is diminished, another Christ is taught, who is just a life counselor as we seek to learn to walk as He did trying to gain access to the same power He used. He simply becomes an example, a sermon illustration of how spiritual or Holy people should act, not the way, truth and life in Himself.

This has always been the goal of the demonic realm. Not to remove Jesus, for then we might seek Him, but to redefine Him in our midst as another Jesus. Notice the subtle way the demon possessed girl who followed Paul as he preached tried to redefine the exclusive message that Jesus is the only way, through Himself, to restoration with God.

Acts 16:16-18 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us a way of salvation." And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

The subtle change is in verse 17 where the word "a" is used in place of "the" in the original Greek.

We can easily see who is being helped by these teachings, and that would be those who are teaching them. They are wasting people's lives as those people follow their teachings thinking they will be successful like the teachers, and yet, they are the ones who are making those teachers successful, it is their donations and purchases of the teaching materials that make them rich and successful. The more successful they become, the more they claim their teachings work, and the more people will follow them hoping to achieve similar success for themselves.

They have made an idol out of the operation of faith by making man and his abilities the foundation, rather than the object of Biblical faith, Jesus. They sought what they could do extending their abilities in the supernatural rather than rest in what Christ has already done in the heavens.

Col. 3:1-4 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Heb. 10:32-34 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

2 Cor. 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 Cor. 5: 1-8 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith,

not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

John 14: 1-6 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Heb. 13: 13-14 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

Rev. 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!