

Text: Rev. 11:15-19

Title: "The day Jesus says, 'My kingdom is of this world.'"

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Place: NBBC

Intro: During his fateful examination of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pilate asked the Savior, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus affirmed that He was their king, but he went on to explain, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:33-36).

The day we trusted Christ as our Savior, we were transferred from the domain of Satan, which is this world, into that kingdom of Christ, which is not a part of this world.

Paul remembered the day that happened to him during his trial before Agrippa in Acts 26. He explained to his examiner that the day he was transferred from one kingdom to the other, from this world to the one not of this world, was the day his purpose in life became to help others do the same: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in [Jesus]" (Acts 26:18).

What is wonderful about our passage this morning about the seventh trumpet is the fact that it describes the day that all this changes. Right now, Jesus's kingdom is not of this world. In this passage, the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign over it forever and ever (v. 15).

In his interview of Christ, the governor Pilate would go on to ask, "What is truth?" Our governors and senators and congressmen and judges have often taken the same position as Pilate of old – that truth does not exist and if it did it would not be discoverable anyway.

As members of a kingdom not of this world, we know that our King, Jesus Christ, is the way, the truth, and the life. The day is soon coming when His truth rules this world, and not one of its potentates will mockingly ask, "What is truth?" That question will have been definitively answered and asked no more. That will be an amazing day. I want us to notice five things our passage says about the amazing day Jesus says, "My kingdom is now of this world."

I. It will be the day the 7th trumpet sounds (v. 15).

Illustration: I have in my library a ten-volume work on Greek word studies that is called the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. The first four of those volumes were edited and compiled by a German NT scholar from the University of Tübingen named Gerhard Kittel. Prior to 1933, Kittel was known as an expert on the Judaism of the New Testament era. He published works that praised the Jewish people and their Talmud and that emphasized the Jewish roots of Christianity.

In 1933, however, Kittel joined the Nazi party and became an active supporter of Adolf Hitler. He allied himself with the German-Christian wing of German Protestantism, whose motto became, "The Swastika on our breasts, and the Cross in our hearts." The sect went on to call for the removal of the Old Testament from the Bible and to teach that Jesus was Aryan, not Jewish.

Application: I mention that sad piece of church history this morning because it demonstrates how corrupting to a church the desire to establish God's kingdom on earth through political means can be. Kittel's example has been repeated over and over.

The day Jesus says, "My kingdom is of this world," will be the day the 7th trumpet sounds at the end of the Great Tribulation period. It will be after the two witnesses of this chapter have finished their testimony and have ascended resurrected into heaven. It will be accomplished by the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ.

Today, believers should not expect the kingdoms of this world to be anything other than the kingdom of Satan. Satan once offered them to Jesus, who refused them in favor of obedience unto the cross to die for our sins. Satan often makes a similar offer to church leaders, and when they accept that offer rather than the path of suffering, they become corrupted.

The 7th trumpet will sound at the end of the Great Tribulation, and only then will the kingdoms of this world become a place where God and His Christ rule and reign. The kingdom of this world will be Satan's kingdom until then, our political maneuverings notwithstanding. Churches must stay out of politics, even in a constitutional republic like ours. God has ordained our government to be *of the people*, so we need to be involved as individual citizens, but God would never ordain a government *of the churches*. As a local church, we are part of a kingdom work that is not of this world.

Illustration: Cal Thomas is a fellow believer who learned some lessons in this area the hard way. He wrote an article

on Friday that addresses this very point titled, "The corruption of faith." He wrote: "When Jim Zeigler, the state auditor of Alabama, invoked the Bible to defend Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore against allegations that he had inappropriate contact with underage girls while single and in his 30s (which Moore has sort of denied), it signaled perhaps the final stage in the corruption of American evangelicalism." As a local church, we need to resist the temptation to think we can make the kingdoms of this world submit to Jesus Christ now. That will happen only when the seventh trumpet sounds.

II. It will be the day the 24 elders worship (vv. 16-17a).

Illustration: I read a good article by Peter Masters, who is the pastor of the church once pastored by Charles Spurgeon, the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. It is entitled, "New Calvinism - The Merger of Calvinism with Worldliness." In that article, Masters noted the following about much of what tries to pass for biblical worship these days:

"We are told of thunderous music, thousands of raised hands, 'Christian' hip-hop and rap lyrics (the examples seeming inept and awkward in construction) uniting the doctrines of grace with the immoral drug-induced musical forms of worldly culture."

Masters is old enough to remember a different kind of worship: "When I was a youngster and newly saved, it seemed as if the chief goal of all zealous Christians, whether Calvinistic or Arminian, was consecration. Sermons, books and conferences stressed this in the spirit of Romans 12.1-2, where the beseeching apostle calls believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice, and not to be conformed to this world. The heart was challenged and stirred. Christ was to

be Lord of one's life, and self must be surrendered on the altar of service for him."

Application: Few books of the Bible teach us more about the true nature of biblical worship than the book of Revelation. Note the elements of the worship of the 24 elders in this passage: humility, thanksgiving, and theology. Are these the elements of our worship this morning? The day Jesus says, "My kingdom is now of this world," will be the day these worldly forms of worship that proliferate in our day come to an abrupt end.

III. It will be the day God's enemies are defeated (vv. 17b-18a, c).

Illustration: Psalm 2 asks an important question: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing?"

Application: God's enemies seem very powerful today, but their claim to power is an empty and vain one. They are already defeated, for Jesus has taken in hand (perfect tense; v. 17b) His great power in His work with the cross and the tomb (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:27-33). Satan asked Him to grasp the kingdoms of this world another way - by bowing down and worshipping him - but Jesus was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, not viewing equality with God a thing to be grasped, but rather earning from His Father the exalted name that is above every name (Matt. 4:8-10; Phil. 2:6-11).

*To take in hand* often refers to one drawing his sword in Scripture. The cross and the tomb were the sword Jesus has taken in hand to defeat His enemies. He finished His gospel work. Satan, sin, and death are defeated foes. Their imagined success and dominance in rebellion against Him are vain. God is not mocked (Gal. 6:7).

IV. It will be the day God's servants are rewarded (v. 18b).

Illustration: Luke 19:11-27 gives some important advice to those who wait for the day that Jesus says, "My kingdom is now of this world" (note v. 11).

Application: Our Revelation text mentions three areas of Christian responsibility that will be rewarded in a special way in the coming kingdom:

(1) prophets (those who must prophesy in our day is every Bible-believer with New Testament truth – *all flesh*, Acts 2:17, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams");

(2) saints – those who live holy lives; and

(3) the ones who fear God's name.

Reward is not based on our smallness or greatness, but rather on our faithfulness at doing what Jesus does in Luke 19 at Zaccheus's house – seeking and saving those who are lost. This we do by sharing God's Word with them as prophets, by living holy lives before them as saints, and by fearing God's name rather than theirs. Will we be rewarded for faithfulness at these responsibilities in that day, when this world becomes our Lord's kingdom (Luke 19:20-26)?

V. It will be the day God's glory is revealed (v. 19).

Illustration: Saturday a few of the girls on my 5-6th grade basketball team discovered in new ways the glory of the game of basketball. One young lady stepped up to the top of the key after dribbling the ball down the court, threw her shot up in the air, and for the first time in her entire life saw

her shot during official competitive play go through the hoop as a perfect swish. When she saw the glory of that, she pumped her fists high in the air, grinned from-ear-to-ear, and jumped for the ceiling with excitement. Seeing something glorious like that in basketball can do that to you if you are on the right team.

Application: The day Jesus says, "My kingdom will now be of this world," will be the day God's glory is revealed. Jesus spoke of this day as a glorious day in Mark 8:38, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

God's shekinah glory is to be found in the holy of holies above the ark of the covenant. John gets a glimpse of God's glory in our passage, because he is describing a day when it will be seen like it has never been seen before. Today, we are not able to glimpse that glory with our eyes, but we need to see it by faith in what John tells us he saw. I can only imagine that John's two fists went up in the air, and he grinned from-ear-to-ear, and he leaped for the clouds, when he saw the glory of His God in this new way. We shall see it with our eyes someday soon. May we not be ashamed of Jesus and His words in this adulterous generation. How awful it would be for the Son of Man to be ashamed of us when He comes in His glory.

Conclusion: As we conclude, I would like to think again of Pilate and of Jesus. For whatever reason, Pilate had a sign made for the one he was handing over to be crucified, which was to be hung over Him on His cross. It said, "The King of the Jews." Bludgeoned and bleeding, the King suffered and died under that sign. One of the thieves hanging

next to Him read the sign. God so worked in this man's heart that he believed what the sign said, in spite of the cruelty of Calvary. He concluded that he had come to his end justly, but this man had done nothing amiss. He confessed this dying King as his Lord, and he cried out to Him, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus could say to him, "Today, you shall be with me in Paradise." Has the King heard your request to be remembered?

"A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction – the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*