

John 18:36 & 1 Peter ***In the World But Not of It – Part One***

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Main Idea of the Sermon: We are called to come around the Scriptures, behold a theological and spiritual vision, and do our best to interpret the world, live in the world, and bless the world, by being the Church in but not of the world. We are called to work for transformation by being faithful, present, and salt and light.

STRUCTURE/OUTLINE OF THE SERMON

- I. Introduction
 - A. The Line
 - B. What We Will Not Do
- II. Who is Jay Thomas?
- III. What are some of the issues at stake?
 - A. The Sufficiency of Scripture
 - B. A Christian methodology of history – warts and all.
 - C. What do we make of the geo-political nation of America?
 - D. What is an American evangelical?
- IV. The Text: John 18:36, 1 Peter, Philippians 3:20
 - A. A King and His Kingdom
 - B. Where is our citizenship?
 - C. How did we get here?
 - D. The way forward: Faithful, Present, Salt and Light
 - 1. Three lanes to avoid: Separation, Domination, Assimilation
 - 2. The Biblical lane to embrace: Transformation
- V. Conclusion
 - A. I believe the right and left have made too much of our nation, in different ways, playing out in different beliefs and actions.
 - B. This Place Matters
 - C. The Line

GOSPEL CENTRALITY

The gospel does not wipe away our nationality, but it does remind us that it is secondary to our ultimate citizenship and identity in Christ – that we are children of God and part of His Kingdom.

KEY WORDS/THEMES

1. **Kingdom (*basileia*) Jn. 18:36** – a term related to royal administration; the royal reign of God; can also refer to the territory ruled by a king, which is how Jesus is using it here in John 18. Vaughan Roberts defines God's kingdom as "God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing" ([God's Big Picture](#)).
2. **Exiles (*parepidēmos*) 1 Pet. 1:1** – pertaining to staying for a while in a strange or foreign place, sojourning, residing temporarily, stranger, sojourner, resident alien, of Christians, who are not at home in this world.
3. **Citizenship (*politeuma*) Phil. 3:20** – can be translated as 'commonwealth' or 'state.' It often denotes a colony of foreigners or relocated veterans. It is related to the Greek word for church, *ekklēsia*. "Our home is in heaven, and here on earth we are a colony of heavenly citizens' (M. Dibelius).
4. **Nation (*ethnos*) see, e.g., Matt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:5; Rom. 4:18; Rev. 5:9; 7:9** – a body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common tradition (e.g., the Samaritan people, the Jewish people). It the broadest of all the terms that refer to different people groups (see *laos*, *glossa*, *phylē* for more specific groupings of people), so in many ways it can be used to talk about any natural grouping of people. It can also refer to people groups foreign to a specific people group, or those who belong to groups that do not profess faith in God (e.g., gentiles).

KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN

- How does it emotionally and theologically feel to hear about the difference between the church and any modern nation state?
- Where are ways you put too much emphasis or identity in the state?
- Where do you see the far right and far left leaning into the state as if it were the new Israel or highly connected to the Church?

RESPONDING IN PRAYER

- Thank God that Scripture is sufficient, that our citizenship is in heaven, that our ultimate identity is in Christ, and that we are His children and part of His Kingdom.
- Pray for our church – that we would work for transformation in our communities by being faithful, present, and salt and light.
- Pray for those among your family, friends, and community who have not put their trust in Jesus – that they would respond to the gospel and find their identity in Christ.