

Sunday, October 26, 2025 – THE EARTH AND THE TWO KINGDOMS – Pastor John Henry Raskin

God's Good Creation

God created the earth and declared it "good."

Summary:

We are citizens of Heaven, called to serve faithfully on earth until Christ returns.

The Two Kingdoms

- Kingdom of God: Eternal, redemptive reality through Jesus.
- Kingdom of the World: Marked by injustice, futility, idolatry.

Our Responsibilities

- Pray: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)
- Live Kingdom values: Righteousness, peace, joy (Romans 14:17)

Christ: King of Both Kingdoms

- Jesus: Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Sovereign (Colossians 1:15-18)
- True citizenship: Christ's eternal Kingdom.
- Delivered from darkness into Christ's Kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14)

Dominion and Free Will

- Free will: Allows us to choose Jesus, as Lord, but inevitably led to the Fall.
- "The earth is the Lord's..." (Psalm 24:1)
- Humanity: Made in God's image, given dominion over creation (Genesis 1:26-28)

Living in the "Now and Not Yet"

- Salvation and growth: Already holy, not yet fully holy.
- The Kingdom of God: Present and future—here, but not yet fully realized.

Final Encouragement

- **Stewardship of Neighbors:** Pursue justice, protect the vulnerable, live as ambassadors of God's Kingdom.
- **Stewardship of Creation:** Care for the earth as an act of worship.

Key Scriptures:

Genesis 1:26-28 | Psalm 24:1 | Colossians 1:13-18 | Matthew 6:10 | 2 Peter 1:2-11

The Earth and the Two Kingdoms

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we talked about the eternal existence of Jesus as the light that was spoken by God in the beginning, and which continues throughout eternity.

We discovered that the Bible, Genesis Chapter One, begins with the earth.

It is by His Spirit hovering over the waters of this planet that God begins all of creation.

When God created the earth, He declared that it was good.

So, when God created the earth, He created it good.

He also made a point of bringing dry land out of the waters and bringing forth vegetation for sustenance on the third Day in preparation for mankind who we see was created from the dust of the earth on the sixth Day.

In Genesis 1:26, we see that God (the three persons, all in agreement) purposed to make mankind in His own image and gave us dominion over the earth and everything in it.

Genesis 1:26

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

The dictionary defines dominion as “sovereignty or control”.

God gave mankind dominion over this great creation that He had made.

I believe that it is precisely because He made us in His image that He gave dominion over to us.

Genesis 1:27-28

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

This is known as the Creation Mandate.

It is the divine charter for human involvement with the Earth.

This responsibility—to work, to keep, to cultivate, to wisely govern was given to all humanity.

It is the basis for all human culture, government, industry, and art.

However, let us not make the mistake, as our ancestors did, of thinking that mankind was ever created to be ruler over the earth without the partnership and overall supreme sovereignty of God, the ultimate King.

Psalm 24:1 assures us...

Psalm 24:1

**The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.**

And yet we were given free will.

We discussed last week that the reason that we were given free will was so that we would have the ability to choose God as Lord and not be like puppets whose allegiance is coerced.

However, as we also discussed there was a dark side to free will and that was that when tempted we had and still have the ability to make fatal mistakes.

When we believed the serpent's lie that we could be like God making our own distinctions between good and evil we were cast out of the garden paradise that God had made.

Our dominion was given over to our enemy, the Satan.

This good earth, given to us by God, at that moment became the World, a Kingdom under the sway of the enemy.

In John's Gospel Jesus twice calls Satan the Ruler of the world.

The Earth, though originally good, now operates under the shadow of the Fall of Man.

Sin has corrupted human governance, twisted our desires, and is destroying the very earth we stand on.

The Kingdom of the World Is the sum of worldly systems, values and beliefs that are influenced by sin and are in opposition to God and His sovereign plan for the earth.

This includes corrupt political, economic, social and cultural systems that promote self-interest and oppose God's will.

The "Kingdom of the World," in its political and cultural expressions, is characterized by Injustice, Futility and Idolatry.

Injustice: The abuse of power, corruption, and the oppression of the poor.

Futility: A constant striving for lasting peace without God and ultimate satisfaction that never arrives.

Idolatry: Placing trust in human institutions, wealth, and power as ultimate saviors.

If you recall, last week I mentioned that when sin entered the world it became dark and chaotic like at the beginning.

God ordains earthly authorities to restrain chaos, but their systems are temporary, often flawed, and ultimately destined to pass away.

But then there is the Gospel. The good news, heralding the Kingdom of Heaven which is here.

The good news is that God did not abandon His creation to the rule of chaos and sin.

He inaugurated a second, eternal, and redemptive reality: the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Heaven).

The Scriptures tell us that as believers, we are no longer subjects of this world and its ruler.

Why? Because of Jesus and His completed work of the Cross. His life, death and resurrection.

Paul tells us...

Colossians 1:13-14

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Our core identity is no longer defined by our earthly citizenship, our race, our career, or our social status.

Our ultimate identity is as citizens of Christ's eternal, spiritual, and perfect Kingdom.

The heart of this Kingdom is Christ Himself.

The very next verses in Colossians speak to His supremacy:

Colossians 1:15-17

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Paul then assures us that not only is Jesus Lord over the natural world and all that exists within it...

But then he includes us, corporately when he says...

Colossians 1:18

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Jesus Christ is the King of both kingdoms!

He is the Creator and Sustainer of the Earthly Kingdom, and He is the Redeemer and Sovereign of the Kingdom of God.

This means the two realms are not separate in authority, however they are still separate in operation.

While Christ is surely King over the whole universe,

He rules the world by His law which reveals sin and it is still in rebellion to Him,

And He rules His Church by His saving Gospel, the forgiveness of sin by grace and through faith and repentance.

The Kingdom of God on earth is ruled not by force or politics, but by the Word and the Spirit.

We are living in the overlap of two distinct realities: the Kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of God.

Let's examine the tension and the responsibilities that come with this dual existence.

Both exist simultaneously on this planet earth which God made and pronounced "good" and which we, in rebellion, have corrupted.

But scripture assures us that it will not always be this way.

When Jesus returns, He will establish His Kingdom which will be His physical government on earth, and it will again be good.

But this raises another question. Is the Kingdom of God present or future?

Is it here or are we waiting for it to arrive?

The answer is "Yes."

The kingdom of God is both present and future; it is here, and it has not yet arrived.

Until you understand this—what scholars call the now and the not yet of the kingdom—you won't understand the gospels or Revelation or much of the New Testament.

This now and not yet is really important.

It's how the kingdom works and how your salvation works as well.

What's true on a macro level is true on a micro level too.

Your life is not a straight line with a clean break between old man and new creation.

It doesn't work like that—it isn't like one moment you were unconverted, selfish and prideful, then boom, in Christ, now you are completely holy.

What happened is that you lived a life outside of Christ in rebellion against God but then the moment that you believed in Jesus as Lord and Christ you were converted, regenerated, justified, adopted.

You are now positionally in Christ. A citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

However, how you still act may not, in actuality yet be that Christlike.

Which is why the Apostle's exhortations in the New Testament are based on who you are in Christ.

Now your goal is to be a GOOD citizen of the Kingdom of God.

Peter, who was once stubborn, prideful and wrongheaded puts it nicely now that he has been filled with the Holy Spirit...

2 Peter 1:2-8,10-11

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things

that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Be who you are in Christ. As the Apostle Paul says “work out your salvation”.

Make your calling and election sure.

In other words, continue to grow in practice, into who Christ has made you to be positionally through faith.

So as a Christian you are already holy and not yet holy and becoming holy.

And the kingdom of God is already here, not yet here, and getting here.

Until we understand those sequences, we won't understand how the gospel works and how the gospel of the kingdom works.

The Kingdom of God is the sovereign reign and rule of Jesus.

It is both a present spiritual reality and a future physical one.

In the here and now, the Kingdom of God is where His will is done, and it is entered into by believers through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom of God is a spiritual state and a moral way of life characterized by righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Okay so you are still getting there...It doesn't change your status.

Jesus taught us to pray:

Matthew 6:10

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

When we pray as Jesus told us to do “Your Kingdom come” we are praying for God's rule to be established “on earth as it is in Heaven”.

This is not a prayer to escape Earth. It is a prayer for the redemptive reality of heaven—its justice, its peace, its healing, its love—to break into the present reality of Earth.

So, how do we, citizens of the eternal kingdom, live responsibly in the current kingdom of God on the Earth?

This brings us to the great original calling of Stewardship—our mandate to responsibly manage the Earth for the glory of its Creator.

Our lives are meant to be a preview, a living demonstration, of the values of the eternal Kingdom, lived out on the physical Earth.

When we act as good stewards, we are answering this prayer with our hearts and our hands.

Our loyalty to the Kingdom of God compels a responsible ethic toward the Kingdom of the Earth in two essential ways:

To live out the Stewardship of Creation (The Physical Earth):

Since Christ created and sustains the Earth, our care for it is an act of worship to Him.

To destroy God's good creation is to dishonor its Owner and King.

We are called to wise use, not careless exploitation.

We are also commanded to live out good Stewardship of our Neighbors.

We are mandated to protect the vulnerable who live among us, not just the valuable.

Since the Kingdom of God is characterized by righteousness we must work for righteousness in the earthly realm.

This means pursuing justice, advocating for the oppressed, supporting good governance, and obeying civil law, all while recognizing that our hope is not in politics, but in the returning King.

We are to be salt and light, preserving the good and illuminating the darkness.

We are commanded to participate in the earthly kingdom as ambassadors of the heavenly one, bringing God's values to bear on the world's systems.

We live our lives on a pilgrimage.

We have our passports stamped for heaven, but we are currently residing in the foreign land of the present age.

Although we have been rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of Light, there is much work for us to do.

Our King is not one who is waiting for us only in a distant heaven.

Our King is the one who created this earth, walked on this earth, died on a cross on this earth, and rose again to be seated as King over all things—in heaven and on earth.

Therefore, let us not be so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good.

Let us embrace our role as faithful stewards.

Let us work, cultivate, create, and build with excellence, justice, and compassion.

For as we care for God's beautiful Earth and pursue His justice within its flawed systems, we are not trying to build the Kingdom of God, but rather, we are reflecting it—

pointing all people to the one, true, and eternal King, Jesus Christ, in whom all things hold together.

May we live this week as true citizens of Heaven, diligently serving the Creator in His common realm, the Earth.

Let's pray...