

# OpenTheo

## Kingdom of God (Part 4)



### Kingdom of God - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses the progress and triumph of the Kingdom of God. He explains that the Kingdom is mediated by the son of David, who sits on the throne with Jesus at the right hand of God. Progress in the Kingdom comes from bringing people's thoughts and hearts under the authority of God, and not just through the implementation of good laws. Gregg emphasizes the need for individuals to surrender to Christ, repent of rebellion, and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Transcript

Tonight, we're going to be talking about the progress and triumph of the Kingdom of God. And I would remind you that the Kingdom of God, as we have seen in some of the earlier sessions, the Kingdom of God is comprised of a people. People who are in the Kingdom of God because they are in a covenant relationship with God, which is defined in terms of a king and his subjects.

Now, our relationship with God can be compared with other things, too. Obviously, Jesus used the imagery of a father and his children. That's also a biblical image.

And there are other images that are biblical. But one of the main issues in the teaching of Jesus was this relationship of the Kingdom of God, which had its beginnings in the Old Testament when God told Israel that if they would obey his voice and keep his covenant, they could be his kingdom. And we found that they didn't do a very good job of it.

God forgave them for the many times they broke his covenant. But eventually, they simply said, we don't want God to be our king. We want to have another king like all the nations have.

And God took that as a personal rejection. He told Samuel, go ahead and give them what they asked for. They've not rejected you.

They've rejected me that I should not reign over them. And so Israel basically rejected her privilege to be God's kingdom on Earth. However, God did promise through the prophets and particularly through David that there would come a time when a

descendant of David would be raised up by God to sit on his throne perpetually for all time, for eternity, and would establish the kingdom again.

And so when Jesus and John the Baptist came preaching and when Jesus sent out the twelve two by two and sent out the seventy two by two during his lifetime, you see that the the emphasis of their message was the kingdom of God is at hand. That is, the kingdom that had been promised through the prophets, the restoration of the kingly relationship between God and his people was at hand. However, in the Old Testament, it was generally assumed that that kingdom would be comprised primarily of the nation of Israel, as was the case when God first mentioned his kingdom at Mount Sinai.

He gave Israel the opportunity to be that kingdom. And when they rejected it, all the promises of the restoration of the kingdom were interpreted by them to mean God was going to restore it to national Israel. But the way it actually turned out was national Israel did not necessarily embrace the king on his terms.

Of course, Jesus was that king of the house of David that was sent. And most of Israel pretty much rejected him on the terms that he came and offered himself as their ruler. Now, he didn't offer himself as a political ruler who would drive out their political enemies, which is what Israel was hoping for.

But because he didn't offer himself in that capacity, they were disillusioned with him and eventually called for his crucifixion. Nonetheless, there was a remnant within Israel who did receive him. We call those people the disciples of Jesus.

They embraced Jesus as their king or as their lord terms that are essentially interchangeable. And because Jesus was their king and their lord, they were his subjects of his kingdom. They were the true kingdom realized on earth in the people who were subject to the king.

Now, after Jesus was crucified, he was caught up into heaven. He sat at the right hand of God. And it is the teaching of the apostles in their sermons in the book of Acts that that kingdom of David had been established, that the promises made to David about one of his sons reigning on his throne, that those promises were fulfilled in the resurrection, the ascension and the present session of Christ, as we call it.

The session of Christ simply means the time since his ascension while he's seated at the right hand of God until the time that he returns and that he is, in fact, enjoying royal authority given to him by his father in Matthew 18, 20 or Matthew 28, 18, excuse me. Jesus said, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. And therefore, there is no.

No authority remaining to be given to him, he has all authority, but authority does not mean necessarily control. Authority simply means the right to rule when a king is

enthroned and he wears the crown rightfully, he has the right to rule all his subjects. That doesn't mean all of them will submit to his rule.

It doesn't mean that all of them will be obedient to him in every kingdom. There are criminals who violate the laws of the king and who rebel against the king, but that doesn't change the fact that the king has the right to rule them. It just means that in their insubordination, they are in the wrong.

That they don't have some innate right to resist him because he has the right, the moral right to rule them, and any who will not submit to his rule are simply in the wrong. Now, Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and earth, which means that he has the right to rule everything in the universe. There's no authority beyond that that can ever be given to him in the future.

However, we know that not all people submit to him. And last time we talked about how we looked at quite a few scriptures that indicated that Jesus had, in fact, inaugurated the kingdom at his coming. In fact, that kingdom has even seemed to have been the kingdom of David.

That was promised in the Old Testament. It's the kingdom of God. It's the kingdom of God mediated through a son of David who sits on his throne, which is Christ at the right hand of God today.

And what I want to talk about today is the next step from that and the progression of the reign of Christ. There is he will never receive any more authority than he now has. That's impossible.

All authority is already his, but he will see a greater measure of submission to his authority among those who are his in his domain. Now, when we talk about the kingdom of Christ, therefore, on one hand, the whole universe is the kingdom of Christ. He is the rightful ruler of the whole universe.

But in other passages, the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of God is spoken of as those who have already happily embraced his rule. That is, those who have recognized that he is the Lord, he is the king. And heretofore, they have been in resistance to him and rebellion against him.

That's what conversion involves, is the recognition that prior to my submission to Christ, I have been a rebel against God and frankly, worthy of whatever penalties such rebels are in line to receive once he decides to lower the boom. But when I realized that I've been a rebel against the king that God has appointed and I surrender to him, I lay down my arms and I will no longer resist. I will no longer fight him.

I will lay down my autonomy. I will lay down my claim to my agenda. And in doing so, I will simply come under him.

I will embrace him as my lord. Then I have entered into the kingdom of God at a in a different sense. That is, the whole universe is his kingdom in the sense that he has the right to rule it.

But he is the actual ruler over all of those who have surrendered to him, laid down their arms instead of fighting against him, are now his soldiers on his side. And I pointed out that having inaugurated the kingdom when he was here the first time, he inaugurated it in an environment where there was tremendous resistance because there was not a vacuum here before he arrived. There was already a kingdom.

And it was ruled over by the devil. Jesus acknowledged this because he said when they said he's casting out demons by Beelzebub, he says any kingdom divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan is divided against himself, his kingdom will not stand.

Jesus acknowledged that Satan had a kingdom. I don't believe that Satan has a rightful kingdom anymore because after Jesus' resurrection, all authority in heaven and earth is given to Christ. Satan doesn't have a legitimate kingdom at all.

He has no authority because all of it, all of it belongs to Christ. But what we find in the world today are people who have just by default, through ignorance of the kingdom of God, through ignorance of the lordship of Christ, through ignorance of the gospel of the kingdom, in other words, they are submitting by default to Satan, who is not a real king at all. But it doesn't matter if he's a real king at all in terms of their personal experience.

As long as they relate to him as if he was, he wins. He wins them. So the message of the kingdom of God, the gospel of the kingdom that must be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, according to Jesus, is the message that there is another king, one Jesus, and that he commands all men everywhere to repent and to submit to him and to follow him and to obey him.

So the message really is Jesus is Lord. And it says in Romans chapter 10 that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and will believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved. That is, he will then be your savior.

Jesus becomes your savior at the point that you surrendered him as Lord. Now, I didn't say at the point that you make him Lord. Sometimes you hear people talk that way.

You know, are you willing to make Jesus the lord of your life? Well, you don't make Jesus Lord. That's already happened. God made him Lord.

God has exalted him to the right hand of himself and has made him Lord and king. You don't make Jesus Lord. You can't make him Lord any more than he already is.

You can surrender to the fact that he is Lord. That's the best you can do. In fact, it's the only hope you have of salvation is for you to recognize that he is, in fact, the Lord.

God has made him Lord. And until you are surrendered to that lordship, you're not in his kingdom. And you are in a rebellion against God.

Now, tonight, I want to talk about what the Bible says about the progression of the kingdom, because I said Jesus is the rightful ruler over the whole universe. But there are still some who resist him. We are preaching the gospel and people are coming out of darkness into light.

And when this happens, Satan and the institutions that represent his power, which basically are the governments of the world, tend to lose their loyal members to Christ. And when you become a Christian, you become a loyal citizen of Christ so that our citizenship is in heaven where our king is. Our king is in heaven and our citizenship is in our relationship to him.

Why are we not citizens of America to them? It depends on how you see it. Some people say there's dual citizenship. A lot of theologians will say, well, we've got citizenship in heaven and we've got citizenship in whatever country we're in.

Well, you know, maybe one could say it that way. I don't want to fight about that, but I don't see that stated anywhere in scripture. What I see stated in scripture is that our citizenship is in heaven and we are here ambassadors.

I'm an ambassador of the kingdom of God whose domicile is in the United States. One of the privileges that comes to that, I happen to carry a United States passport and the United States considers to be one of its citizens. And therefore I have all the privileges of citizenship and there's nothing wrong with me using them.

Paul had Roman citizenship and when he was arrested and was going to be beaten as a Roman citizen, he had the right to not be beaten without a fair trial. He claimed his rights as a Roman citizen. The point is, even though it is possible to acknowledge I am a citizen of the United States in the sense that the United States recognizes me as such, and there are great privileges that come with that. When I become a citizen of the kingdom of God, Jesus said, you can't serve two masters.

You've got to be loyal more to one than to another. And if I'm to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, it means that my primary loyalty is to the kingdom, the king who has sent me here to be his ambassador on this planet. And of course, I'm supposed to be a law abiding citizen.

I should appreciate the wonderful benefits of being domiciled in a wonderful country like this. But we have to remember there are citizens of the kingdom of God domiciled in every country in the world where the gospel has been preached. So there are, there are citizens of our country, the kingdom of God who live in Iraq or in communist China or Cuba or North Korea, as well as in all the places that we'd much rather live than those

places.

In other words, there are there are true Christians who are citizens of the kingdom of God scattered throughout the entire world domiciled. But they are all ambassadors for Christ in those places. We just happen to be in a more comfortable place to be doing this kind of thing.

But we are as Peter tells us in first Peter, chapter two, we are strangers and pilgrims here in this world. We are traveling through this world and going to end up where our home is. And in the meantime, we have something we're supposed to be doing here.

Part of that is is like a military metaphor in scripture, the spiritual warfare, which is to take ground from the enemy. Now, this is not done through physical warfare. The last scripture we looked at last week, I believe, was second Corinthians 10, verses four and five, which says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

And while maybe you've thought of that versus an exhortation to bring your thoughts into obedience to Christ, which, of course, is mandatory in the context of second Corinthians, chapter 10, Paul is talking about his influence through his ministry upon others, his weapons, the preaching of the gospel, the power of intercessory prayer, the power of a holy life and a godly example. Our spiritual resources are like weapons that penetrate that part of the world where Satan's influence has never been challenged. And where we proclaim there's another king, one Jesus, we set up our banner in that spot and say, this is the banner of the kingdom of God right here.

And we're claiming territory for our king. Now, we don't do that with a real banner, but, you know, when they go up to the moon, they put an American flag up. We own it now.

We own the moon now. Do you know that's a very humble claim, isn't that? But the point is, when we go when missionaries go to unevangelized areas or when you go into the place you work, which may be an unevangelized area or the neighborhood in which you live, maybe an unevangelized area. You are there to plant the flag of the kingdom of God and to call the people to surrender to Christ.

To repent of their rebellion and to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as people do this, of course, the kingdom of God grows. It progresses as the gospel of the kingdom goes out and is responded to favorably in every land.

The kingdom of God spreads and gains territory in Colossians 1:13. Paul is writing to us who are already Christians. And he says that God has delivered us from the power of darkness.

And it's conveyed us into the kingdom of the son of his love, that is, into the kingdom of God ruled over by Christ, who is the David King appointed by God to rule over his kingdom. So God has already taken you and me, if we happen to be true believers who have come into his kingdom. He's taken us out of the power of darkness.

And this has tremendous ramifications when it comes to dealing with the devil. And I'm not going to talk about those right now. That's another subject.

There's also another series on the spiritual warfare. But but the truth of the matter is that we have been conveyed out of the power of darkness and into something else. We've been conveyed into the kingdom of God.

And insofar as we convince one other person to do the same thing, then the kingdom grows by one more person. And if we convince 10 people in a lifetime to do it, then the kingdom grows that way. And in this way, the kingdom of Christ and the influence of Christ spreads.

And there's many references to this happening in the scripture. In Daniel, chapter two, there's a vision. That's actually a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had and his wise men and astrologers were unable to make sense of it.

And so eventually Daniel was brought in to give an interpretation of it. Now, the dream had to do with an image like a statue made of metal, of actually several kinds of metal. The head was of gold.

The chest was of silver. The belly was a bronze and the legs were of iron. And as you go down toward the feet, the feet were a mixture of iron and clay.

But then at a certain point, he says, you watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image in its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed together and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.

And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Now, we are not left in the dark as to what this means, but picture it if you can. There's this image made of four metals.

And in the vision, in the dream, a stone comes from somewhere. I guess I picture the stone flying through the air and striking the image in the feet, though it doesn't say it's flying through there. I guess it could be rolling along and hits it like a bowling pin or something.

But the point is, this thing is hit in the feet by a stone. The stone is specifically said to be a stone that is cut out without hands. It is not of human origin.

In the interpretation that is given, each of these metals in the images represents a successive world empire, the Babylonian Empire, which was contemporary at the time this dream was given, is the head of gold. Daniel explained it would be followed by another empire, the Medieval Persian Empire, represented by the chest of silver. Then would come the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great, which was the the belly of bronze.

And then, of course, the Roman Empire conquered that and represented by the legs of iron. And the feet of iron and clay simply represent the Roman Empire in its later stages, where it is beginning to be corrupt and eventually dissolving. And if you read of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire in any histories, you'll know that that is true.

The Roman Empire fell gradually because of interior corruption and so forth. Now, we are told that a stone came and hit the image in its feet. That is, in that in that part of the image that represents the Roman Empire.

But what is the stone? Well, Daniel explains it this way in Daniel 2, 44, he says, 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. So this stone that hits the image of the feet, then it itself grows into a great mountain to fill the earth.

And it does so at the expense of these other kingdoms. It grinds them into power powder and then they're taken away by the wind like like chaff on the summer threshing floor. So the image was described.

He says now that stone represents the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the God of heaven, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. By the way, we noticed in the New Testament. The kingdom is sometimes called the kingdom of God.

But in Matthew it is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven. Well, why? Well, it is the kingdom of the God of heaven. The God of heaven sets up a kingdom that's the kingdom of the God of heaven or abbreviated the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven.

Either one is fine. The point is that the kingdom is a stone. It is not said to be particularly large at its beginning, but it strikes the feet and then it grows and it fills the whole earth, eventually consuming all of the other kingdoms.

So what is this about? Well, it says here, this is the kingdom of God. It it'll be established in the reign of these kings. Now, the last of the kings mentioned in the image was what we identify as the Roman Empire, the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay.

It does. The picture doesn't go any further into history than that, but that's fine because the kingdom of God was established by Christ during the time that the Roman Empire was still around. As a matter of fact, during the time of the Roman Empire, Jesus came



and he established a kingdom and it did strike the Roman Empire in the feet, but it didn't immediately topple it.

We know the Roman Empire did fall within a few centuries and the kingdom of God grew during those centuries until it eventually supplanted the Roman Empire, but it has not finished growing. It is moving and moving and growing and growing, and this is the progress of the kingdom we want to examine tonight. Jesus gave us this statement, which probably is an allusion to the verse in Daniel two, we just read.

In Daniel two, he spoke about the kingdom of God being like a stone that grinds these kingdoms into powder, Jesus said in Matthew 21, verses 43 and 44. Therefore, I say to you, he's speaking to Israel, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.

Now, this particular statement is not found. That is the second of these verses. Verse 44, Matthew 21, 44 is not found in some of the older manuscripts, but I believe it is authentic and it's found in most of our translations of the Bible.

But that statement, whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder, I believe is a reference to two Old Testament scriptures in Isaiah, chapter eight. Jesus is referred to as a stumbling block and some would fall over, it will stumble upon it. And that's what Jesus is.

And in first Peter, chapter two and other places in the New Testament, that particular statement about the stumbling block is applied to Jesus. But the other scripture is on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder is almost certainly a reference to that scripture we saw in Daniel two, 44. That stone grinds to powder all resistance from all the kingdoms of this world.

Now, the recognition that the church is the kingdom of God was understood early in Christian history. And I just said the church is the king of God, I better clarify what I mean by that. I do believe it's correct to say the church is the kingdom of God, but only if we understand what is meant by the word church.

If I had a chalkboard here, I would draw a very simple graphic, but it's so simple. You don't need the chalkboard. I'll just describe it to you.

And it's, you know, it's as simple as can be. I would draw two circles next to each other with an overlapping field where they intersect each other, where one circle partially overlaps the other. You can picture that in your mind.

One circle we could call the institutional church. And that would include all Christian organizations, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, whatever, anything that's called a church, any organization that has structure, a hierarchy, perhaps

a 501 C3 Corporation and members. Anything that's an organized church is part of what we could call the institutional church.

The other circle I would call the true church, but those circles do intersect. And there is a field that is in both circles. If you can picture this, I'm sure you quite easily can.

So so that we could say that those who are in both circles are part of each circle. They are in institutional churches, but they're also in what's called the true church. The one circle is the institutional church.

The other circle would be the true church, which is simply made up of those who are truly born again. Those who truly are subject to Jesus as their Lord, people who are truly saved. Anyone who has experience in any church.

And I've, I was raised in the church. I've been in the church for 53 years and I've been in several churches, I've been leadership in several churches, and I'm certainly been a member of many. I would say that anyone who has experience in institutional churches will acknowledge there are some people in there who are true Christians.

And there are some people in there who aren't true Christians and probably don't even know what it means to be a true Christian. I don't care which church you look at. I don't care if it's the Catholic church, the Greek Orthodox church, the Lutheran, the Baptist, the Methodist, the Pentecostal doesn't matter in every church, unless it's a very tiny one.

You know, if it's of any size at all, there's going to be some people in the church who are truly believers who have been converted, who really are in God's kingdom, who are really subject to King Jesus. And there's others in there who are in there for reasons they don't know why they were raised there. They like the music, their friends go there, or they might even think of themselves as Christians.

But they're of that category that Jesus said, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name? And I will profess them. I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity.

Now, obviously, the people of that type think of themselves as Christians until they come to the day of judgment, find out that they were mistaken. They must be people who are probably in churches somewhere, but they are not truly submitted to Christ in that same context as the passage is quoted as in Matthew, chapter seven, just before that statement, Jesus says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, enters the kingdom of God. But those who do the will of my father in heaven, that is, those who are surrendered to Christ as Lord and do they live under his Lordship? They live as subjects of his king ship.

Now, not everyone of those who says, Lord, Lord, is in that category. Almost everyone

who calls Jesus Lord is probably going to be found in an institutional church of some kind, but only a percentage of those there will be true Christians. And then there's part of that circle of two Christians that might not even be in the institutional church.

They might be in places where there aren't churches. They've come to know Christ, but there just aren't institutional churches there. There's no institutional churches in Saudi Arabia, but there are some Christians there.

They're outside of institutional churches, but they're Christians. They're part of the true church of Jesus Christ. The true church of Jesus Christ is that global, spiritually defined community of people that God recognizes as truly those who are submitted to him, who have been born again.

They're under the Lordship of Christ. And they are followers of his many of them, perhaps most of them are in institutional churches. But like I said, there's an overlapping area there.

Now, when I say the kingdom of God is the church, I mean the kingdom of God is that second circle. I'm not saying that the Catholic Church or the Lutheran Church or the Methodist Church is the kingdom of God in those churches. There are some who are, but you'll find some of them in all the churches and some of them not in any churches at all because of their maybe the specific situations they live in where there's no churches available to them.

But the point is, when I say the church is the king, I'm not identifying that with any particular organization, but with the community of believers the world over who are truly submitted to Jesus Christ. That's the true church. In other words, what Paul called the body of Christ.

What is the body of Christ? Well, it's all the people who are under one head, Jesus. Well, isn't head just another metaphor for Lord or king? If you're a part of the body of Christ, you're subject to the head. And in the imagery of a body and a head, this is nothing but another way of talking about a king and his subjects.

The head of a body is the ruler of the body. And so the true church, which is the body of Christ, is the true kingdom of God. Now, I want to explain that because I think this was got confused, especially in the Middle Ages, when the institutional Roman Catholic Church thought of itself as the church.

And Roman Catholics still think of themselves that way. And they're not the only ones. Some Protestants may think of their group that way.

But the point is that in the Middle Ages, there weren't any other churches institutionalized, just the Roman Catholic. And they thought, OK, the king were the kingdom of God. We're supposed to take over the world.

There's some Muslims down there in the Middle East controlling Jerusalem. Let's send our armies down there, our crusaders down there and wipe those people out and take the kingdom of God for God. And they didn't understand that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Paul said in Ephesians chapter six, I think it's verse 12. He says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We wrestle against principalities and against powers and against rulers of the darkness of this age and of spiritual wickedness and heavenly places.

We're dealing with spiritual powers. Our battle is a spiritual battle. When I talk to you about the kingdom of God conquering the world, I don't want anyone to make the mistake that I'm suggesting we've got sort of a Christian version of the Taliban here.

We're not starting a militia. We're using a biblical metaphor for what we're all quite familiar with already, and that is an evangelistic church. Going to all nations, teaching the gospel of the kingdom and winning people to Christ, that is the means of conquest.

It is not through the political process necessarily, although we'll have ramifications on politics. Of course, if you get a large percentage of a population following Jesus Christ in reality. Well, when they go to polls and vote, they're going to vote for things that are going to look more Christian than otherwise.

And so the political complexion of a nation will be improved if there's a larger number of true Christians. But we don't look at the political process as the way of bringing in the kingdom of God. We don't suppose that if we can just elect enough of our people to Congress and make laws that are Christian laws, that we'll have made America the kingdom of God.

That's not how it happens. You can't make the kingdom of God by imposing laws on people. Moses tried that and God himself tried that.

God called Israel to be his kingdom. He gave him laws and imposed the most Christian set of laws, the most righteous set of laws any nation has ever had. That didn't work very well.

And the reason it didn't work very well is it was imposed upon people who were not Christians. Good laws, the best laws ever given to any nation were given by God to Israel, even Paul and reflecting back on them in Romans seven says, we know that the law, he means the Old Testament law is wholly just and good. Problem is the law is spiritually said, but I'm carnal.

And as long as a spiritual law is enforced on carnal people, you'll have the semblance of Christianity in a culture, but you won't have the kingdom of God because the people are inwardly seething in rebellion against those laws. There was a period of time where England didn't have a king or a queen and they had a Lord protector in Oliver Cromwell

and he was a Puritan. And for, you know, I think it was a couple of decades.

I don't remember the exact number of years he imposed Puritan law on Great Britain and everyone had to live under Christian law. And no doubt, Cromwell and those who were in leadership that we have established the kingdom of God here, but as soon as he was out, the people who'd been seething in rebellion under those laws overthrew the puritanical rule and returned back to their pagan or at least very worldly structure of society because they weren't converted. If we think that we're going to make people stop getting abortions or stop being gay by somehow restricting their rights, we've got another thing coming.

Now, I'm against I'm against abortion rights. I don't think anyone has the right before God to get an abortion. It's a sin.

No one has a right to sin before God. But if we think we're going to make people stop getting abortions because we made a law against it, I'm for laws against it, by the way, because I'm for laws against murder. But the point is laws against murder, which we already have, don't keep people from murdering.

They keep some people from murdering, but they don't abolish murder because good laws can be imposed on bad people and bad people find a way to squirm around out from under it, like like putting your finger on a wet watermelon seed. You can't can't keep it under because human nature is so much in rebellion. The kingdom of God only can grow as people's hearts are changed.

That's why we need the spiritual weapons that bring men's thoughts into captivity, every thought into captivity of Jesus Christ. That can't happen unless that person has been brought to place of inward, total, willing surrender and repentance. And that doesn't come by imposing laws upon them.

It doesn't come by the edge of the sword. It comes by what's sharper than a two edged sword. The word of God presented by the power of God and imposed on the conscience by the spirit of God and people being brought to repentance.

So the expansion of the kingdom of God, the progress of the kingdom I'm talking about is not not about any of the agendas that some Christians might feel attracted to. You know, it's I'm not against making Christian laws. I think if any laws are made in country, they ought to be good ones.

And it's not a good law to legalize homosexual marriage. That's not a good law. It's not a good law to legalize abortion.

Those are bad laws. Those are immoral laws. And no country should have immoral laws.

So I'm not against making good laws. I'm against thinking that making good laws is the

way that God's going to win here. No, making good laws, and if they're enforced, will make it more comfortable for us to raise our children in an environment that we don't feel they're going to get so corrupted in.

I know because I raised five children and I was very interested in my children being in a sanitized environment growing up because I didn't want them corrupted. But I never dreamed for a moment that that sanitized environment that could be brought about through political means was the kingdom of God. It's just something I prefer.

You know, I mentioned in an earlier lecture here, the kingdom of God actually spreads very well in places where the government's not amenable at all. Communist China is the place in modern history where the kingdom of God has grown the fastest of any known time in history. Under Mao Tse Tung, from about 700,000 Christians there when Mao took over to about 50 million when Mao died.

Huge growth of the true kingdom of God in an environment where the laws were all against it. Now, as I said at that time, I'm not advocating persecution. I'm not advocating bad laws.

I'm saying the kingdom of God and its progress is tied not to the decency of the laws. It is tied to the devotion of its subjects. And so the kingdom expands as we bring people's thoughts into captivity by bringing their hearts into captivity.

And yes, the kingdom of God is moving and will grind all opposition to powder, as it was predicted in Daniel. Jesus told a couple of parables about this. This is in Matthew 13, verses 31 and 32.

Matthew 13, 31 and 32. Another parable he put forth to them, saying the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

What is Jesus saying? This is a very short parable, and he never gives an explanation. He must have thought it was self-explanatory. Amazingly, however, Christians reading this have gotten two diametrically opposed interpretations from each other from it.

On the one hand, there are those who believe this is a parable about the failure of the kingdom of God in the end times. Now, to my mind, that's not very obvious. And to my mind, it looks like it's not about the success of the kingdom of God.

So how did some people get the idea it's about the failure of the kingdom of God? Well, what do we see? The kingdom is like a seed. It's so to feel small in the beginning as Jesus. You know, Jesus movement was very small when he died.

He was the only loyal citizen of the kingdom. He was the king on the cross. All the others

had abandoned him.

But after that, some of them came back to him. And then on the day of Pentecost, three thousand came in. Then it kept growing from there.

So like a little tiny seed at its beginning, it's grown and grown and grown till now. There's probably a billion Christians, maybe not that many true Christians, but certainly a large number of people who profess to be Christians. And God only knows what percentage really belong to this kingdom.

But the the point here is. It looks like this is talking about the tremendous growth and progress and success of the kingdom of God from from humble, small beginnings, very much like that stone that struck the image in the feet and Daniel's explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which grew into a great mountain to fill the whole earth. Isn't this kind of a similar image? Seems like it to me.

But there's this part about it that people sometimes point to. They say, look, the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. That isn't good.

Why isn't that good? Well, they say they say, well, in an earlier parable in the same chapter, their parable of the sower and the soils, some seed fell on hard soil, which it didn't penetrate. And she said the birds of the air came and they ate the seeds and it didn't produce anything. And when Jesus explained that parable, he said.

These are those who hear the word of God and they don't understand it, and the devil comes and takes it away. So I say, well, very clearly, the birds in that parable are the devil. And therefore, birds are evil in the parables, they're not good, they're bad.

Now, here's the kingdom of God grown into a great tree. And they say, look, the birds have lodged in its branches. That means in the last days, the the church will become utterly corrupt.

Because it's infiltrated by evil, the birds in its branches. Now, to my mind, no, no offense to anyone who holds that particular view. To my mind, that's a very naive way of interpreting the scripture.

The pastor I was raised under taught that. And he said, there's a law of biblical interpretation called the law of exegetical constancy, which says that if something in one parable represents something there, the same thing must represent the same thing in all the parables. And I say nonsense, I've read the parables.

In the first three parables of Matthew 13, there's seeds in all of them, but they're not the same thing. In the first parable, the seed is the word of God. In the second parable, the wheat and the tares, the seed is the children of the kingdom.

And then the mustard seed, it's the kingdom itself. Seeds can represent lots of things. And birds can too.

With reference to seeds, birds are a nuisance. With reference to trees, birds are not particularly a nuisance. In fact, birds in the branches of trees seems to be exactly where God wants birds to be in general.

That's it doesn't hurt the tree. You know, it gets on your car, gets on the branches of the tree. But you know, but I mean, the truth is, that's the right place for birds to be.

And not only that, this image of the great tree with the birds lodging its branches has at least three precedents in the Old Testament, all of which give the impression that the birds and the branches are a good thing. One of those is found in Daniel four, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream of a tree. And it says in Daniel four, verses 10 through 12, these were the visions of my head while on my bed, I was looking to behold a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great.

And the tree grew and became strong. Its height reached the heavens and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. Big tree.

Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. That sounds positive. The beasts of the field found shade under it.

The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches and all flesh was fed from it. Now, is this an ominous picture? Well, this is a this is a beautiful picture, a great tree. It's got beautiful fruit.

The you know, the woodland creatures can find shade under its under its shade. The birds can find build nests in its branches. Everyone's being fed.

I don't see anything negative about this. And Daniel interpreted this for Nebuchadnezzar. And basically he said the tree is Nebuchadnezzar.

In his glory. Now, in the vision, the tree got cut down for a while, then grew again seven years later, and Daniel said, this is you, you're going to be cut down because your pride and you're going to eat grass like an ox and you're going to have the dew of heaven upon you. You're you're going to be like an animal.

Then you're going to be restored when you know that the that God rules. And so we know Nebuchadnezzar went through a period of insanity for about seven years. But the tree before it was cut down is Nebuchadnezzar in his glory.

And what is he like? He's a kingdom. He's a king. And he provides shade and shelter for the woodland creatures.

That's what trees are supposed to do. That's not bad. That doesn't hurt the tree for the



animals to find shade under it, for the birds to nest in its branches, even for people to eat its fruit.

That's not that doesn't hurt the tree. That's what God made trees for. This is a good picture, not a bad picture.

The birds are not bad here. OK. In Ezekiel, there's a similar vision Ezekiel has of the Assyrian Empire.

And he says, indeed, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon. Not literally. Syria is not literally a cedar, nor was it in Lebanon.

But since the cedars in Lebanon were the greatest trees anyone knew of, he's likening Assyria to the greatest and most glorious of the trees anyone had ever thought of. With fine branches that shaded the forest and of high stature and its top was among the thick boughs, its height was exalted above all the trees of the field. Its boughs were multiplied and its branches became long because of the abundance of water as it sent them out.

This is a positive image, not negative. All the birds of the heaven made their nests in its boughs under its branches. All the beasts of the field brought forth their young and in its shadow, all the great nations made their home.

Now, notice he he kind of explains the imagery in that last line. The animals that are finding shade under the tree are like the nations that are under the umbrella of the Assyrian Empire when Assyria ruled. The image goes on to point out that Assyria was cut down to just like Nebuchadnezzar, the tree was cut down.

So Assyria got cut down. But the point here is here are two great empires in the days when they were doing well are likened to trees. And both cases mentioned the birds and the woodland creatures finding shelter there.

This is a part of the positive imagery that's painted there before the fall of these guys. Now, here's another passage in Ezekiel. This is Ezekiel 17 verses 20 through 22 through 24.

And this is an Old Testament image of the kingdom of God with Christ and its ruler. In the context, it says, Thus says the Lord God, I will take also one of the highest branches of this high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs, a tender one, and I will plant it on a high and prominent mountain on the mountain of height of Israel.

I will plant it and it will bring forth boughs and bear fruit and be a majestic cedar. Now, here here's proof that the so-called law of exegetical constancy is bogus. In Ezekiel 31, the cedar was Assyria.

In Ezekiel 17, the cedar is now a kingdom that God plants in Israel. Not the same thing, but nonetheless, both of them are kingdoms. Under it will dwell birds of every sort in the shadow of its branches, they will dwell and all the trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree.

Jesus, who is lowly, was exalted to the right hand of God, dried up the green tree and made a dry tree flourish. Jesus made a statement about that elsewhere, too. We won't get into too little time.

I, the Lord, have spoken and have done it. He's talking about taking an obscure twig and planting it. So it becomes a great tree and all the birds lodging it, just like Jesus talked about.

The kingdom is like a mustard seed becomes a great plant and the birds lodging. This is not negative. This is positive.

What Jesus said about the mustard seed is a positive picture of the kingdom of God growing and flourishing from a very small beginning. Jesus and his disciples were a very small beginning for a kingdom. But look what it is today.

Millions and millions, hundreds of millions strong and growing. You might say it doesn't seem to be growing to me. It seems like the churches are kind of shrinking in the United States.

Yeah, but the United States is not the kingdom of God. In fact, the United States, not even the world. In the third world, the church is growing faster than here by by a factor of probably 50.

As a matter of fact, in Latin America, the church is growing. The true conversions to Protestant Christianity are taking place at a rate I heard some years ago, this four times the population growth of Latin America. That is four times faster than the growth of the population were conversions to Christ.

The same thing is certainly happening in China because population growth is very stilted in China because they they control it and keep it down. But they can't control the rise and the spread of the kingdom of God there. And it's you know, there's perhaps 100 million Christians there now.

And likewise, Africa, south of the Sahara, has become essentially a Christian continent. Now, north of the Sahara is still Muslim. But south of the Sahara, the church is growing so fast that church growth experts say that, you know, Africa is going to be as much a Christian continent as Europe was in the in the Middle Ages.

In other words, just because we don't see growth here doesn't mean it isn't happening. The kingdom of God is still growing by leaps and bounds. If we're not so provincial as to

only look at our own corner of the world, it's happening, you know, as is predicted.

And like a great tree, there are many helpless creatures, us who find their shade and their and their shelter and their security in this kingdom. Here's another parable that followed the other one, Matthew 13:31. Another parable, he spoke to them, the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till all of it was leavened.

Once again, we have some Christians who say this is a bad picture of the kingdom of God. Why? Well, because of that law of exegetical constancy. What's what has what's that got to do with it? Well, leaven, you know, is mentioned a lot of other places in Scripture to beware of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said.

Paul said in first Corinthians five, a little leaven leavens a whole lump. Get that evil out of the church. Paul and Jesus both spoke of sin as being like leaven in that it influences its environment like leaven in a lump of dough.

Leaven is yeast. So anyone who's made their own bread, you know, you put a few little tiny bit of yeast into a larger batch of dough and the whole batch rises because of that little bit of yeast. In other words, that yeast has an influence on its environment, disproportionate to its own volume and its own size because it's alive.

Yeast is alive. The flour isn't alive. The eggs are no longer alive.

Whatever else you put in the bread are not alive, but the yeast is alive. And though it's a small element, a small percentage of what's put into that batch, it is alive and dynamic and it influences the the rise of the whole thing now is what some people say is since yeast is always evil, this must be saying that the kingdom of God will be infiltrated by evil, just like the birds and the branches, they say, represent evil infiltrating the church in the last days. So there are some who use these two parables to make them say exactly the opposite of what they appear to say.

Both parables appear to be talking about the great thriving and progress and success of the kingdom of God as it progresses. But something no, this is talking about bad stuff is ominous. The yeast is infiltrating the kingdom of God.

Well, I could agree with that if it's true. But the problem is it isn't. Jesus didn't say the kingdom of God is like three measures of meal, which some person put yeast into.

If that were the case, we could say, OK, the yeast is a foreign element that shouldn't be in there. And in some bad person put that into the kingdom, the kingdom is infiltrated. But he said the kingdom of God is like yeast.

That statement in itself proves that the so-called law of exegetical conceit is not true. It is true that sometimes sin is likened to yeast in other contexts. Why? Because sin also

infiltrates.

And affects things, but so does the kingdom of God. It's very clear Jesus is not like any leaven to sin here. He says the kingdom of heaven is like leaven.

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that is put into an environment, into a lump of dough. And it has an impact on its environment. We certainly can see that's the case.

You see, the parable of the mustard seed speaks of the kingdom's growth extensively. The yeast speaks of the kingdom's influence internally in the society. When the kingdom of God broaches the borders of a new land and takes root there through the preaching of the gospel, it has two effects.

It begins to expand and grow and take more conquests, take more souls into it. But it also has an elevating effect on the society it's in so that even those in that society who don't become converts, they still enjoy the benefits of the influence of Christ's kingdom in their land. And, you know, as much as many people want to say America is a Christian country, America never really was a Christian country.

America is a country that has a very large percentage of Christians in it. Even some of the founders of the country were Christians, fortunately, and that led to very, you know, enlightened views of morality and government and so forth being introduced into our founding documents. But not everyone who signed those documents, not all of them were Christians, certainly, and not all the population were Christians.

Now, there are Christianity was extremely influential in the early days and still is in this society. And we probably have, I don't know, more Christian influence in this country, probably than in any other country, at least of similar size in the world. But that's because there is a significant number of Christians who are like leaven in this lump of dough, our society.

You all know that you've got plenty of neighbors who aren't Christians, but they benefit from living in a country that's been influenced by the light of the gospel. I can't go into all the ways that the kingdom of God has elevated human society wherever it's gone. Slavery doesn't exist here anymore.

William Wilberforce is in the news right now because what is this the anniversary of his success in abolishing slavery in England. He was obviously a member of the kingdom of God. He was also a member of parliament, but he was he was also a follower of Jesus Christ and his influence changed his world.

Not only his alone, his and those of others who are members of the kingdom of God, pressing the claims of Christ on the consciences of their society. And while not everyone in England became a Christian, eventually enough people were sensitized to the, to a Christian way of looking at things that they didn't want slavery in their land anymore.

And the same thing happened in this country later on.

Now, everywhere the gospel goes, it has a beneficial impact on the society it's in. There's a article that appeared in Reader's Digest some time ago called Shimabuku, the village that lives by the Bible. And the story went like this after World War II, American troops went into Okinawa to liberate it.

And Okinawa was in, was in squalor. Okinawa was just a mess. All of, they were just in moral degradation.

They were totally in disarray. All the villages were just filthy, you know, uncultivated. People were just living almost like, you know, in totally uncivilized condition.

Then the troops came to this one village called Shimabuku. And Shimabuku, when they approached two old men, one of them carrying a Bible came out to meet the troops. And the troops were suspicious of a trap because they weren't sure this was really gonna be a friendly encounter, but they cautiously entered the village and they found it was totally different than all the villages they'd encountered.

Its fields were tilled and fertile, productive. There was virtually no crime. There was no prostitution.

There was no drunkenness. There was no divorce in that society. And the reason was that 30 years earlier, an American missionary on his way to Japan had passed through there and converted those two old men who were young men at the time.

He only stayed long enough to give them a Japanese translation of the Bible, teach them a few hymns and to urge them to live by the Bible. And he left. And in 30 years, through the influence of the scripture and those two men, the kingdom of God had elevated that lump of dough till everyone in the society was benefiting from a more moral, a more healthy, a more prosperous society.

And this is what that leaven of the kingdom does when it's put into the dough of any society where the kingdom of God goes, things get better. You know that things are very different in Western Europe historically for the past, certainly at least the past 1500 years or more Western Europe and America and the European colonies in Australia and South America and so forth. Those, the lifestyle is not wonderful everywhere, but things are far different in what we call the Western world than in Asia, where the gospel really didn't penetrate in the same way, didn't have the same representation.

And, you know, we have more sensitivity to human rights, the rights of women, the rights of children, the rights of the aged care for the sick. All these things have been prosperous as well as technological advance, scientific progress. They didn't happen in Asia.

They happened in the Western world. And that's not some kind of a racist statement. This is observing history.

Technology and science did not make any significant advances for hundreds and hundreds of years in the east where Christianity had virtually no representation. But wherever the gospel has influenced society, the standard of living, the morals and basically productivity, everything has increased because the kingdom of God is a good influence, even upon those in the society who have not fully embraced Jesus. It's just the goodness of Christ is so infectious that it not only saves those who are saved, but it improves.

It radiates goodness to the environment around it. So the kingdom progresses in the world extensively and intensively. Now, I want to talk to you about what the Bible says about the ultimate future of the kingdom of God.

In Luke 19, verse 12, Jesus told a parable that began like this. Therefore, he said, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. Now, the parable goes on to talk about how he gave some of his goods to be managed by different stewards, and then he came back and they had to give account for their stewardship.

But it's interesting. This is what the kingdom of God is like. It's like a certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return.

Well, he's that nobleman. He's the one who went to a far country, ascended into heaven, and he's going to return. But in the meantime, he's receiving a kingdom now.

He's already been enthroned, but he's receiving the kingdoms of this world that are eventually going to be his kingdom, it says in Revelation. We're going to talk about that moment. See that.

But look at what Daniel says in Daniel seven, verses 13 through 14. Daniel is having a vision and he says, I was watching in the night visions and behold, one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. This is the only passage in the Old Testament where Jesus is referred to as the son of man.

The term son of man is used many times in Ezekiel and a few times in other books of the Old Testament, but never referring to Christ here. However, it obviously does refer to Christ. I saw one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.

He came to the ancient of days and they brought him near before him. Then to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away.

And his kingdom, the one which shall not be destroyed. Now, I'll bet many of you when

you read that thing, well, it looks like when Jesus comes back, he gets a kingdom. He sets up a kingdom, but this is not a prophecy about Jesus coming back.

True, it does say I saw one like the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, but where is he coming to and from? He's coming to heaven. Daniel is positioned in on the heaven side of this vision, and he sees the sun and coming through the clouds to God. This was the ascension of Christ.

When Christ ascended into heaven, he came before the father and was given a place on the father's throne where he sits today at his right hand. And he was given a kingdom. And remember the parable we just saw in Luke 19, it's like a certain no one went into a far country to receive a kingdom and then to return when after his kingdom had been established, apparently to his satisfaction before he returned to it.

But he came to the ancient of days and they brought him near him. So this is not Jesus coming back from heaven. This is Jesus going to heaven from the Mount of Olives when the disciples saw him go up in a cloud, received him out of their sight.

So Daniel's on the other side of that cloud up where the throne is in his vision. And he sees Jesus coming up with the cloud through the cloud to the throne. And he takes the throne and he's given a kingdom.

By the way, this is the traditional historic interpretation of this passage, though it's probably not the majority view today. Because there are other views that have become prominent in the last 150 years or so. But throughout most of church history, this is the view of this passage that was held.

It was not seen as a passage about the second coming of Christ, but rather the results of his first of his ascension. And it says later in that chapter, he's watching in the vision until the ancient of days came and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the most high. And the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Now, here is where the ancient of days comes here. This is later in the vision. Jesus goes to the ancient of days, sits down, he receives a kingdom that all nations should serve him.

Well, that's exactly where things stand right now. All nations should serve him. And that's our message.

That's the message of the kingdom is that all nations should serve him. There is another king, one Jesus, and everyone should submit to him. But the time will come.

And this is later in the vision where the ancient of days comes here and a judgment is made in favor of the saints. That's us. And the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Now, this is in one sense, we're already in the kingdom. We've been translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom. But the time comes when those who have served Christ in their lifetime, when he returns, will be given positions in his kingdom and will possess authority in his kingdom.

He has so described it. In fact, in that parable, we didn't read much of it in Luke 19. When he came back, he said, you've been faithful over a few things.

Rule over 10 cities, rule over five cities, he says to his servants when he comes back, the saints possess the authority in the kingdom. Now, some people might be all jazzed about that. And some people might look at it as just sort of a carnal triumphalism where we just are power hungry and can't wait till we rule the world.

I don't care about ruling the world, frankly, but if that pleases God for me to do it, I don't mind pleasing him just like now. I want to please him now. I'll please him then.

If he wants me to rule, that'll be OK. I don't like ruling. I've never liked authority.

It's too responsible. But I'd much rather let someone else rule and me just follow. But the point is, if it's the will of God, I'm open to it.

Apparently, time's going to come where all who have been his faithful subjects in this life, when he comes back in possession of the total package that he's waiting for, which is a much broader expansion of his kingdom, then he'll come back and he'll establish his servants in positions of authority. Then the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the heavens of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people, the saints of the most high. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominion shall serve and obey him.

I believe this is when Jesus returns now, when he returns, all the kingdoms will be given under the authority of his faithful, the saints of the most high. In Luke 12, 32, Jesus said to his disciples, do not fear little flock. They were a little stone at that time, a little seed, not very big yet, but they're a little flock back then, much bigger flock now.

Do not fear little flock. It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. In Second Timothy two, verses 11 through 13, Paul said, this is a faithful saying for if we died with him, we'll also live with him.

If we endure, we will also reign with him. There's more to that passage, but that's the part I wanted you to see. If we endure in this present time, we will reign with him in a future time.

In Revelation 11, 15, we are told the time comes, which is celebrated by some heavenly angel making this announcement. Revelation 11, 15 says, 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. That's when the seventh trumpet sounds and it's at the last trump.

You know, the dead in Christ rise and so forth, and at that point, all the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. In first Corinthians 15. Verses 22 through 26, it says, for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, all should be made alive.

But each one in his own order, Christ, the first fruits, that is, he's the first one resurrected from the dead. Afterward, those who are his at his coming, when he comes will be risen from the dead. Then comes the end at that point, when he delivers the kingdom to God, the father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power, that's when all the kingdoms of this world will have become his kingdom.

He'll have put an end to all rival rule and authority and power, for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. And the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. Now, this is interesting.

He's going to put all his enemies under his feet and the last one will be death. Well, when is death put under his feet at the resurrection? So when do all the other enemies get put under his feet? Apparently prior to that, because that's the last one. So what do we expect between now and the time that Jesus comes back? We expect the kingdom to progress and to triumph over its enemies, like Levin, which is alive in a dead environment, but influences the whole environment.

Until the whole world has been influenced. Now, I don't believe in the conversion of the whole world. It might seem like I'm speaking very post-millennia right now.

That's not actually my position. I believe that the kingdom that Jesus establishes first coming is progressing and growing until it has had a dynamic impact on the whole world. That impact does not necessarily include the conversion of even the majority of people.

But it does mean that those who are his kingdom will have become all that he wants them to be and will have expanded as far as he wants them to expand until there's really no reason for him to wait any longer to come back and claim what has been captured for him by his soldiers, by his people. I don't expect for us to take it by military might. I don't expect us to take it through political power.

But I believe the preaching of the gospel, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe to the Jew first and also to the Greek. And the power of God is greater than any power on earth or in hell. And therefore, there's no reason to be doubtful that God's going to fulfill his promises along these lines.

Philippians 2, verses 10 through 11 says, Therefore, God is also highly exalted. Jesus made him king at his right hand and given him a name which is above every name, the

highest authority in the universe. That's already happened so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This is our manifesto. This is our mandate. Every knee should bow.

Every tongue should confess Jesus is Lord. That's nothing less than that is what we'll be satisfied with. Now, God might be satisfied to interrupt the thing before we get as far as we'd like to go.

I mean, I'd like to see everyone in the whole world get saved, but I don't see the Bible predicting that's going to happen. I think there's wheat and tares until the end. And when Jesus comes, the terrorists and the wheat will be separated and so forth.

But and the tares are not Christians. But I do believe that the wheat is going to grow to a greater maturity and that the impact of the kingdom on its environment and on the world at large will be greater. But our mandate is to see the the necessity of every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus is Lord.

I love this scripture. This is a passage that is quoted in, I think, is in Matthew chapter 12 applied to Jesus. It's Isaiah 42, verses one through four.

It says, Behold, my servant, that's Jesus, whom I uphold, my elect one in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

Wow, that'll be cool. He will not cry out nor raise his voice nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. He's not a street preacher.

He's not a rabble rouser. He's not one going up and stirring things up. He's it's a quiet movement like leaven in a lump of dough.

The gospel being preached from man to man, woman to woman, as people are converted, the Gentiles begin to be enlightened. It says a smoking fax, he will not quench. He will bring forth justice for truth.

He will not fail nor be discouraged. Sometimes I get discouraged, but I love reading this because he is not even discouraged. You ever get discouraged when you look at the state of our society or even of the church? It's kind of discouraging.

Well, he's not discouraged. He will not fail. He will not be discouraged.

He's got his plan and he's going to work his plan. He's going to work it through his people. And he's and it says until he has established justice in the earth.

And the coastlands shall wait for his law. There is a time coming when justice will be

established in the earth. And that is through whom? Through the servant who is not crying out.

He's not breaking bruised reeds or putting out smoking flax. He's not doing anything damaging to anybody. He's just bringing his life to people one person at a time, one heart at a time as they surrendered his lordship, they are changed and the world around them begins to be changed by that change in them.

And ultimately, he's going to bring justice to the world. Something that's very conspicuous by its absence in almost every society, but much more present than it used to be in the world. Some people say, I think the world's getting worse and worse all the time.

Well, you haven't studied history very much. The world is not getting worse and worse all the time. It's getting kind of worse here at this particular time, because it was so much better at one time, the influence of the gospel was more profound in this country and an earlier generation than it is in our generation.

But that's one of the normal fluctuations. You know, anyone ever bought gold or silver bullion? If you do, no one's confessing it, they've got it hiding. Okay, I get it.

I get it. I understand. Well, I've owned gold and silver bullion before.

And, and when you own it, you go on the internet every day to see is it up or is it down? Is it up or is it down? And you can get discouraged at times, because it'll spike up there and gold's way up there above \$700 an ounce. Say, wow, it's worth something now. And the next day it plummets down to, you know, under \$600.

And I think, lost \$100 per ounce just in one day. And then it'll, you know, hang around down there in the lower areas for a while, then it'll go up again and stuff. And you think, man, there's no obvious progress going on here.

It's just up and down and up and down. But if you pull up the chart for the last 12 months, you see it's going up and up and up and up. Sure, it's got its down, but doesn't go down as far as it used to be.

And it gains ground. If you pull up a chart of the price of gold over the past 10 years, it's, you know, it's gone essentially through the roof. And and yet, if you watch it in any small daily segment, it may go way down from where it was at the point, oh, no, you know, the bottom's falling out of the gold market.

Well, it's not. And we're living in a little segment of history. We're looking at our part of the world where the kingdom of God is taking a beating at the moment, partly due to the church being so compromised, frankly, and partly due to the power of the media and its and its desire to trample and discredit Christianity.

But don't worry, this is only a blip. If you pull back and look at the big picture of history, the chart's going up and up and up and up. More and more people are following Christ's justice, concepts of justice.

Even the atheists have concepts of justice. They don't realize they're pensioners upon the kingdom of God. They didn't know anything about justice until the Bible was given to the Bible was preached.

And now they've got ideas about justice, too. They don't know it's from God because they're blind. But the fact is, even though they're blind in general about God, they're still their sensitivity to being elevated.

Even an atheist doesn't think it's right to torture criminals. Well, that's a rather new concept in history. Even an atheist thinks that slavery is wrong, but that's an extremely new concept in history and has only taken hold in Christian lands.

So to speak, that's where Christianity has been influential. Let me give you this last illustration will be done here. I mentioned a similarity between David's kingdom last week and the kingdom of God.

That's an intentional type in the Bible. But you remember that David was anointed by Samuel, a prophet at his father's house in a more or less private ceremony. And the Bible says the spirit came on David and left Saul, the king who is ruling.

David became king. But Saul didn't acknowledge that, and most of the people of Israel didn't acknowledge that. At a much later date, all of Israel acknowledged David's king and he was coronated and he ruled the whole country.

But for an extensive period of time, we don't know how many years, but it seems like decades between the time he was anointed to be king in his father's home and the time that he actually reigned as king over the whole land of Israel. And everyone recognized the kingdom. He was persecuted.

He was obscure. He had to live in caves and dens. He was running from Saul from place to place.

Saul's armies were pursuing him. But you know what? There were people gathering with David. And if you don't know what kind of people gathered with him in first Samuel, 22 to it says everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt and everyone who was discontented gathered to him.

So he became captain over them. And there were about 400 men with him. Eventually, the number was 600.

But initially there were 400. The nation of Israel was still following Saul, but he wasn't

really the king anymore. They didn't know it, but some people did know that.

And they realized that David is God's king. Even Jonathan, the king's son recognized that. But these foremen, they made David their captain at a time where it was not very safe or popular to do that.

But when David came to power, they became his cabinet. These foremen became, you know, they had privileged positions in his kingdom because they were with him during his time of persecution. And Jesus Christ became king when his father anointed him.

I believe that his baptism, when the spirit came on him and his father said, this is my son in whom I'm well pleased. And at the Mount of Transfiguration, we said, this my son, hear him. This is the boss.

Now you follow what he says. And there have been a small number, a growing number, but still relatively small who have recognized and they've made Jesus their captain. They say, he's my king.

I don't care how unpopular it is. I don't care how many people want to kill me for it. Doesn't matter.

He's the king and he's my king. I'm going to follow him no matter what it costs. Eventually, his kingdom will be universally recognized at his coming.

And those who have been with him during the time of persecution and obscurity and humility and so forth will reign with him. If we endure, we will reign with him.