



TWO KINGDOMS

ONE KING

A 4-SESSION **BIBLE STUDY**
ON CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP



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Notes

[illegible]

INTRODUCTION

*Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

MATTHEW 6:10

People take to the streets to protest a government policy. Some wave a Bible in one hand and carry a sign with a political slogan in the other hand. In other circumstances, someone might wear a Christian-themed shirt to the polling place while voting for favorite political candidates. Are those demonstrations of Christian citizenship? How do we live as Christians in an earthly nation that may or may not be ruled by godly principles, a place where people may ridicule our faith? We are citizens of an earthly nation and, at the same time, because we trust in Jesus for salvation, we are citizens of heaven, even while we still live on earth. We live at the same time in two different kingdoms, but both of those kingdoms are ruled by one King.

[illegible]



O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made the heavens and the earth.

ISAIAH 37:16

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you created all things and continue to rule and sustain all that you have made. You love the world you created and sent your Son to be our Savior. Bless our study of your Word as we seek to learn more about the majesty of your reign. Just as Jesus taught us to pray, we ask that your will would be done among us on earth as it is done in heaven. Hear our prayer, and accept our grateful praise in the name of Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION

What might be some of the advantages and disadvantages of earthly dual citizenship?

INTRODUCTION

We confess in the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” God created all things, and he reigns over the world in which we live. God also reigns through Christ Jesus over his Church, that is, over all who trust in Jesus for salvation. God’s reign over all things, both earthly and spiritual, is sometimes described as his rule over two kingdoms. One of these realms is called the kingdom of God’s right hand, or the kingdom of grace. The kingdom of grace is the Church, the Body of Christ. The other realm is called the kingdom of God’s left hand, or the kingdom of power. The kingdom of power refers to God’s rule over this earth through its governments and institutions. God is Lord and King over both kingdoms, but he rules over each in a different way.

THE KINGDOM OF GRACE

The kingdom of God’s right hand, also called the kingdom of grace, refers to Christ’s rule over his Church. In this kingdom, Christ rules in grace and forgiveness according to the Gospel. In this kingdom, all who trust in Jesus receive forgiveness for their sins. We grow in faith as the Word of God is taught among us and as we receive the Lord’s Supper. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we proclaim the Good News of salvation so others will hear and believe in Jesus as their Savior. Earthly kingdoms come to an end. “The LORD brings the counsel of nations to nothing” (Psalm 33:10), but of his Messiah, God says, “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:13).

- 1. **Read Colossians 1:11-14.** How has God the Father qualified us to share in the inheritance (eternal life) of the saints?
- 2. In what kingdom or domain had we lived before God in his grace brought us into the kingdom of his Son?
- 3. What have we received as citizens of Christ’s kingdom?
- 4. **Read Ephesians 1:3-6.** When did God choose us to be citizens of his kingdom of grace?
- 5. What are some of the spiritual blessings that we have received through faith in Christ Jesus?

- 6. **Read Ephesians 1:18-23.** When was Christ exalted to be seated at God’s right hand to reign over his Church?
- 7. How is the Church described in these verses?

THE KINGDOM OF POWER

God loves the world he made and still sustains it. Through the kingdom of his left hand, or the kingdom of power, God reigns over his creation by working through earthly rulers, governments and laws. He rules even through people who do not believe in him. Hidden behind these governments and laws, God is at work to restrain evil and to promote and protect what is good. Although God has established secular governments and offices of authority, those who hold positions of leadership are sinners. Throughout human history, we have seen that governments and their leaders do not always rule with righteousness and godly wisdom. Although we may not understand God’s reasons for allowing godless people to rule, we can be confident that God still reigns in all circumstances and always seeks to call people to repentance and to faith in his Son. As the children of God, we live in God’s kingdom of grace and in his kingdom of power. Even in troubling times or living under the authority of ungodly rulers, we can be certain “that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

It is important to remember that these two kingdoms do not refer to God’s kingdom and Satan’s kingdom, as if these were two equal powers. In Scripture the devil is called “the ruler of this world” (John 14:30) and “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). For reasons that are hidden from us, God permits Satan to have power and influence in this fallen world, but ultimate authority belongs to our Lord and King. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus destroyed the devil’s power (Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 John 3:8). Read Job 1:12, Job 2:6, Luke 4:5-6 and Luke 22:53 as examples of God’s supreme authority and the limits he places on Satan’s power.

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A 4-SESSION **BIBLE STUDY** ON CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

This Bible study student guide on Christian citizenship takes a look at the two kingdoms—the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth. We are citizens of both, and Christ is the King over each. Scripture readings, discussion prompts, questions to ponder and prayers to speak together help participants to better understand what it means to live out our role as residents of a nation here on earth while still following the decrees of the Ruler of All.



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