

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## *The Eternal Kingdom* **Selected Scripture**

**Keywords:** Kingdom of God, Eternal Kingdom, Heaven, End Times, Eschatology

**SermonAudio Blurb:** As wonderful as the millennial kingdom will be it is still a fallen world under sin. Satan was removed but the hearts of mankind were still in rebellion. They had their glorious King present. They had the curse removed from the land. They had truth and justice rolling forth from Jerusalem. But they still loved their sin. So these must be dealt with completely and finally and the final promises of a new heaven and earth shall come to pass. That is the focus of this sermon, the hope and glory of the eternal kingdom.

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We come now to the end of our series on the Kingdom of God and with it we come to the high point of the whole series.
  - 1. We leave behind points of controversy for the most part, where sincere Christians disagree on aspects of the reign of Jesus Christ.
  - 2. We now can set our sights upon the glorious hope of the final, total destruction of the great enemies: sin, Satan and death.
- B. By way of reminder we saw last week the glory of earthly reign of Jesus Christ, also known as the millennial reign of Christ.
  - 1. We saw that this reign of Jesus is not merely a spiritual reigning in heaven, but that He will literally and physically reign from Jerusalem. He will reign over the whole earth and all nations shall come under His authority.
  - 2. Secondly, we saw that the Apostles would reign with Jesus Christ over the nation of Israel. Each Apostle would be responsible for one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This also involved the ingathering and restoration of the nation of Israel, where they are now true worshipers of their Lord.
  - 3. Thirdly, this time of reign will be a time of incredible spiritual blessing upon the earth and people. Justice and truth will be absolute as it is Christ who rules. No longer will lies and rebellion be the norm. Sin will exist, but sin will not be the lord and ruler —Christ will.
  - 4. Fourthly, the external realities of this creation will be changed. The curse placed upon creation due to sin is lifted for the most part. Creation spring

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forth in a level of beauty and fruitfulness unknown to us. Sickness and death are rarities rather than normal. It is a good time to be alive.

- C. As wonderful as the millennial kingdom will be it is still a fallen world under sin. Satan was removed but the hearts of mankind were still in rebellion.
  - 1. They had their glorious King present. They had the curse removed from the land. They had truth and justice rolling forth from Jerusalem.
  - 2. But they still loved their sin. So these must be dealt with completely and finally and the final promises of a new heaven and earth shall come to pass.
  - 3. That is the focus of this sermon, the hope and glory of the eternal kingdom.
  - 4. There are several components to the ushering in and establishing of this final aspect of Christ's Kingdom. We will see seven components of the eternal kingdom that are designed to give us hope that helps us endure to the end.

## **II. The Eternal Kingdom.**

- A. The first component will be the transition from the millennial kingdom to the eternal kingdom by casting the great enemies into the lake of fire.
  - 1. Revelation 20 gives the description of this event in vs 7-15.
    - a. Satan is released (7). This is a part of God's will and purposes. And notice the purposes in vs 8—two purposes:
      - (1) To deceive the nations again.
      - (2) To gather them to do war against Jesus Christ.
    - b. The nations are destroyed in an instance by God when they gather for war (9). The most anticlimactic scene in the bible.
    - c. Satan is cast into the lake of fire, what we often call "hell" (10).
    - d. A second, great resurrection takes place then, where all who were unbelievers since Adam and all who lived after the second coming will now be judged (11-12).
      - (1) Each person shall be standing alone with no where to hide.
      - (2) The basis of the judgment will be their deeds.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- (3) Any who were not followers and lover of Jesus Christ are cast into hell to join Satan.
  - e. And finally, death itself and even Hades are cast into hell to be banished forever (14).
  - f. This, all by itself is enough for me to rejoice beyond measure. I cannot comprehend in the slightest what life would look like without the constant pressure of sin, Satan and death. That they are not even a factor. Oh what a day.
2. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.
    - a. At the end of the millennial kingdom and at the end of the judgment the “end” has come.
    - b. Vs 25 talks about how Christ must reign until all the enemies are put under His authority. And that is what Revelation 20 described.
    - c. But then Christ delivers up to His Father even the Kingdom, for now, all the powers both seen and unseen are now abolished.
    - d. And so the millennial kingdom merges into the eternal kingdom and for eternity the Father and Son shall rule over all things. As it is written in Revelation 22:3, *“And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him.”*
  - B. The second component is the re-creation of all things.
    1. 2 Peter 3:5-7, 10.
      - a. The world was once destroyed by the Flood. And again it is worth noting that Peter believed that event actually happened, not merely some symbolic event that we should not take too seriously.
      - b. But vs 7 says that it is now reserved for fire and that on the final day of this age all things shall be scrubbed clean by God’s fire (10).
      - c. May I point out that because Peter knows this is certain that he then gives a pastoral exhortation in vs 11 that each of us should consider.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- d. And so, through the searching fire of God, the universe, all of creation, is scrubbed clean and this is where it becomes exciting and comforting.
2. Revelation 21:1.
  - a. From that blank canvas we see a new Genesis 1 emerge. In the beginning all was chaos and covered in water, and out of it God formed all things.
  - b. Now, that is cleansed and from this new canvas we read those words in vs 1, *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”*
    - (1) The word here for “new” is not an updated version of the old creation.
    - (2) It is utterly new. God will not merely reform what was. He will not merely rebuild from the ruins of this age. He will make all things truly new in the fullest, truest sense of the word.
- C. A third component to this eternal kingdom is unfettered fellowship with God (Revelation 22:4).
  1. Here we have an ongoing description of the New Jerusalem. The capitol city of the New Creation.
  2. Here we will see the throne of the Father and Son (1).
  3. But even more better than that is that all shall see His face.
  4. Only Adam and Eve knew this reality in the garden. There they had walked with God and for a short time knew Him before they sinned.
  5. But now for eternity all of His children will see Him as He is.
  6. Paul describes the fact that we see eternity dimly. Turn to 1 Corinthians 13:12.
    - a. The reality if you are honest is that heaven is at best vague. Unless you have lost all of your loved ones or you are suffering greatly from physical weakness and sickness, it is something you know you are to love but often struggle to do so.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- b. Why? Because you see it dimly. The best of us see it dimly. The greatest minds see it dimly. The most creative of minds, see it dimly.
- c. But in that day, we will see heaven, and God Himself, face to face. No barriers. No weakness. No misunderstandings. Take the best you have ever hoped for, the most grand, the most glorious and put it in the forefront of your mind. And realize it is but a dim, unfaithful shadow of what it will be like to see eternity unfettered.
- d. How can we grasp this? Only by faith. When the things of this age grab hold of us and draw us inward and downward we must fight by faith to know that this is not our home.
- e. But Paul gives a clever way to think about this. He wants us to think about how well God knows us.. He knows us to the uttermost. Nothing is hidden from Him.
  - (1) Your darkest thought and your most unspoken wish is known to Him.
  - (2) When you lie down at night and your minds slips into that other world of dreams and nightmares He is there, aware of it all.
  - (3) He knows your strengths and He knows your sins. He watches over you as you wander and become bored by His glory.
  - (4) He sees you content with baubles that offer no joy. And He knows you when your heart skips a beat as for just a moment you sense a glimpse of eternity.
  - (5) He knows you as you weep in sorrow and discouragement. He knows what you say you fear and what you really fear. He knows you in ways you cannot know.
  - (6) And He loves you. He loves you beloved in ways you cannot fathom.
  - (7) Paul says here, “just as I have been fully known.”
- f. To the degree that God know you, His child. It is to that degree you and I will finally know Him.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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7. A fourth component is the glory of city called the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10ff)
  - a. This is a huge city that defies our imagination. It is described as a cube of unimaginable size, 1,500 miles long, wide and high. Its beauty is like that of a bride on her wedding day.
  - b. Although many seek to make it a symbolic city the details given are so great that it cannot fit comfortably in the realm of symbolism, for each detail then requires a symbolic meaning.
  - c. Instead it is better to see it as the dwelling place God set in the middle of this new creation.
  - d. Take note of the gates representing the 12 tribes and the foundation stones the 12 Apostles in vs 12 and 14. Note how God continues to make a distinction between the Church and Israel. But also how they are brought together as the people of God.
  - e. There is no temple in it (22) for God is the Temple Himself.
  - f. It has no need for the sun or the moon for the glory of the Lord fills it (23). I think of how on the mount of transfiguration Jesus gave the three disciples a glimpse of His glory and how He shone so brightly it terrified them. The city becomes a beacon to the entire new creation.
  - g. Finally, you see that there shall still be a distinction among all of the redeemed in vs 24. Nations will still exist and kings shall rule. But now it will be done in perfect harmony rather than selfish ambition.
8. A fifth component is that we will be changed and made fit for eternity.
  - a. 2 Corinthians 5:17.
    - (1) Give a more literal rendering.
    - (2) When we place our hope and trust in Jesus we become part of what the bible describes as “the new.” This is due to our being “in Christ.”
    - (3) But right now though we are spiritual made participants of the new creation we are not able to enter into it. One aspect remains connected to this world and age.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- (4) What is happening to every Christian right now is that we are being conformed into the image of Christ according to Romans 8:29.
  - (5) John writes, “*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*” (1 John 3:2)
  - (6) So on one hand we are now part of the new reality that God is going to do in, through, and because of Jesus Christ. But on the other hand we do not yet have it but hope in it.
- b. 1 Corinthians 15:37ff.
- (1) In this great chapter on the necessity and nature of the resurrection Paul also speaks of the new body each Christian shall have.
  - (2) vs 39 our body is unlike the bodies of the rest of creation. We are unique and Christ only came to redeem humanity.
  - (3) vs 40 our bodies are fit for this age but not for the next. We must be changed. So we do not look upon what we are now with some sort of shame or hatred, for it is how God designed us. There is a glory in what we are, but it is not the final glory.
  - (4) vs 42ff Paul picks up the idea of a seed. You plant it in one state and it rises out of the ground in a new state of being.
    - (a) Unless we are alive when Christ returns we will die. Every one of us are walking a path that leads to the grave and nothing you or I do can avoid it.
    - (b) There is nothing more sad than the grave site of an unbeliever. Their body lies there only to be raised unto eternal judgment.
    - (c) But for the believer there is something sad yet beautiful in death. This race is finished and the person is truly laid to rest. The body is placed in the grave like a seed in the ground.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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- (d) Paul describes it as a perishable body, a body of dishonor, a weak body, and a natural body in these vss. On the body the ravages of a sin-stained world find their marks.
  - (e) But when Christ calls the body forth from the grave at His return it shall become an imperishable body, a glorious body, a powerful body and a spiritual body.
  - (f) This does not mean it is a spirit. It is a physical body like Christ's at His resurrection. It is the same and yet different. Can eat and it can be touched but it also is not constrained in ways we don't fully understand.
  - (g) This is what Paul means in vs 50 about inheriting the Kingdom of God. Too many try to make it mean that the Kingdom of God is somehow a spiritual kingdom that is not physically present, but that is not what is meant according to the context.
  - (h) All who make up the redeemed shall be changed. We shall be like our Lord. The bodies we have will be changed and we will never again know sickness and despair, pain or sorrow. We shall be more alive than we can imagine.
9. A sixth component is actually a missing component.
- a. Revelation 21:4.
    - (1) Every tear will be gone.
    - (2) No more death.
    - (3) No more mourning, or crying, or pain.
    - (4) On the cross Jesus' final words were, "It is finished" and He gave up His spirit and died. And in that moment He set into motion all that was necessary to bring all things to the desired end He had in mind. On the cross He carried upon Himself the pain and power of sin and death. He carried them away thus destroying the power of Satan.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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- (5) And so in the eternal kingdom we can say with confidence that because He said it was finished on the cross therefore pain, mourning and death will be finished as well.
- b. Can you even begin to grasp how wonderful that will be?
- (1) We live in a world where we hope for joy but expect disappointment.
  - (2) We walk around with guilt and regret, some of it known by others and some known only by you—and God.
  - (3) But in the eternal kingdom these are not just diminished, they simply will not exist. They shall be gone.
- c. Matthew 5:4
- (1) *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*
  - (2) This is one of the beatitudes (MM is preaching on this the next two sermons). It speaks to the truth that those who mourn over sin, both their own and the pain of sin upon this creation, will in the new heavens and earth, find comfort. God will wipe their tears and God shall bind up their heart in ways we can't begin to fathom but let me try.
  - (3) ". . . For I will turn their mourning into joy, And will comfort them, and give them joy for their sorrow."  
(Jeremiah 31:13).
    - (a) Think about this. Joy for their sorrow. Turn mourning into joy.
    - (b) Not just give them joy, but actually take what was sorrow and mourning and turn it, change it, into joy.
    - (c) To the degree you have sorrow for His sake joy shall be yours.
    - (d) I believe this is another part of the nature of eternal rewards; each of us shall have a unique capacity for joy that is in direct relation to how well we endured in persecution and suffering for the sake of Christ's name.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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10. A seventh component is an eternal inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4).
  - a. I cannot develop this fully as I would like. But realize that Peter is writing to a church that is suffering and being persecuted. They are dispersed throughout Asia Minor and life is hitting them hard.
  - b. The whole book is an unfolding of what it means to be chosen by God to be alien or strangers in this world (vs 1). How do we live in a world that is not ours? 1 Peter tells us.
  - c. So he begins by a strong word of encouragement. Both our inheritance and ourselves are kept safe.
  - d. And this inheritance, of eternal life, of eternal reward and of this joy we just spoke about, shall be ours for eternity.
  - e. Just try to grasp it, but I promise you that you will fail. A joy that is described in vs 4 in the most glorious of ways. An inheritance that simply will not diminish in any way.
  - f. And our capacity to delight in this inheritance will also not diminish in any way. It is part of the new creation, where sin never can reach it, taint it, destroy it, or distort it—for sin is gone forever.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul describes the body we have right now as an earthly tent that is wearing out. But the body that awaits us shall be an eternal building.
  1. Right now we groan, but then we shall rejoice. The reality is that we must daily walk by faith and not sight.
    - a. What we see is what belongs to this age. But it is passing away.
    - b. What we believe is what God tells us in the Bible.
    - c. And it is what God says that becomes the focal point of our hearts and minds as we walk today and tomorrow. We remind ourselves what is true and what is passing away.
- B. The bible tells us to comfort one another with these things.
  1. May today be a day where you give comfort to a brother or sister in Christ of what is to come.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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2. May today be a day you refocus your mind upon what is true and excellent and once again enter the good fight to the end.

## ***Benediction***

**“May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”**

## **Community Group Questions**

1. How have you witnessed or experienced the temptation to despair due to the nature of living in a broken world?
2. Together think through how the gospel points us forward as much as backward (to the cross of Christ). What are things to come that you need to take more seriously and why?
3. Talk about how each of you factor in the reality of living in a fallen, sinful world in the most mundane thing is life. Then see how good you can describe a world eternally devoid of these things.