



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church of Christ Welcomes You!

July 3, 2016

The Lord's People: Part 3

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Jesus was a master at using the things in the material realm, with which everyone is familiar, to illustrate the things in the spiritual realm, to which no one has direct access through the physical senses. He used a variety of figures to illustrate various features of the spiritual relationship that is possible between Him and us. Among them are "the church," "the family of God," "the kingdom of God and Christ," "the body of Christ," "the building of God" and "the vineyard of the Lord." The following is a continuation of the study of the kingdom of God and Christ. To view part one and two, please visit our website.

Concerning the coming of the kingdom, John the Baptist said, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Jesus also said, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). If "the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14-15) was "at hand" during the ministries of John and Jesus, it cannot be future now. Jesus further said that "the kingdom of God [would] come with power" (Mark 9:1).

After His resurrection, and just prior to His ascension, Jesus told His apostles, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence," and "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:4-8). What has this to do with the kingdom? They had just asked Him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (v. 6) He seems to be reminding them of the statement recorded in Mark 9:1, so that, when they received power, they would know the kingdom had come.

A few days later, on the first day of the Feast of Weeks [called "Pentecost," because it always fell on the fiftieth day after the Passover Sabbath (Lev. 23:15, 16; Dt. 16:9, 10)], the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit and received power (Acts 2:1-4, 43; 4:33). It is implied, therefore, that the kingdom came on that Pentecost, which was always the first day of the week.

Citizenship in the kingdom of God does not come via natural birth (as it did in the Old Testament). Rather, it is bestowed conditionally. The condition is that one must be "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:3-5). But how is one "born of water and of the Spirit"?

First, one who is born again becomes a new creature, but "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore, whatever puts one into Christ makes him a new creature and is necessary to being born again. But water baptism puts one into Christ (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27). Therefore, one becomes a new creature when he is baptized in water; thus, baptism in water is necessary to being born again. This explains why, in the book of Acts (often called the book of conversions), every time the word "water" appears, it is used in connection with baptism (Acts 1:5; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 11:16).

Second, since the Holy Spirit revealed the word of God, and the word of God commands the alien sinner to be baptized, the alien sinner who has been baptized according to the word of God has been "born of water and of the Spirit" and is no longer an alien sinner, but a citizen in the kingdom of God. One who has not been baptized in water for the remission of sins has not been born again and remains outside the kingdom of God and in a lost condition.

Kingdom citizenship conveys exclusive entitlements. Among these are the honor of addressing God as "Father" (Gal. 4:6), the right to commune with Jesus in the Lord's Supper (Heb. 13:10; Matt. 26:26-29), and the privilege of praying with the expectation that God will both hear and answer (1 Peter 3:12).

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.

Five Day A Week Reading Plan

Mon: Proverbs 23-27
Tues: Proverbs 28 - Eccl. 1
Wed: Ecclesiastes 2-6
Thurs: Ecclesiastes 7-11
Fri: Eccl. 12 - Song 4

Citizenship in the kingdom is equivalent to citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20) because the kingdom of God is also the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:14, 15). Kingdom citizenship also prepares us for heaven (2 Peter 1:4-11) because only the ones who have entered the kingdom in its earthly stage—"having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"—may enter the kingdom in its heavenly stage.

Further, citizenship in the kingdom of God confers considerable responsibilities (Matt. 25:32-40). Failure to meet these responsibilities will not be tolerated (Matt. 25:41-46). Thus, "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:21).

Churches of Christ are not democratic bodies but local bodies of kingdom citizens. They do not have the power to make laws but they do have the responsibility to see that Christ's laws are both respected and obeyed.

Another figure Jesus used in referring to His people was that of a building. During the Patriarchal age (so-called because God revealed His will to the fathers) no specific building was identified as being God's. Only two acts of worship were emphasized—prayer and sacrifice. One could pray anywhere and sacrifice required only an altar and an offering.

During the Mosaic age (so-called because God gave the law to Israel through Moses) God's building was first a tabernacle (Ex. 35:11; 40:34) and later a temple (1 Kings 5:1-18; 6:1-38; 2 Chron. 7:16).

But what of God's building now? How is it described? What is its foundation? What is its composition?

The church is "God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9); it is "the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16); but it is "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).

The "temple of the Lord" is built by and on Jesus Christ. He is the Divine Architect (Zech. 6:12-13; Heb. 3:1-6). But He is also the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), because His unique Son-ship to God must be believed by one who would enter a proper relationship with God to receive eternal life (Matt. 16:13-18; John 20:30-31).

Jesus is referred to as the "Chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:16; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 16:16-18).

"The corner-stones of our present day buildings are but ornamental. Any importance attached to them is honorary and artificial as far as the construction of the building is concerned. But this was not so in the apostolic age nor in the ages prior to the first century." "By the measurement of the cornerstone was the whole building plumbed. All measurements horizontal and vertical finally related to the corner-stone. As well as being the basis for the measurements, because of its size the corner-stone also formed the essential part of the foundation . . . It then can be said of Jesus, as the chief-corner stone of God's house, that in Him all things consist or hold together" (Don DeWelt: The Church of the Bible).

This "stone" was "rejected indeed by men" (1 Peter 2:4, 7), in that they rejected His claim to be the Messiah for whom they had waited so long. But this same "stone" was "chosen by God" not because of their rejection of Him but in spite of it.

He is "precious" because, as a cornerstone, He supports [gives substance to the foundation] (Eph. 2:19-20), unites [serves as the point of reference] (Eph. 2:21-22), and adorns [is the focal point of attention] (1 Cor. 1:1-2).

Thus, the building of God is no longer a physical structure, such as the tabernacle or the temple of the Mosaic Age; it is "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Paul told the saints at Corinth, "Ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9, KJV). The first person plural pronoun indicates that Christians collectively make up the building of God.

Those who are built upon the foundation of the Lord are "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw" (1 Cor. 3:12). The first three will "endure" the fiery trials of life; the last three will be "burned" (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

Each Christian is someone else's work, in that someone labored to bring him into the church by building on the foundation of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 14). One does this by preaching "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1-2; Acts 18:1-8).

Those who have been built into God's building are called "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5), and "a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). But we are His house only "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end" (Heb. 3:4-6). To be continued...