

#### Sermons on the Biblical Hope

- 1 – God’s King – *Psalm 2, Mark 1*
- 2 – God’s Kingdom – *Psalm 110, Mark 4, Acts 2*
- 3 – The Inauguration of God’s Kingdom – *Acts 14, 17; Jn 12*
- 4 – The Consummation of the Kingdom – *Ps 96, Jn 5; Rom 8*
- 5-12 – The Continuation of the Kingdom
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- 6 – The NT and Historical Optimism – *Mt 13, 28*
- 7, 8 – What about the Olivet Discourse? – *Mt 28; Mk 13*
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## The Continuation of the Kingdom

*Citizens of God’s Kingdom*

The Biblical Hope: Part XII

*Philippians 3:17-21*

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### I. Greek and Roman Citizens

The Christian confession is very simple: Jesus Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ of all the earth. So how does Jesus go about discipling, Christianizing, His empire? Paul helps us answer this question:

*<sup>17</sup>Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. <sup>18</sup>For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: <sup>19</sup>whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. <sup>20</sup>For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Phil 3:17-21)*

### II. Citizens of Heaven (cf. Phil 2:14-15)

Paul begins by contrasting two patterns of life – the life of those who reflect *the kingdom of heaven* and the life of those who reflect the *kingdom of hell*. On the one hand, are Paul and those like him who provide a *pattern of heavenly mindedness*. On the other hand, are “*the \_\_\_\_\_ of the cross of Christ*” (18) who “*set their minds on \_\_\_\_\_ things*” (19b). In context “*earthly things*” means *sinful things*.

Unfortunately, many have concluded that by calling us citizens of \_\_\_\_\_, Paul is summoning us *to avoid contact* with the created world; in fact, he is commanding *the exact opposite*. He is insisting that our task as the Church, *is to bring a taste of heaven to earth*. In the same way that Roman citizens were sent to Romanize the empire, we have been sent to \_\_\_\_\_ the world.

This is confirmed when we consider the goal of redemptive history, the \_\_\_\_\_ of all things. We await Jesus’ coming *from heaven* to “*transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body*” (21). And that same that will accomplish our *future resurrection* is active now *subduing all things to Himself* (21). The Spirit, who will give life to our mortal bodies in the resurrection, dwells in us now and is subduing us and all the world into the likeness of Christ.

### III. Getting a Taste of Heaven

Now, in order to fulfill this task, in order to bring a taste of heaven to earth, we have to know what heaven is like. We have to know what God’s rule looks like when it takes shape. In order for us to bring a taste of heaven to earth, to Christianize and disciple the nations, we have to become more acquainted with the character of heaven. So how do we do that?

A. You have us for a pattern (v. 17)

**First**, we are to follow the example of those who have walked with God longer than we. We are to imitate the friends, not the enemies, of God. Paul exhorts the Philippians, “*Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a \_\_\_\_\_*” (17).

B. We eagerly wait for the Savior (v. 20)

**Second**, we are to recall the fundamentals of heavenly citizenship by meditating on the character of Christ as revealed in the Word of God. Paul directs our eyes to the Lord Jesus Christ: *“we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Jesus is the exemplar of what it means to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven. *“Let this mind be in you,”* Paul writes in Philippians 2:5, *“which was also in Christ Jesus...”* Learning of Christ as He is revealed in the entire Word of God trains us to be citizens of heaven. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Tim 3:16-17).

C. You have come to Mt. Zion (cf. Heb 10:19-25; 12:22-24)

**Third**, we are to visit \_\_\_\_\_ regularly so that God can teach us what it means to be citizens of heaven. In the old covenant, in order to visit heaven, God’s people had to go to the \_\_\_\_\_, which was God’s dwelling place, the place where heaven and earth met. *“How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God... For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand [elsewhere]. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness”* (Ps 84:1-2, 10). The temple was heaven on earth.

In the new covenant, in order to visit heaven, you need not travel to earthly Jerusalem; you need but travel to the heavenly Jerusalem - to gather with the people of God in the Name of Christ to worship and serve the Lord of glory by the power of the Spirit. We no longer have to travel to a specific place; but we do have to \_\_\_\_\_ with a specific people. Whenever the church gathers *as the \_\_\_\_\_* to worship the Lord together, we enter into heaven itself.

*<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup>and having a High Priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

1. Let us draw near (22)

2. Let us hold fast (23)

3. Let us consider one another (24)

*<sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, <sup>23</sup> to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, <sup>24</sup> to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

#### IV. Application

#### V. Conclusion