

The Better Way

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 9:35-38; Colossians 1:9-17) W. N. "Bill" Jackson

Perhaps the most commonly misunderstood aspect of the church is its identity as the kingdom of God. Many today are familiar with the word *church* as used in denominationalism, but have a poor conception of the church of the Lord, the church of the New Testament order. For others, the "church" concerns premillennialism. They teach that the church is a temporary body, brought into existence only until such time as God will establish the "kingdom" when He comes again. Our lesson now is to see the church as the eternal kingdom spoken of in the Old Testament, the message of the kingdom proclaimed in the Lord's ministry, and the church, the kingdom, in existence in the time of the apostles.

THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY

(Daniel 2:44)

In interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, God's servant Daniel referred to Nebuchadnezzar's own kingdom (verses 37-38), an inferior kingdom to follow is (verse 39), a third kingdom having worldwide rule (verse 40), and a fourth kingdom strong as iron, breaking and crushing all in its path (verse 40). In our text, Daniel made these points: (a) the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, (b) it would be in the days of these last-mentioned kings, and (c) it would be a permanent kingdom. The Babylonian empire of Nebuchadnezzar was followed by the empires of Medo-Persia, Greece, and then Rome, the final one. All the events of the king's dream, including the establishment of the church, came to pass during the Roman rule. The church, the kingdom of God, was scattered throughout the world doing God's work, and has continued till this day.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IN JESUS' MINISTRY

(Matthew 9:35-38)

Here is the kingdom in the days of preparation. Both John and Jesus began their ministries with the preaching of "...the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:2; 4:17). The Lord spoke continually of the coming kingdom, and prefaced many parables with the statement, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto..." Concerning the kingdom, in Mark 9:1, He stated that it would come, with power, and in the lifetime of some of those hearers. Jesus moved with compassion as He saw the scattered multitudes, noting that they were as sheep without a shepherd, that the laborers were too few in comparison with the harvest, and asking His disciples to pray for more workers. Entering into the villages and cities, the Lord was able to render them aid in healing their diseases and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. He was teaching the

“good news” which would come to full realization in the establishing of the church, the kingdom (Mat. 16:18, 19; Acts 2:47).

THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM, AND THE COLOSSIANS (Colossians 1:9-17)

To these saints, members of the church, the body of Christ (Col. 1:18), Paul mentions his prayers for them and his desire for their spiritual growth and development, and makes mention of their translation from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of Christ. Let us note our text in three parts:

(1) *Paul's prayer and desire for them* (verses 9-11.) Being continually in prayer for them, he desired for their good: (a) that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will, (b) that they would have that knowledge with spiritual wisdom and understanding, (c) that their daily lives would be pleasing unto the Lord, (d) that they would be fruitful in all good work, (e) that they would continually increase in the knowledge of God, (f) that they would be strengthened with all power, and (g) that their lives would be characterized by patience, longsuffering and joy.

(2) *The Colossians were in the kingdom* (verses 12-13). Mentioning the thanksgiving due the Father, the apostle then refers to the work the Father has performed in them. The Father had provided that they, with all who will obey

His will, should with all saints be partakers of His goodness, here called “...**the inheritance...in light.**” But men in sin are said, always, to be in darkness; void of light. They can only share in that goodness, in light, by leaving the darkness. This is what God has provided and Paul mentions it in these words: “...**The Father...delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.**”

(3) *Tribute to the Christ* (verses 14-17). We have redemption in Christ, the forgiveness of sins. Christ, who is the image of God and the firstborn of all creation; Christ, the creator of all things; Christ, the pre-existent one and the sustainer of all things. We know, then, that Paul and the Colossians were in the kingdom, and that, nearly 2,000 years ago.

CONCLUSION

Daniel had prophesied that God's kingdom would be set up in the days of the Roman rulers, and also that this kingdom would be a permanent one, outlasting all earthly empires. Jesus, in His personal ministry, preaching concerning the kingdom. He used the words *church* and *kingdom* interchangeably (Mat. 16:18,19). Those in the church were said to be in the kingdom (Col. 1:13). How privileged we are to be in the church, the kingdom of God!~

Deceased

“MOSES, MY SERVANT IS DEAD!”

Leslie G. Thomas

Moses had led the children of Israel for forty years, and they had never known any other leader; but the day came when he could no longer go before them: for “**Moses my servant is dead.**” It would be useless to try to give an adequate estimation of the effect the passing of this great man had on the people of the Lord, even if that were possible. Moses was gone, and he could never lead them again. His fatal mistake at the waters of Meribah (Num. 20:2-13) had led Jehovah to tell Moses that he would not be permitted to lead the host of Israel into the land which had been promised to them.

But Moses did not allow this supreme disappointment to keep him from continuing his work in behalf of the people who would enter the land (cf. Num. 27:15-20). As one reviews the history of Moses, he is impressed with the fact that his life and character were almost solitary in their

grandeur, dignity, and elevation. The extraordinary height to which he attained is appropriately described by the words which Wordsworth ascribed to Milton: “Thy soul is like a star, and dwelt apart.” In the closing chapter of Deuteronomy, we read, “**And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face**” (Deu. 34:10). But regardless of his greatness, the earthly life of Moses came to an end; and he could not therefore lead Israel any longer.

But it was necessary that the work of Jehovah go on; for it is never permissible for it to be halted by the death of a leader.

Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jor-

dan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel (Jos. 1:1, 2).

It is never easy for one to take the place of a great leader; but it can be successfully done with the help of Jehovah. But in studying this lesson, let us begin with a consideration of the following:

THE WORKER AND THE WORK

When death removes a great leader from the work which God has ordained for His people, we are often too ready to imagine that a situation has been created, which cannot be properly and adequately dealt with by another person. We forget that each age has its new demands, and that the resources for carrying out the work which God has commanded are not easily exhausted. The Lord has always been able to raise up a man for any worthy work, which needs to be done (2 Tim. 2:2).

Jehovah, of course, is interested in the work which He has for His people to do, but He is also interested in the worker; and He always has a place of responsibility for any one who is willing to prepare himself for service. This was true in the case of Joshua, and it is just as true of the Lord's people today. The church is always in need of good men, and there is always a place for the man who is *ready* to serve. This is particularly true in the case of leadership.

But any successful leader in the work of the Lord must be strong and courageous. This was emphasized by Jehovah Himself in His charge to Joshua, as may be seen by reading the first nine verses of the first chapter of Joshua. Joshua had known the behavior of the Israelites, during their long journey in the wilderness; and now as he was preparing to lead them in conquering the land of Canaan, he doubtless felt that much of the same perverse disposition which they had continually manifested was still in them. Such a situation needed a strong and resolute spirit to deal with it, and Jehovah told Joshua just exactly how to do it.

THE SOURCES OF JOSHUA'S STRENGTH

(1) *A faithful past.* If one will take the time to read that which is said about Joshua in the books of Exodus and Numbers, he will see that this man of God was faithful in all that he was called upon to do. His service as the minister of Moses included (a) the battle with the Amalekites (Exo. 17: 8-16); (b) on mount Sinai with Moses (Exo. 24:12, 13; 32:15ff); (c) in the tent of meeting (Exo. 33:7-11); (d) in defense of his

master (this was evidently a case of mistaken judgment, which was corrected; and, to his credit, it was not repeated, so far as the record goes; Num. 11:26-29); (e) as a spy in Canaan (Num. 13:1-14:10); and (f) as Moses' successor (Num. 27:15-23). Any man who seeks a place of leadership in the church (1 Tim. 3:1), should make every effort to see that he has a faithful past (1 Tim. 3:7).

(2) *A distinct call.* God, of course, does not call people directly today, as He called Joshua; but His call to service through His word is just as real and distinct. When a man of faith knows that the Lord expects him to do a certain work (cf. Mat. 25:14-30), he is invincible. This, however, does not imply that he is unconscious of his own deficiencies, insensible to the difficulties in the way, or invulnerable to the shafts of ridicule and adverse criticism; but from all such things he looks steadily away to the declared purpose of God, and yields himself as a channel through which it may operate.

(3) *The sense of God's presence* (Jos. 1:5; cf. Heb. 13:5, 6; Mat. 28:20; Dan. 3:1ff; 6:1ff.) Nothing could stand in the way of Joshua, as long as he was faithful to God; and the same will be true of those godly church leaders, who put their trust in the Lord.

(4) *The indwelling of God's word* (Jos. 1:7, 8). This, of course, is absolutely indispensable; and it is the basis upon which the preceding sources of strength must stand (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-8).

PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS

It is necessary that we keep in mind God's standard of success and prosperity; for every thoughtful person knows that not all seeming success is actually successful (cf. Mat. 16:26; Luke 12:15-21; 16:19-31).

The book which bears his name tells the story of how well Joshua succeeded in the work which God called him to do, as the successor of Moses. Those who read the book carefully will note that it is divided into three principal parts, namely: (1) the conquest of Canaan, (chapters 1-12); (2) the distribution of the land to the various tribes (chapters 13-21); and (3) Joshua's farewell addresses, and the account of his death (chapters 22-24).

Some important lessons which we should learn from the book now under consideration:

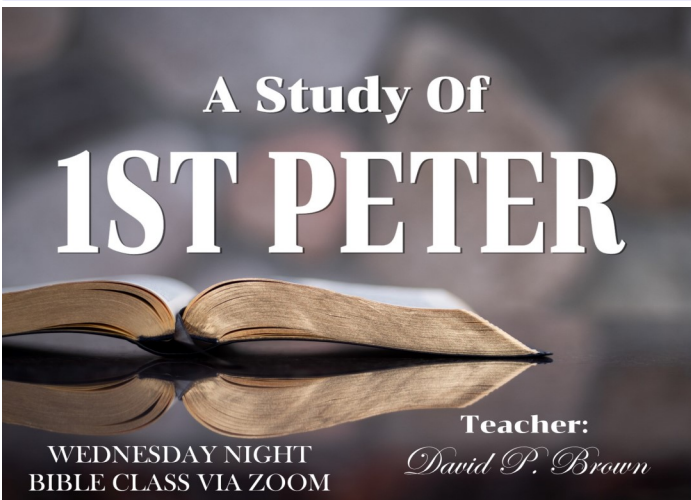
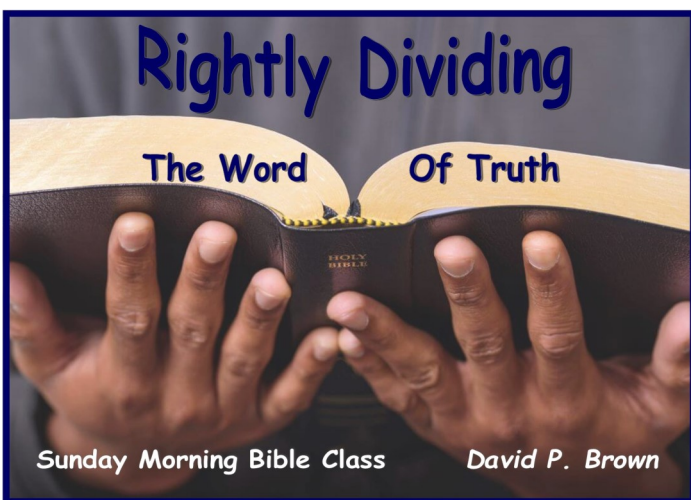
(1) God gives, but we must take possession. The three keywords of the conquest of Canaan were (a) prepare, (b) pass over, and (c) pos-

sess. God has given us all of our spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3; 2:8), but we must possess them.

(2) We must depend upon God's direction, when we take possession of the blessings which He has given to us; or, which is the same thing, make use of the strength which He supplies (cf. Tit. 3:5a; 1 Pet. 4:11).

(3) There is always strength enough at our disposal to enable us to take possession of that which God has given us (cf. John 1:12; Eph. 6:10ff).~

Deceased



TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who wanted to see the hands of Jesus?

Answer to last week's question:

Three; Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

Announcements	Bret Bailey
Scripture Reading	Bret Bailey <i>Genesis 3:22-4:8</i>
Song Leader	Jonathan West
Prayer	Stephen Cohn/Eric Paluka (AM) Bret Bailey/Ken Cohn (PM)
Speaker	David Brown

Lord's Table (AM)

(John 19:16-19)

Bret Bailey	Steven Johnson
Andrew Paluka	J.D. Gunter

Lord's Table (PM)

Jonathan West	Eric Paluka
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Audio/Video Monitor	Eric Paluka
Camera/Door Monitor	Jaden Gruchow

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2024

(via Zoom Meeting)

Announcements	Bret Bailey
Speaker	Eric Paluka
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown

FOR DECEMBER

Prepare Communion	West
Lock Buildings	West
Prepare Bulletin Board	West

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Glenn Kryszak, Barbara Perkins, Emma Gomez, April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Edith Young, Zack Nero, Debbie Brannon, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, December 8th:** Youth Holiday Party after afternoon services.
- **Friday, December 13th:** Ladies' Holiday Party at the home of Jenny Gunter.
- **Saturday, December 14th:** Holiday Hayride at the home of Ken & Nancy Cohn.