

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

Anna Surface 2010

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

June
23
2019

THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM

by Jim Stauffer

We must be attentive to the language of the Scriptures if we are to grasp its meaning. There are so many passages about the church and the kingdom that equate them if we see how Scripture identifies them.

For instance, Jesus tells Nicodemus one needs to be *born again, born of water and the Spirit*, if he is to enter the kingdom. We then see this new birth in action in **Acts 2:38** and it is said to bring forgiveness of sins. The KJV of the Bible tells us those who were baptized and received that forgiveness of sins, were then added to the church as the saved. So, salvation resulted from this obedience to baptism which added one to the church. Add to that Paul's statement in **Col. 1:13,14**, *"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* This makes it clear to us that obeying God and Christ and receiving the remission of sins places us in the church which is the kingdom. Notice when Jesus spoke of establishing His church (**Mat. 16:18**), He followed it up in **verse 19** by calling it the kingdom.

Peter tells us we are saved by, *the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ*. (**1 Pet. 1:19**) Corresponding to that Paul in his meeting with the elders of the church at Ephesus tells them they are to, *shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood*. (**Acts 20:28**)

And Scripture makes it abundantly clear the church/kingdom is the place of spiritual residence of those who have been saved, that is have been redeemed from sin and not those who reject God and Christ and continue to practice sin in their lives (**1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:21**).

When the birth of Jesus was announced and promised to Mary it was said He would reign on the throne of His Father, David (**Lk. 1:32,33**). This meets with the Lord's statement to Pilate about being born to be a king (**John 18:37**). Isaiah prophesied of this king to be born and to reign as, *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*. This same king

who is reigning today (**1 Cor. 15:25-28**), is said to be the ruler or head of the church today. *"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."* (**Ephesians 1:22-23**) *"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."* (**Ephesians 5:23-24**)

So, we come to recognize that our salvation/redemption from sin places us in the church, the kingdom, which is the body of Christ. It is very important that we understand the responsibilities that go with becoming a child of God by way of His redemptive plan. The Lord tells us by way of His instruction to His contemporaries, we must deny ourselves and follow Him and that this leads to the saving of the soul. He says in answer to a question about the kingdom, *"The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."* (**Lk. 17:20,21**).

If we wish to be saved and be a part of the kingdom when its full promise is realized at the day of judgment, we must take heed to the instructions given to those who would be a part of the body of Christ, the church, the kingdom of God.

Should We Pray "Your Kingdom Come" Today?

By Kyle Pope

In Jesus' model prayer recorded in **Matthew 6:9-13** He prayed, *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (**6:10, NKJV**). At least as early

as 1867 brethren wrestled with the question posed in the title of this article. Is it appropriate to pray this element of the model prayer or should we no longer make this request now that the Lord's kingdom has been established in the reign of Jesus Christ? An anonymous writer published in *Lard's Quarterly* (a paper edited by the respected Restoration preacher Moses Lard) argued for a personal application of the appeal of this prayer, claiming, "so long as there is one sinner unconverted, or one saint unsanctified; so long will we have need for the petition *'thy kingdom come'*" (July 1867, 249). Moses Lard, recognizing the challenges some might offer to this, added a comment after the article rejecting this view arguing, "I cannot pray *'thy kingdom come;'* but I profoundly can [pray], thy 'everlasting kingdom' come" (*ibid.* 252). J.W. McGarvey, another respected nineteenth century preacher argued, "it is improper to retain the words, and yet attach to them a sense different from that in which Jesus employed them" (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, 65). In this, he assumes that Jesus meant these words of the coming establishment of the Lord's kingdom, which came about on the Day of Pentecost. The question is, are we able to determine in exactly what *sense* the Lord originally employed these words? Later, in the same sermon Jesus used an individual rather than a corporate sense of *seeking the kingdom* (6:33). In this, Jesus commanded individuals to seek and submit their hearts to the Lord's kingship. Could that have been His meaning in the model prayer?

It may be significant that the appeal *"Your kingdom come"* is not repeated later in the New Testament in examples of apostolic prayer. Instead, we find phrases of slightly different emphasis. Paul would use the Aramaic phrase *maranatha*, *"O come Lord"* (1 Cor. 16:22). John, near the end of the great vision of Revelation cried out, *"Come Lord Jesus"* (Rev. 22:20). Yet, these very writers describe the kingdom as being in existence in the first century. Paul told the Colossians that God *"delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"* (Col. 1:13). John wrote, *"He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen"* (Rev. 1:6, NASB). Do these statements show that the apostles recognized that it was no longer necessary to pray for the kingdom to come (in a corporate sense), but that we should pray for Christ's return?

It might be argued that, if *"Your kingdom come"* is no longer applicable, it destroys the force of Jesus' model as an example to Christians of all ages. We should note, however, that there are many things for which the emphasis in prayer has changed this side of the cross. McGarvey demonstrates as it relates to Jesus' mediation on behalf of Christians. The model prayer makes no mention of prayer in Jesus name, but

McGarvey notes, "We must also insert the name of Jesus as the mediator through whom we pray: for on the night of the betrayal he taught his disciples to thenceforward ask in his name (**John 16:24**; see also **Col. 3:17**)" (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, 65). This command of Jesus doesn't rob the model prayer of its force, but it introduces the relationship of mediation that did not exist until after the cross.

People cannot remove themselves completely from the environment and culture in which they live and communicate. Words and concepts that attain a certain sense within a culture cannot be divorced from the meaning they hold within that culture. In our own day apostasy within the denominational world has so permeated our culture that many (if not most) in the religious world conceive of the *"kingdom"* as a future, political, material, and geographically identifiable entity that will come some day in the future. John R. Rice, for example, in his commentary on Matthew expresses the typical premillennial view. Commenting on the meaning of the words *"Your kingdom come,"* he argues, "This is clearly a prayer for the reign of Christ on earth. That kingdom has not yet come" (105). This view ignores the fact that John and Paul (as noted above) said it *had* come in their day (**see Rev. 1:6; Col. 1:13**). Modern Jews hold a similar view to that expressed by Rice. Many still use, the *Kaddish*, a ritual prayer that was originally recited at the end of a rabbinical sermon in the synagogue. Its use in early Judaism is attested in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sotah* 49a). Although it is preserved in different versions, a common form appeals "may his kingdom come in your lifetime." If this appeal was offered in the first century it may indicate the force Jesus' words would have held to His Jewish audience. They were likely accustomed to the anticipation of an earthly political kingdom that was to come in the future. The Babylonian Talmud records that the first century teacher Johanan ben Zakkai taught that any ritual prayer must include mention of the kingship of God (*Berachoth* 40b). Modern Conservative and Orthodox Jews still continue to hope for such an earthly kingdom.

It is true that we must never allow human misconceptions to determine what we believe and teach. We must teach the truth about God's kingdom whether it runs contrary to popular thinking or not. However, in every section of the model prayer, Jesus is not dictating the exact words that are to be spoken, but the general elements that constitute acceptable prayer to God. Given that the modern Jews and premillennialists apply this appeal in a corporate sense, the modern use of the words *"Your kingdom come"* (without any modification) could certainly give the wrong impression.

“THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH”

The “nature” of something is whatever combines together to make the object of consideration what it is. Webster gives the following definition of “nature: the essential character of a thing; essence (*Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1197*). By applying this definition to the church, we can better understand the nature of the Lord’s spiritual body. What is the nature of the church?

The word church is used in different ways in the New Testament. Luke tells us: But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison (**Acts 8:3**). Here, *church* refers to people. Sometimes *church* refers to those who heard the gospel, obeyed, and were thus “saved from sin (**Acts 2:47**).

A clear picture of what the church is and how it functions is found in **Acts 11:19:26**. Consider the teaching of this passage. After Stephen’s death, persecution scattered the disciples far beyond the environs of Jerusalem (**Acts 11:19**). Men came to Antioch preaching the word to the Jews at first, but soon thereafter to the Gentiles. This fulfills prophecy concerning all nations being a part of God’s house (**Isaiah 2: 1-4**). That is what the church does: It preaches Christ! In this case, a local church is not under consideration; nor, is there any hint of some sponsoring church that sent these preachers to other places. The evidence simply indicates that Christians, those saved by the blood of Christ, were preaching the gospel. Sometimes we find local churches sending preachers out to preach (**Acts 13:1-3**). We also find local churches having fellowship with one preacher as he preached in other places (**Philippians 4:15,16**). But the relationship between Christ and His church and preaching is one of cause and effect. Christ saves us; we, as the saved, then go forth and preach His saving message.

What kind of people comprise the Lord’s church? **Acts 11:21** says: *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord*. The saved are those who hear and respond to the gospel. The church is made up of people who believe in the Lord and in His word. Yes, preaching is important because faith is a must! When people hear and respond, they are tuning to the Lord; they are converted. Peter preached the need to *repent and turn* (**Acts 3:19**).

Barnabas came to Antioch and, *...exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord* (**Acts 11:23**). That is what the church does i.e., it cleaves to the Lord. The church is people; people who continue to serve the Lord faithfully. The saints in Antioch determined in their hearts to remain loyal to the Lord. It was a settled matter with them. It must be the same for God’s people today. These early Christians engaged in regular periods of worship to the Lord (**Acts 11:26**). Worship was and is important for God’s people.

Worship draws us closer to the Lord; it defines who we are as creatures who worship the Creator.

It was true in Antioch and in other places where God had children that these early Christians continued to emphasize the preaching of the word. As the pillar and ground of the truth, how could they do otherwise? From house to house, in private settings, disputing publicly, in public worship, these early Christians placed great stress on teaching God’s word. In the case of the church in Antioch, much people were taught (**Acts 11:26**). That is what the church is; that is its nature. The church is made up of people saved by the blood of Jesus; in turn, they go forth, even in the midst of persecution to preach the word.

Sometimes congregating in one place to be God’s people in that locale, they worshiped regularly, prayed often, and preached continuously. How could it be otherwise? After all, that is what Christians do!

Randy Harshbarger

Who Started This Whole Church Thing?

Have you ever wondered where this whole thing about Church got its start? After all when you read the Old Testament there is no mention of the church there. Let’s take a quick look at the Scriptures and see what we can find out!

The first time we see the word church in the scriptures is in **Matthew 16:18** where Jesus said to Peter, *And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*. Jesus told the disciples He was going to use the confession that Peter had just made, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, in **verse 16**, to build his church. That is just what He did on the Day of Pentecost in **Acts 2** where Peter revealed to the Jews who were convicted of their sin of murdering their Messiah, Jesus, the keys to the Kingdom Jesus had promised. Peter told them to, *Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins*; (**Acts 2:38**). That day 3000 people were baptized and God added them to the church that Jesus had just started. Remember that He said in **Matthew 16** that the gates of Hades would not prevail against the church. Well, Jesus had indeed died but it did not prevent Him from establishing His Church!

So, the next time you are tempted to dismiss the church as unimportant or somehow not involved with our spiritual well-being maybe we ought to ask ourselves whether or not Jesus would make a promise to the disciples about something that is trivial in nature. It’s a good question, don’t you think?

Cleveland R. Reddinger Jr.

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

Deacons: Bill Miller

Brandon Jimison

Casey Dent

Joe Hurd

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

Check out the following websites:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES: SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JAN PATRICK, ALMA
BAUMGARTNER, STEVE AND
SUZANNE WIMP, TRACY AND
DALE RICHARDSON, LINDIA
JACKSON AND TRUDY
MULLEN.

BIBLE CLASSES - SUNDAY -
THE PSALMS - RON PECK -
TEACHER

WEDNESDAY - 1&2 TIMOTHY
- JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING

**SERMON: SEARCHING THE
SCRIPTURES**



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10