

The High Price of Rebellion Against the King

Under a kingdom form of government, the word of the king is paramount. People prosper or perish based on the favor of the king. As such, the king is responsible for everything in the kingdom. The protection of citizens and territory, the economy, the legal system, the educational system, citizenship, the medical system and even the culture are the king's responsibility.

God's government system is a kingdom. During His earthly ministry, His major message was the gospel of the kingdom. He qualified those who would accept His sacrifice and His rule to be citizens in His kingdom. The kingdom was partially restored but is still not of this realm. When He returns again, the kingdom will be fully restored during His millennial reign.

When arrested, Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king. Jesus responded that He is a King, but that His kingdom is not of this world or not of this realm. He qualified His answer with the phrase "as it is" which could be interpreted "at his time." Jesus knew that He would eventually return to physically reign over His kingdom. One should not make the mistake of thinking that because it is not currently of this realm, that it does not have power on the earth today.

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (Judg. 18:36-37, NASB).

Protection of citizens and territory is a major role of the king. Jesus is King of kings, Lord of lords, and over the hosts of heaven. Jesus has unlimited power. Jesus gave a hint of some of the power of the King and the kingdom, as He was being arrested.

When Peter had struck the servant's ear, Jesus told His disciples that He didn't need their swords because He could have 12 legions of angels at His disposal. A Roman legion had 6,000 troops, so Jesus was indicating that he could call on 72,000 angels. We learn in Isaiah that one angel can destroy at least 185,000 people. Jesus was saying that he could call on heaven to destroy at least 13.3 billion (the population of the earth at that time was 200-300 million). Jesus didn't call the angels to help as He subjected Himself to the word of God and His purpose in life.

"Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:53).

"Then the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead" (Isa. 37:36).

As members of the kingdom, we have access to protection and all the resources of heaven to accomplish His plans and purposes. We have the right to be protected and served by angels to accomplish our King's business. We don't call forth angels or the miraculous to harm our enemies. We are called to love and pray for our enemies. But the protection and power entrusted to us through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and even angels should assure us that absolutely nothing can prevent us from accomplishing the plans and purposes of God in our lives. Jesus has paid the price. Jesus has won the victory. All that is needed is that we need to subject ourselves to His reign.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).

In the Old Testament, the two books of Samuel and Kings are filled with examples of earthly kingdoms. Some of these kings followed the Lord fully. These kingdoms were highly blessed with protection from their enemies, prosperity, health, peace and expansion of their territories.

Other kings did not follow the Lord. Some lost blessings because of a lack of faith, fear or indifference. But some of the kings were in open rebellion. The rebellion caused them to lose the Lord’s protection, defeat, death, severe hardship and their kingdoms. Sometimes the impacts of rebellion were felt for generations.

As the earthly kings of old, we are free to choose life or death, but can’t escape the consequences. We can entrust everything in our lives to the King and expect kingdom protection and blessings in this life and for eternity. We are free to refuse to submit to the Lord’s reign and accept the outcomes in this life and eternity. Which will we choose? What are we modeling for our congregants? Which will we teach our congregants to choose?

How many times should the apostle Paul have been killed? He was imprisoned, beaten, whipped, stoned and shipwrecked in addition to being hungry, thirsty, bitten by a deadly snake and cold (2 Cor. 11:16-29). Paul had more lives than any cat, because the Lord was with him. He was in the kingdom as demonstrated by his power, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. He was protected so that no plan or action of the enemy could succeed.

As leaders, let us follow, model and teach others to follow our King in such a way that we are protected from all evil. Let us and our followers declare as Paul that we have fought

the good fight, finished the course and kept the faith, until we enter His heavenly kingdom.

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen,” (2 Tim. 4:18). {eo}

Dr. James Russell is a professor of economics at Oral Roberts University.