

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #2

“Kingdom Glasses”

Video Intro

Review

Tonight we continue our teaching series on what I believe to be the most important subject in the Bible: The Kingdom of God. Last week, we covered 3 points.

KINGDOM BASICS

1. The Kingdom of God is a first priority
 - The first thing Jesus preached (Matthew 4:17)
 - The first thing He taught us to pray for (Matthew 6:10)
 - The first thing He said we are to seek (Matthew 6:33)
- 2. The Kingdom of God is a present reality (Luke 17:21; Romans 14:17)**
3. The Kingdom of God is an unshakable Kingdom

In Hebrews 12, God has decreed that He will shake heaven and earth to remove everything that can be shaken so that those things that cannot be shaken can remain.

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

And yet with all this, there is a problem. In John chapter 3, Jesus said this about the Kingdom of God.

Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

John 3:3

Notice, He did not say IF you are born again you WILL see the Kingdom;
He said UNLESS you are born again, you CANNOT see it.

In other words, it is possible to be born again and not seek the Kingdom!

Even though the Kingdom of God is the central subject of Jesus’ message, many (perhaps even most) of God’s people do not yet “see” the Kingdom clearly, even though they may be looking right at it. It’s like a 3-D movie.

I remember seeing my first 3-D movie back in the 1950's.

Normal movies had height and width; but the images in these movies had *depth*.

The images on the screen seemed to be coming right out into the audience!

The problem was that you had to have a special pair of glasses to really see the movie. Without the glasses, the images were blurry and unwatchable.

You couldn't really see the movie without the glasses.

We need some "Kingdom Glasses"-new lenses that will allow us to "see" the present reality of the Kingdom of God.

I was saved 10 years before God gave me some "Kingdom Glasses"; and it revolutionized my Christian life. It was like putting on 3-D glasses; it changed the way I saw the world; blurry things were made clear; and there was *depth*!

The current Christian culture in America desperately needs some "Kingdom Glasses" because there is a great problem facing the church today.

I want to do 3 things tonight:

**I want to call out the Problem
Show the cause of the Problem
Present the cure for the Problem**

I. First: Calling Out the Problem

A. The Greatest Problem in American Christianity is Immaturity

E. Stanley Jones, "Christian Maturity"

"The most pressing need of our age is—maturity. We are very immature people attempting to handle very mature problems. The gap between the maturity of our problems and the immaturity of our personhood is the most serious problem on the planet."

1. The Church has always faced problems. But today we are facing "*very mature problems*". Jones is saying that our problems have "grown up". But we haven't.

2. There was a time when American culture was very accommodating to Christianity: ministers were respected; the 10 commandments were on our courthouse walls and prayer was in our schools.

3. We came under fire here and there; but today we see *the entire Christian faith* itself under attack; there is a comprehensive attack upon everything we once took for granted.

Comprehensive

Complete; including all or nearly all elements or aspects of something.

4. This is not new. A hundred years ago, James Orr, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, saw this coming:

James Orr

“No one, whose eyes are open to the signs of times, can fail to perceive that if Christianity is to be effectually defended from the attacks made upon it, it is the *comprehensive method* that is rapidly becoming the more urgent. The opposition which Christianity has to encounter is no longer confined to special doctrines. *It extends to the whole manner of how we conceive the world.*”

a. Our conflict with the culture is no longer limited to debating doctrines of salvation, water baptism or speaking in tongues; it is a *comprehensive* conflict about the very nature of reality.

James Orr

“It is no longer an opposition of detail, but of principle. It is the Christian view of things in general that is attacked, and it is only by an exposition and vindication of the Christian view of things as a whole that the attack can most successfully be met.”

5. The old saying is “we can’t see the forest for the trees”; meaning that we are focused on individual trees to the point where we’ve lost our ability to see the forest.

a. An example is our politicians in Washington: for the past 3 years one major political party has been consumed with removing the President of the United States from office; the result is they have lost sight of why they were sent to Washington in the first place: To do business for the American people.

b. In the same way, the Church has missed the forest for the trees. We become so distracted by individual issues that we have become lost sight of the great purpose of why God saved us in the first place.

Charles Colson

“The culture war is not just about abortion, homosexual rights, or the decline of public education. These are only skirmishes. The real war is a cosmic conflict between worldviews—between the Christian worldview and the various secular and spiritual worldviews waged against it.”

Gary DeMar

(From his book, “War of the Worldviews”)

“We are experiencing a conflict of two rival worldviews, two rival faith systems—Christianity that teaches that God is sovereign over all and the variety of worldviews that teach that man is sovereign over all...”

6. Our great problem is that the immaturity of the modern American churchgoer does not have a comprehensive belief system that can withstand the comprehensive attacks on the Christian faith.

a. Surveys have fewer than 1 in 5 American Christians have a biblical (or ‘kingdom’) worldview! (We recommend our 47 week series on “The War of the Worldviews”)

B. So What is a Worldview?

Charles Colson

“A worldview is the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions.”

Gary DeMar

“A worldview is the way a person looks at and evaluates the world in which they live.”

1. Jesus was teaching on worldviews in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 6:22-23

“Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.

2. Your “eye” is your worldview; how you see the world; a good eye (worldview) fills the whole body with light; a bad eye (worldview) fills the whole body with darkness.

a. Warning: You can be deceived. You can think you have the light when it is really darkness. And Jesus says that's the deepest darkness of all.

3. Our problem is immaturity as to how we see. If we can't see the Kingdom we have no biblical worldview; so we have no comprehensive answer for the comprehensive problems we are facing. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

II. The Cause of the Problem

A. Reductionism

1. Western Christianity has lost what Jesus called the 'Gospel of the Kingdom' by reducing it to simply a Gospel of personal salvation.

a. Personal Testimony: I became saved, water baptized, and a member of a Baptist church within a week. But I spent the next 2 years being told "That's all there is; next stop is heaven or the rapture!" I never recall hearing one message about the Kingdom of God.

Walter Rauschenbusch

(American Baptist Pastor/Theologian)

"The Kingdom of God is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming life on earth into the harmony of heaven."

2. In his amazing book, "The Unchanging Person and the Unshakable Kingdom", the great E. Stanley Jones said it this way:

E. Stanley Jones

"We have not rejected the Kingdom. We have reduced it: to ecclesiasticism, where the church is the Kingdom; to denominationalism, where the denomination is the Kingdom; to nationalism, where politics is the Kingdom."

a. This is a great error of the theology of the Church of Rome; the church is the Kingdom. But to make the church the same as the Kingdom is an insult to the Kingdom! The church is full of mixture; the Kingdom has nothing out of place. The church is full of disorder; but there's no disorder in the Kingdom; the church is shakable; the Kingdom is not!

b. Jones says we have reduced the Kingdom to nationalism, so politics is the Kingdom. There are 2 possible errors Christians without a Kingdom

worldview make about politics; some don't get involved at all; others think politicians can save us. But as Christian columnist Cal Thomas once said...

Cal Thomas

“The Kingdom of God is not going to arrive on Air Force One.”

c. Patriotism is a good thing; I love our country. But we do well to remember that all earthly governments, including ours, cannot compare with the government of God. Patriotism can become perverted if we forget the words of American theologian...

Gregory A. Boyd

Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God as a radical alternative to all versions of the kingdoms of this world, whether they declare themselves to be ‘under God’ or not.”

d. I believe we live in the greatest nation on earth; but I also believe that patriotism can be a pitfall to Christians who love America more than they love the Kingdom of God.

e. It bothers me that the same Christians offended that NFL players refused to stand for the National Anthem seem so silent when God's name is taken in vain or so called Christians prance around half naked on stage at the halftime Super Bowl show. If we demand people to honor the flag, how much more ought we demand that they honor the Lord Jesus Christ?

Review

1. Our problem is immaturity
2. The cause of our problem is that we have reduced the Kingdom of God to smallness.

E. Stanley Jones

“The hand of littleness has been at the throat of the Kingdom, so that it speaks as a squeak instead of a world-shaking call to acceptance and action. That choking hand must be taken away because necessity demands it. We are perishing for a clear cut voice that will command us, free us, unite us, and save us.”

a. This is what I was looking for as a young believer; to break free of the “littleness” of religion; to hear a roar from the pulpit instead of a squeak; I was

perishing for something that was worth giving my life for. And I found it when I saw the Kingdom.

3. So let me close with the cure for the problem of immaturity; how to overcome the reductionism of the Kingdom....

E. Stanley Jones

“We have reduced the Kingdom by putting it into narrower molds instead of the Kingdom as Jesus preached it: God’s total answer for man’s total need.”

III. The Cure: Kingdom Glasses

A. To See the Totalitarian Nature of the Kingdom of God

1. I have always been fascinated with the history of the 2nd World War; and how one fanatic almost took over the world.

2. **Adolf Hitler’s greatest support base was the young people; they were called “The Hitler Youth”.**

a. These young men and women were fanatical supporters of the Nazi worldview and sold themselves out to it; many betrayed their own mother and fathers if they observed in their parents anything disloyal to the Reich.

b. How did this happen? Why did these young people give themselves so completely to the message of National Socialism? I found this quote from one:

Former Member of Hitler Youth

“We turned to Nazism because our lives were at loose ends—compartmentalized. We needed something to bring life back into wholeness and meaning. But we chose the wrong totalitarianism. We now see that we were seeking for the Kingdom of God.”

3. The great American revival will never happen without the young people; and the young people will never be revived until they find a totalitarianism worth giving their lives for.

“Totalitarian”

A system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to its authority.

4. The Kingdom of God is a “totalitarian” government! It requires a radical commitment of its subjects. And it has something to say on every subject.

5. When I put on my “Kingdom Glasses” I see God shaking the Kingdoms of this world so that only the Kingdom of God remains. I see this is what will bring a worldwide revival.

Stanley Jones

“God may be applying the shock treatments (of worldly totalitarisms) to shock us back into the discovery of our own totalitarianism—the Kingdom of God. And if that should happen, there would be the greatest spiritual awakening that this planet has ever seen.”

6. May God grant us the “Kingdom Glasses” that delivers us from immaturity and allows us grasp a glimpse of the Kingdom of God—the unshakable Kingdom of God.

Close

British novelist H.G. Wells was the author of a number of literary science fiction classics like “The Invisible Man”, “War of the Worlds” and “The Time Machine”

Wells was a genius. And even though he was not a Christian, he did recognize the immensity of the biblical message of the Kingdom of God. I will close with this quote:

H.G. Wells

“The most radical proposal ever presented to the mind of man is the proposal to replace the present world order with God’s order, which is the Kingdom of God.”

God is offering us this radical proposal. Do you want to be a part of it?