



"To forsake Christ for the world, is to leave a treasure for a trifle, eternity for a moment, reality for a shadow."

—William Jenkyn

05-Sep-14

A Heavenly Homeland (Part Two)

In Part One, we saw from Paul's letter to the Colossians that those whom [God](#) has delivered from the power of darkness have been conveyed into His Son's Kingdom, and are now citizens of that heavenly realm ([Colossians 1:13](#)). The congregation at Colossae was being troubled by people who likely once had spiritual understanding but who had become enemies of Christ, having chosen to focus on the physical and temporal rather than the benefits and obligations of their heavenly citizenship.

In Matthew 6, part of the [Sermon on the Mount](#), [Jesus](#) uses several illustrations to contrast the things of earth and the things of heaven—and to point out where our focus should be:

- Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ([Matthew 6:19-21](#))
- No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. ([Matthew 6:24](#))
- Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the [kingdom of God](#) and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ([Matthew 6:31-33](#))

We will focus—we will expend our time and effort—on what we value. One focus—one "master," as it were—will always take precedence, and Christ is telling us that the heavenly Master is immeasurably more significant.

This same principle applies to citizenship. Among the governments of men, it is possible for a man to be a legal citizen of more than one nation. Similarly, each one of us has an earthly citizenship in

addition to a heavenly citizenship. But what Jesus taught regarding treasures and mammon also applies to our citizenships: One of them must take precedence over the other, and He urges—commands—us to seek His Kingdom above all else.

This does not mean that He calls on us to renounce our earthly citizenship. In [Acts 22:22-29](#), when Paul was about to be scourged, he boldly announced the fact that he was a Roman citizen. He made lawful use of a benefit of that earthly citizenship, that it was illegal to scourge a Roman. Yet, Paul's life and teachings plainly display that his *heavenly* citizenship was the master. He suffered and even went to his death for the sake of that homeland, just as most of Christ's apostles did.

In his letter to the Gentile Galatians, Paul reassures them that physical distinctions do not carry over into Christ:

For you are all sons of God through [faith](#) in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ([Galatians 3:26-28](#); see [Colossians 3:9-11](#))

Physical distinctions such as ethnicity and earthly citizenship are not factors within the heavenly homeland. To amplify Paul's contrasts here, in the heavenly Kingdom—into which we have already been spiritually conveyed—there is neither American, nor Canadian. There is neither French, nor Briton. There is neither South African, nor Zambian. Neither Trinidadian, nor Filipino. Neither Australian nor Namibian. Neither German nor Dutch. We "are all one in Christ Jesus," and *His* Kingdom supersedes *all* of the aspects of the lands of our birth or residence.

The fact is that we who are citizens of heaven are merely pilgrims and sojourners here on earth, passing through on our way to the Kingdom of God. We are *observers* rather than participants, learning and practicing God's way of life but not yet tasked with righting the wrongs of [the world](#).

We do not wage physical warfare on behalf of our earthly homelands. Right now, our warfare is only spiritual (see [Ephesians 6:12](#)). When our King descends to establish His [Kingdom on earth](#), then we will fight (see [Revelation 19:14](#); [Zechariah 14:5](#); [John 18:36](#)). We likewise do not get involved in politics, because even though the governments are *allowed* by God and even authorized by Him (see [Romans 13:1](#)), they are all in fundamental opposition to Him. It would be profoundly contradictory for citizens of heaven to become involved in the politics of governments that our King will overthrow when He returns!

We serve either the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) or the kingdoms of men. We cannot serve two masters.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Heavenly Citizenship \(Part 2\)](#)

by Martin G. Collins

Martin Collins warns that we have an obligation to respond to our calling, ensuring our heavenly citizenship, no longer living on a passport, but having a birth certificate in our heavenly kingdom.

The church is our state, kingdom, and temple, and places us in the body of Jesus Christ's bride, citizens in God's eternal kingdom. Our state or kingdom is unique from all others. Citizens are a people bound together by a common allegiance to a leader. In the church, we have a common allegiance to Jesus Christ and His laws, as well as our brethren in this spiritual body. We also have special privileges, such as a birth certificate in Heaven, a membership in God's family, and a home in the New Jerusalem, entitling us to enjoy every spiritual blessing, endless in magnitude. God the Father and Jesus Christ have a very special regard for us, freely giving us all things or all the resources of His Kingdom, sharing them freely among all of us. As members of His family, we have the privilege and the responsibility to bear one another's burdens. We have a right to access to the King, taking our case directly to God, who will personally intervene on our behalf and will receive His protection as though we were the pupil of His eye. As citizens of God's kingdom, we have responsibilities, and should have patriotic pride, placing country before self, having signed ourselves away to its service at our baptism. After we are citizens of God's Kingdom, we are strangers to the world and should not mix in its political affairs, but serve as ambassadors or representatives of our King, always defending His Laws and customs, willing to die for them, if necessary.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Sixth Commandment \(Part 2\): War! \(1997\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

A reason lies behind the devastating wars that have plagued mankind since the beginning. John Ritenbaugh gives the uncomplicated solution: Men have broken the sixth commandment!

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
