

COLOSSIANS
Glorious Transactions
Colossians 1:12b-14a

INTRODUCTION

When we hear many radio and TV preachers today, we might conclude that Christianity is a big, happy party lived in the power of the Holy Spirit with little or no conflict, struggle or warfare. In fact, some even say if we are struggling, fighting or warring as a Christian we are in sin, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Christian life is not a picnic but a persistent struggle with the world; it is not a tea party but a terrible battle with the flesh; it is not a game but a great fight with the devil. And the reason we are at war is because we Christians live in a spiritual kingdom diametrically opposed to Satan's kingdom of darkness. When we became Christians, God made some glorious transactions that placed us into a fourth dimension or an invisible kingdom where mighty spiritual acts are taking place.

Colossians 1:12-14 is part of a prayer the Apostle Paul made for the saints of the Colossian and Church. He prayed they might be filled with the knowledge or God's will for the purpose they might live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him. Then he gives four ways a Christian can please the Lord: 1) Bearing spiritual fruit; 2) growing in the knowledge of God; 3) Being strengthened with supernatural power to endure and show patience with joy and 4) Giving thanks to the Father. Thanks to the Father is to be given for three major transactions: 1) for the fact we shall inherit a future kingdom; 2) for the fact we have been rescued from the dominion of darkness and 3) for the fact we have been transferred into the kingdom of God's Son. Christians who please God are thinking about living in these spiritual realities daily and all these are made possible by the redemption accomplished by Christ.

Notice again Paul did not pray for building programs, increase in church membership, or bigger and better programs out for spiritual realities to become dominant in the minds of these Christians.

THE TRANSACTION INTO THE FUTURE KINGDOM (1:12b): *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.* The Colossian Christians were to thank their Heavenly Father that He qualified them to receive an inheritance. Notice carefully they were not qualified in themselves but God made them qualified when He saved them by His grace and put them in Christ. The inheritance is in the kingdom of light which is our eternal reward. Obviously this is a reference to the future kingdom of God to appear after the second coming of Christ. It will be a kingdom of light because there will be no sin, no night, no suffering, no tears, no trouble. It will be a kingdom of holiness, purity and perfection. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Notice once again who will possess this kingdom. It will be the "saints" - those saved by God's grace; those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and are set apart by God for worship, service and heaven. Only these will enter into the eternal kingdom.

In God's eyes, because there is no past, present or future with Him, Christians are already present in the future kingdom. Because of Christ's death for us, we hold the title deed to our future inheritance.

THE TRANSACTION OUT OF SATAN'S PRESENT KINGDOM (1:13a): *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness...* --The Colossian Christians were to thank God for being rescued out of Satan's power and kingdom.

Satan's Kingdom Is Now. The dominion, power, authority and tyranny of darkness refers to Satan and his demonic forces who have an evil kingdom and control this physical world at every level except those in the kingdom of Christ. ***“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*** (Eph. 6:11,12).

Satan's Kingdom Is Real. Satan is called the “god of this world” and he blinds the minds of all non-Christians without exception. ***“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*** (II Cor. 4:3,4). The Apostle John tells us this about the extent of the grip Satan has on the world. ***“We know we are children of God, and the whole world is under the control of the evil one”*** (I Jn. 5:19). Satan's task is to deceive the nations that they might not come to know Christ as the only Savior for the world. This is why we are told in John 3:19, ***“Light (Christ and His kingdom) has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”*** The non-Christian is in terrible bondage and blindness but does not know it. We would acknowledge fortune tellers, Satanic cults, seance seekers, drug abusers, bums and prostitutes may be influenced and even possessed by Satan. Yet, the whole world is under Satan's control - the dignified banker, the skilled surgeon, the brilliant scientist, the dedicated teacher, the popular politician, the happy, little baby in the crib and even the consecrated religious man - all are dominated, controlled by, influenced by and under the tyranny of the devil unless they are in Christ.

When the apostle Paul was explaining his mission to the Gentiles to Agrippa, he said what Christ had told him, ***“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”*** (Acts 26:17,18). Remember, my Christian friends, almost all of us in this room are Gentiles!

Satan's Kingdom Has Been And Will Be Defeated. Satan's kingdom was defeated by Christ at the Cross. The Bible says of this act, ***“The prince of the world has been condemned”*** (Jn. 16:11). Christ said, ***“The prince of the world is coming. He has no hold on me.”*** Jesus referring to His death said, ***“Now is the time for judgment on the world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”*** (Jn.12:31). Satan is alive on planet earth but he is not doing well. His doom is certain and His grip lessens as the kingdom of God increases in this world. He still seeks to devour Christians and tempt them, but Christians have the promise, ***“The One who is in you (Christ) is greater than the one (Satan) who is in the world.”*** (I Jn. 4:4). Christians need to be aware of the devil's schemes but they do not need to be afraid of him. He is defeated, he is reeling and he is lessening in power. Furthermore, we Christians are told right here in Colossians 1:13 that we have been rescued by God from the dominion, authority, power and tyranny of darkness. What a thought! We have been snatched, delivered, rescued, and transplanted into another kingdom, and we will never again feel comfortable, at ease, or at home in the kingdom of darkness. In fact, as Christians we will struggle with it until we die and go home to be with Christ and live perfectly in the kingdom of light.

THE TRANSAC'TION INTO CHRIST'S PRESENT KINGDOM (1:13b): *And brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,* --The Colossians (as all Christians) have been rescued out of Satan's kingdom and authority and have been translated, transferred or relocated in the kingdom of Christ. The Greek word for “brought” is a word well known in the ancient world. When one empire won a victory over another, it was the custom to take the population of the defeated country and transfer it lock, stock and barrel to the conqueror's land. Therefore, the Christian, lock, stock and barrel has been positionally put into the kingdom of Christ. Notice this kingdom was given by God the Father to His beloved Son. We conclude It is a kingdom with subjects and reigned over by Jesus Christ the Lord.

Christ's Kingdom Is Now. The kingdom Paul speaks of here is not the future kingdom of light but it is a present, spiritual, invisible kingdom. The invisible kingdom undergirds, surrounds, and interpenetrates the visible world in which we live. This invisible kingdom of Christ controls the visible world for it is unrestricted, unlimited and infinite. This is a kingdom which can be entered into now. ***“The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.”*** (Lk. 16:16); Christians are said to experience certain aspects of this kingdom now. ***“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.”*** (Rom 14:17). The visible world is filled with impossibilities but the invisible kingdom is filled with limitless possibilities. We should look away from a world filled with impossibilities to a kingdom filled with supernatural possibilities. Christians are commanded to seek this kingdom. Where is this kingdom? It is all around us in another dimension unknown to the human eye and not subject to the laws of science. Christians are commanded to seek this kingdom and reap physical blessings. ***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*** (Mat. 6:33).

Perhaps you remember the incident of Elisha and his servant in II Kings 6. They were in a city surrounded by the armies of Syria. The servant looked out and saw a vast army and felt the situation was hopeless (II Kgs. 6:15). Elisha comforted his servant by telling him there were more on Elisha's side than on Syria's side (II Kgs. 6:16). This undoubtedly perplexed the servant because with his physical senses he could plainly see they were outnumbered, and he probably thought Elisha was not playing with a full deck. Elisha prayed God would open the servant's eyes to the real spiritual world all about him and God did. Consequently, the servant saw the true spiritual world and chariots of fire around Elisha (II Kgs. 6:17). The spiritual world is more real than the physical world but the spiritual world can only be entered into by faith.

Christ's Kingdom Is Real. The spiritual kingdom, all about us, is more real than the physical world we experience with our five senses. This kingdom is the realm of invisible reality. In the invisible world of reality, things cannot be touched, seen, smelled, tasted or heard. These spiritual realities are not subject to the scrutiny of science nor are they available to the philosophies of men but they are real. In the realm of spiritual realities, lives can be changed, societies turned up side down and a world revolutionized. It comes as we live in the fourth dimension, the spiritual kingdom, the invisible world of reality, the realm of the supernatural. This invisible kingdom of reality is not like anything we understand in the physical world. We don't use carnal, human, rational means to survive in this kingdom. ***“Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.’”*** (Jn. 18:36). ***“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”*** (I Cor. 10:3,4).

New King. This kingdom of Christ belongs to Christ because the Father gave it to Him. In this kingdom Christ is King. He rules supreme. He reigns over all His subjects with love. His subjects are true Christians who obey their King.

New Birth. This kingdom can only be entered into by a spiritual new birth. Our Lord told Nicodemus, who was a very religious man but unsaved, ***“I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*** (Jn. 3:3). A man touched by the grace of God, having believed in Christ as Savior and Lord, is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, (Jn. 3:3). A man touched by the grace of God, having believed in Christ as Savior and Lord, is born again and is placed into the invisible kingdom. In the kingdom men and women and children have yielded all personal rights to the one and only true, sovereign Christ, Almighty God. Where once the Christian's master was Satan, now it is Christ.

New Constitution. In the invisible kingdom of reality, we live by a new constitution as citizens of the spiritual kingdom. That constitution is the Bible. The Bible is the foundation, the bedrock to understanding how the spiritual kingdom works.

New Way Of Operating. In the invisible kingdom of reality, we have a new modus operandi - a new way of doing things. Before we lived by sight alone but now we live by faith: ***“We live by faith, not by sight.”*** (II Cor. 5:7). Faith is the key to unlock the secrets of the kingdom. Hebrews 11:6 says, ***“And without faith it is impossible to please God...”*** By faith, the Christian breaks into the spiritual realm of reality where the supernatural dominates the natural. By faith we break into the unseen universe which lies behind the world of sense. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, ***“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen”*** (II Cor. 4:18). Moses lived constantly in this fourth dimension of the invisible reality when it is said of him in Hebrews 12:27, ***“He persevered because he saw him who is invisible.”*** How did Moses see God? Through the eyes of faith and not of sight. Faith unlocks the unbelievable mysteries of the spiritual kingdom to the Christian. Proverbs 3:5 says it well, ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”***

New Laws. Just as there are certain laws which govern the physical world so there are certain laws which govern the spiritual kingdom. These laws do not always follow our human laws of logic, and sometimes they don't make sense to our well-trained humanistic minds. But if a person operates on these laws, he will be blessed by God. Again Proverbs 3:5, ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”***

Law of Reciprocity. This law says, ***“Give and it will be given to you”*** (Lk. 6:38). This law says give unreservedly of yourself, your time, your talents, your spiritual gifts and your money and you shall receive back more than you ever gave in spiritual blessing and financial blessing. If you give on your job, in your community and in your church, you are going to be rewarded. If you are lazy, critical and fault finding, you will get this back as well. The world says, “Get all you can get for Number One.” God says, “Give all you can and you shall reap reward.” If a person is in financial trouble, the smartest thing he can do is to start giving money away. It doesn't make sense but God says, ***“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given you.”*** (Matt. 6:33).

Law of Use. From the Parable of the Talents we learn this principle, ***“For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him”*** (Matt 25:29). The law is simple: Whatever we have in talent, money, art, technical skills, athletic ability or whatever, if we don't use it in excellence for God and His kingdom, it shall diminish and/or be taken away from us. But if we use whatever we have in excellence for God's glory, we will have abundance. In other words, God is saying, “Do it my way even if you don't understand and you will be blessed.” The world says, “Do something well only if it is profitable and mediocrity is O.K. if you can get away with it.”

Law of Perseverance. The spiritual realities of the secret kingdom may not affect the visible world immediately. The Christian must persevere in what he is convinced God wants him to do, and when it comes, it will come through prayer. This is why Christ told His disciples, ***“They should always pray and not give up.”*** (Lk. 18:1). Jesus in another place said, ***“Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you”*** (Matt. 7:7). We are told that Christians ***“must go through many hardships to***

enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) Satan would discourage us and depress us but we Christians must push on, must not give up, must persevere and we will see the blessings of the spiritual kingdom be a reality in life. The world is honest and says, “I quit!” We Christians are more pious and say, “The Lord has shut the door.” Someone once said, “Winners never quit and quitters never win!”

Law of Responsibility. In Luke 12:48 we read, ***“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”*** Those who are given by God goods, ability, money, authority or fame have a responsibility that the less favored do not have. A failure to fulfill this responsibility brings much chaos to the visible world. With power comes more responsibility! With leadership comes more responsibility! With money comes more responsibility! With fame comes more responsibility!

Law of Greatness. In Matthew 18:26 our Lord taught His disciples, ***“...the greater of you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.”*** The point is obvious: if one wants to become great, he must be like a child and become a servant. In Matthew 23:11, our Lord said, ***“The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*** In the world, we are told, “Get to the top at all costs - lie, cheat, flatter, stomp on the rights and feelings of others - do anything to become king of the hill.” Jesus said that to get to the top one must take a lowly position as servant. When we learn to lead as servants, then greatness will be ours through the power of the invisible kingdom.

Law of Unity. Unity among Christians in the spiritual kingdom is essential and has an impact upon the visible world. Jesus said, ***“Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself cannot stand.”*** (Matt 12:25). Without internal unity within a group - family, church, business or nation - that group will soon collapse. This is why Christians are called upon to be one heart, one mind and one faith. Unity within the spiritual kingdom has a great impact for good in the visible world. However, disunity among Christians has devastating effects on the unsaved world.

Law of Miracles. Jesus said, ***“With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”*** (Mk. 10:27). God who exists in the fourth dimension, the spiritual kingdom often disrupts the natural order to accomplish His purposes with the miraculous. God is the only absolutely free person in the universe and is not bound even by His own creation. He can at anytime break into the natural order and do a miracle. Christians must be committed to the supernatural and believe God to do mighty works for His own glory. Today the world is sold out to naturalism but we Christians must be sold out to supernaturalism. As Christians, we will never see any miracles unless we believe in a supernatural working God. Miracles not only include healings but seeing God work providentially in what seem to be humanly impossible situations. Certainly no Christian should be frightened of any supernatural phenomenon because God releases the power of the secret kingdom at times.

Law of Dominion. In Genesis 1:27 it says of man, “...**fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.**” This verse tells us God wants man to have authority over the earth. He wants man to rule the way he was originally created to rule. Before the Fall of Adam, man experienced authority under God's sovereignty over everything and ruled to please God. After the Fall, man still had dominion but sin had entered in and man's ability to rule was tainted by sin and instead of ruling for God, man ruled for his own selfish ends. Christians today are redeemed men and women and have a potentially right understanding of how to rule in creation. The law of dominion says that all politics, all medicine, all business, all science, all education and even all religion should be brought under the Lordship of Christ in this world. This is the last thing Satan wants for this world and he will fight Christ and His followers to the bitter end. Yet, through the power of the invisible kingdom, Christians can progressively bring Christ's dominion to the earth (never perfectly) and this continues until the future kingdom of light is set up.

Christ's Kingdom Will Be Victorious. At the second coming of Christ, the present spiritual kingdom will be brought together with the future kingdom, and King Jesus will reign visible in all the universe: “**Then the end will come, when he (Christ) hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.**” (I Cor. 15:24,25). Christ's kingdom will win the war! Christ will be victorious! Christ's people will be more than conquerors!

CONCLUSION

We began this sermon by saying the Christian life is not a picnic, a tea party or a game. It is a struggle, a fight and a war! Why? Because we Christians, through the death of Christ, were rescued out of Satan's kingdom of darkness and transferred into Christ's kingdom.

Satan does not want the Christian to understand these glorious transactions. Satan does not want the Christian to begin to experience the power of the invisible kingdom. Satan does not want the Christian to operate on faith to release the power of the secret kingdom. So the battle rages even though Satan knows no true Christian can ever be his again because every Christian is a loyal subject of Christ in a new kingdom.

If you are a non-Christian, Satan does not want you to hear that you are in his grips and Christ can rescue you from his kingdom of darkness and tyranny. How can you be rescued? How can you be delivered? Through Christ who, in His death, judged Satan forever! You must trust in Christ as your Savior and bow to Him as your Lord to get into His kingdom. Jesus says to you today, “**I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**” (Jn. 3:3).