

Life Under Two Kingdoms

How Do Citizens of God's Kingdom Live in the Kingdoms of Men

Bible Study, 10/7/26

Two Kingdoms

The Christian's Dilemma

God is sovereign and ordains all authority.

BUT also “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 Jn 5:19)?

So, how can Christians hold both truths at the same time without demonizing governments as satanic or baptizing it as morally trustworthy?

Government Authority

Romans 13:1-4

1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which is from God. The authorities that exist have been appointed by God. 2 Consequently, whoever resists authority is opposing what God has set in place, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the one in authority? Then do what is right, and you will have his approval. 4 For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not carry the sword in vain. He is God's servant, an agent of retribution to the wrongdoer.

5 Therefore it is necessary to submit to authority, not only to avoid punishment, but also as a matter of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes. For the authorities are God's servants, who devote themselves to their work.

7 Pay everyone what you owe him: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue [customs, tolls, any additional gov't obligation] to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. 8 Be indebted to no one, except to one another in love. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

The God of This Age

2 Corinthians 4:4-5

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

1 John 4:4-6

4 You, little children, are from God and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 5 They are of the world. That is why they speak from the world's perspective, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

Ephesians 2:1-5

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you used to walk when you conformed to the ways of this world and of the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, fulfilling the cravings of our flesh and indulging its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature children of wrath. 4 But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved!

Matthew 22:15-22

15 Then the Pharisees went out and conspired to trap Jesus in His words. 16 They sent their disciples to Him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that You are honest and that You teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You seek favor from no one, because You pay no attention to external appearance. 17 So tell us what You think: Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

18 But Jesus knew their evil intent and said, “You hypocrites, why are you testing Me? 19 Show Me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought Him a denarius. 20 “Whose image is this,” He asked, “and whose inscription?”

21 “Caesar’s,” they answered. So Jesus told them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

22 And when they heard this, they were amazed. So they left Him and went away.

Matthew 13:19

19 When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and doesn't understand it, **the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.** This is the one sown along the path.

Matthew 6:19-24

24 No one can serve two masters: Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Two Kingdoms

Dual Citizenship?

1. To be obedient to Christ, means we must be obedient to Cesar
2. A characteristic of Kingdom-minded Christians is a commitment to honoring the laws of the land, sometimes more than the average person committed **ULTIMATELY** to their own earthly kingdom.
3. However, when his earthly king requires something forbidden by his heavenly king, the Christian will have to determine where he wants his permanent/ultimate citizenship to be. In those cases, he cannot obey both kings.

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Dual Citizenship

1. Interesting Paul never mentions serving in the military or holding political office in this list—just taxes, revenue (tolls, customs), fear and honor:
 - If nations demand a christian's life and total allegiance, what's left to give God?
 - And what happens when the nation's laws conflict with Jesus' teachings?
2. We can't give our ultimate allegiance to both God and earthly governments:
 - When the apostles faced this dilemma, Peter stated, "We must obey God rather than men". (Acts 5:29)

Two Kingdoms

Dual Citizenship

Acts 4:19

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

1 Samuel 15:24

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

Genesis 3:17-19

17 And to Adam He said: “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you; through toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it will yield for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread, until you return to the ground — because out of it were you taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Two Kingdoms

Difficult Questions

Consider King Saul and King David

Kingdoms Collide

1 Samuel 24:1-11

1 After Saul had returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.” 2 So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to look for David and his men in the region of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 Soon Saul came to the sheepfolds along the road, where there was a cave, and he went in to relieve himself. And David and his men were hiding in the recesses of the cave. 4 So David’s men said to him, “This is the day about which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do with him as you wish.’” **Then David crept up and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 5 Afterward, David’s conscience was stricken because he had cut off the corner of Saul’s robe. 6 So he said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed. May I never lift**

my hand against him, since he is the LORD’s anointed.” 7 With these words David restrained his men, and he did not let them rise up against Saul. Then Saul left the cave and went on his way.

8 After that, David got up, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed facedown in reverence 9 and said to Saul, “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Look, David intends to harm you’ ? 10 Behold, this day you have seen with your own eyes that the LORD delivered you into my hand in the cave. **I was told to kill you, but I spared you and said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD’s anointed.’** 11 See, my father, look at the corner of your robe in my hand. For I cut it off, but I did not kill you. **Know and see that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands.** I have not sinned against you, even though you are hunting me down to take my life.

Kingdoms Collide

1 Samuel 24:12-22

12 May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD take vengeance on you, but my hand will never be against you. 13 As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand will never be against you. 14 Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? 15 May the LORD be our judge and decide between you and me. May He take notice and plead my case and deliver me from your hand."

16 When David had finished saying these things, Saul called back, "Is that your voice, David my son?" Then Saul wept aloud 17 and said to David, "You are more righteous

than I, for you have rewarded me with good, though I have rewarded you with evil. 18 And you have declared this day how you have treated me well, for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him go away unharmed? May the LORD reward you with good for what you have done for me this day. 20 Now I know for sure that you will be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. 21 So now, swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's house." 22 So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Kingdoms Collide

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. 4 The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the flesh. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Ephesians 6:11-13

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can make your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you will be able to stand your ground, and having done everything, to stand.

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Difficult Questions

What practical habits help you obey the state without trusting it? Where do you see Christians tempted either toward cynicism (demonizing) or cheerleading (baptizing)?

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John 17:15-18

15I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one.^c 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. 18As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. 19For them I sanctify Myself, so that they too may be sanctified by the truth.

Tertullian

"What will be God's if all things are Caesar's?"