

The Everlasting Kingdom

by Burt Groves

Burt Groves' sermon emphasizes the establishment and eternal nature of God's kingdom through Jesus Christ and the call for believers to live as His disciples.

Duration: 34:34

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, Joel 2:28-32, Matthew 3:1, Matthew 4:17, 1 Corinthians 2:2, Galatians 4:4-5

Topics: "Everlasting Kingdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of following Jesus and the path that leads to life. He highlights the sacrifice Jesus made by leaving heaven and giving up his glory to bring salvation to all. The preacher references the prophet Joel and Peter's preaching on Pentecost to emphasize the coming of the kingdom. He also mentions John the Baptist's message of repentance and Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of heaven. The sermon emphasizes the need for people to learn the truth of the gospel and strive for salvation through Jesus Christ. The preacher also references Daniel and Isaiah to highlight the eternal nature of God's kingdom and the invitation for all nations to come and worship Him.

Transcript

Thank you, Owen. It's a joy to be with you. Many of you know that I'll only get to hear one of you, and I regret my short stay.

I'm thankful to be here, but I have to return to Odessa early in the morning. A good crowd on this first evening, first lecture. I'm thankful to be a part of it, and I'm thankful that you are a part of it.

We have something in common with Nebuchadnezzar. You say, what in the world? I think most of us have something in common with that old, old king of long ago. Haven't you dreamed and forgotten your dream? That's what he did.

But he immediately began to exercise his power. These people in his kingdom who claimed to have mystical powers were eager to tell him what his king meant. But he wanted them to first tell him what the dream was.

All right, are you up with me now? I'll get my words straightened out here in a moment. He wanted them to show him their ability by telling him what he had dreamed. Then he wanted to know what's the meaning of the dream.

Well, in Daniel 2 and verse 4, the old king lived forever. Tell us the dream, and we'll show you the meaning of it. He knew they had planned.

They were prepared to take advantage of their opportunity. They didn't have miraculous power. They didn't have any idea what the king had dreamed.

So he decreed, you die. But in this proclamation, Daniel was included along with Shadrach, Neshach, and Abednego. Well, Daniel, seeing that the king was in a hurry, immediately began working to get an audience with the king.

And he informed him that he could tell him the meaning of the dream. A little bit of time was given. The Lord revealed to Daniel what was going on and what he needed to know.

And he came before the king, giving God the glory, not claiming to have this power by himself. And he told him, you dreamed about this image of a man with a head of gold, shoulder and arms of silver, stomach of bronze, legs and feet of iron, and finally the feet, iron and clay. Of course, immediately Nebuchadnezzar knew that he knew.

He remembers the dream, and he's eager to hear the meaning of the dream. Well, there was a little more to the dream. In his dream he also saw a great stone falling down onto the feet of the statue, crushing those feet, so much so that everything is dissolved, everything is destroyed, even as wheat is thrashed in harvest season, and the waste blows away.

So this statue blew away, and the stone grew larger and larger until it covered the earth. Here is the meaning. O king, you're the head of gold, and it goes down from there.

After you there's going to be a lesser kingdom. Most likely the Medo-Persians. After them another kingdom, the Grecians or Macedonians.

And then finally another, the Roman Empire. And he told him in Daniel 2.44, In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven establish a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. It will not be given to other people.

It will break in pieces and consume these kingdoms. It will stand forever. Daniel, by inspiration of God, was proclaiming the coming of the king and the kingdom.

We turn to Isaiah, and we see the kingdom being addressed again in the second chapter, verses 2 and 3. There we learn that God said in the last days, The Lord will establish his kingdom in the top of the mountains, and it will be exalted above the hills. All nations shall flow unto it. Many will come and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will lead us in his paths. We'll walk in his way, for out of Zion shall go forth the law. And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Matthew 4, verses 1 and 2, gives the very same prophecy. The kingdom is coming. Yes, it's no wonder that the Jews were expecting the Messiah.

And it's tragic that when he came, most of them wouldn't accept him. Again, Isaiah addresses the coming king. Isaiah 9, 6 and 7. And unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulders. His name shall be called Wonderful.

The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and kingdom there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David to establish it and the justice and the judgment.

And it will stand forever. The last days were approaching. And, of course, when the last days came, Christ had come to make it possible.

In Isaiah 53, we can read with the Ethiopian eunuch of long ago. The Holy Spirit dispatched Philip to meet him in the way as he was traveling back to Ethiopia from Jerusalem where he had been to worship. Unusual thing.

He found him reading from the prophet Isaiah. Understandest thou what thou readest? How can I unless some man should guide me? He beginneth the same scripture and preached to him Jesus. Well, if we begin with that 53rd chapter in the first verse, who has believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Behold, he shall grow up before him as a tender plant.

As a root out of dry ground, he hath no form nor commonness. And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we shall desire him. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

We hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He beginneth the same scripture, and preached to him Jesus. Beloved, we must follow the steps of Philip of long ago. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2, in verse 2, I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

You see, Jesus is the King that was coming. When John the Baptizer was on the scene, we read in Matthew 3, beginning with verse 1, In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In Matthew 4, verse 17, Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Interesting. The forerunner of Jesus, and Jesus himself, preached the same theme. The miracles Jesus performed attested to the truthfulness of what he taught, and also the nature of his identity.

Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have life through his name. John 20, 30, and 31.

As Jesus lived, he lived the gospel. I like to remember, he is the Word became flesh. And I need to understand that to a greater and greater degree, that ought to be happening to each of us.

If we think about the weakness of the kingdom, aren't we really talking about the weakness of the citizens of the kingdom? Of Jesus we read, in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And of this Word we read in verse 14 of John 1, The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

And we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. That's who he was, who he is, and whom we ought to be. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Colossians 3, verses 16 and 17. Our Lord Jesus, thisting with his disciples, asked, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? They mentioned John the Baptist, other prophets.

Whom do ye say that I am? Peter is a spokesman. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus said, Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matthew 16, the context of 18 and 19.

What Jesus said to Peter, he was saying to all the apostles. And later we find a similar teaching given to the apostles after Jesus had died, but prior to his ascension. Recorded in John 20, verses 22 and 23, where our Lord Jesus breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.

Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. Now, what did he say in Matthew's account of the earlier incident? Whatever you bind on earth is going to be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth is going to be loosed in heaven.

And how could he say this? Because the apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2 and verse 4. They were not given this authority as mere men, but rather they were functioning as the foundation of the church with Jesus being the chief cornerstone. So what they taught, we should be teaching today.

And the results that they saw, we should be seeing today. They did pay a price. Remember the man that came to Jesus? Lord, I'll follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus replied in Luke 9, latter verses, Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. Wasn't our Lord Jesus asking, Do you really want to follow me? Are you sure you want to follow me? Our generation has forgotten, if we ever knew, that the way that leads to life is straight and narrow, and few there be that go in thereat. Jesus paid a terrible price when he stepped down from heaven.

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son, as Galatians 4, 4 and 5 teach. He came, he emptied himself of heaven's glory. He didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

He was willing to let go of heaven's glory, to make possible heaven's glory for all of us. Not only for all of us, but for all the world. There was the prophet Joel, who told of the coming of the kingdom.

In Joel 2, verses 28-32. When Peter was preaching on Pentecost, he quoted Joel. Beginning with Acts 2, verse 17.

Now remember, Peter spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance. This was really God's message. Human first by Joel, human now on Pentecost Day.

On the day that the church of our Lord, the kingdom of God, was about to have its beginning. And remember this, God had a kingdom all along, but the Jewish people were not willing to honor their king. Samuel was troubled greatly, because the people were asking, give us a king like the nations around us.

One that can lead us into battle. One that can protect us from our enemies. God spoke to Samuel in 1 Samuel 8, verse 7. And said, hearken to the words that the people say to you.

They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not rule them. This is the idea. They don't want me to be their king.

This was a theocracy. Beloved, as Christians, we're a part of a theocracy today. God in Christ, and Jesus is God, rules us.

If he doesn't rule us, we're not his people. And if we're not his people, we are lost. Back to Acts 2, beginning with 17.

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. It shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy.

Your young men shall see visions. Your old men shall dream dreams. On my servants and on my handmaids in that day will I pour out of my spirit and they shall prophesy.

And I will give wonders in heaven above and signs from the earth, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

In the apocryphal language, Joel and Peter pictured kingdoms falling and the one kingdom of God beginning. The mountain of the Lord's house was being established in the top of the mountains, exalted above the hills. From Zion and from Jerusalem was going forth the word of God.

Later, quoting King David, Acts 2, beginning with 29, Let it not be free to speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is yet with us. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins after the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, this spake he of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up.

We all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. Do you remember the cloven tongues like as a fire that sat upon the apostles? Remember the noise as of a rushing mighty wind that filled all the place where they were? This phenomena attracted the multitudes so that thousands were going to respond to heaven's message as the kingdom of Christ was a reality.

He is on the throne of David. He is exalted at the right hand of the Father. The lesson was climaxed.

And sometimes we don't climax our lessons. But this one was climaxed. Peter says in Acts 2 beginning with 36, Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Can you imagine that all of us were in that assembly? And we're not Gentiles anymore. Now we're Jews. We're Jews who just a short time before were shouting, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children.

And really that's what Peter's saying. You've got your wish. But God has made the Christ whom you crucified your Lord.

He's the Savior. Yes, they were guilty. Yes, Jews crucified Jesus.

Judas crucified Jesus. The soldiers crucified Jesus. We crucified Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15.3 Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Men and brethren. They were pricked in their hearts and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter said, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is to you, to your children, listen to this, to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And how did He call us? 2 Thessalonians 2.14 Whereunto He called you by our gospel. Then in that day Peter admonished, Save yourselves from this untoward or misdirected generation.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. Christ was ruling. He told Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants think that I should not be delivered to the Jews. He is ruling today. Looking back to the church of Colossians, Colossians 1.13 Writing to these saints at Colossae, He said, He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the dear Son of God, in whom we have redemption.

He continues to rule today. How do we know? 1 Corinthians 15. The great resurrection chapter.

Verses about 24-25 Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall put down all rule, and all power, and all authority. For he must rule till he has put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy that should be destroyed is death. Aren't we still preaching funerals? Are people still dying? Then, since death continues, our Lord Jesus continues to rule, enabling the faithful to say with Paul of long ago, For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1.21 Beloved, we have a message. Not a message that originates with us. The great need of the Lord's Church today, the same as it has always been, is not for better orators.

We like to hear people that can speak. Remember what Paul said? When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, in declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2, beginning with verse 1. Paul didn't want people attracted to Paul. That was not their need. Preachers, we don't want people attracted to us.

That's not their need. In 2 Corinthians 4, beginning with verse 3, and he's looking back to an incident in the Old Testament that ideally would need to be explained. But he makes this application about the gospel.

He said, If our gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shone into our hearts to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Listen. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of us. This must be in the mind of every gospel teacher.

Whether he stands in the pulpit, whether he sits at the supper table, wherever he may be, when he presents the gospel of Jesus Christ, he must strive to help people learn the truth of the gospel so that through Jesus Christ, yes, through the grace of God, salvation may be a reality in their life. The kingdom is now. It's an eternal kingdom.

It's rule that will never end. And, yes, we see evidence of weaknesses. You don't have to go very far.

Examine yourself. What do you be in the faith? Prove your own self. Know you are not your own self.

Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates. 2 Corinthians 13 and 5. In me I see need of improvement. Maybe you feel the same way.

Beloved, this is serious. The kingdom is now. It is eternal.

Now, this mortal can put on immortality. In fact, the spirit that's housed in this mortal is going to exist somewhere throughout eternity. Let us recognize in the vision of John in Revelation 11 and verse 15.

The seventh angel sounded the trumpet. Loud voices were heard by the apostle John, voices from heaven. They said, The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdom of the Lord.

And of his Christ. And he shall reign forever and ever. How long? As long as this world stands, Christ Jesus is Lord of glory.

And he needs to be, he wants to be, yearns to be, the Lord of our lives. Yes, behold what manner of love. The Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.

When you think about being children of God, you remember Nicodemus, ruler of the Jews, went to Jesus by night. And you speculate about why. Why at night? But he was taught, Nicodemus, you can't enter the kingdom unless you're born of water and of the Spirit.

We emphasize being children of God, and this is a great blessing. But the family of God and the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the church of Christ, all describe the followers of Jesus. Discipleship.

Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Acts 11, verse 26. You ever feel like a sheep? A sheep in need of a shepherd? We have a shepherd.

Are we a sheep following him? In John 10, verse 27-28, Jesus said, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man be able to pluck them out of my hand. That's the security that all people need.

Security that's enjoyed only in Christ Jesus our Lord. Truly, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8 and 1. But that describes the way of life.

Conversion places us in Christ. Galatians 3, verse 26 and following. Romans 6, verse 3 and following.

But as we have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let us walk in him. Rooted and built up in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Colossians 2, verse 6 and 7. Just as one who obeys the gospel today really wants to grow in Christ and see others converted to Christ, just as that person has true enthusiasm about what Christianity is all about, what the kingdom really is, so should we be just as long as we live.

As our children grow up, it's not a question of how much do they earn, what honors do they receive, it's a question of are they following Jesus. And tomorrow may be too late. Now is the accepted time.

Now is the day of salvation. The kingdom of God is now. It will be as long as this world stands.

Let's live as citizens of the kingdom.

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