

Title: The Kingdom Of God

Text: John 3:3-6

Date: June 19, 2011 – Father’s Day

Place: Decatur Church of God

Theme: Packed Bags

Today we have recognized “fathers”. We should honor them but some have lived without honor. While our theme, packed bags, is a positive approach, too often, way too often, fathers have packed their bags and bailed on their families. That is not an honorable choice, conclusion, or action.

What should take place in our families is modeled for us in what the Bible calls “The Kingdom of God.”

Our theme, Packed Bags, has us considering the future. Where will the Lord take us?

Last week we examined our present relationship with Jesus. How does that affect our future?

First, let’s consider a kingdom in a land far, far away. Wait a minute that sounds like a fairy tale and I’m not talking about make believe. What is the Kingdom of God?

William Cox in “*Biblical Studies of Last Things*” says that God has a present kingdom. That kingdom is both new and at the same time old. It is new in that it took on a completely new and clearer manifestation at the first advent of our Lord; and yet it is old in that it existed long before our Lord ever came to earth in bodily form.”

I. This is an eternal kingdom.***Psalm 145:13***

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

- A. In both the OT and the NT the eternal kingdom was a spiritual kingdom.
- Made up of genuine followers of God
 - Those who had been born from above

John 3:3-6

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

⁴"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

* This kingdom should never be confused with the earthly material kingdom of national Israel that came to end in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Nor should we confuse it with the modern nation of Israel that is built upon beliefs that still reject the notion of Christ as the Messiah.

- B. We have a different entrance to God.
- Cox says "the people of the old covenant entered the kingdom by looking forward through faith to the Lamb of God."
 - He says, "we of the new covenant exercise faith in the finished work of the cross."

* Through the years I have discovered that words often have multiple meanings that can create confusion.

Am I "cool?" Am I "hot?"

Should I "rise up," or should I "get down?"

* Years ago I was preaching in Pennsylvania when a voice from the crowd yelled out, "You go man." I thought he wanted me to leave. Later I discovered that he liked what I was saying and that was a phrase of affirmation.

II. What do we mean by the word “kingdom?”

The word seems to be used in at least four distinct ways in the Bible.

- A. The kingdom of national Israel
 - i. Which had its beginning when Saul was made king over Israel
 - ii. Up to that time Israel had been a theocracy
 - iii. Came to a definite end in A.D. 70
 - iv. Our Lord himself in Matthew 23 and 24 predicted the event
 - v. It is a matter of historical record

- B. The kingdoms of this world
 - i. Will one day submit to the majesty of Christ
 - ii. Every knee will bow; every tongue will confess Him as Lord.

- C. The kingdom of Satan
 - i. Diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God
 - ii. The Lord’s coming will put down Satan
 - iii. Will bring Satan’s kingdom to an end.

- D. The kingdom of God
 - i. The only kingdom that will last forever.

* The first three were temporal and material. One of the three already came to an end and the other two have only a limited duration.

Daniel 2:44

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

III. The Eternal Kingdom was to be set up by the Messiah.

- A. The Messiah was to be a king.
- i. The king's kingdom was to appear with the king.
 - ii. The Bible nowhere pictures a king without his kingdom.
 - iii. There are no verses in the Bible speaking of a postpone-ment of the messianic kingdom.

* The Messiah was to be a Greater David and would sit upon a throne just as soon as he appeared in the world.

- B. The OT prophecies applied to the Lord's first coming.
- i. The angelic announcements of the birth of Christ (to say that these announcements referred to the second coming borders on the ridiculous)
 - ii. The Jews who accepted Jesus tried to crown their king (they literalized the prophecies but it showed that they looked for a king)
 - iii. The believing Jews were constantly addressing Jesus in the language of the kingdom.

* For example, on Palm Sunday, Jesus is addressed in language reserved for the messianic kingdom alone. And Jesus did not disclaim these titles.

IV. Daniel affirmed the kingdom.

Daniel 2:31-35

"You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.

³²The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. ³⁴While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. ³⁵Then the

iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

- A. The nations depicted in the statue:
 - a. Babylon
 - b. Medo-Persian
 - c. Greek
 - d. Rome
 - e. The Kingdom of Christ.

- B. The characteristics of those nations:
 - a. Four kingdoms, set up by men, God himself set up the fifth.
 - b. The fifth kingdom was a visible kingdom. It was to have subjects that reign with kingdom authority.
 - c. It was to be a progressive kingdom filling the whole earth. (grain of a mustard seed, small piece of leaven or yeast)
 - d. God's kingdom would be eternal.
 - e. The kingdom would be set up in the days of the fourth kingdom.

Daniel 2:44-45

⁴⁴"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

V. What is the kingdom?

- A. The most acceptable definition of the kingdom of God among evangelicals is “God reigning in the hearts of people.”
- i. This reign transcends time and space.
 - ii. This kingdom is eternal.

Col. 1:13

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

* George Ladd in “*Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God*” wrote, “When our Lord said at the beginning of His ministry that unless a man was born again he could not enter the Kingdom of God, I believe He meant that everyone who is born again has entered the Kingdom of God, and the new birth brings him into that Kingdom...”

- B. God’s eternal kingdom is spiritual in nature, and can be entered into only by means of new birth.

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

- C. There is but one kingdom for God’s people.
- i. Entrance is through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - ii. He is the door.

John 10:9

I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

Conclusion: Dads, are you a citizen of this kingdom? Have you entered through the gate, Jesus Christ? Friends, don’t miss it, the kingdom is calling out to you.