

Whose Kingdom Will Have No End.

Text: Luke 1:33

Suggested Hymns:

186, 125, 252, 30, 549

- 1) A Look At The Kingdom
- 2) A Look At The King
- 3) Before Time And In Time
- 4) The Kingdom's Style
- 5) Not Escape But Fulfilment

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 1:33, ³³ ***“And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*** (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today we are continuing our series on the Nicene Creed. Part 10 focuses on the words, *Whose kingdom will have no end.*

Are those words a threat or a promise? Or a little bit of both? Do people really care if this kingdom comes to an end or not? We see other kingdoms which have come to an end, so we could just be seeing one more in a series of kingdoms having its little day.

Let us consider what is so special about this kingdom that we should care whether it comes to an end or lasts forever. Let us take a look at this kingdom which will have no end. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. A Look At The Kingdom

Perhaps after seeing what God's kingdom is like, some people may wish that it too would come to an end, like all other kingdoms, and the sooner the better. If we do not like what we see in the kingdom now, why should we want it to continue forever and ever?

A failure to see what the kingdom is can make us reluctant to welcome more of the same. A failure to realise that the kingdom has come, that it is among us now, makes its promised durability less than anticipated.

If past history is an indication, this *“Whose kingdom will have no end”* is more than an empty prediction. If we recall that the kingdom not only weathered

the Fall in the Garden of Eden but produced the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ then its continuity will never be put into doubt.

Whether we want a kingdom without end, to come or not, it will come. It is not a question of whether or not it will come but rather: Does its coming threaten us, or do we embrace it?

2. A Look At The King

Our text says, *“And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”* The kind of king determines the kind of kingdom. If we want to know what this kingdom is like, we have only to look at the King, Jesus Christ.

When we look at the concrete reality of the King, the vagueness of the word “kingdom” disappears. Much of what precedes this statement in the Nicene Creed, *“Whose kingdom will have no end,”* indicates the kind of king who is our King. *“The only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds.”* He is acquainted with timelessness. Jesus is eternal.

At the very beginning of this Second Article of the Nicene Creed there is the affirmation of timelessness. It is altogether fitting that the ending should reaffirm the beginning. This matter of timelessness is not a new feature of the King’s program. The King Himself is timeless.

“God of God, Light of light, very God of very God.” This emphasises the kingdom’s eternal nature.

To make the point even more clear the Nicene Creed says, *“Begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.”* Begotten, therefore having no beginning, and therefore having no end. Since eternity is inherent in what Jesus is and what He has done, we say with confidence, *“Whose kingdom will have no end.”*

Not only was Jesus not made; He is the Maker *“by whom all things were made.”* That means this King is experienced in ruling. Since He brought creation into being, He is certainly able to keep it going. He who simply is, makes. He who makes, preserves to all eternity.

This King, who has no beginning, who is of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, this God came down from heaven for us

men and for our salvation. To do this, Jesus became incarnate of the Virgin Mary.

Pretend-greatness withdraws from danger and trouble. But true greatness invites danger and trouble. Pretend-greatness, sensing a great need, withdraws. But true greatness draws near to meet the need, the need of us men, the need for our salvation.

This was not a remote-control operation with long mechanical arms, electromagnetically controlled, with the manipulator shielded from danger of contamination by thick walls of lead.

Rather, this Being who is not made, who made us, is now Himself formed in the womb of one of His creatures, the womb of the Virgin Mary. This is carrying the need for an empathic response to its ultimate limits, becoming one of us, living with us, like us.

“And was made man.” Jesus was not simply manhood in general. Jesus was a man. He was a specific man with the name Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, with residence for a few years in Nazareth, in the carpenter shop of a man named Joseph. His ancestry was of the tribe of Judah. Not all of His ancestors had spotless reputations, but He Himself was spotless.

He did not do what we often do: apologise for being man and all that goes with it; apologise for getting tired; apologise for having to eat; apologise for getting sick; apologise for experiencing pain; apologise for having our bodies grow old.

You will search the New Testament without success, for any statements of our Lord to parallel our own criticism of being simply human beings. That Jesus did not believe He had made a mistake in creating man, He asserted by His becoming a Man Himself.

His incarnation should stop forever the kind of criticism we give flesh-and-blood creatures. If we want to criticise the flesh-and-blood formula, either our own or anyone else's, we must in all fairness criticise Jesus' becoming flesh and blood.

3. Before Time And In Time

The story of salvation begins before time and takes on completion in time with a flesh-and-blood baby formed in the womb of Mary and born of her. *“Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man.”* Undertaken by the Holy Spirit at the command of the Father, the incarnation of Christ could not want a higher authorisation. This is going to the top, above which there is nothing else.

Jesus became what we were and are, in a way that was absolutely necessary, although not complimentary to us. Jesus was without sin. That could be bad news, were it not for the good news, that Jesus became sin for us, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, ²¹ *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* In becoming sin Jesus paid us the highest compliment of loving us.

Love follows strange pathways, and so did His. *“And was crucified.”* Non-flesh-and-blood creatures, non-sin-bearing creatures do not end up on crosses. Christ was flesh and blood, and He was sin. He chose to be both, knowingly, before time began. And these two choices, often repulsive to us, when combined in Jesus made for our salvation.

Lest we forget, the Nicene Creed adds: *“He suffered and was buried.”* Crucifixions are ghastly events. Scripture says in Galatians 3:13, *“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”* People suffer greatly while being crucified. The cause-and-effect relationship between crucifixion and subsequent death has a high correlation. Remember, this was done *for us men and for our salvation.*

If death is earth’s way of wrapping up a story, resurrection and ascension is heaven’s way of doing it. *“And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.”* For us men and for our salvation, let us not forget.

And one day *“He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead.”* It is this King’s kingdom of which it is said it will have no end. It is a kingdom that began before time, was put to severe trial in time by the Fall in the Garden of Eden, by the pre-Noah wickedness of the human race, and by the post-Exodus antics of the chosen people. This was followed by the worst blood-stained Passover the world has ever seen around A. D. 30 when they had Jesus crucified.

This kingdom has suffered reverses that would have toppled every other kingdom, and yet of all kingdoms it alone stands victorious. The latest “ism” poses no threat to it.

When Martin Luther talks about the impact and purpose of God’s action in Christ Jesus, he writes: *“that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally.”*

What has begun for us now — living in the Kingdom, working and serving in the Kingdom — with the glorious hope of the resurrection on the Last Day, the King set in motion before time began. He gave it renewed emphasis in the Exodus event, and clarified it in His crucifixion and resurrection.

4. The Kingdom’s Style

John the Baptist speaks for all of us when he asks from prison, *“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*¹ The kingdom did not look very real from his view behind bars. Even the assurance of the King was less than impressive. ⁵ *“The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

This may not sound like our idea of a kingdom in full flower; but after all, it is not our kingdom. It is the King’s kingdom. Jesus sees this kingdom flourishing. It may not be exactly what we had in mind. But it is what He has in mind. And of this kingdom there will be no end.

This kind of kingdom which has no end is all the more wonderful because it has concern for all people, for the sinner. Its King becomes what He did not need to have to become: man.

Jesus does what He did not need to have to do: be born of a woman to redeem man. Jesus concerns Himself with everyone of us — for us men for our salvation — to the point of unmistakable pain and death.

It is not a question whether or not the kingdom will prevail. The only question is whether we will be part of it. Whether the durability of this kingdom is a threat or a promise depends on us.

If this kingdom is to have no end, it means that earthly kingdoms will have an end. Our first response may well be, *“This isn’t exactly the kind of kingdom I had in mind.”*

A closer look, however, reveals that we are already a part of it. Our own kingdom began to crumble long ago, began to crumble in Baptism. From that day to this our days have begun *“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* That was the first death of our kingdom, for we *“were buried with Christ by Baptism into death.”*² That was the beginning of the deaths we have died each day to this.

Our Baptism was the day of our first resurrection, *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”*³ That was the beginning of our daily resurrection. The kingdom that will have no end does not begin when time ends. It has begun. It has conquered and engulfed us already.

Often we have drunk the cup which Christ called *“the new covenant in My blood.”*⁴ Through our feasting at His table He has given us the flavour of all feasting to follow. The cup of the *new covenant* in the blood of Christ gives us a new picture of the kind of King we have for our kingdom.

We are certainly blessed by the continuation into eternity of a kingdom whose King is the kind, who gives Himself into death for us, and who feeds us continually with Himself.

5. Not Escape But Fulfilment

To have seen the goodness which we have already seen and to see it no longer bounded by time, is an exciting prospect indeed. Our life founded in a King who was begotten, lived, suffered, died, was crucified, risen, and ascended. And of this King there shall be no end!

For the kingdom of God is where Jesus Christ is. He is among His baptised people. In the words of Luther, God’s name is hallowed *“when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it.”*

The kingdom of God comes *“when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit so that by His grace we believe His holy word and lead a godly life here in*

time and hereafter in eternity.” Jesus says in Matthew 18:20. ²⁰ “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

With St. Paul we can say, *“¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.⁵ ... I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.⁶ ... Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.⁷*

By comparison with all this, how weak are the boasts of people: “Serving the community since 1975,” or: “Faithful service since 1954,” or: “A leader in its field for fifteen years,” alongside the phrase “*Whose kingdom will have no end.*”

Let us understand and appreciate all the more that we are in Christ’s kingdom which has no end. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Matthew 11:3

² Romans 6:4

³ Romans 6:5

⁴ Luke 22:20

⁵ Romans 8:18

⁶ Philippians 1:23

⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:12