

## Christian Nationalism and the Kingdom of God

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*“What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.”*

(Ps 8:4–8)

A Christian doesn't have to read news headlines for very long today before becoming depressed. Society seems to be quickly plummeting further and further away from anything that even approximates justice and righteousness. We live in days of despair, threat of war, violence, murder, poverty, sickness, abortion, waning morality, injustice, and racial tensions.

In bleak times such as these, it is natural to ask, “Why have things gotten so bad?” And it is also good for Christians to consider, “How then should we live?” But what also often happens during times of societal decay is that some Christians begin to point fingers at other Christians they believe are to blame for such decay, and new movements arise that claim to have the answer.

One particular movement that has taken center stage in recent days is what has come to be called “Christian Nationalism.” This moniker means more than simply a nation that upholds values consistent with God's moral law or an emphasis upon Christians actively applying their biblical values to how they vote and what they support politically. Among those who are writing and speaking on the issue, Christian Nationalism is the idea that Christians ought to pursue the formation of nations that explicitly consider themselves to be Christian and govern themselves accordingly.

For example, to quote Stephen Wolfe's *The Case for Christian Nationalism*,

Christian Nationalism is a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation, in order to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good in Christ.

Wolfe acknowledges that “a nation has no power in itself to bring anyone internally to true faith.” The aim, then, is making the nation “Christian” *externally*.

And indeed, Christian nationalists often talk about our mandate to “baptize nations.” Or to put it in the words of Andrew Torba and Andrew Isker, Christian Nationalism is Christians “taking

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dominion and discipling nations.” This emphasis is expanded with what Doug Wilson has called “mere Christendom,” meaning “a network of nations bound together by a formal, public, civic acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the fundamental truth of the Apostles’ Creed.”

There are a variety of reasons for this emphasis in focus on Christian Nationalism and even postmillennial theonomy that are certainly understandable. The rapid rise of atrocities like “drag queen story hour,” gay “marriage,” LGBTQ+ distortions, and Satan worship on prime time television have rightly alarmed faithful Christians. The angst is understandable.

But I have grown concerned that the underlying emphases and theological basis for what Christian nationalists are advocating does not match what Scripture commands for the church. What they advocate, I fear, threatens to undermine the pilgrim character of New Testament Christianity and the spiritual mission given to the church of making disciples.

And so my argument today is this: the Christian Nationalism debate is not primarily a political or cultural debate. It is a kingdom debate. The real disagreement is about the nature, timing, and citizens of Christ’s kingdom. And when we allow Scripture to answer the kingdom question, it gives us a different agenda than Christian Nationalism.

I want to walk through three points to my argument today. First, the biblical framework of God’s two-fold kingdom. Second, the fundamental errors of Christian Nationalism in light of that framework. And third, the biblical alternative: Christian faithfulness as citizens and exiles in God’s twofold kingdom until the King returns.

### **God’s Two-fold Kingdom**

Central to a biblical philosophy of cultural engagement is how Scripture uses language like 'rule,' 'reign,' and 'kingdom' to describe God's plan in history, and essential to this understanding is recognition that Scripture uses these kinds of 'kingdom' terms to describe a couple different concepts in God's working out of his sovereign plan.

### **God’s Universal Sovereign Reign**

First, there is one clear sense in which the Bible refers to a kingdom that is eternal and universal in scope. The psalmist proclaims, “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps 103:19) and “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations” (Ps 145:13). All aspects of the universe fall under this rule, including what we might commonly consider culture: social and family structures, government, agriculture, the arts, and so forth. God rules it all.

Within this universal reign, God created Adam in his image. God is the sovereign king, but Adam was made in God’s image to be a vice-regent who would rule over all creation on God’s behalf:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen 1:27–28)

This was a blessing given to Adam as a representative of all humanity to take the raw materials of God’s creation and use them for his glory and their good; this is essentially what we call culture—what we make of God’s creation. This blessing establishes the basis for common human institutions such as marriage, family, agriculture, horticulture, and husbandry.

It was a blessing, but it was also a responsibility. “Subdue” and “have dominion” are royal terms, the former term later used to describe Israel’s subduing of the land of Canaan, and the latter term used to describe the Messiah’s future reign. Made in God’s image, man is given the role of God’s regal representative on earth. God is sovereign king over all creation, but he formed man in his image to be his vice-regent on earth.

Also important to note here is that this blessing occurs before the Fall. All humankind was blessed with dominion over creation, and thus God rules his universal kingdom through all people created in his image.

The realm of this kingdom over which man was to rule as God’s regal representative was a garden God planted as his earthly palace (Gen 2:8). God placed the man whom he had formed in his palace, adorned it with rich food and gold, and gave Adam a job: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (Gen 2:15).

Yet here the language shifts from royal language to priestly language, revealing a second role man was to play in the garden realm. The phrase “work it and keep it” signifies much more than the duties of a gardener; both verbs are used elsewhere for the duties of the Levites—serving the Lord in the sanctuary and guarding it from the intrusion of anything profane or evil.

In other words, the four verbs in Genesis 2 that describe man’s purpose in the garden indicate that God created man to be his kingly representative and his priestly representative. The garden was not only God’s earthly palace, but also his earthly temple. Man was supposed to “keep” the palace-sanctuary, that is, to guard and protect its holiness, preventing those who would attempt to usurp God’s reign and defile his temple.

Thus, what God intended for man in the garden was that he serve as a perfect king/priest within a “holy theocracy,” a perfect union between kingdom and temple, between reigning and worshiping. This is what David was referring to in Psalm 8. God chose to rule his world through man.

### **Adam’s Failure and the Separation**

However, when the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 8, which claims that God has put everything under the feet of man, he says in the next verse, “At present, we do not yet see

everything in subjection to him” (Heb 2:8). Adam failed. He disobeyed God’s command to have dominion over creation; he allowed a creature, the serpent, to be king. He failed to guard God’s garden sanctuary and allowed Satan to defile it. As the representative of all humankind, Adam failed to be God’s perfect king/priest, and he was exiled from the palace/sanctuary of God’s presence.

Adam’s failure did not end the universal sovereign reign of God, of course, and many of the passages in Scripture that speak of God ruling over all refer to that continual, never-ending reign of God on his throne. All of this was part of God’s sovereign plan.

But Adam’s failure did result in a fracturing of his role as king/priest in God’s garden-sanctuary. God pronounced a curse upon Adam and Eve and all creation. And in the midst of his curse upon the serpent, he provided a glimmer of hope in Genesis 3:15:

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

God promised that one day a seed of the woman—a Second Adam—would accomplish what the First Adam failed to do. He would crush the usurper’s head and cleanse the defiled sanctuary, fulfilling the God-given role of the perfect king/priest.

But until the Second Adam establishes his rule, God separated the two aspects of his united kingdom into two realms of his sovereign rule.

### **The Common Kingdom**

The first realm is what we might call the common kingdom, preserved by God’s common grace, which holds in check the curse on mankind while God works his plan of redemption.

God established marriage and family as fundamental building blocks of human society (Gen 2:18–24), and these continued after the Fall. Even after Cain murdered Abel, God promised preservation of justice, implying the establishment of legal systems that would prevent unbridled evil in the world (Gen 4:13–16). Cain built a city where that measure of justice was maintained (Gen 4:17). Work continued as a means of prosperity, including the development of husbandry, the arts, and metallurgy (Gen 4:20–22).

Further, in Genesis 9, God’s covenant with Noah reveals his plan to preserve humankind and creation until the Second Adam establishes his rule. In his covenant with Noah, God specifically repeats the blessings of Genesis 1:28—“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” He wants humans to continue to engage in cultural matters like having children and working the ground—this is a blessing because it helps to maintain order in the world.

But notice that he does not repeat the command to have dominion. That command was given to Adam as our representative, and he failed as our representative. *We* failed in him. Our

work in culture is simply a way to maintain order as a blessing to us until the Second Adam takes dominion.

But in his covenant with Noah, God established government with its God-given responsibility of capital punishment: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Gen 9:6). God gave this responsibility to govern the world to all humankind as a common grace means through which he would providentially control man’s sinfulness and preserve the world and its order until the Second Adam establishes his reign. Thus even pagan magistrates can enforce God’s moral law involving peaceful relations between citizens since they are still made in God’s image (though marred by sin), “the law is written on their hearts” (Rom 2:15), and by God’s common grace, even unbelievers often recognize that society simply works better when certain morality is enforced.

In other words, the regal aspect of Adam’s garden role continues imperfectly for all humankind as a common grace means to imperfectly preserve a degree of order and peace until Christ establishes his perfect theocratic Kingdom on earth. This **common kingdom of God** is not redemptive in nature, and it is not limited only to redeemed people; the common kingdom is God’s providential rule over all through human institutions that he has appointed to maintain order in this world—family, government, and human vocation.

### **The Redemptive Kingdom**

However, God also called out a subset from among the common kingdom as a worshiping community. This distinction between two subsets of humanity was declared already in the promise of Genesis 3:15 when God declared that there would be enmity between Satan’s offspring and the woman’s offspring. When it comes to worship, only two options exist: Christ or Antichrist. There is no neutral middle ground—individuals worship either Christ or Satan, and thus there exists a spiritual antithesis between believers and unbelievers for all of human history.

Unlike within the common grace institutions of the world, where all humans share a measure of commonality, God’s worshiping community is set apart from unbelieving humanity. God called out Noah and his family as a redeemed community, saving them from judgment. In God’s covenant with Abraham (Gen 17:1–8), God called out a redeemed people for his name. The requirement for membership in this community is faith—“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain” (Heb 11:4); “By faith Noah...constructed an ark for the saving of his household” (Heb 11:7); and Abraham “believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:6).

Abraham and his family were a called-out worshiping community. And as such, though they were part of the common kingdoms of the world, they were sojourners and pilgrims. Abraham sought “the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Heb 11:10). God’s

redeemed people, though still sharing commonalities with the rest of humanity, are nevertheless “strangers and exiles on the earth,” since “they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one” (Heb 11:13, 16). Their temporal citizenship is in earthly cities, but their deepest identity is in a heavenly kingdom.

This is the second way Scripture often uses “kingdom” language: to refer to God’s specific rule through the Second Adam over his redeemed worshiping people.

And indeed, the Second Adam came in the person of Jesus Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the role of God’s king/priest. Like with the first Adam, the serpent tempted Jesus and tried to usurp his rule, but Jesus conquered him. Like with the first Adam, God appointed Jesus to be a priest, and Jesus perfectly obeyed by cleansing the temple and offering up himself as an atoning sacrifice. Unlike the first Adam, Jesus passed the test and earned the right to rule as the perfect king/priest, and after his resurrection from the dead, he ascended into the heavenly palace/temple itself, where he sat down at the right hand of God’s throne. Christ succeeded where Adam failed and is now enjoying the blessings Adam never attained.

So when Scripture uses kingdom language with reference to the redeemed people of God under the rule of Christ, the perfect king/priest, it is different from God’s universal common kingdom. This redemptive kingdom does not include all humankind; it includes only those who place their faith in this perfect king/priest, “sons of the kingdom” (Matt 13:38) who have been delivered “from the domain of darkness and transferred . . . to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin” (Col 1:13).

### **Promise of Future Union**

This establishes the reality of a two-fold kingdom over which God rules: (1) a universal common kingdom, God’s sovereign superintendence over all things—including creation and human institutions, cultures, and societies, and (2) a redemptive kingdom, God’s specific rule over his redeemed people.

But God intends one day to unite them into one Kingdom. This is the third, and perhaps most concrete way Scripture uses “kingdom” terminology: it prophesies the reign of a perfect King/Priest in which he will unite God’s universal reign with his redemptive reign, a day when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11:9), when Christ will “have dominion from sea to sea, and from River to the ends of the earth” (Ps 72:8).

### **Model for Future Union**

In the Old Testament, however, God did foreshadow what this union would look like. The Abrahamic Covenant and especially the Mosaic Covenant established a nation that would serve as both a prototype of the united Kingdom of God and further evidence that sinful humans

could not achieve it. In other words, God chose the nation of Israel to be a model of the union between the universal common kingdom and the redemptive kingdom.

By means of the Mosaic covenant, Israel became a proto-typical theocratic union of kingdom and worship. The Mosaic Law given at Mt. Sinai united religious qualifications with moral and civil in which the Law governed every aspect of their society. This was an earthly picture of what the united universal redemptive kingdom would look like. However, because of Israel's continual rebellion, idolatry, and eventually indifference, God terminated that united kingdom when his Shekinah-Glory departed from the temple in Ezekiel 11.

Christ's first coming qualified him as the perfect king/priest and accomplished the means of redeeming a people who would comprise the citizenship of the universal redemptive Kingdom, but Christ's first coming never brings with it the same union of the civil and redemptive that existed in either the Garden of Eden or Israel's kingdom. Although Christ has already established his rule over his redeemed people, as Hebrews 2:8 says, "At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him." Christ is, as Psalm 110 states, presently seated at the Father's right hand until the Father makes his enemies his footstool.

The Bible presents this united kingdom as coming suddenly and with violent force at the Second Coming of Christ. Psalm 110 and other Messianic psalms all describe the nations submitting to Christ's lordship as coming when the Messiah breaks them with a rod of iron, when he crushes his oppressor, and when he executes judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses. Prophets like Isaiah and Zechariah foretell the coming of Christ with judgment in the Day of the Lord as that which will unite the two-fold kingdom into one.

Furthermore, Jesus specifically described his earthly reign as being accomplished as a result of his coming again. He promised in Matthew 25:31–32, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." The order of events here is clear: the Son of Man comes again, *then* he will sit on his glorious throne to judge the nations. After separating the sheep from the goats, he says to his sheep, "Come, you who are blessed by the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (v 34).

The perfect united Kingdom has been promised and ensured, but it is not yet a reality. It will happen only after Jesus comes again, when "the kingdom of this world"—that is, the common kingdom—"will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev 11:15).

In other words, we should not expect a union of the common kingdom and the redemptive kingdom in this present age. It will happen in the age to come.

## **II. The Fundamental Errors of Christian Nationalism**

With this biblical framework in place, the diagnosis of Christian Nationalism becomes straightforward. The fundamental error of Christian Nationalism is that it attempts to collapse God's twofold kingdom back into one before the King returns to do so himself. It tries to realize in this age the union of kingdom and worship that Scripture reserves for Christ's return. And this fundamental error results in several subsequent errors:

### **1. CN Reverses the Order of Faith and Acknowledgment of Christ's Lordship**

Christian Nationalism wants nations to formally and publicly acknowledge Christ's Lordship first, with the expectation that internal conversions will come later, after the external Christianization. This is what Wolfe means by "cultural Christianity" that "implicitly orders people to the Christian faith, though it cannot bring anyone to faith." You essentially "baptize" the nation first—public acknowledgment of Christ's Lordship—and then you press for conversions. The assumption is that formal acknowledgment of Christ's Lordship by those who have not yet personally professed submission to his Lordship is a means God uses to lead individuals to personal faith.

But the New Covenant is "not like" the Old Covenant (Jer 31:32). In the Old Covenant, where a union of kingdom and worship existed in one theocratic nation, the external participation in the covenant precedes inner regeneration and personal profession of faith. Thus, the covenant people are comprised of both regenerate and unregenerate people.

In the present church age, however, where kingdom and worship are separate, inner regeneration and personal profession of faith precede membership in the covenant. Thus, the church is comprised of only those who profess faith in Christ. We do not expect people to acknowledge Christ's lordship formally and publicly until after they actually believe it. In the New Testament, no one is compelled by edict to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ—in fact, quite the opposite. Yet this is exactly what would be necessary for anything like "Christian" nations or Christendom.

It strikes me that, in essence, Christian nationalists want to apply a paedobaptist theology to whole nations. And indeed, this is why Wilson himself acknowledges that his vision for mere Christendom is built upon the bedrock of paedocommunion and postmillennialism.

### **2. CN Conflates the Church's Mission with the Dominion Mandate**

Christian nationalists routinely use the language of "taking dominion" and "discipling nations." They treat the Great Commission as a continuation of Genesis 1:28—as if God's commission to the church is essentially to finish what Adam started.

But we have already seen that the dominion command was given to Adam as our representative, and he failed as our representative. Sinful humanity will never be able to exercise dominion over creation—we need a perfect man to do that for us.

And that perfect man has come. Christ is the last Adam. He accomplished what Adam failed to do, and he will exercise dominion over all creation when he comes again. To believe that it is somehow our responsibility to do what Adam failed to do would be to distrust the sufficiency of what Christ accomplished. It is not up to us to “extend his reign”; Christ will do that, not us. We cannot be Second Adams.

The church’s mission is clear: make disciples (Matt 28:18–20). Evangelize people from every nation. Baptize those who have professed faith. Teach them to observe everything Christ commanded. This is not a lesser mission that needs to be supplemented by political dominion. This is the mission Christ gave to the church. Anything more than this threatens to sideline what Christ has actually commanded us to do.

### **3. CN Underestimates Common Grace**

One of the most compelling arguments for Christian Nationalism is the myth of neutrality. Doug Wilson is right that there is no neutrality on any issue; every matter is either consistent with God’s law or it contradicts God’s law. Secularism is indeed a false religion. On this point I agree fully.

Where I disagree is in the implications Wilson draws from this principle. He argues that since there is no neutrality in politics, then the only two alternatives are anarchy or theonomy, chaos or Christendom. In government, “it is Christ or chaos,” he insists.

But the problem is that this framework does not give any space for common grace, the *imago Dei*, and the reality of Romans 2:14–15: “when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires... they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts.” Even though it is inconsistent with what unbelievers say they believe, pagans made in God’s image nevertheless sometimes take advantage of his common grace and do what the law requires.

I do believe that the only grounding for successful living that makes *consistent* sense is one rooted in the authoritative truth of God’s holy Word and repentant faith in Jesus Christ. When it comes to eternal salvation, it’s Christ or chaos.

But the truth is that in matters of the state, the only two options are not Christ or chaos. In his kind providence, God specifically designed human government to provide a third, common grace option given to all humankind that imperfectly preserves a degree of order and peace until Christ establishes his perfect theocratic Kingdom on earth. Before the flood, it *was* Christ or chaos, and it quickly devolved into chaos. But after Genesis 9, and especially after Babel, nations formed and prevented chaos as God works his plan of redemption for his people.

Throughout history, pagans have often figured out successful legal systems that reflect biblical values because, since God designed the world to work in a certain way, those kinds of systems just work. That's the reality of common grace politics.

#### **4. CN Creates the Very Problem It Claims to Solve**

It is certainly true that were biblical Christianity enforced at a national level, there would be external benefits in terms of public morality and cultural production. However, these very external blessings possess a devastating effect.

Externally Christian nations create a cultural Christianity that actually hinders the church's mission of making disciples.

Since in a Christian nation the very fabric of society is considered "Christian," citizens of such a nation do not recognize their inherent depravity and need to repent of their sin and put their unreserved faith in Christ alone for their salvation. In the consciousness of such citizens, they are "Christian" by virtue of their citizenship; there is no "opt in" to Christianity in Christendom—citizens have already been "baptized" into Christian culture.

This is not speculation. Christian nationalism has been tried before. Wherever Christendom has been established—the Holy Roman Empire, England, Zambia—it has produced nominal Christianity, syncretistic worship, and eventually the very secularization that Christian nationalists now lament.

The devastating irony is that Christian Nationalism claims to advance the gospel, but the union of church and state does not lead to more regenerate believers. It leads to more nominal ones. It lulls true Christians into forgetting that they are exiles. And history has shown that Christendom produces the seeds of its own undoing.

### **III. Christian Faithfulness: The Biblical Alternative**

So if Christian Nationalism is not the answer, what is? Pietistic isolation? Withdrawal? A privatized faith?

No. The Bible teaches us something far more robust than either Christian Nationalism or cultural retreat. And the key to understanding it is recognizing our present identity within God's twofold kingdom—citizens and exiles.

#### **Citizens and Exiles in God's Twofold Kingdom**

If we want to look to the Old Testament for an analogy to our present situation as Christians in this age, we are more like the sojourning patriarchs and the exiled Hebrews than either the Edenic or Mosaic holy theocracies. And this is exactly how the New Testament portrays us. Peter specifically calls us "sojourners and exiles" (1 Pet 2:11). "Our citizenship is in heaven," Paul tells

us (Phil 3:20); we are “citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph 2:19).

We are first and foremost citizens of the redemptive kingdom. Peter makes this clear in 1 Peter 2:9–10: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” We are not trying to build a Christian nation—God is already building it through the gospel. We are already a “holy nation” through the blood of Christ.

And because we are this holy nation, Peter goes on to describe us as “sojourners and exiles” in verse 11. We are in this world—God has left us here for a purpose—but in reality, this world is not our home.

But we are also citizens of the common kingdom along with every other human being. The common grace institutions that God established to preserve order are still in effect—families, human governments, and other God-ordained institutions through which even unbelievers can preserve order and justice, devise successful political systems, produce worthy art, and teach things that are true.

### **Faithful Presence in the Common Kingdom**

And so, in these kinds of activities, God’s people can stand alongside unbelieving people, participating in and contributing to society as citizens of the common kingdom. Jeremiah’s command to Israel in exile is the perfect illustration: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters...But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jer 29:5–7).

Jesus was clear: render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s. Why? Because the welfare of the city is also our welfare. A healthy government that protects the innocent and punishes injustice is part of God’s universal reign, even if that government is pagan. In the very context of teaching Christians how to live as sojourners and exiles, Peter specifically says that Christians should submit to earthly authorities and even honor them (1 Pet 2:13–18). Paul commands that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions” (1 Tim 2:1–2). Why? So that “we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way”—exactly why God established human government in Genesis 9.

Christians absolutely should live out their biblical values in the public sphere. We should oppose abortion with everything we have. We should loudly decry the sexual revolution and the mutilation of children. We should boldly proclaim “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way” (Ps 2:12) to kings and magistrates. We should vote, engage, hold public officials accountable, and support laws that reflect God’s moral order—not because we’re building

Christendom, but because things simply work better when society operates according to how God designed the world.

And though we ought to boldly oppose ungodliness in the common kingdoms of this world, we do not wage war according to the flesh, because our war is not a fleshly war. We assert Christ's Lordship over "arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Those divine, spiritual weapons are the ordinary means of grace. The Word of God gives us all the weapons we need.

### **The Value of Ordinary Faithfulness**

We must not try to motivate ourselves and others with grand ambitions of societal transformation, because God never promised it, and he never commands us to do massive, earth-shattering things in society. He commands us to be holy and faithful.

When societal transformation becomes our goal, it leads us to undervalue the ordinary—chasing after big movements and causes while failing to recognize the value of faithful fathers and mothers and grandparents and pastors, rearing godly children, working hard in their vocations, and doing it all for God's glory.

There is a frantic restlessness that characterizes the goal of massive societal transformation. But there is a restful contentment that accompanies a life of Christian faithfulness that says, "I am going to submit to the authority of God's Word. I am going to rest in the ordinary means of grace. And I am going to work hard at rearing godly children, working heartily as unto the Lord, standing up for righteousness in society, and doing it all for God's glory."

### **Conclusion: The King Is Coming**

I agree with Christian nationalists—Jesus does want a theocracy. And he will get what he wants, when he comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead. And it won't be *mere* Christendom—it will be totalitarian, rule-with-a-rod-of iron theocracy. For now, Jesus is presently redeeming his elect while preserving the world through imperfect governments, but one day he will establish Christendom.

The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. He will reunite his twofold kingdom into one. Every knee will bow. The palace and the temple will be one. And he will reign forever and ever.

Until that day, we do not lose heart. We do not take matters into our own hands like Peter in the garden. We do not try to build by the sword what can only be built by the Spirit.

We live faithfully in this present age, building houses, planting gardens, seeking the welfare of the city, fully optimistic that the Second Adam will accomplish God's plan for human history

“when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed” (2 Thess 1:10).

“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:28–29).