

Learn to Pray, Part 4

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October 14, 2007

Well, we're back to Luke 11, so if you have your Bibles, you can turn there. We are looking at a section of Scripture [that] teaches us how to pray.

Let's say that on some Saturday, you have off [and] you go someplace for lunch—one of those little restaurants that allows you to sit out there in front by the street. You're eating there, relaxing on a day off, and up drives this big, black limo. A chauffer gets out and goes around to the other side of the car, opens the door, and a very important[-looking] man in a black suit [with] a big, shiny briefcase comes walking right up to you. [He] says, "May I sit down? I have a question I want to ask you."

You say, "Well, sure, fine." So he starts fiddling with the lock on the briefcase, gets it open, spins the briefcase around, and he lets you look inside [at the] bundles of \$100 bills.

He says, "All the money in this suitcase is yours if you can answer this one question: When Jesus, in Luke 11:2, said to pray to the Father, 'Your kingdom come,' what kingdom was He talking about?" Now, the question is: Would you get to go home with the money? That is the question.

What's interesting is when you start looking at the Bible, the "kingdom" is all over the place. The Bible is constantly talking about kingdoms, yet so many Christians have no idea what the kingdom is. They'd go home [after that meeting at the restaurant] with their lunch in them, [and] that's it. I find that interesting. I wonder to myself, "What goes through a person's mind

when he reads ‘kingdom’ here, and ‘kingdom’ there, and ‘kingdom’ there. What’s going through your mind? Anything? Does anything go through there? What’s happening in there? Why is it that so many Christians seem to be so ignorant of one of the most frequently mentioned topics in all the Bible?”

The primary problem is preachers. Most preachers don’t preach on the kingdom because it’s very complex. It’s a very difficult subject to explain, especially in a short period of time. You see, there’s always this problem. You’re a preacher, and you say to yourself, “I know what I’m going to do! I’m going to do a series.” Well, by the time you get to the end of the series, everybody [has] forgot[ten] what happened at the beginning. It’s like examining a tree a millimeter at a time—you start at the roots, and you slowly work up [the tree], and you get to the top of the tree, and people [say], “Man, I see that little piece of that leaf at the top, but what are we looking at again?” It’s very hard to get a big picture of the kingdom, [in] a condensed form, in a way that people can grasp. For that reason, pastors stay away from the kingdom theme.

For instance, in my library, I have three volumes, three tomes, [that are] 700 pages each, [printed] in very fine, microscopic, eye-straining print, [and] written in very technical language. [Those books are] the life work of a man named George Peters. [The] three volumes [are] entitled *The Theocratic Kingdom*, and [they are] all about the kingdom. You [might] look at those three volumes, and say to yourself, “You know, I don’t need to know the kingdom that well. [It’s] not that important to me in my life.” There are some simpler works [available] on the kingdom and prophecy, and I’ve told the bookstore to order those. If I have piqued your interest this morning, you can take some time to digest some kingdom information at a slower rate than what I am going to give you this morning. What I am going to do this morning is something I tell my seminary students never to do, and that’s give people too much information. Only a madman would try to cover the kingdom in one Sunday, so I’m applying for the title. At the risk of creating

great confusion in your mind, I am going to give you too much information. I'm just confessing at the beginning.

But I want to give you the big picture, and I can't give you the big picture without at least surveying the details. I am going to do my best to make it simple, and yet, if you're sitting there, thinking, "Man this is too much," you can always log on to our Website, go to classes, go to the class on prophecy, and get handouts, and diagrams, and listen to messages [in which] I go through it really slow[ly].¹ But for this morning, we're eating the whole elephant in one fell swoop.

Look at Luke 11. We know that in verses 1–13, Jesus is talking about a bunch of issues related to prayer. In the beginning of the chapter, He gives what is called the "Disciples' Prayer," or [the] "Lord's Prayer." We learned from verse 1 that Jesus was faithful to pray, that His disciples wanted to [learn how to] pray, and that we should be like Jesus [and the disciples]—diligent to pray, and wanting to learn how to pray. Then in verses 2–4 we began to look at the Disciples' Prayer. Jesus says [that] the first thing we are to do is to know [to whom we are to] pray: the Father. [The word used for "Father" is] a very intimate, endearing term, almost like "dearest Daddy." We are to approach God as His children, and talk to Him because He wants us to talk to Him. Then, the first, primary, high-priority prayer request is that God's name, the Father's name, would be hallowed, which we learned means that it is to be revered [and] respected. Basically, it lives out as glorify[ing] God in all that you say or do. You're basically asking God to make sure He gets all the glory, which is the whole purpose for everything existing. So we saw that.

Look at Luke 11, and we're just going to read verses 1–2. It says:

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." And He

¹http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/teaching.aspx/prophecy_2005

said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.’”

At the risk of committing sermonic suicide, I am going to inflict you with too much information. I’m sorry about this, but it’s just the way it is. I have four little questions we are going to ask and answer. The answers are somewhat complex, and increasingly so. So, at the beginning, I’m going to go fast, and at the end I’m going to go slower because [at] the beginning we’re just getting to the place to where we need to be to talk about “Your kingdom come.” So, get ready. Get lucid. Get ready to absorb.

The first question [is]: What is “the kingdom”? Pretty basic, huh? Let’s start off with the basics. If you’re going to pray, “Your kingdom come,” you should probably know what you’re praying for. Well, a “kingdom” must have four components. [They are]: [first], a ruler—that’s pretty clear. Second, a kingdom must have an area, a territory, a sphere of dominion. That’s pretty easy. [Third], a kingdom must have subjects—people ruled over. Finally, a kingdom must have the exercise of the king’s authority. He must be actively exercising his power and authority. [If] you have that, you’ve got yourself a kingdom. OK, now we know what a kingdom is. We know that we’re praying to the Father, asking the Father that His kingdom come, which means that we’re praying for the Father’s kingdom.

Now, just to give you an example of that, [let’s look at] 1 Chronicles 29:11–12. You don’t need to turn there; I’ll just read it. This is one of those texts that has all four of those elements in it. Let me point them out. I’ll read these two verses. David is praying, and he says: “Yours, O LORD,” there’s the ruler, “is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself” there’s the exercise of the ruler—“You exalt Yourself”—“as head over all.” There’s the territory—God rules over everything, all. “Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all,” there’s the territory again, “and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to

strengthen everyone.” There’s the [mention of] subjects. So, you’ve got the king, the territory, the exercise of the rule, and the subjects—those are the four components that create a kingdom.

Now that we know what a kingdom is, we need to ask ourselves: What is the “Father’s kingdom”? Because if we’re praying for “Your kingdom come,” and we’re praying to the Father, [then] we’re praying for the Father’s kingdom to come. So, really, what is the Father’s kingdom? When we look at this, and we do a little search in the New Testament and try [to] find other places where the Father’s kingdom is mentioned, we begin to discover some interesting things. As we search through the Bible, we find out that there’s more than just one kingdom mentioned. There are even kingdoms that people see in the Bible that I don’t see there. And so, I want to talk about six different kingdoms that have been proposed so that you can understand just a little bit about the different kinds, so when you’re reading your Bible, [and] you come across the term, [you] don’t just assume they all mean the same thing.

[One]: The first kingdom is what is called “God’s universal kingdom.” This is a pretty easy one to understand. [The concept is] basically [that] God rules everything—heaven, earth, [and] all they contain. For instance, Psalm 103:19 says: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.” So, in other words, in one respect, God has a universal kingdom over all things. Bingo. Next one.

[Two]: The next one is a little bit scarier just because [of] the term [by which] they call it. I’m going to throw out the term here, but it’s easy to understand; it’s not too complex. It’s called the “theocratic government,” or “theocratic monarchy” kingdom. In the word “theocratic,” *theos* is “God” in the Greek, and so “theocratic” means “a God-ruled” something. God is ruling. So, if you have a theocratic government, it is a God-ruled government. A theocratic monarchy is God ruling through a king. We can look back in Israel’s history, and we know that God wrote His law, gave [Israel] the sacrificial system, and He basically ruled His people through the sacrificial system. [It was established] that as long as they obeyed the Word of

God, then God was having His say through the government system. That would be a theocratic government. Then, when David, who was a godly king, [ruled], David was told by God what to do, and then David did it. So, God was ruling the nation of Israel through the godly king David. That is a theocratic monarchy—that's not too difficult [to understand] either.

[Three]: Then, we enter into some fog. This is when we get to another kind of kingdom that people see in the Bible that's called the "spiritual kingdom." It's never really called that anywhere [in the Bible], but different verses seem to indicate that there may be a kind of spiritual kingdom comprised of all believers from Adam until the end of the age. It's kind of a fellowship of all believers. Think of it as the totality of all believers comprising a spiritual kingdom. For instance, turn to Colossians 1. I'm just going to give you one verse here. There are not a lot of verses [that discuss this spiritual kingdom], but there are a few [to which proponents of this concept] like to turn. [The verse in Colossians 1] is one of them because it seems to be very clear and can be understood in a couple ways.

But, let me just give it to you as they would describe it, and then I'll tell you what I think about that. [In] Colossians 1:13, Paul writes this, speaking to believers: "For He," that is, God, "rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." Here, unbelievers are described as being rescued, when they become believers, from this domain, this kingdom, of darkness—the kingdom ruled by Satan, the god of this world, when they are "held captive by Satan to do his will" [see 2 Timothy 2:26]. They are transferred to, Paul says, "the kingdom of His beloved Son," which you would call the kingdom of Christ, since that's "His beloved Son." You could understand why people would say, "Well, there is some kind of kingdom happening here, because this text here," and there [are] a few others, "says that we have been, upon faith in Christ, transferred from one kingdom to another. That's what the text clearly says."

Yet it could be said that both Christ and Satan [share a] dual kingdom. Some people would say, "I don't know about the spiritual kingdom thing here because where's the territory? If Satan is ruling now on earth, and

Satan is the god of this world, and the earth is Satan's territory, then where is the territory of the spiritual kingdom? Sure, we can say that God is ruling the kingdom, or Christ is ruling the kingdom, and, yes, we could say that believers are submitting to Him, but where is the territory?" Well, it could be that there is dual rule over the same territory. For instance, we already know that God is ruler over everything, which includes the earth, and so Satan, though he is the god of this world and ruling the evil world system, has a kingdom underneath the overall kingdom of God, and we could just say that Christ is ruling through believers here on earth at the same time Satan is ruling unbelievers. There's kind of a dual-kingdom thing going on at the same time.

Now, to me, that just doesn't work very [well]. Granted, we are literally kingdom saints when we come to Christ. That is, we're saints who will inherit the kingdom. Christ is literally our King, and Christ is literally exercising authority over believers, now, through His Word, through the Church. But the debated question is: Are believers kingdom saints waiting for the kingdom of Christ, [which] they will certainly inherit, or are they actually now in a spiritual kingdom waiting for a future kingdom, when Christ will reign on earth? That's the issue. For instance, the Bible sometimes speaks of things as already having occurred, or as a present reality, which aren't yet fulfilled. For instance, if you go through Isaiah 53, the great prophecy of Jesus' death, you remember what it says: "And He *was* led like a lamb to the slaughter" [see Isaiah 53:7, emphasis added] and "He *was* crushed" [53:5, emphasis added]. It speaks of the death of Christ as what? Past, though it hadn't happened yet.

Ephesians 2:6 says [that] He has "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and [yet] here you all are in your pew[s]. What are you doing here? I thought you were in heaven with Jesus. Well, some say, "No, that's talking about [how] we are right now sharing the glory that Christ has in His exaltation." That's true, but it says [that] *we're* "seated. . . with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" now. And yet, here we are. How'd that happen? Well, an explanation of that

is that when God makes a promise, His promises are so sure, so definitive, so absolute and infallible that when God makes a promise and it becomes yours, then it's as good as already having happened. And so, a lot of times the Scriptures speak in that way. So, it could just be that in Colossians, Paul is saying, "Yes, you were of Satan's domain; yes, when believing in the gospel your membership was transferred from that kingdom to the new kingdom, the kingdom which you are in training for here on earth, and which will eventually be yours for certain in the future." Now, if you want to believe in a spiritual kingdom, fine. I just think of us as kingdom-saints-in-training here now, [preparing] for the future kingdom. But, it's not a huge deal.

[Four]: Now we get into even a more slippery kingdom idea. This is the fourth kind of kingdom that, if you read books [on this subject], you'll discover, and that is the "mystery kingdom." Sounds pretty fun, doesn't it? Very sleuthy: the mystery kingdom. Do you remember when Jesus, in Matthew 13, gave all those parables? In Matthew [13:]10–11, the disciples come up to Jesus, and they say, "Why are you speaking to them in parables?" They're thinking to themselves, "If I wanted somebody to know something, I would just tell him straight out. I wouldn't be telling him all of these parables." [Do] you remember what Jesus said? "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted" [13:11]. Some see that as saying, "There is this group of people from the time of Jesus' rejection until the Rapture [who] exist in a spiritual, mystical, mystery kingdom. These people get in on the mysteries of the kingdom of God."

They would also maybe quote Matthew 21:43, [which is] in the parable of the landowner. If you remember, Jesus talks about the landowner who rents out his vineyard to some people to take care of it, and when he sends his servants [to check on the work], they kill them; he sends more servants, they kill them; he sends his son, they kill him. The servants are representative of the prophets, the son is representative of Jesus, and Jesus then says to the Jewish leaders, "So, what do you think will happen when that king

comes back with his army?” The Jews say, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end” [21:41]. Then Jesus says this: “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” [21:43]. [The proponents of the “mystery kingdom” concept] say, “See? The reason Jesus started talking in parables is because He was entering into this mystery kingdom age, this age when, after being rejected, [He] was beginning to turn the kingdom over to a select group. In those mysteries were mysteries like the knowledge that the Messiah would be crucified, that the Church Age would begin, that we would then have this time period when God would primarily reach out to the Gentiles, and [then] that would end at the Rapture. That whole time period is a mystery.”

That very well could be, but I just don’t see it. I think that it’s better to understand Matthew 13:10–11 as just saying, “To you believers has been granted to know the mysteries and to them it has not,” because even Gentiles today don’t understand the mysteries of the kingdom [and] don’t understand the parables even though they’re Gentiles. I think when Jesus said “The kingdom of God would be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruit of it,” all He was saying [was that] before this, the Jews were primarily being offered the kingdom, and now [it’s] going to the Gentiles. Well, we know the Church still had plenty of Jews, Jews still are coming to the Lord. There are Jews in this room who know the Lord, and so, I think it’s best to just take it that way. I don’t really see this whole mystery kingdom idea. If you want to [believe it], that’s fine. If you want to see the spiritual kingdom, that’s fine, but I don’t see the mystery kingdom.

Five: [The next kingdom we’re going to look at is] the “eternal kingdom,” or “eternal state.” This is a pretty easy one, too. This [kingdom occurs] after everything happens in prophecy, the whole book of Revelation is played out, Jesus comes back to earth, He rules and reigns for 1,000 years, the White Throne Judgment happens, and then [we] enter into this eternal state, this eternal kingdom. That’s easy.

Now, let me just summarize [what we’ve covered so far] for you. None of this relates to our text yet, directly, but this is all background so you

can understand our text. One: There is a universal kingdom [in which] God rules over everything. [Two]: There is a theocratic government or monarchy, which is God ruling through a government or a king to do His will on earth. [Three]: There is also a spiritual kingdom, maybe, that some [believe] represents all the saints from Adam to the end of time. [They believe that] all believers are in this spiritual pool called the spiritual kingdom. [Four]: Others see a mystery kingdom, [which goes] from the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders until the Rapture of the Church. [Five]: Then there is the eternal kingdom, which would be that kingdom that goes on forever and ever after prophecy is played out.

Now, the good thing is [that] none of these things relate to what Jesus is telling us to pray for. Phew. I know what you're thinking: "My note page is filled up." Well, save some space; you're going to need it. OK. Then there is the final—[sixth]—kingdom, which is the kingdom I want to talk about now. I found ten synonyms for it, but even though there are ten synonyms, it's just one thing, so relax. [One]: Sometimes, it's just called "the kingdom," like in our text [in Luke 11]. That's pretty simple. [Two]: Sometimes it is called the "kingdom of God." [Three]: Sometimes it is called the "kingdom of heaven." [Four]: Sometimes it is called the "kingdom of Christ," or the "kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ," or some combination of those words. Five: Sometimes it is called the "Davidic kingdom" because it is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, [which said] that David would have a descendant who would rule and reign forever.

[Six]: Sometimes it is called the "millennial kingdom," "millennium" meaning 1,000—the thousand-year kingdom. That is the duration of the kingdom. [Seven]: Sometimes it is called the "mediatorial kingdom." You [may] think, "Man, [why] do theologians think up words like this to confuse people?" A "mediator" is one who goes between two people—Jesus is the mediator between God and man. Jesus comes back, He sets up His kingdom, and since He is a man and God, He's the perfect mediator because He's both God and man, and He rules His kingdom, mediating that kingdom, or ruling in that kingdom. [Eight]: Sometimes, it is called the

“Messianic kingdom,” because Jesus is the Messiah, and it’s His kingdom. [Nine]: Sometimes it’s called the “theocratic kingdom,” because Jesus, again, is God and He rules in a God-ruled government, and is a God-man, so He fits perfectly with the theocratic idea also. [Ten]: Finally, some people call it “Christ’s earthly kingdom,” to make a distinction between the spiritual kingdom and the mystery kingdom, which are also kind of Christ’s. So, there you have it. All of that is the kingdom of Jesus coming to earth, ruling, and reigning for 1,000 years.

But the [second] question is: How do we know our text in Luke 11 is speaking of the kingdom of Christ when He comes back to rule and reign for 1,000 years? How do we know that? Well, first, He can’t be talking about the universal kingdom because it’s already here. Second, He can’t be talking about the spiritual kingdom because it already started with Adam and all of the believers since then. Third, He can’t be talking about the mystery kingdom because I don’t think it exists. So, it narrows us down to really, two kingdoms—either the kingdom of Christ, or the eternal kingdom. Since the kingdom of Christ is the first in sequence, we can assume that He’s talking about that, since He’s praying—you remember what Matthew said [in Matthew 6:10]—“Your kingdom come,” and then Matthew adds that extra phrase in the Disciples’ Prayer, “Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.” When Christ establishes His earthly kingdom that will be the first time God’s will was done “on earth as it is in heaven.”

Second, when He says [to] pray, “Father, Your kingdom come,” He’s talking about the Father’s kingdom. There’s only one other place in the New Testament where Jesus actually mentions the Father’s kingdom, and that is in the upper room in Matthew 26:29, where He is instituting the Lord’s supper. He says, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” Well, when does that happen? [It happens] when Jesus comes back to earth to set up His kingdom on earth, His thousand-year kingdom. In the parallel passage [about] the upper room [in Luke 22:18], Jesus says, “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” This

is great! Now we know that “the kingdom of My Father” is the kingdom of God and that both of them are the kingdom of Christ when He comes to establish His reign on earth, physically, bodily ruling and reigning from Jerusalem. That is just a great help.

Now we know what we’re praying for. For instance, in Ephesians 5:5, Paul says: “For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” He uses both terms there: Christ and God. So we’ve got it down now. So, the question [of] “What kingdom are we talking about?” is [answered]. So, Jesus says, “I want you to pray that I come back to earth and set up My millennial, thousand-year, Messianic, theocratic kingdom of the Father. OK? Pray that.”

[A subtext of that] question is: Are you doing that? Think about this. If the highest priority of prayer is to pray that God’s name be hallowed, that He be glorified in everything, and the second highest priority of prayer that Jesus says—Jesus is giving us the model prayer, [saying], “Here’s the *most* important thing, here’s the *second most* important thing”—is that “My kingdom come,” the question is: Is the thing that you pray about, second to the glory of God, that Jesus’ kingdom would come? Is it even tenth on the list? We need to pray this. Jesus says we need to pray for His kingdom to come. It should be [a] regular part of our prayer list, and we’re going to find out why later, at the end [of this sermon]. We need, as believers, [to] be asking the Father to have Jesus come back and set up His kingdom. We should long for that, just like we long for God to be glorified, because that will bring great glory to God.

Moving on. Third question: Who is involved in the kingdom? We’ve answered the question “What is the kingdom?” and then we’ve looked at the different kinds of kingdoms and found out what kingdom [for which] Jesus is asking us to pray. Now, we want to talk about who is involved in the kingdom. Well, it’s not Satan or his demons. They are not going to be there. How do we know that? Revelation 20:1–3, talking about what

happens during this kingdom time period, this thousand-year reign of Christ [says]:

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; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

Satan and all his demons are in the pit for 1,000 years, so they're not going to be in the kingdom. Who is going to be in the kingdom? Well, two categories of people, excluding the holy angels. First of all (you're going to have to follow me here, it's going to be a little complex), at the end of the Church Age, the Rapture happens, and when the Rapture happens, believers are caught up together to be with the Lord in the air and given glorified bodies [see 1 Thessalonians 4:17]. All of the believers who have died are resurrected, those who are alive will be caught up, and we are then glorified with Christ. When Christ returns [at the Second Coming], we return with Him, and we rule and reign with Him. The question is: Over who[m]? You see, when the Rapture happens, all of the believers are caught up and taken away, so only unbelievers remain on earth. When the Second Coming happens, all of the unbelievers are taken away, and only believers remain.

And now, if you're asking, "Well, how is that if [believers are] all taken and [unbelievers are] all left?" [It is] because during the seven-year Tribulation, many Jews and Gentiles will come to Christ. After the Rapture, we enter into this period of Tribulation, and at that time, the antichrist rises to power, there is great judgment brought upon the earth, many come to Christ, and when Jesus comes back, those mortals, those believers, who are

alive on earth when Jesus returns enter into the kingdom of Christ as mortals. Those [people] will be in the kingdom. We will be glorified and we will be ruling and reigning over those mortals.

If you're thinking to yourself, "But where does it tell us about this Rapture thing?" Well, the first text that mentions it is 1 Corinthians 15:51–52. The whole chapter is about the resurrection, and Paul tells us something really cool at the end. He says: "Let me just let you in on a little mystery, a little secret here that you need to know." Whenever Paul uses the term "mystery," he's saying, "I'm going to reveal something now that's new and super cool." He says this: "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep," that is, we're not all going to die, "but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." Now, that is cool! Here you are, you're going through your life, and you're in a traffic jam on the freeway, and all of a sudden, "snap," you're with Christ, glorified. Oh! Wouldn't that be cool? [You would] just leave your car down there and let somebody else deal with it. They can have it! Yeah! [It's] the Rapture, the catching away.

But you're saying, "Well, that doesn't give a lot of detail." No, but Paul does give more detail in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. Paul is letting the Thessalonians know that they have not missed the day of the Lord [because] false teachers had come in, and said, "You missed it! You missed the [Rapture]." [Paul] says, "No, you didn't. If you went through that, you would know because you would be with Jesus in glorified bodies." This is what he says, starting in verse 13:

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

He's saying [that] when God comes back to earth, He is going to bring with Him those who are resurrected, who have fallen asleep in Jesus. That is, believers. Verse 15: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord," this is not the Second Coming, this is the coming of the Lord for His Church, "will not precede those who have fallen asleep," those who have died in Jesus. [Verse 16 continues]:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Oh, man, that is cool! I mean, [it will happen] all of a sudden, it can happen [at] any moment, any time. Christ can't come back [for the Second Coming] right now because we have to go through the Tribulation, but at any time He can come back to Rapture out the Church. That is what is called the "doctrine of imminence." So, at any time, Christ can come back, and we will be caught up to be with the Lord forever. When Jesus returns to earth, what's going to happen is [that] we're going to be with [Him] and He's going to give us assignments so that we're ruling with Him over those people who enter in and multiply during His thousand-year reign, those people who came to Christ during the Tribulation, or "Tribulation saints."

Paul, speaking to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:12, says: "If we endure, we will also reign with Him." Is that cool, or what? Who is it [that] reigns? What kind of people reign? Kings, queens, princes, [and] princesses [rule]. When you come to know Christ as your Savior, you are adopted into the family of God, and believe me, if there was ever any royalty, it's God, and now you're part of God's family, which makes you royalty. Therefore, you reign. In Revelation 2:26, Jesus says to the church of Thyatira, "He who

overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, *to him I will give authority over the nations.*” That’s you, if you know Christ! Think about that. You [might be] saying, “Man, I don’t know how to rule nations,” [but] you will.

In Revelation 5:10, the elders and living creatures are singing a new song about those redeemed by the blood of Christ, and they sing: “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” So, you’re not only kings and queens, you’re also *priestly* kings and queens. In Revelation 20:4 and 6, speaking of what happens after the Tribulation right before the kingdom of Christ is established on earth, John says:

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.

They reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [Verse 6 continues]: “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 about as clear as you can get. So, who is going to be in the kingdom? Jesus is going to be in the kingdom. Satan and his demons are *not* going to be there. Glorified believers will be ruling and reigning with Christ, and those who came to Christ during the Tribulation will enter into the Tribulation and there they will be ruled over by us.

OK, I want you to see if you can all get this stuck in your head. [As I was preparing this sermon, I wondered] how I [could] get [you] to do this. [So,] we’re going to do a little prophetic arts and crafts. Get out a pen [and] a

piece of paper. Try [to] find a piece of paper that you can draw [a] long line on. Turn the paper sideways. I don't care what you do, [just] find any kind of piece of paper. If you have a blank page in your Bible and you want to try to do this, [go ahead]. We're going for the longest line you can [make], and we're going to write small. When I say "small," I mean small. We're going to pack a lot of data in here. I don't want to hear [complaints] at the end because you ran out of space. I'm warning you right now, we're going to put some information in here. We're going to give you a little prophetic timeline.

So, draw yourself a line the width of your paper. To the far left, above the line, draw a little cross. A little cross, and right above it, write, maybe even at an angle, or wherever it fits—maybe below it—"Death of Christ." OK? So, now you should have a line, and at the far left, "Death of Christ" [written there] with a little cross to symbolize that. Immediately to the right, and very close to [the cross], write "Church Age." To the right of "Church Age," draw a little arrow pointing up from the line, and label that "Rapture." Then, to the right of the little arrow pointing up, labeled "Rapture," try and write this in as small a space as you can—maybe some above the line, maybe some below, maybe abbreviated—"Seven-Year Tribulation," or "Trib," maybe. Then, to the right of that, right after the "Seven-Year Trib," draw a little arrow pointing down toward the line, and above that, write—and you might want to do "2nd" here—"Second Coming."

Now, come on, follow me here. Try and get this right. I don't want to see any bad drawings. All of these will be checked and graded. I want you to draw another arrow in the shape of an arc connecting the top of the arrow pointing up and then arc it over to the arrow pointing down, arcing over through the seven-year Tribulation—a little, tiny arc there, a little arrow. So, you see the Rapture pointing arrow up, and then you have the Second Coming arrow down, and another arrow, [arced], connecting the two. I'll explain it in a minute. Then, to the right of the arrow pointing down, you can write "Thousand-Year Kingdom" above the line there. If you want you, if you have room, if you can stack them in there, you could put all the

other synonyms in there—kingdom of Christ, kingdom of God, kingdom of the Father, Messianic kingdom, theocratic kingdom—whatever you want, throw it all in there if you want to just label it all. Keep writing small—we’re not done yet.

Let’s do a little review in case some of you got a little confused. We’ve got the little cross that says, “[Death of Christ],” then you have “Church Age,” then you have the arrow pointing up, [and] above that it says “Rapture.” Then you’ve got the little arc, and the arc is going to an arrow pointing down, and in between that, you have “Seven-Year Trib.” The little arrow pointing down is the “Second Coming,” and after that, it says, “Thousand-Year Kingdom, Kingdom of Christ, Kingdom of the Father, Messianic Kingdom, Theocratic Kingdom.” OK? All right. We’ve got that down. [You could also have] “Mediatorial Kingdom,” if you know how to spell it. So you’ve got that.

Now, right after that, draw a little chair. Actually, you can draw a throne if you want, but chairs work [well] for thrones because not a lot of people are good at drawing thrones—they end up looking like chairs anyway. Then you can write above the little chair, “Great White Throne Judgment.” You might have to put some of that below and some of that above. Then, if you go a little bit past that, you will have “Eternal State.” That [timeline shows] every major prophetic event to come. Let’s just walk through your chart [one more time]. Look at your little chart, and this is what you should have. You’ve got the little cross, which is the “Death of Christ,” followed by the “Church Age,” which ends at the “Rapture,” when the saints are caught up to be with the Lord in the air. Then, ensues a seven-year time period called the “Tribulation,” when the antichrist rises to power, [when] the earth has all the judgments described in Revelation 6–19. [You can] read all about it in great detail [in those chapters].

At the end of that time, Jesus then comes back to earth, at His “Second Coming,” and the reason there’s a little arc there [is] because even though we’re Raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation, we return with Christ at His Second Coming, and for those of you who don’t like riding horses,

you're going to be on a horse. You come back with Christ to earth at the Second Coming. There Jesus will stand on the Mount of Olives, the wicked will be separated, the goats from the sheep [see Matthew 25:32], the wheat from the tares [see Matthew 13:40], you will have this time [when] God sends forth His angels, and they will separate believers from unbelievers.

Now, follow me here, because this is where some people get confused. When you're reading in Matthew 24:40–41, Jesus says this, and He's talking about the end of the Tribulation, right at the time of the Second Coming: "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left." This is not a Rapture text. This is the separation of believers from unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation. Those removed are unbelievers [who will] be executed, cast into hell, where they will then wait for judgment at the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the thousand years. And so, what happens is [that] the believers, then, who have come to Christ during the Tribulation, then enter into the thousand-year reign of Christ as mortals.

They begin to live a long time. Listen to what Isaiah says in Isaiah 65:20–23. This is just fascinating. Isaiah says: "No longer will there be in it," that is, the kingdom of Christ here on earth, "an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred." You die at the age of 100, and it's like, "Oh, that's just a pity. He was so young. He was a baby." Really? "And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed." [People would be saying], "I wonder why he died. I mean, he was only ninety-eight." [Verse 21 continues]: "They will build houses and inhabit them; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit." Gardening—that's a good part.

They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of

their hands. They will not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them. [65:22–23]

He's talking about this total prosperity when Jesus is reigning on earth. The curse is lifted, and people start living like they did before the Flood, [like] Methuselah, [who was] over 900 years old. Some people will probably live through the whole length of the entire kingdom—all 1,000 years—and never die.

In Isaiah 11:6–9, it [talks] of the kingdom. [As you read it] just think about this. If you've ever been to the zoo, this is a marvel: "And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat." By the way, leopards love to eat goats. [Verse 6 continues]:

And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. [11:6–9]

[There will be a] total transformation of the world, [in which] the curse is lifted, Satan is gone, and all of that aggression in the animals that has come as a result of the curse will be gone. You've got the little infant over there, [and] instead of eating dirt, he's playing with the king cobra. "Honey, don't hurt the cobra. Honey, don't pull the lion's ears. That's not kind." That's how it's going to be. The "Davidic covenant," the promise made to David, [will be fulfilled]. Here it is in 1 Chronicles 17:11–1[5]. God promised David this:

When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants 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.

If you want to read about the temple during the millennium, you can read it in Ezekiel 40–48, it's [given] in great detail. He goes on to say [in 1 Chronicles 17:]13: "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you," speaking of Saul. "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever. According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David." What's neat is [that] you have this incredible picture of David's descendant ruling and reigning in a temple that He builds on earth forever and ever. That person is Jesus, and it happens during the thousand-year reign of Christ.

Isaiah 9:7, that text that comes right after the Christmas text, [which says], "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders" [9:6]. It goes on to say, right after that, [in] verse 7:

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

In Jeremiah 23:5–6, God promises a righteous Shepherd to Israel, [which is] afflicted with ungodly shepherds. He says this:

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign

as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'"

That's Jesus. [Do] you remember [how] Nebuchadnezzar had the dream of the statue and it had the head of gold, the chest and arms of silver, then bronze and iron, and iron and clay feet. What was it standing on? A stone not cut out with the hands of man, a stone that crushes all the other kingdoms [see Daniel 2:31–35]. Daniel interprets [the dream], saying:

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

That is Jesus' kingdom, which will begin at the thousand years, and after it finishes, there will be a re-creation of the heavens and earth, and He will continue to reign forever and ever.

Do you remember what the angel Gabriel told Mary about Jesus in Luke 1:32–33? Let me remind you:

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.

I don't know about you, but when I read those texts, it makes me excited. You might be wondering, "Why would God have us pray, 'Thy kingdom come'? What is the practical purpose?" Well, besides the obvious—God tells us to—here are some things. [Question four]: Why pray "Thy kingdom come"? [One]: It's God's will, and we need to pray according to

God's will. [Two]: Because we want Jesus to rule the earth in righteousness. [Three]: Because we want to see the wicked judged, and justice established on earth. Four: Because we want God's will to be "done, on earth as it is in heaven" [Matthew 6:10]. Five: Because we long to see Jesus. Six: Because it will motivate us to live holy lives, knowing that Jesus could come back [at] any moment—in the middle of whatever you're doing that you shouldn't be doing. So don't do it.

Seven: Because it will motivate us to have godly priorities, "redeeming the time for the days are evil" [see Ephesians 5:16]. Eight: Because it will motivate us to share the gospel with the lost, knowing that Christ could come back for His Church, and then the world will be entered into a Tribulation period of great catastrophe, when most of the world's population will die. Nine: Because it will give us peace, and help us not fret or be anxious when we see the world around us growing from bad to worse. Those are just some of the practical reasons. When you pray, "Send Jesus to set up His kingdom," it's a life-transforming prayer because all of those things are imported into that request.

So, as you leave here today, keep praying your ten minutes a day, and don't stop. Increase it if you want, but don't cut back. Don't forget that if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have a loving heavenly Father who takes pleasure in talking with you. He wants to hear from you. Pray that God's name would be glorified in everything, especially your life. Pray that God's kingdom would come. It will change your life. Let's pray.

Father, we are thankful that You tell us exactly how to pray and what to pray for. Father, we do pray that Your kingdom would come. We pray that the Rapture would occur. That in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye [see 1 Corinthians 15:52], we would be caught up together to be with the Lord in the air [see 1 Thessalonians 4:17], and thus always be with the Lord. [We pray] that we would be glorified, and freed from sin, freed from our sin-cursed bodies; that we would rule and reign with You; we would come back on white horses at Your Second Coming to earth; we would see You stand at the Mount of Olives and remanufacture the terrain, and lift the

curse, and throw Satan and demons into the abyss. [We pray] that we then would see the great, prosperous reign of the King, and we would be part of all of that, see[ing] people growing old after hundreds of years, and the earth just flourishing under Your righteous reign. Then [we would witness] the White Throne Judgment when sin, death, Satan, the false prophets, and all those who hated You so as not to repent [being] judged, and we will enter into an eternal state and experience things “eye has not seen, or ear heard, or even entered into the heart of man” [see 1 Corinthians 2:9]. [We pray] that we would be rewarded, and that the sufferings of this present world would not be worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in the saints. Oh, Father, help us to pray for Your kingdom. We ask it. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

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