



GOD'S KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

"14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. "

- 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1

God's Kingdom Is Not Of This World

It was recently as preparing a study guide for the Book of Ezekiel, in chapter eighteen that I understood racism had, in my mind, crossed a line. Every form of racism – critical race theory, intersectionality, systemic racism, White privilege, the oppressed and the oppressors, other issues coming out of the feminist agenda and homosexual agenda – had crossed a line from the world where bitterness and rancor, vengeance and hatred flourish into the kingdom; and Christian leaders had begun to pick up the worldly philosophy and carry it into the church and into Christian universities and seminaries into denominations. I said, at the time, that this was the most devastating thing I'd ever seen in my life in terms of tearing a nation apart, and it would be as well the most devastating thing to tear the church to shreds if it ever crossed that line into the kingdom of light.

Sadly, that happened, and that has done no small amount of damage to leaders, churches, relationships, schools, denominations; and the damage is far from over. It is now aided and abetted by the entire power structure of the United States of America; and unfortunately unwitting, undiscerning evangelicals got sucked into the philosophies behind all of this racism, and they've taken up that cause, and has created chaos with regard to the clarity of the gospel message, because they keep talking about it as if it was part of the gospel – which it is clearly not. Neither is it part of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God; it is just the latest version of human philosophy coming to fruition. Started about three hundred years ago with the Enlightenment. Some philosophers – perhaps the most well-known, Rousseau, who had a very simple agenda: eliminate God, Christianity – demonstrate that people are good, and it's society that makes them bad, overturn the biblical doctrine of human depravity. He was such a brilliant writer that he had an amazing impact. He was followed by people like Marx, who turned it toward economics; Freud, who turned it toward sex. And it was carried all the way down to our day today; and unfortunately the church has lacked discernment to understand when they've picked up the devil's causes.

Jesus said this, as you will remember in John 18, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be delivered over to the Jews; but as it is My kingdom is not of this world.”

There’s no connection between the kingdom of God and the world. We heard the echo, still hearing in our ears, of the fact that there is a distinction between the flesh and the spirit, as we saw in Romans chapter 8. Those in the flesh cannot please God. The flesh, the world, the kingdom of darkness – one in the same.

Then Jesus said, as we have noted in Luke 17, “The kingdom of God is in your midst.” The kingdom is here because the King is here, as we’ve been seeing. He’s here alive in His church. So His kingdom has nothing to do with this world; His kingdom is here, separate from the world. I want to help you understand that this morning in a very practical way, I hope. To begin with, turn to a familiar, and even beloved portion of Scripture, the sixteenth chapter of Matthew; and I want to begin with it. Illustration at the expense of our favorite punching bag apostle, Peter.

In Matthew 16:13, “When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets.’ But He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ,’ – the Messiah – ‘the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you’re Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.’” Wow, the highlight of Peter’s life. He was a spokesman for God. “Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who’s in heaven. You just spoke for God.”

Go down to verse 21: “From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You’re a stumbling block to Me; for you’re not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’” How in

the world in one moment can you be a spokesman for God and then a voice for Satan? When you cross the line from God's interests to man's. I mean, it couldn't be more clear.

"Get behind Me, Satan"? Hupage. "Go away, Satan." The exact verb He used in Matthew 4:10 when at the temptation He dismissed the devil himself. Strong, intense emotion. Fierce rebuke. Jesus speaks to Peter as the voice of Satan exactly the same way He spoke to Satan himself. The most devastating rebuke to a disciple: "You're in partnership with the devil because you picked up man's cause." This is crushing.

"Peter" means stone. "You are a rock, and now you are a stumbling stone. You're in the way of God's purposes. You're not setting your mind on God's interests." Same term that you hear in Colossians 3: "Set your mind on things above and not on things on the earth." This is the worst rebuke, and for a loving disciple who just hit the high point of his life, the low point must have been completely crushing.

The devil's way is to get people who confess the truth caught up in the devil's work, crossing a line from the kingdom of light back into the kingdom of darkness to get Christians to think that the kingdom of light can advance – listen – without suffering. "You don't need to go to the cross. We can get You what You need without the cross." And he was essentially saying to Jesus exactly what the devil had said: "I'll give You all the kingdoms of the world, just bow down to me." Peter's recycling that same temptation: "You don't need to die, there's another way. You don't need to suffer. You can make concessions. You can make compromises with the dark kingdom."

Peter's sin has been repeated incessantly through church history, all of church history, where people who declare that they believe the truth about Christ make alliances with Satan. Christians have been trying to use the world, the darkness, the flesh, the spiritually dead, to somehow help Jesus build His kingdom, and essentially they have struck deals with the devil. Every effort to advance the kingdom by means of a worldly scheme is an attempt to do God's work the devil's way, and to avoid –

listen carefully – suffering, to avoid rejection, to avoid hostility. And that’s exactly the temptation that the devil gave and that Peter recycled.

Did we forget that we lose our lives for the gospel? Did we forget that there’s no crown without a cross? That’s always the devil’s temptation: “Hey, we’ll advance the church by having a very powerful lobby group in Washington DC, manipulating politicians. We’ll advance the kingdom by cleverly developing some strategies for the church to win over the kingdom of darkness citizens, to pull them in. We’ll be very accepting and very tolerant, and we won’t talk about sin. We’ll devise some very worldly means to make them feel like this is normal life; this is going to be like a concert they went to, or just like a TED Talk they heard.” And all of it has one thing in mind: to avoid the suffering that comes with the confrontation of the gospel.

And while we know the gospel is good news, the first message of the gospel is, “You are a sinner and you are on your way to eternal hell.” This culture does not want to hear that. For three hundred years they’ve been building a philosophy that is now in full fruition that says people are basically good and they have a right to be whoever they are. And the fact is this is the philosophy in a nutshell.

The reason people are unfulfilled is because there is a historic White patriarchy who has created religion, which is false, since there is no God, and use that religion basically to oppress and incarcerate the people in general. They have created laws, given them religion as a covering, sort of sacred blanket, in order to prevent people from doing what they want to do: “We’ve got to throw all that off and let everybody whatever they want to be,” and that’s how you get to a hundred genders. It all started when they wanted to say man is good, it’s culture that makes him bad, and it’s the elite who rose to the top who created the culture that inhibits their sexual desires. All the architects of that – I don’t know if you’ve ever read Paul Johnson’s book called *The Intellectuals*. It’s a terrifying book; goes through all those philosophers and it shows how deviant they were in terms of their sexual conduct. They were wanting a philosophy, of course, that overthrows God and morality so they could live wretched lives. There was nothing noble about it.

How is it that the church has taken up that cause, cultural Marxism or whatever? Good intentions and a love for Christ prompting efforts to advance the kingdom by political lobbying by pragmatism, by social change, by shallow gospel, by entertainment, emotional manipulation, acceptance of sin, is to overthrow the purpose of God and to do the devil's work.

Our Lord's way is to stay on your side, the kingdom of light; and that is why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5, "We have to bring every thought captive" – to whom? – "to Christ." We have to smash these ideological fortifications raised up against the knowledge of God and liberate the people who are held captive by those things, and lead them, in every sense, to the knowledge of Christ.

John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, because the world is passing away." It has no future. James says, "Friendship with the world is enmity with God." He says one chapter earlier that the wisdom which is from below is demonic. Partnering with the devil is no positive strategy. The kingdom of light needs no help from the devil. The world with its corruption is on the way to destruction, offers us absolutely nothing.

How do we relate to the world separated from it? We, by compassion and mandate, we don't court it, we warn the world. We don't adopt its ideas, we don't take up its causes, we warn it. And if we end up taking up its causes, the compromises are totally destructive: destructive to the clarity of our message and destructive to the very life of the church, which is supposed to be unified in love. And the kingdom is righteousness, joy, and peace. Where is that in the current form of evangelicalism – righteousness, joy, and peace?

Evangelicalism has become like Peter, offering a better way, a better way than bold, compassionate proclamation of the gospel that offends the sinner; a better way that seeks popularity and acceptance, rather than hostility and rejection; a way that is very different from the way of our Lord. And by the way, the apostles turned the world upside-down with absolutely no help from it. The evil kingdom of darkness hates all that loves God and all that God loves. The kingdom of darkness loves all that God hates; it is no friend to the light.

Our evil rulers have exchanged the truth of God for lies, as we saw in Romans 1. It's a kingdom under the power of the ultimate liar, Satan. They worship the creature more than the Creator. They suppress the truth. They are under judgment. Godless rulers are many, all the way through human history; we saw that in the Old Testament. And in a sense, they're all previews of the final godless ruler, the Antichrist. That's why the New Testament says, "There are many antichrists."

There's a final one. Listen to how it describes him in Revelation 13. "I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems," – or crowns – "and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon" – who is Satan – "gave him" – who's the Antichrist – "the power and his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast," – some kind of false resurrection – "and they worshiped the dragon" – Satan – "because he gave his authority to the beast." – the Antichrist – "They worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?' It was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him." – half the tribulation – "And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

"And it was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear." We're headed toward the ultimate God-hater, the Antichrist. But every godless, Christ-hating ruler in human history has been a preview of the final Antichrist.

Two kingdoms: one is God's, the other is Satan's; one is marked by truth, the other by lies; one exalts Christ, the other exalts Antichrist. Those kingdoms cannot mix. And all that always goes wrong in history with the church is when the church

endeavors to do that. The Bible warns us about that, Ephesians chapter 5, verse 5: “For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an entrance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Do you see it? They’re immoral, impure, covetous, idolaters; no part in the kingdom of Christ and God. Don’t be deceived by them, they’re under divine wrath, they’re the sons of disobedience.

Verse 7: “Therefore do not be” – what? – “partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light” – That’s just so basic, isn’t it? Stay on your side – “(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth).” What are you doing over on the side of lies and deception and bitterness and anger and hatred and rancor and vengeance? What are you doing on that side? Rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic is useless.

In Colossians chapter 2, verse 6, “Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,” – walk in light, walk in Christ – “having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.” Oh, my. What characterizes the people who walk in Christ? They are overflowing with what? Gratitude. Does that seem like a dominating reality in the evangelical world, thankfulness? “See to it” – verse 8 – “that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than to Christ.” Don’t let anybody seduce you away from Christ. Chapter 3 of Colossians, verse 1, “You’ve been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things that are on earth.” That’s pretty simple, isn’t it?

Go down to verse 12: “You’ve been chosen of God, holy, beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience; bearing with one another, forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Let the word of

Christ richly dwell in you.” Verse 17: “Whatever you do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

That’s how the Christian life is to be lived. We’re not angry, we’re not hostile, we’re not rancorous, we’re not vengeful, we’re not screaming about inequities; we don’t live that way. We stay on the side of righteousness, peace, and joy, and gratitude, because our sins have been what? Forgiven. Who are you to go out and demand anything of anybody who have no right to the forgiveness God has given you?

But none of those is my text. Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 6. This is a death blow to compromise, 2 Corinthians chapter 6. I’m going to read it, starting in verse 14. See if this isn’t all confusing.

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial,” – or Satan – “or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we’re the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I’ll be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty.” Then verse 1: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

This is the most direct and powerful attack on compromise. Two kingdoms: one is marked by righteousness, light, Christ, believers, and God; the other is marked by lawlessness, darkness, Belial – who is Satan – unbelievers, and idols. There is no possibility of those two coming together in any common cause that has any spiritual or eternal significance, no possibility, none whatsoever. Now one kingdom is old, another is new; one is earthly, another is heavenly; one is deadly, the other is life-giving; one is material, the other is spiritual; one is lying, the other is truthful.

So the command – go back to verse 14: “Do not be bound together with unbelievers.” You say, “Does that mean if you’re married to an unbeliever, divorce them?” No, Paul dealt with that in chapter 7. “If you’re married to an unbeliever, you stay with them.”

So, “Well, does that mean that we become monastics and we go live in a cave?” No. No. Paul actually says in this very same letter that he became all things to all men that he might win some. And Jesus, in John 17, prayed to the Father, “Father, I don’t ask that You take them out of the world, I ask that You keep them from the Evil One. They have to be here to fulfill the Great Commission. Don’t let them get seduced by Satan. Don’t let them get pulled over into the kingdom of darkness.”

I was listening to a pastor who was reciting some of the current issues in the Lutheran church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and his heart was broken because it was basically under the control of lesbians and transgender people. How does that happen? It doesn’t happen all of a sudden, it happens by long sequence of small compromises.

Don’t be bound together. This comes from Deuteronomy 22. This is most interesting prescription that God gave to Israel, very practical one – listen to this – Deuteronomy 22. He’s talking about all kinds of laws, agriculture. He’s talking about donkeys and oxen and clothes. And down in verse 10, he says, “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.” That’s just pretty practical. Try to hook up a donkey and an ox to the same cart? They have two different natures, they have two different gaits, two different temperaments. That’s a prohibition.

“You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.” They can’t function together in a common effort; and that is what’s behind this statement. You can’t bring the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light together in any common cause. You can’t pick up the world’s causes and link them to the divine cause and mandate of the gospel.

In Jeremiah chapter 2, there’s an indictment of Israel. God says this: “I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, the love of your betrothals, your following

after Me in the wilderness, through a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first of His harvest. All who are of it became guilty; evil came upon them,” declares the Lord. “All who ate of it” – rather – became guilty; and evil came upon them,” declares the Lord. Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord, ‘What injustice did your fathers find in Me, that they went far from Me? Why did you turn? It was all so good in the beginning. Why did you turn? Why did you walk after emptiness and become empty?’” They didn’t say, “Where is the Lord who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought and of deep darkness to a land that no one crossed and where no man dwelt?”

“I brought you into the fruitful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But you came and defiled My land, and My inheritance you made an abomination. The priests didn’t say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ and those who handle the law; but they didn’t know Me. The rulers transgressed against Me, the prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after things that did not profit.”

Verse 13, here’s the problem: “My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” Who does that? What kind of folly is that? That’s what they did. God was not enough, they had to make all kinds of forays into the darkness.

All Satan ever wants to do is disrupt the work of God; is that right? Are we unclear about that? Do you think he wants to help? And Satan wants to disrupt the work of God, according to what Scripture says, two ways: one, by joining the church, by sowing tares among the wheat, Matthew 13; two, by seducing the church to join the world. And the people of God are constantly warned against that.

Listen to Romans 16:17, “I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.” Stay away from divisive people who are doing things that do not fit biblical doctrine. “Such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the

unsuspecting. For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I'm rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. Don't worry about Satan, the god of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." You don't want him as an ally, and you don't need to fear him either.

Currently, turning the church into a racist, feminist, homosexual battleground by picking up the philosophies of the darkness is a violation of this simple command. The kingdom of light joining the bitter, vengeful, graceless philosophy, godless philosophy spawned out of three hundred years ago of God-hating, Christ-rejecting, anti-family, anti-Christian atheists, who were driven by sexual perversion. Bringing the kingdom of light into any connection to that is unthinkable, unthinkable.

But they say people are basically good, and Christianity denies that; and that has to be overturned. People need to know they're good and they should be able to do anything they want to do; and it's only the bad people who got into power and made laws against all sexual behavior. Man should be free because, basically, he's good. Let him do whatever he wants; don't restrain him. That's what religion has done. We need to get rid of religion. That's the bottom line difference at the start in the gospel. We say man is basically what? Evil. In the kingdom of darkness, man is basically good.

Listen to Mark. This is really indisputable, verse 18 of chapter 7: "Are you so lacking in understanding? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him? His problem is not outside, because it doesn't go into his heart, but into his stomach and is eliminated. (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He was saying, 'That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.'" The problem is not what somebody did to your ancestors, the problem is you. It's you. And when Christians give up that point they cut the gospel off at its very start.

“God looked at the earth,” – in Genesis 6 – “and said, ‘Nothing but evil continually.’” They had a completely different view of humanity in the kingdom of darkness, that man is basically good, and so he ought to be able to do whatever he wants. And the kingdom of light has had too much influence, and it’s taken away freedom. “We’re going to get rid of the kingdom of light; we’re going to get rid of all of it, every bit of it; get it out of our culture, and we’re going to become obsessed with sex, not just at a personal level and pornography, but at a political level, so that all you want to talk about is the rights of people who are perverted sexually because they’ve overthrown God – at least they think they have.

Now Paul supports the command in verse 14 by looking into three areas, which will be obvious: the past, the present, and the future. But let me just start with the past. The very verb “bound together” is drawn out of that Deuteronomy 22:10 passage about the ox and the donkey; and that reminds us prohibitions in the Old Testament with regard to Israel. I read you from Jeremiah. But let me just remind you of things that God said to Israel about being bound together with unbelievers.

So let’s look at the past. Let’s go back, for example, to the twenty-third chapter of Exodus; we’ll just look at verses 31 and 32, the end of the chapter: “I’ll fix your boundary in the Promised Land from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.” That’s pretty serious. God knew the impact of Pagans living side-by-side with the Jewish people, and so He told them, “You need to drive them out; this is your land. I gave it to Abraham in a covenant promise. You need to drive them out.” Verse 32, “You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods.” He wanted them driven out because they pose such a threat to the integrity of His people.

In the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, again, just after replacing the law: “Watch yourselves” – verse 12, Exodus 34:12 – “that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you’re going, or it will become a snare in your midst. But rather, you’re to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim.” – false worship location – “But rather, you are to tear them down, for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous,

is a jealous God – otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods. You have no business making any alliance with the enemy.”

In seventh chapter of Deuteronomy – skipping some other scriptures for time’s sake – chapter 7 begins, “When the Lord your God brings you into the land,” – now they were on the edge of the land ready to go in – “the land where you’re entering to possess it, clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, and the Lord is going to take care of them to bring you in, and when the Lord Your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you will utterly destroy them,” – wow, that’s how dangerous they were – “utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, show no favor to them. Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; and then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire. For you are a holy people,” – a separate people – “holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

“The Lord did not set His love on you or choose you because you were more in number than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you; and He brought you here with His mighty hand out of Egypt. Make no alliance. Go to war with them; eliminate them.”

Isaiah picks up the same cry a number of places in his prophecy. God gave them laws that kept them socially disconnected. They had clothing laws. They had dietary laws. They had calendar laws. They had all kinds of laws and prescriptions of all phases of life, which made it – those were designed, not for some spiritual benefit;

those were designed to make it very, very difficult for them to interact with other people.

One of the cries that led to the Holocaust in Europe was the fact that the Jews never amalgamated. They never mingled with the other populations of people. And Hitler used them as a threat, as if they were plotting people's destruction. People didn't interact with them; and this was part of the legacy of that original prescription that was intended to help them stay separate from the nations who worshiped idols. So, don't be bound together with unbelievers isn't something new; it was very clear in the past.

What about the present? Well, look what He says immediately after that in the present tense, speaking to us: "What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness? What fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we're the temple of the living God."

In the present tense you have these five comparisons: "What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?" Partnership, the word *metochē*, only appears here; but another form of it appears in Luke chapter 5, verse 7, speaking of Peter's business of fishing, the partners in his business. Another form of it is used in Hebrews to speak of our union with Christ. So he's saying, "You don't make common union with righteousness and lawlessness."

And lawlessness is a characteristic of unbelievers, they are lawless by definition. Matthew's familiar passage, rejecting the religious people where our Lord says, "Many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, we did this and we did that.' And I'll say, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you because of your lawless deeds.'" There's no partnership possible between the lawless and the righteous.

First John 3, verses 4 through 7, is a helpful text to enforce this: "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin." Our Lord came to take away sin. Sin is lawlessness. You are righteous; what have you to do with the

lawless? “No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil’s sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for the purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”

In verse 10, he says, “The children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: one who doesn’t practice righteousness is not of God, nor one who doesn’t love his brother.” Oh? “One who doesn’t love his brother.” The hatred being spewn out in the race world is not the love of the children of God.

Secondly, he says, “What fellowship has light with darkness?” Lawlessness talked about behavior, this talks more about character. “What fellowship has light with darkness?” What *koinōnia*? Light is truth and virtue, darkness is lies and sin. Children of light and children of the darkness together in a common cause that is supposed to have any redemptive value? Impossible. There’s no harmony possible because of behavior. There’s no harmony possible because of character. Light and dark are mutually exclusive.

Thirdly, he says let’s go from the behavior to the character to the power: “What harmony,” – by the way, the word “harmony” is *sumphōnēsis* – what symphony is there between Christ and Belial?” – which is an Old Testament name used about a dozen times for Satan. Really? That is a very jarring statement. “What harmony between Christ and Satan?” None. It is unthinkable that Satan would be sought to aid in the cause of Christ. We have no connection in behavior or character or power or means. What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? We operate by faith, they operate by sight. We operate by trusting the power of God, they operate by manipulating people. We operate in the spirit, they operate in the flesh.

We have nothing in common in behavior, character, power, means, and lastly, identity. That’s a big word today, isn’t it? You get to invent your own identity. Okay, here’s ours: “What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you’re the temple of God.” That’s who we are. Anybody asks you, you can tell them. I know they can’t see it, but that’s who you are.

What? “Know you not that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit?” right, 1 Corinthians 6. John 14:20, Jesus said, “I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” You don’t go to a temple because you are the temple of God – personally, yes, and collectively. “And in Christ there’s neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, bond or free; we’re all one.”

We have all these radical identities: racial identity, sexual identity, gender identity. Our identity personally is as the temple of God, and collectively as the temple of God. And the word “temple” here is naos, and it refers to the Holy of Holies, not just the courtyard. When we say we’re the temple of God, we are essentially a living ark of the covenant inside the Holy of Holies where God dwells. If a priest went in there unprepared, he would be killed by God instantaneously.

You don’t allow the kingdom of darkness to join with the temple of God. That sounds like what we read in 1 Samuel 4, where they took the ark of the covenant and put it in the temple to Dagon. And God says, “I’m not going to allow that,” and crushed that idol.

Ezekiel has a vision in the eighth chapter – I won’t take time to look at it. But he had a vision in the eighth chapter, and the vision was God took him into the temple, and he found in the temple all kinds of idols, everywhere, in the temple of God. And God pronounced to Ichabod, “The glory has departed.” And there’s a vision there of the glory coming up out of the temple over the door, up into the sky, out over the hills and disappeared. The glory of God departed when the people of God made alliances with Satan.

We are God’s temple, and His temple is holy. Don’t be bound together with unbelievers. Don’t be bound together with those that are lawless. Don’t be bound together with those of the darkness. Don’t be bound together with the children of Satan. Don’t be bound together with idolators in any common cause that is supposed to have some spiritual purpose and effect. You cannot advance the kingdom of God that way. Come out from them and be separate.

Now that takes us to the future. This is very powerful. Just a few minutes to set it before you. “We’re the temple of the living God, just as God said,” – verse 16 – ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

This is not a call to salvation, no, because he just said we’re the temple, right? We’re the temple of God, so we’re believers. And he calls us in chapter 7, verse 1, “Beloved.” But He says, “I will, I will, I will, I will,” four times; and essentially, those are drawn from a mosaic of Old Testament scriptures, “I will, I will, I will, I will”; and then in chapter 7, verse 1, he call those promises, promises. It’s a mosaic of Old Testament promises to the people of God.

But there is coming a day – listen – when God will walk with His people, and He will be their God, and they will be His people, when He will welcome them and be a father to them, and they will be sons and daughters to Him. What is he talking about? He’s talking about the coming kingdom. Jeremiah 24, “For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I’ll bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and plant them. I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.” That’s a kingdom promise.

Jeremiah 31:33, “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says the Lord, “I will put My law within them and in their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Another promise of the coming salvation of Israel and the kingdom.

Ezekiel 37, verses 26 and 27: “I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them, And I will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.” This is a promise of the coming kingdom, the millennial reign of Christ.

In Matthew it's called the regeneration. In Acts it's called the times of refreshing and the times of restitution. Paul calls it the Day of Christ. But it's the kingdom.

Turn to Revelation, and let's go to the kingdom, chapter 19: "After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.' And a second time they said, 'Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever.'"

This is the destruction that has been described in 17 and 18, the destruction of the world, both its religion and its economy. And so, "They are saying, 'Hallelujah!' and worshiping God who sits on the throne. And a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants,' – or slaves – 'you who fear Him, small and great.' And I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.'"

And then in verse 11, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, on His head are many diadems; He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He's clothed with a robe dipped in blood, His name is called The Word of God. And the armies who are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," – saints and angels – "were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'"

Go to chapter 20: "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; threw him into the abyss, shut it, sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed," – that's the length of

the coming earthly kingdom of Christ when He returns – “then he would be released for a little time.

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were complete. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” That’s the fulfillment of the promised kingdom.

Now let’s go back to our text for just a couple more minutes. The words of the apostle Paul, as I said, are drawn from a mosaic of Old Testament texts. I don’t want to go through all of them, but just to remind you that the kingdom was promised in the Old Testament, and it was also described – and it’s very important to know this.

For example, Isaiah said that the kingdom would be global, it’d be worldwide, and Christ the Messiah would reign over everything and everyone. Every knee would bow to Yahweh. Every person would worship. All nations would see His glory. In the kingdom, there will be perfect justice and fairness, righteousness and truth, perfect peace, tranquility, no war, economic blessing, abundant reign, longer sunlight, long life, safety, joy. Daniel says the same thing. But Daniel also adds that Christ will come to be the Lord of that kingdom, and Zechariah says, “And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

This may be news to some post-millennialists; but we’re not bringing the kingdom. I heard an evangelical leader say this last week that we have an urban mandate to redeem the cities. I don’t find that in the Bible. We have a gospel mandate to warn them of destruction, because that’s what’s coming in Revelation 18. Our job is not to redeem society, our job is to give the gospel so that one sinner at a time can come into the kingdom and arrive one day in that kingdom, where there is perfect

righteousness and peace. Again, what's the point of rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic, this world is going down; and evil men grow worse and worse.

Based on God's words in the past, based upon His distinction between us and the world in the present and based upon His kingdom promises, verse 17 then repeats the mandate: "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate." That is taken out of Isaiah 52:11, "Depart, depart, come out, be separate."

"Do not touch what is unclean; and I'll welcome you into My kingdom in time. And when that kingdom comes I'll be a father to you, and you'll be sons and daughters to Me." That's drawn really out of, I think, 1 Chronicles 17. In 1 Chronicles 17, you have the promise of the kingdom; and it's so beautiful, I want to read it to you. First Chronicles 17, and I'll read maybe starting at verse 7.

"Now, therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader over My people Israel. I've been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I'll make you a name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth. I'll appoint a place for My people Israel, and plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and not be moved again; and the wicked will not waste them anymore as formerly, even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. And I will subdue all their enemies. And moreover, I tell you that the Lord will build a house for you. When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers,' – he says to David – 'that I will set up one of your descendants' – the Messiah – 'after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father and he shall be My son.'" And in the wonderful words of the apostle Paul, he extends the promise of God to the Messiah to be his son to all who are in Christ to become sons and daughters of the King in the kingdom. The promise of God to the king as a son is extended to all of us as sons and daughters.

We're headed for the kingdom, folks. Aren't you glad? So one response is acceptable, verse 1: "Therefore, having these promises," – Do I need to say it? You can't fix the world – "beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh

and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Don’t make alliances with the world. Get rid of filthiness, molusmos. That’s only here in the New Testament; but in other literature we find that it had to do with unholy alliances. Don’t make unholy alliances.

“Perfecting holiness,” it’s the verb epiteleō, which means it’s eschatological, it’s in the final sense. We’re headed toward perfect holiness, perfect worship. Live your life in that direction. We need no alliances with Satan to advance the kingdom. We don’t have a calling to make people more socially acceptable on their way to eternal hell. Our message is, “Repent, and believe the gospel.”

So we left Peter looking pretty bad. We need to recover Peter, so let’s turn to 1 Peter chapter 1. Peter was brash, but Peter was also teachable. Chapter 1, verse 13, 1 Peter. This is his letter; this is what he wants to say to us: “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Get that future perspective, right? “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it’s written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

“If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in” – whom? – “God.”

That’s a good word, Peter. Get your focus in the right place, right, because chapter 2, verse 9, “You are a chosen race, you’re a royal priesthood, you’re a holy nation, you’re a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

That's what we do. We don't take up the world's go nowhere causes. We understand there are issues in life. They are never going to be resolved until, on a global sense, the King arrives to fix everything, and reign in righteousness and justice. In the meantime, we can't do anything in the spiritual sense except bring the gospel that transforms the sinner.

You were once not a people, you're now the people of God. You had not received mercy, now you've received mercy. "Behold, I urge you as aliens and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." What's the day of visitation? The day when God visits in judgment.

You live a life proclaiming the excellencies of the One who called you out of darkness into His light. You live a life of excellent behavior, and people will see that life, hear that proclamation; and one day when God visits, they will be taken with you into glory. That's why we're here.