

The Kingdom of Christ

Book of Isaiah

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Bible Text: Isaiah 65:17-18

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If you will, look with me in your Bibles once again to Isaiah 65. Isaiah 65. I want to read for us from verse 18 down to verse 25, but we probably won't get much further than verse 20. So if you were thinking that when we started on Isaiah 65 we were soon to be finished, we're taking our time. This is a journey, and there's no hurry. It's the Word of the Lord, and we want to, by His grace, glean all we can from this Word.

I want to speak to you about the Kingdom of Christ. And in the reading just before the message in Luke 17 about the middle of that portion, we saw where our Lord Jesus confronted the religious people of his generation who had a view of the kingdom of God much like many people do today. That somehow there is going to be some future, earthly, physical kingdom. It's going to be centered in Jerusalem. It's going to be over there in Israel. And there are even groups of confessing Christians today that are actually donating money for funds to rebuild the temple eventually in Jerusalem, and, believe it or not, there is even a movement of raising up a pure priesthood after all these years that somehow will begin to initiate sacrifices once again. I can't tell you of anything more blasphemous. I believe our Lord set that straight even with the Pharisees as we read it there in Luke 17, that the kingdom comes not with observation. We aren't to say, "Lo here," or "Lo there." But He said, "The kingdom of God is in you." Is the way it is put, "is among you." In other words, when Christ was on this earth, the king was here. A kingdom assumes a king, and it assumes his power and authority to rule and to reign. And so, as you look at this matter of the kingdom of God throughout Scripture, you could say in one sense the kingdom has always been, because God is King, and He has decreed all things, and therefore all things through history flow out of Him being on the throne. So it has been, but you can say it is right now. I'm not waiting for Christ to come back to be King. The Scriptures are very clear that He came, lived, died, rose again, and ascended on high, and where is He seated now? On the throne. So, it was and is, and yet we can also say is to come.

Thank God there is a kingdom to come that is not like what we see around us here that is full of sin, the curse, and the fall, that God has purposed to, as we saw last time in Isaiah 65:17, create all things new. And this message that we see here in Isaiah 65:17 is designed to encourage the Lord's people living in this world. People like ourselves that, even as we saw in Psalm 79, cry out "How long Lord?" I don't know about you, but the

longer I live in this world, in this life, the less appealing it is. And I'm thankful there's nothing new under the sun. I know when you first graduate from high school, get out there, and you feel like you're going to have something to contribute to the world, and the world is waiting for you, and "I'm going to make some changes. I'm going to make a difference." All this stuff. And here I am at 58 now looking back and thinking, "You know, apart from the Lord and His grace and mercy having revealed Christ in this poor sinner's heart, nothing else matters. It really doesn't. I have not got a legacy to leave. I'm not trying to establish one. Whether I am ever famous in this world's eyes or not doesn't matter. I will tell you what is important is being accepted in the Beloved and being found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, but that which is of God through the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the world go by."

But, that being said, look at what we have to look forward to, and that's what we see here in Isaiah 65 with regard to the kingdom of Christ. I'll begin in verse 17.

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

That's about how far we're going to get in the message, but I'll read on just so you can see the context.

20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Now the Scriptures are a profound literary work that this world minimizes. I'm talking about it not just being the inspired Word of God, but in this book that we hold in our hands there is actually a library: 66 books written over a period of 1500 years. I don't know if we really appreciate the fact that we hold in our hands a printed copy of God's Word. There are many that don't. There are many that have maybe just portions of it, or they have heard of it, but here we are, the Lord has put it in our hands. And taken even

unregenerate men and giving them the science and the ability to print and to publish these things. The King James Version, someone was saying the other day, "Where does the Royalty over there get all their money? Because they don't do anything." Well, believe it or not, for every King James Bible that is sold, the King and Queen get a piece of it, royalty. It's the King James Version. They are still collecting on it. But do you know what? Whether they ever believe it or not, the Lord used that era and gave King James that presence of mind to ordain that a group of men sit down and carefully study the original Scriptures and come up with a translation that would be what would be the accepted version, the received text, and that would be used for years to come and here we are.

You can go back and compare what's written here with the original. I like the carefulness with which the translators translated this Word, because when they came to a part that wasn't necessarily...they couldn't find the equivalent in the original to translate it into English, they put that in italics. And so that helps us as you're reading along. Okay? This was their sense in translating it, but do you know what? We have the tools today through the Strong's Concordance and especially with technology now, some of you are using it, I see you checking me out while I'm preaching it, checking up the Word, looking at it. It's easy to do which is good. I'm all for it. We're like Bereans. Let's study the Scriptures. Don't take my word for it. Compare Scripture with Scripture. But we have all of that ability today, but it's God's Word that He has preserved against all the attacks of the enemy to destroy it. You study church history a little bit, and you'll see times and seasons where the one emphasis and crusade was to destroy every copy of the Word. There are martyrs that have shed their blood. I think of William Tyndale who was burnt at the stake for determining that the common English person would be able to take God's Word and read it in His own language and wouldn't have to go to a service where some man was up there talking in a foreign language, in Latin, that no one understood anyway, and talking hocus pocus without any knowledge of what this Word was about. And so, what a privilege to have it.

But even as I read for you, and here's a portion here in Isaiah 65, thinking in terms of the Bible as literature and how the Lord used 40 different writers all with different personalities. This is not just something that was dictated word for word and put out there, but the Lord using Moses to write what he did, and Isaiah to write what he did, and Paul to write what he did, and all of it together having but one purpose, and that was to describe, and glorify, and honor, and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ because it's Christ's Spirit which was in these prophets. Peter spoke of that. He wrote of that. The Spirit of Christ which was in them caused them to write of the glory which should come in His death.

And so, as we read this, what picturesque language, talking here of a new heavens and a new earth. Very poetic in many ways. Speaking here of a New Jerusalem. Look at the words of rejoicing: of the joy of the people, the voice of weeping, not being heard anymore, of an infant of days. You see much of the language of Scripture, particularly here in the prophets, was prophetic. But it was also figurative. I believe this is where people go wrong. They try to take this Scripture and interpret it in a natural sense.

They're looking for a natural kingdom. I had somebody accuse me one time, he said, "Well, you keep talking about a spiritual kingdom. What are you doing spiritualizing the Word? Don't you believe that there's going to be a literal kingdom one day?" Yeah, there's a literal kingdom. There's a literal kingdom now. There is literally a kingdom of which Christ is the King, and He rules over His people. There is a literal kingdom, but it's not a natural kingdom. It's not one, even as Christ said, that you can observe with your eyes, and see. Let's go, like so many are taking pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Let's go back to the Holy Land, they call it.

I remember my dad and mom took a trip years ago over there. My dad was kind of a history buff and archeology and he liked to study these things, and I remember after his trip asking, I said, "How was it?" And he said, "You could hardly see anything for all the shrines. You know everywhere that supposedly someone had put a foot there was a shrine. You could see a lot of the works of men's hands, but not much of what was there originally as God had created it." I thought, "Well, that's probably a good thing. Then you don't put any emphasis at all on that land."

As we have read this particular portion of Scripture and study this, what we have here first of all is the kingdom of Christ prophesied and there are two aspects to it. There is His spiritual kingdom that is set forth here, but also His eternal kingdom and I want you to look at that with me. The spiritual kingdom. We know that in verse 17 it sets the stage for us that God would do something new. He would "create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." We saw that last time. But here's the part where I want us to focus in this message in verses 18 and 19. He says, "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people."

Well, who is this Jerusalem of which Isaiah is prophesying here? Certainly, it's not that old city of Jerusalem. I don't look for the Lord to go and refurbish old Jerusalem and here's why. Even Paul, the apostle didn't. Look in Galatians 4. Galatians 4. I suppose if people take exception with me for spiritualizing the Scriptures, they'd have to take exception with the Apostle Paul, because He actually uses that word "allegory." And that's what people will do when they don't believe the message of the Gospel, when they don't believe that the message of this book, the Bible, has to do with Christ and Him crucified, they will always accuse you of allegorizing and spiritualizing. It's like one person said to me one time, "Do you see Christ everywhere?" My answer sadly was, "I wish I could." The sad thing is that He's there and I don't see Him. I'm like that woman in the Song of Solomon that heard the rattling of the door, and woke out of her sleep, and went running after the King. "Where is He? Where have you put Him?" That's my desire. I tell you, I grieve when I can read a Scripture and not see Christ in it, and it grieves me that I'm so blind even after all these years, but I know it takes the Spirit of God to open my eyes.

But that's what Paul was saying here in Galatians 4. Look in verse 21. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the

bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise." And here's that dirty word, "Which things are an allegory." "Oh, you can't do that Paul!" Oh, yes he can. Paul was writing this as the inspired Word of God going back to that Old Testament text and considering it through spiritual eyes. Considering how, yes, it was a true history. It doesn't take it away from being an historic fact, but he says, "Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Can you imagine the Jews of his day becoming angry at hearing this kind of preaching. "What? You're comparing us with Agar who gave birth to Ishmael?" That was their enemy. And what Paul is saying is "You are that seed. You call yourselves Jews. You boast of being Abraham's seed, but in reality, Jerusalem of old, you are no different than Ishmael. You can fight him all you want to, but you are of nature the same and under bondage the same." That's what he's saying.

But look at here. Here's the distinction. Look at verse 26. "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

So, here in Isaiah 65 when in verse 18 he speaks there, "Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing," he is forward looking to that time when the Lord Jesus Christ would come into this world and would pay the sin debt of that people which God had purposed to call out to His name and save them by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the true Israel. That's the true Jerusalem. That's that one which is from above and not of the earth, earthly.

We saw that last time in 2 Corinthians 5 if you just go back for review. 2 Corinthians 5:17 where Paul says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," a new creation. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It's speaking there from the time of the cross. Old things passed away. What did Christ accomplish at the cross? What did He finish so that here His work now is described as a new creation? Well, He put away sin. He put away the curse. No longer were animal sacrifices necessary as a covering for sin. They were just as a type until He should die. That's what it means, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The writer of the Hebrews talked about a new and living way that has been opened up through Christ entering in through the veil. Christ the forerunner. It talks about Him being the accomplishment of all that those Old Testament priests and high priests represented, that blood that was put upon the altar. All of that accomplished in His death and therefore, all things now become new. You see, this isn't something that you take and internalize and think, "Okay, I am regenerated. So all things are new." Well, you've got another guess

coming when you think that way. Sure there is a new perspective, there are new eyes to see Christ, but do you know what? I still have to live with the same old Ken Wimer. And the more light that the Gospel shines on this old Ken Wimer, the less I like because when you're blind, you don't really see what there is, especially if you're in a room with a light out, but turn the light on and take a look. If the Lord ever takes and turns that light of Christ and the Gospel on this soul, I will tell you what: your mouth will be stopped. That's what it's designed to do. That every mouth might be stopped and the world be found guilty before Him.

But all things new. You see, that's what's being described here in Isaiah 65. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." All things new. "I create Jerusalem." All of this is what flows out of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Him paying the sin debt and earning and establishing that righteousness whereby God now declares righteous once for all. I'm not declared righteous when I believe. That's not when I was declared righteous. I was declared righteous, if Christ paid my debt, when He said "It is finished." You say, "Well, Ken, you weren't even there." Absolutely, I'm glad that it's that way, because that means that it's outside of myself, and that's how God can accept me based upon that work of His Son and not anything in me.

So that's the spiritual side, I believe, of His kingdom. And I believe that's what Isaiah is describing here prophetically. This work that would be done, not with old Jerusalem. In fact, in our reading, when it described there of two men being in a field, and one taken, and the other left, it was describing what would take place even in that generation; that God would cause the Roman Empire to surround Jerusalem and come in and destroy that city, and wipe out that temple, and be done with it. And I believe that He so ordained it to be completely done away. If you go over there today, on the foundation of where that old temple was that was destroyed in 70 A.D., the Muslims have built one of their holiest mosques, the Dome of the Rock. It would take a literal war. Can you imagine if anybody tried to go in and destroy that and try to rebuild the temple? I believe God saw to it, even through the means of men, that never again would anybody ever go back and lay another brick on top of that because it's done. That's not the Jerusalem of which He is speaking here. He's talking about a New Jerusalem, a people of His choosing. One purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet, people continue to hope in something that is different, just like it was in Christ's day. The stone which the builders rejected, they try to take another stone and build on that foundation. When you see them over there today with a stiff neck doing this in front of that wall, there is one part of the wall that remains from that old temple, and they call that the Wailing Wall. And you will see people putting pieces of paper in there that are prayers. What are they praying for? They're praying for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, old Jerusalem. They're praying for the rebuilding of that old temple, of the reestablishing of Israel as a nation, it's prominence in the world. And you can see that all of that is just a continued picture of the rebellion of the heart, because they renounce the Son of God. They will not see Him as the sacrifice, the only sacrifice for sin, and they continue to hope in another way. They can only await nothing but condemnation there. So what we

see here described prophetically in Isaiah is that spiritual kingdom which God has purposed should come.

You'll notice in verse 16 of Isaiah 65, these are all connected, it says that "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth." It's speaking here of a spiritual work. "And he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes." What's our biggest trouble? It's our sin. How could that be forgotten? How could that be hidden from the eyes of a holy God? Well, in the satisfactory sacrifice, that of the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished.

Now, you might say to me, "Well, isn't there an eternal aspect to this?" Yes. As I said, "The kingdom of God can be described as what has been, what is, and what shall be." I truly believe that in verse 17 when he talks here about creating "new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." It's talking about a complete change of things as we know it now whereby this world as we've known it in its fall and in its curse will be remembered no more. Peter spoke of that in 2 Peter 3.

Look there with me. This is the future glory with which we have to look forward. But it is founded still upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and His death, and what He has accomplished. In 2 Peter 3 it says there in verse 9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward." That's an important word in there, "to us-ward." "Not willing that any should perish." How this verse has been twisted and misquoted. They pull it out of context. They forget to whom Peter is writing. When he says, "to us-ward," if you go back to the beginning of his epistle, he's talking to those "that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." That's verse 1. That's who this epistle is written to. And so when he says, "Longsuffering to us-ward," we understand by implication not willing that any of us should perish, any of the us-ward, but that all of us should come to repentance. All of those that God has ordained should obtain that righteousness through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that have obtained it in His work. The Lord will not lose one for whom He has died. That's what that's saying.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." I believe that is what Isaiah was writing of when he said, "The former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." It's not talking in Isaiah 65 about some future earthly kingdom to be established over there in earthly Jerusalem and earthly Israel where once again Israel's prominence, as some hope, will be reestablished. No. All that has been done away.

Notice between verse 9 and verse 10 there is no earthly millennial kingdom even mentioned. It just says that God is not slack concerning His promise. If Christ has not yet returned it is simply because the last one for whom He died has not yet been brought in. If you ask, "Well, why is He waiting?" There has got to be another sheep there somewhere. If I didn't believe there was another sheep, I wouldn't even be preaching

today. Why preach if there are no more sheep? If the Lord has caused us to be able to meet together again here today and this Word to go forth, it's for the encouragement of His sheep here, but it's for the encouragement of His sheep that are throughout the world that may hear this through the means of SermonAudio or some other means, and some of those sheep may not even know yet that they are sheep. The Lord knows them.

But He is building His kingdom. He's creating His Jerusalem. It's from above. But when that last number comes in, verse 10 says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." A thief in the night you're not expecting. It will be of a sudden. And when it says that in verse 10 it doesn't say that when He comes then there is going to be this thousand year earthly kingdom. No. It says, simply, that "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." In other words, don't get your roots too deep in this world. To live in a manner of holy conversation and godliness is to live in a manner in which the Spirit of God having revealed Christ in you, causes you to look to that one holiness and that one righteousness which God has established in His Son. And in godliness, that word "godliness" is "reverence." Reverential fear. In other words, living to His glory.

"Looking for," verse 12 says, "and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise," notice, "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." In other words, completely removed from the curse of this world.

When you come back to Isaiah 65, and this is why I am taking my time going down through this, is because verses 20 through 25 we find figurative language. This is a form of literature that is used. It's figurative, but it's describing the peace, the joy, and the blessing of that work accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, whether it is in this life now, or when all of this is finally put away and this world as we know it will be burnt up, and taken out, and the new established. It's describing in language that we understand of the joy and of the blessing of that work accomplished. When it speaks there in verse 20, we'll see this next time, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." It's talking about eternity. It's a way of describing how we will live forever. "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." That's as opposed to dying. How many people do you know that build a house and never dwelt in it? That's a part of this sin cursed earth. One man builds, another man dwells in it. One man plants a field, and another man eats from it, because he's gone. So as you go down through here, that's what's being described, but it fits the picture of how the New Testament describes the kingdom of God.

If you will look with me in your Bibles, for example, over in the book of Romans 14. Let me just sum it up with this, and give you something to think about, and read, and study, and then Lord willing we will come back to it. But here in Romans 14, and I'll just look at one particular verse here. You see, there are many that still, like the Jews of old, want us

to go back and put us back under the Law. The conditional preaching that they say, "Well, it's all right to believe in Christ, but." There's no but here. Look at Romans 14, and we will begin with verse 13. "Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself." Tell that to our religious fundamentalist world where they've got it all broken down. This type of sin. That type of sin. This is clean. This is unclean. You know, if Christ has put away your sin there is nothing unclean in who you are or in what you do. Now you see it, because you know your heart, but God doesn't. If the work of Christ is effectual, that sin has been put away. He sees it no more.

And so, "I know," Paul says, "and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of." So why do you abstain from certain things? As far as meat, and drink, and what not. It's not because there is anything spiritual in abstaining. But out of love. "Okay, that causes you to stumble." And you know, when the Scriptures talk about it causing another to stumble, it doesn't mean that they think ill of you for eating it, or ill of you for drinking it. It's you obligating them to do something that's against their conscience. I'm not going to serve a man pork if he really feels like somehow it's detrimental to him in his health or whatever way. But if I choose to eat pork when he's not around, that's not a stumbling block to him. That's what it's talking about.

But here's the key in verse 17. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." So again, the difference between a natural kingdom and a literal spiritual kingdom. There is a literal spiritual kingdom that is described here as that of righteousness, of peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost and that can never be taken away. What is that righteousness? Well, it is the righteousness of God that the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth, and earned, and established, and God once for all imputed to the account of His people.

What is that peace? Well, it could be threefold. It could be that peace, that legal peace that has been established between the sinner and God by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It could be that inner peace that the Spirit of God gives to that sinner when He is pleased to reveal Christ in Him that I am the Lord's, and He is mine. But there is also that peace with one another in the body; the getting along irrespective of our different backgrounds and where we've come from. There is a oneness that Christ gives His people that joins them together and causes them to live at peace with one another in the body. All of this is describing that kingdom.

But notice, it says, "And joy in the Holy Ghost." And when you come back here to Isaiah 65, and I have to stop, but that's what we see here. It says in verse 18, "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Now, it may be speaking there of our joy in Christ, but if you look at it carefully, here is the amazing thing: it's talking about God's joy of His

people. God in His holiness could not just look on a sinner and rejoice, but in His Son He rejoices. Why? Because He doesn't see the sinner. He sees His Son. What a kingdom. What a glorious kingdom that is ruled by a benevolent Redeemer, Savior, and Substitute of His people.

And it says, "The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." Why? Because Christ has paid the debt. That's a subject to rejoice in, and one I trust you do rejoice in.