

Sunday, June 1, 2014—The Judgment Seat of Christ—What Does it Mean to Reign With Christ?

Introduction/Review

- The last few weeks we have been considering the faithful saying of II Timothy 2:11-13 as part of our greater series on the JSC. Thus far we have considered 3 of the 4 “if statements” that comprise the faithful saying.
 - “For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*:
 - “If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*.”
 - “if we deny *him*, he also will deny us.”
- After considering these expressions as statements of FACT instead of statements of CONDITION we have observed the following truths.
 - All believers ARE dead with Christ and WILL also live with Christ in the future.
 - All believers WILL/DO suffer as a matter of FACT.
 - All believers WILL reign with Christ as a matter of FACT. This is purpose for which the Godhead created the body of Christ to repossess the heavenly places
 - All believers WILL/DO deny Christ through our works.
 - All believers WILL be denied by Christ by suffering loss with respect to our works at the JSC.
- ALL BELIEVERS WILL REIGN WITH CHRIST IN SOME CAPACITY. THE JSC MANIFESTS AND DECLARES EACH BELIEVER'S CAPACITY FOR SERVICE IN THE HEAVENLY GOVERNMENT. WHILE ALL BELIEVERS WILL REIGN WITH CHRIST ALL BELIEVERS DO NOT FULFILL THE SAME FUNCTION IN THE HEAVENLY GOVERNMENT.
- Before we move on and consider the 4th “if statement” of the faithful saying in verse 13 I would like to spend some time talking about the nature of what it means to reign with Christ.

Preliminary Considerations

- Colossians 1:16—we can understand some basic things regarding the nature of the invisible heavenly government by observing the visible earthly governments around us. For example, we can understand that there are levels of governmental authority in both realms of government.
 - Ephesians 1:21
- Daniel 10:13, 20—in the heavens there are political/governmental affiliations and associates that resemble the observable ones on earth.
- Amos 9:6—just as God founded his troop on earth, he also builded his “stories” in the heavens.

- Colossians 1:16—just how far do these physical observations extend? In other words, just how much can we understand about the nature and functioning of the heavenly government by observing the earthly governmental structures around us? I would submit to you not very much.
- I Corinthians 2:7-8—if the “princes of this world,” would have known about the mystery they never would have crucified Christ. The “princes of the world” are following the course charted by the “prince the power of air,” i.e., Satan himself.
- Ephesians 2:1-3—the course of this world has been charted by Satan. Satan has so corrupted the governmental structures of both heaven and earth that it is next to impossible to look at them by outward observation and concludes much about the nature of reign with Christ in eternity.
- In fact, I would submit to you this morning that it is exactly this propensity that we have to judge eternity by the here and now that clouds our ability to see these things clearly. We cannot use the normal functioning of the earthly governments around us judge what it means to reign in eternity with Christ. Earthly governments are so corrupted by the course of this world that they impeded our ability to think clearly about what it means to reign with Christ.
- Reign—1) to possess or exercise sovereign power or authority; to rule; to exercise government, as a king or emperor; or to hold the supreme power. 2) To be predominant; to prevail. 3) To rule; to have superior or uncontrolled dominion (Rom. 6). (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*)
- When we read the definition of what it means to “reign” we see words associated with power, authority, and ruler ship, i.e., the ability to tell others what to do and Lord over them. Given that we see earthly governments do these exact things we naturally assume reigning with Christ in the heavenly places is a power trip.
- II Timothy 2:12—when read as statements of CONDITION suffering in II Timothy 2:12 results in a greater position of reigning. Suffer now reign later. Don't suffer now and you will not reign later. Suffer a lot and you gain a great position of reigning later. Maximize your suffering now and you will maximize your reign in eternity.
- Ephesians 1:21—thrones (Col. 1:16), principalities, powers, mights, and dominions are positions of reigning authority that are occupied by those who are joint-heirs with Christ some maintain. While the “every name that is named” category is reserved for those who are heirs of God. These are the janitorial staff of eternity, these are the ones who are not worthy of reigning with Christ because they didn't suffer for the right things in the proper amount, according to some.
- Do you see how critical it is to get II Timothy 2:11-13 right? It is equally critical to have a proper understanding of what it means to reign.

Reining in the Kingdom of God

- Members of the body of Christ are not the only ones to have misconceptions regarding what it means to reign/rule in the kingdom of God. During the earthly ministry of Christ, in the Gospels, the 12 Apostles argued about which one of them would be greatest in the kingdom of God.
- Luke 22:24-27—according to verse 24, there was “strife” among the Apostles concerning which one of them would be” accounted the greatest.” This was not the only time such an exchange among the apostles is recorded.
 - Matthew 18:1
 - Mark 9:34
 - Luke 9:46
- Luke 22:25—in verse 25, Jesus begins to rebuke this spirit of division within the Apostle by discussing the type of lordship that Gentiles kings exercise over their subjects. The English word “lordship” carries the following meanings according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*:
 - 1) The state of quality of being a lord; hence, a title of honor given to noblemen, except to dukes, who have the title of grace.
 - 2) A titular compellation of judges and certain other persons in authority and office.
 - 3) Dominion; power; authority.
 - 4) Seignior; domain; the territory of a lord over which he holds jurisdiction; a manor.
- That the Gentiles view lordship in authoritarian terms is evidenced by the second half of Luke 22:25, “they that exercise authority upon them **are called benefactors.**” Notice that this portion of the verse is written from the point of view of those who “exercise authority” upon others, i.e., the kings of the Gentiles in the first half of the verse. In the gentile world, those who wield and command this type of lordship and authority over others are the benefactors of their power at the expense of their subjects. In short, Jesus perceived that the Apostles viewed his kingdom as functioning in the same manner as Gentiles kingdoms in terms of power and authority.
- Mark 10:35-40—James and John ask Christ for the honor of sitting one on his right hand and other on his left when he entered into his “glory,” i.e., the kingdom.
- Mark 10:41—when the remaining ten Apostles where made aware of these events they were most displeased with James and John for making this petition.
- Mark 10:42—Christ calls the Apostles unto him and addresses them in a very similar fashion to what we observed in Luke 22:25. Here like in Luke 22, Christ describes the manner in which the Gentiles conceive of Lordship and political authority. There can be no doubt that Christ viewed the Apostles as thinking that authority in the kingdom of God worked in the same manner as Gentile political authority.

- Mark 10:43—that Jesus viewed the Apostles as functioning with a Gentile notion of kingdom authority is evidenced by his comments to the twelve in this verse. Christ says that authority in his kingdom is not a matter of lordship and exercising authority over people. Rather greatness in the kingdom of God is tied to ministry and service, according to Mark 10:43.
 - Luke 22:26
- Elsewhere in the Gospels, the Greek word translated “minister” in Mark 10:43 is translated “servant” in the King James Bible.
 - Matthew 23:11—But he that is greatest among you shall be your **servant**.
 - Mark 9:35—And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and **servant** of all.
 - John 12:26—If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my **servant** be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.
- According to John 12:26, who will the Father honor? The father will honor those who are his servants. These observations help establish the premise that greatness and honor in the kingdom of God are related to greater capacities from service not authoritarian rule in the Gentile sense.
- Mark 10:44—the one who will be “chieftest,” i.e., first in rank is the one who will be servant of all. The one who demonstrates the greatest capacity for humble service will be given chiefs position of honor in the kingdom.
 - Luke 22:27
- Mark 10:45—the Lord Jesus Christ came to minister unto the people of Israel and offer himself for their sins. The Lord Jesus Christ was the suffering servant who paid the ultimate price by sacrificing himself.
 - Zechariah 3:8—“. . . I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.”
- Philippians 2:5-8—Jesus Christ was the Father’s ultimate servant.
- Philippians 2:9-11—Jesus Christ is accorded the greatest position in heaven and earth because he demonstrated the greatest capacity for service.
 - Colossians 1:18—Christ is the exalted head of the body the church so that in all things (positions of government) he might have the preeminence.
- Reigning with Christ is not about authoritarian rule or power and authority it’s about serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly government. This is what the JSC is all about trying/testing the sort of one’s work/service for Christ. While all believers will reign with Christ but not all

believers will not have/occupy the same position because all believers do not demonstrate themselves to have the same capacities for service.