



"History, in general, only informs us what bad government is."
—Thomas Jefferson

12-Sep-14

A Heavenly Homeland (Part Three)

In Parts One and Two, we have found that, in Christ—in His heavenly Kingdom—our earthly citizenships are essentially inconsequential by comparison. Another aspect of this relates to what Paul writes in [Philippians 3:19](#) about the enemies of Christ who "set their minds on earthly things" or "side with earthly things." One area in which we can evaluate how much our heavenly Kingdom means to us is how much we set our minds on earthly kingdoms.

Certainly, we *are* pilgrims here on earth ([1 Peter 2:11](#)), and any pilgrim cannot help but be aware of—and even dismayed by—what is transpiring within the lands of his sojourn. But there comes a point when we can go beyond merely observing or even "[sighing and crying](#)" over [sin](#) ([Ezekiel 9:4](#)), becoming caught up in the details and the vain machinations of the governments of men. Without realizing it, our heavenly citizenship may take second-place to our observations on the passing scene.

This is especially relevant to us now, because the whole world is in turmoil. All of the nations are experiencing some measure of crisis, and it affects us—*even though* we are citizens of heaven. We see our nations heading in very troubling directions, and thoughts have crossed all of our minds about how

close we must be to the end. In the United States especially, we are seeing the government pursue increasingly radical policies, making us shake our heads and wonder how much longer this can continue before something cracks. When the nations of our birth are headed toward Hades in a hand-basket, it can shake and rile us.

Yet, the bottom line is that all of this *must* pass away. That is a core point of the gospel—that a truly *good* Kingdom will be established to put an end to the mad rule of man. Empires will crumble. "Jacob" will be troubled ([Jeremiah 30:7](#)). Any nations left standing at Christ's [second coming](#) will be subjugated. During such times of turmoil, we need to remind ourselves that our hope and confidence were never in the capabilities of man in the first place ([Psalm 118:8](#)). Our trust is not in a perfect human government ([Psalm 118:9](#)), which we know is impossible.

On the other hand, we already have an unshakable Kingdom. We are subjects of a government immune to greed, corruption, subversion, power-grabs, pragmatism, and megalomania. We are part of a Kingdom that is inherently stable, which continually works toward [peace](#) and *real* unity. Our Kingdom has the means and the will to protect us from foes real and imagined; from foes spiritual and foes physical. We live under a Kingdom that knows how to provide in perfect proportion and in the perfect time—supplying neither too much, nor too little, neither too early, nor too late. We have a King who was willing to become an earthen vessel like us and to be crushed so that we might be reconciled to Him and to our spiritual Father.

The kingdoms of men are hardly worth a second glance in comparison. Even so, we still have the daily choice of whether to set our minds on the eternal things above, or to set them on the transitory insanity here below. Paul instructs the brethren in Colossae where their—and our—focus should be:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of [God](#). Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died [at [baptism](#)], and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ([Colossians 3: 1-3](#))

Now, even though we are part of an eternal, superior Kingdom, it does not follow that we will be immune from difficulty, trials, or even persecution. Yet, *because of* our heavenly citizenship, those difficulties and trials have significance—real meaning and purpose. They have God-ordained parameters and limits. Our King does not allow us to be tested beyond what we can bear ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)). He regulates the duration and the intensity of the trials we endure.

Our Kingdom is not one that shields us from all suffering or from the consequences of all of our actions. Rather, it is a Kingdom, a government, that truly has our eternal best interests in mind, so, instead of giving us an easy life, it guides us *through* a life that will prepare us to inherit the Kingdom in its fullness. An easy life would leave us unfit for that position.

A major part we have to play within this process is to keep our heavenly citizenship at the forefront of our minds. In [Philippians 3:18-19](#), Paul writes about some who apparently held that citizenship but let it go because it did not mean enough to them. [The world](#) around them—with all of its entertainments, cultures, diversions, and politics—was *more real* to them than the Kingdom into which God had conveyed them ([Colossians 1:13](#)). They lost sight of their King—of what their King is willing to provide and what He requires. They forgot about their status as earthly representatives of a heavenly homeland, one that is supposed to be their community and the source of instruction in how to conduct their lives. Whether in one brash move or through gradual neglect, they renounced their heavenly citizenship in favor of a world that is passing away.

We stand in the same place that they once did and have the same choice to make. We make that choice by what we choose to focus on—what we set our minds on, what we give our attention to. This world is passing away, and all the governments and politics and structures of men will fall as mankind is forced to admit that he is not able to govern himself apart from God. We may be able to *observe* it, and it may *affect* us, but we do not have to be caught up in it or weighed down by that destruction.

We have a heavenly homeland already and the opportunity to inherit that Kingdom when the King returns. This is the citizenship aspect of [the gospel](#)

of the Kingdom—which is *very* good news for us. If this is what we want, we *will* set our minds on it.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[God Is Preparing Us For the Kingdom](#)

by Kim Myers

Do you remember the days when the Church of God was one organization, and we all thought we were on the same page, having the complex pieces of prophecy all figured out, enjoying each other's company or fellowship, and generally having a wonderful time in the Church? Then, we seemed to take trials and tests more in stride than we do today, in the wake of the diaspora of the greater Church of God. Today, the scattered greater Church of God is experiencing more overwhelming trials than ever before, indicating that God seems to be preparing to wrap things up, preparing His people for the end time. When we become Spirit beings, all the trials we have gone through will not matter anymore. King David's life was one continuous trial even though he was a man after God's own heart. God's faithfulness to David led him through every one of his trials, including exile and threats of murder from King Saul, civil war, and the grave sin of adultery and murder. David was quick to repent and God forgave him, even though the consequences—including family and political upheaval—followed David through the rest of his life. David was faithful to God through all these trials. In the Millennium, King David receives a reward of leadership as the result of passing these trials. Similarly, we must stay loyal to God through our trials. God is preparing us, just as He prepared King David, for the Kingdom of God.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Road to the Kingdom](#)

by Mike Ford

In many places in Scripture, God promises to guide us along the godly path. Also within the pages of the Bible—our main source of information about spiritual matters—are the details about the way we are to conduct our lives. Mike Ford shows the steps we should take when faced with trials, problems and decisions.

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