

BIBLICAL PRAXIS OF MISSION

Class 3: Evangelism In Light Of The Coming Kingdom

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I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

- A. In light of the coming Messianic Kingdom, the Church's primary role is acknowledge and worship God in his present benevolent sovereignty over all things in the heavens and on the earth, and to wait, hope and pray for the Day of the Lord and the coming of His Messiah.
- B. Secondly, the Church is called to prepare for its inheritance in that kingdom. It is called to holiness and blamelessness that we might receive a rich welcome into the coming kingdom. This is the context of discipleship and sanctification, training to reign in love and righteousness.

II. THE TERTIARY ROLE OF THE CHURCH

- A. The tertiary role of the Church is to be a witness of that Kingdom—and the judgment and restoration therein—to all the nations.

*This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms** (before the establishment of the Kingdom, cf. v.26)... ⁴⁶ **This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations (before "everything" is fulfilled), beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses (Gk. martus) of these things (i.e. suffering before the glory). (NIV Luke 24:44-48)***

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel (cf. "the kingdom of God" v.3)?" ⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses (Gk. martus) in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (NIV Acts 1:6-8)

- *He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses (Gk. martus) whom God had already chosen-- by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify (Gk. diamarturomai) that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. (NIV Acts 10:41-42)*

- B. This witness primary consists of the proclamation of the gospel/good news of the Kingdom. The essential constitution of the gospel is the Resurrection and the Kingdom.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (ESV Mark 1:14-15)

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you... ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... ¹⁷ if Christ has not been raised,

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***your faith is futile; you are still in your sins... ²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death... ³² If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."* (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 15:1-57)**

1. Humanity's ultimate problem is death/suffering/sickness and its root of wickedness and rebellion (i.e. bad news). The biblical gospel (i.e. good news) boldly declares to the sick and dying the overturning and conquering of death in the resurrection of the body. Moreover, it declares to the poor and oppressed the uprooting and destruction of wickedness in the judgment of the Day of the Lord.

***And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.* (^{ESV} Matthew 9:35)**

***The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor."* (^{NIV} Luke 4:17)**

2. On the other hand, the Christonaturalistic gospel essentially acquiesces and concedes to death, incorporating it into the core of its good news. Oxymoronically, death is the means of escaping death, which itself is immortalized when the material heavens and earth are destroyed.

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile... ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men... ³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? ³¹ I die every day-- I mean that, brothers-- just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord... ³² If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³ Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." ³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-- I say this to your shame. (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 15:16-34)

3. This Christonaturalistic gospel is proclaimed throughout the earth in sermon, song and lifestyle. Though a retarded hope, it is the only thing available to the modern church.

***"Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away. To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away. I'll fly away, Oh Glory; I'll fly away. When I die, Hallelujah, by and by; I'll fly away... Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away. To a land where joy shall never end, I'll fly away."*¹**

¹ Albert E. Brumley, "I'll Fly Away" (1929), public domain.

4. Though the “heavenly destiny” of the modern church is the core of the modern gospel, it is surprisingly little addressed. The enemy desires to destroy all hope to humanity, even a retarded heavenly destiny.

John Calvin, the great expositor, never wrote a commentary on Revelation and never dealt with the eternal state at any length. Though he encourages meditation on Heaven in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, his theology of Heave seems strikingly weak compared to his theology of God, Christ, salvation, Scripture, and the church... A great deal has been written about eschatology—the study of the end times—but comparatively little about Heaven... Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote an in-depth two-volume set titled The Nature and Destiny of Man. Remarkably, he had nothing to say about Heaven. William Shedd’s three-volume Dogmatic Theology contains eighty-seven pages on eternal punishment, but only two on Heaven. In his nine-hundred-page theology, Great Doctrines of the Bible, Martyn Lloyd-Jones devotes less than two pages to the eternal state and the New Earth. Louis Berkof’s classic Systematic Theology devotes thirty-eight pages to creation, forty pages to baptism and communion, and fifteen pages to what theologians call “the intermediate state”... Yet it contains only two pages on Hell and one page on the eternal state. When all that’s said about the eternal Heaven is limited to page 737 of a 737-page systematic theology like Berkof’s, it raises a question: Does Scripture really have so little to say? Are there so few theological implications to this subject? The biblical answer, I believe, is an emphatic no! In The Eclipse of Heaven, theology professor A. J. Conyers writes, ‘Even to one without religious commitment and theological convictions, it should be an unsettling thought that this world is attempting to chart its way through some of the most perilous waters in history, having now decided it ignore what was for nearly two millennia its fixed point of reference—its North Star. The certainty of judgment, the longing for heaven, the dread of hell: these are not prominent considerations in our modern discourse about the important matters of life. But they once were.’”²

At this point, *The Christian’s Pilgrim* by Jonathan Edwards is highlighted in the audio teaching, which can be downloaded with 3b’s audio teaching.

Tim Warner articles that John Harrigan references can be downloaded here (Tim Warner’s website <http://www.answersinrevelation.org/>):

Millennial Week Eschatology <http://www.oasischristianchurch.org/air/chiliasm.pdf>

Chronology of the Whole Bible <http://www.oasischristianchurch.org/air/chronology.pdf>

- C. The good news of the Kingdom also inherently consists of bad news toward the wicked and unrepentant. Thus, the good news is consistently accompanied by a call to repentance unto the forgiveness of sins (cf. Mt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 3:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 11:18; 13:38; 14:3; 17:30; 20:21; 26:18; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 2:13; Tit. 2:11; etc.).

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."... ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the

² Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 8-9.

region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. (^{ESV} Matthew 3:1-6)

Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd... ¹⁷ "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people... ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'... ³⁶ Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (^{NIV} Acts 2:14-38)

Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰ Then times of refreshment (Gk. *anapsuxis*) will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. (^{NLT} Acts 3:19-20)

III. PROCLAMATION BY WORD

- A. This witness of the Kingdom is primarily accomplished through a bold proclamation of the word.

They lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit... ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (^{ESV} Acts 4:24-31)

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there... ¹² when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women... ¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them... ²⁵ When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages. (^{NIV} Acts 8:4-25)

"He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." ⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. (^{NIV} Acts 10:42-44)

The two of them (Paul and Barnabas), sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. ⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they

proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues... ^{14:1} At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed... ³ So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. (^{NIV} Acts 13:4-14:3)

And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." ... ¹³ When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. (^{ESV} Acts 17:2-13)

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth... ⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. (^{NIV} Acts 18:1-5)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus... ⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. (^{NIV} Acts 19:1-8)

I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. ²⁵ Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again... ²⁷ I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. (^{NIV} Acts 20:24-27)

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. ³¹ Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. (^{NIV} Acts 28:30-31)

- B. Ministry of the Word (i.e. evangelism and proclamation of the Kingdom) was considered the culmination of the purpose of the apostles before the return of Christ.

The twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (^{ESV} Acts 6:2-4)

- They themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. ^{2:1} For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict... ⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. (^{ESV} 1 Thessalonians 1:9-2:9)***

- *I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God... ¹⁹ So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. (NIV Romans 15:15-20)*

C. Paul's primary charge to his main disciple, Timothy, was the proclamation of the Kingdom.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine (concerning the Kingdom). Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry ("fulfill your ministry" NASB/ESV/NKJ). (NIV 2 Timothy 4:1-5)

- *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. ³ Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus... ⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself. ¹⁴ Keep reminding them of these things... ¹⁶ Avoid godless chatter ("foolish discussions" NLT), because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. ¹⁷ Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. (NIV 2 Timothy 2:2-18)*

IV. PROCLAMATION BY DEED

"Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words."-- St. Francis³

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (ESV Colossians 3:17)

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. (NIV 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

³ Though often quoted as from St. Francis, this catchy phrase is not actually in his writings or in the earliest biographies about him. However, in Chapter XVII of his Rule of 1221, Francis told the friars not to preach unless they had received the proper permission to do so. Then he added, "Let all the brothers, however, preach by their deeds." This is where the popular quote found its origin.

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (^{ESV} 1 John 3:16-18)

- A. The Church's witness of the Kingdom is not only by word, but also by deed. The Church witnesses to the righteousness and holiness of the coming Kingdom by walking in righteousness and holiness in this age. This is the thrust of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6)

You are the light of the world (cf. "the Day"). ***A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*** (^{ESV} Matthew 5:14-16)

- ***And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*** (^{NIV} Romans 13:11-13)
- ***Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*** (^{NIV} Hebrews 10:23-25)
- ***If any man builds on this foundation (holiness of Jesus Messiah) using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw (cf. quality of deeds), ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward*** (cf. Is. 40:10; 62:11; Mt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12). (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 3:12-14)

- B. By their lifestyle, the Church witnesses to the world concerning what kind of behavior will be acceptable in the age to come.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control (implying that those who live like this will inherit the Kingdom). (^{NIV} Galatians 5:19-23)

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people... ⁵ For of this

you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (^{NIV} Ephesians 5:1-5)

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ ***Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*** ⁶ ***Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*** (^{NIV} Colossians 3:4-6)

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ ***and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.*** (^{NIV} Philippians 1:27-28)

- C. Walking in the righteousness of the age to come is meant confirm the message of the Church to an unbelieving world.

I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. ¹² ***What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside*** (as a reflection of the age to come)? ¹³ ***God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."*** (cf. Deut. 13:5; 17:7; 21:21; etc.) ^{6:1} ***If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?*** ² ***Do you not know that the saints will judge the world***? (cf. Is. 24:21ff; Dan. 7:27; Ps. 149:6ff; etc.)... ⁶ ***But instead, one brother goes to law against another-- and this in front of unbelievers!*** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:6)