

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

I'd like to begin this morning by reading a few verses of Scripture from **Luke 17**. Previous to what we're about to read, we have the story of the ten lepers that were cleansed. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem and was passing through the border between Samaria and Galilee, and because of the quarantine that was on these lepers, they were standing at a distance from Jesus and the crowd that surrounded Him and they began to shout out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." And Jesus called out to them and said, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." And lickety-split they were off, and as they were on their way, one of them noticed that his leprosy was gone, and he turned right around and ran back to Jesus and fell at His feet and thanked Him for what He had done. And do you remember what Jesus said to those who had witnessed these things? He said, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine." Why was this foreigner, this Gentile, the only one who decided to come back? Some of them were probably Jews, don't you think? In fact, the Spirit of Prophecy says all the other nine were Jews, God's chosen people, but only the Samaritan came back. I find that interesting, and there must be a lesson here for us, right? And Jesus "said unto him, arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Evidently the others had faith, because they were all healed, or did they all have faith? The fact that the other nine did not return and thank Jesus like the Samaritan did, tells us something of their faith, doesn't it? or the lack thereof.

As I was researching this story I found this interesting quote in ***Testimonies for the Church, volume 3, page 179***. It says, "For the sake of this one man, who would make a right use of the blessing of health, Jesus healed the whole ten. The nine passed on without appreciating the work done and rendered no grateful thanks to Jesus for doing the work."

So here we have an instance where the other nine lepers benefited from the faith of the Samaritan, and if that's the case, we ought to make it a point to be around others who have faith rather than unbelievers, especially if our faith is weak. We don't know some of the details of this story as to why the Lord chose to heal all ten, but I suspect it was the faith of the Samaritan who encouraged the others to cry out to Jesus in the first place. But whatever the case, it's important to have friends of faith.

And so, only the hated half-breed Samaritan was able to take hold of the healing power of Jesus through faith, and because of his faith, they were all healed. The other nine were Old Testament Seventh-day Adventists, weren't they? Sure they were. They were Jews looking for the advent of the Messiah and knew that the seventh-day Sabbath was the

correct day of worship. But could it be that this one non-Adventist had more faith than the nine Adventists? Apparently so, at least in this situation. And this should be a lesson to us that God has many people out there who don't know what we know, and yet they may be way ahead of us in the faith department. Knowledge is good, but faith is even more important, because without faith **Hebrews 11:6** says what? It's impossible to please God. And according to the details of this story, people with faith are much more apt to actually do what God says, and to follow the truth when they hear it, than those who have knowledge but no faith, or a weak faith. We should examine ourselves this morning to determine which group we belong to.

But let's move on to our Scripture reading in **Luke 17:20-22**, "And when he (**Jesus**) was demanded (**or interrogated, that's really what the Greek means**) when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: (**it's not something physical we can see with our eyes, and it seems the Samaritan knew that, but the other nine didn't**) Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! (**in other words, don't look over here or over there for God's kingdom**) for, behold, the kingdom of God is (**where?**) within you. And he said unto the disciples, the days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, (**You'll wish you could see Me and be with Me and watch Me do things like I just did for these lepers, in the near future**) and ye shall not see *it*." Why? Because He would be taken up from them in just a little while.

It had been about three years before this that John the Baptist gave the message that, like a trumpet call, had sounded throughout the land, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." And now the Pharisees had come to Jesus demanding an answer as to when it was going to happen, because as yet, these Pharisees saw no indication of the establishment of this kingdom, although the evidence was right in front of them. They were more like the nine lepers rather than the one who returned. The problem was, they didn't have the eye salve of the Holy Spirit like the Samaritan to see this spiritual kingdom in operation, and it's still the same today, isn't it?

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man (**or the man that is ruled by the fallen sinful nature**) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are (**what?**) foolishness (**or absurdity**) unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned." There are many things in the Bible that seem unbelievable and even silly to the unconverted heart, like all the miracles that took place. And I have to admit, if you read the Bible without spiritual eyesight, some of the things you read are totally unbelievable.

But to the one who has partaken of the divine nature and had a heart transplant, these same things are not only believable, but bring great peace and assurance to that new heart.

So, what were these Pharisees insinuating when they demanded an answer from Jesus about “His coming kingdom”? Because they didn’t see it, they were insinuating that His mission had failed. For three years they had opposed Jesus at every step of the way, and now they wanted to know, “where is the promise of Your so-called kingdom.” They were thinking of a physical kingdom, weren’t they? And so were the disciples at this point. The Pharisees claimed to be students of the word and the voice of God to the people, but they failed to understand what Jeremiah had written some 600 years beforehand. In **Jeremiah 31:33** God says, “The new covenant that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” That was the kingdom Jesus came to set up, and the Pharisees were totally oblivious to its character.

When the law of God is written in the heart, obedience to that law is something we will want to do. But if not, it’s not only something we will not want to do, but it will be impossible to do. In other words, the sinful nature of man is not capable of obedience from the heart. There can be outward compliance, but inwardly it’s simply forced obedience, and that kind of obedience can never transform the character and prepare us for the coming of Christ.

Jesus said the kingdom of God begins in the heart and not to look here or there for it, or look for the manifestation of it through earthly powers, but that’s exactly where the Pharisee’s heads were. They lived under the Roman yoke at that point, and they wanted out! The problem was, they were there as a result of their own rebellion and unbelief because of the “natural man” syndrome, and the kind of kingdom Jesus came to establish was not what their carnal hearts desired.

Turning to His disciples Jesus said, and this is my paraphrase, “the days will come, when you will have a desire to be with Me, but right now while I am with you, you’re in danger of missing something very important, because My kingdom doesn’t come by worldly fanfare, and you are in danger of failing to recognize the true meaning of My mission. You don’t realize how great your present privilege is in having Me among you. The days will come when you will look back with longing upon the opportunities you now have to walk and talk with Me, but I’ll be gone.” And friends, the lesson for us is that we better take

every opportunity we have now to get to know Jesus and the nature of His kingdom the best we can, because if we don't, the time is coming when those opportunities will no longer be available.

So again, even the disciples didn't comprehend the spiritual lessons Jesus was trying to teach them. It wasn't until after His ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that the disciples finally started to get it. After the baptism of the Spirit they began to realize what the mission of Jesus was, and many of the lessons that He taught them came home to their remembrance, and their minds were opened to comprehend and to understand the various miracles He had performed. In many ways they were like men that just woke up from a dream and realized what the apostle John wrote in his gospel. **John 1:14** says, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Jesus Christ, the long looked for Messiah had actually come to a sinful world to save fallen sinful human beings in a nature like their own and make them part of His kingdom. That which they had before dimly understood, now came to them as a fresh revelation, and the Old Testament Scriptures truly became the word of God to them, and they began to study it in earnest and saw how the prophecies testified of Christ, and as a result they were brought into closer fellowship with God and to one another and began to understand that Jesus had ascended to heaven to complete the work He had begun here on earth as our great High Priest, and many of them went on to add to the Scriptures as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And we now benefit from what they wrote in the New Testament.

After the Holy Spirit opened up the minds to these things, how they must have longed to see Him again, don't you think? How they wished that they might be able to come to Him and have Him explain the scriptures which they didn't before comprehend; if they could just turn back the clock, how attentive they would be to listen to His every word that fell from His lips. In **John 16:12** Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but **(what?)** ye cannot bear them now." In other words, when Jesus was here they weren't ready to receive what He had to give them, but now that they were filled with the Holy Spirit and understood the nature of His Spiritual kingdom; now that they have the eye salve of the Holy Spirit, they were finally ready to receive whatever Jesus had to say.

John the Baptist was sent of God to proclaim the coming of Christ and to call the attention of the Jewish nation to His mission, that they might be prepared to receive Him, but were

they ready? No! Jesus had been among them for more than thirty years, but the vast majority didn't acknowledge Him as the One that was sent from God.

After Jesus was taken up from them the disciples must have thought, "how could we have been so stupid to have allowed the religious leaders and the prevailing unbelief to cloud our thinking about what the Messiah would be like? Why did we not see what the Scriptures plainly reveal about the coming Messiah? Why did we allow earthly considerations and the opposition of the religious leaders to confuse our senses so that we didn't comprehend that someone greater than Moses was among us, that One wiser than Solomon was instructing us? How dull were our ears! how feeble their understanding!"

But at least they finally got it, didn't they? How about us? Will we be asking ourselves similar questions when Jesus comes the second time? We better not be, because if we are it will be at an eternal loss. Why? Because our great High Priest will have finished His work in the heavenly sanctuary by then and the opportunity for forgiveness of sin and power to overcome will be gone. **Hebrews 9:28** says, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Are you looking for Him, friends? When Jesus comes, He's not coming to deal with sin a second time, He already did that. By then all sin will have already been placed upon the head of the scapegoat. When He comes He'll be looking for those who are looking for Him; for those who are without sin, because through the power of the Holy Spirit they will have learned how to live without yielding to temptation.

Remember Thomas? He said he wouldn't believe until he was able to stick his finger into the wounds made by the Roman soldiers. And what about Peter? He denied that he had any connection with Jesus at all. And don't think these painful remembrances didn't cause them some guilt and sadness just like every time we blow it. The disciples had been with Jesus for three and a half years, and yet they didn't really know or appreciate Him as they should have.

After the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension of Christ, the priests and rulers combining their efforts with government leaders, brought Christ's followers before the courts and thrust into prison, but you know what they did? **Acts 5:41** says, they rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" and were willing to follow Jesus at any cost.

Now, here's an important point for us to consider today, because Solomon the wise man said there's nothing new under the sun, what has happened in the past will happen again. And friends, it's already begun. There was a union of church and state during the first century, wasn't there? Yes, we just talked about how the disciples were treated by the civil court system egged on by the religious leaders. And later on during the dark ages of papal supremacy there was also a union of church and state, and it didn't end well for Protestants? And one last time there will be a union of church and state here in America first, and then around the world just before Jesus comes, and we can already see it coming on the horizon if we're paying attention?

Today there are those in the religious world who believe that they have been given the authority, and the mandate from God even, to establish Christ's kingdom here on earth just like the Pharisees believed would happen and just like the disciples of old thought before they understood the true nature of Christ's kingdom. Today there are those that want to make Jesus, through government decrees, the ruler of the kingdoms of this world and the ruler in the courts and legislative halls. They believe that Jesus should rule through legal enactments enforced by human authority.

And since Jesus is no longer here in person, they believe they have the authority to act in His stead and to execute the laws of His kingdom. I don't have a problem with that if it were just dealing with the second table of God's law that deals with our relationship to one another, because that's the role of government as it says in **Romans 13**, but when it comes to the first table of the law, that deals with our relationship to our Creator, I do have a problem with that, because it's an individual matter of conscience. That's why our forefathers wrote the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights the way they did, and we should all be familiar with these documents. That "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," and that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." And The Declaration of Independence that says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Any thinking person should be able to discern from these words that the separation of church and state is antithetical to the idea of freedom of religion and of conscience.

The establishment of an earthly kingdom such as the Jews were looking for in the days of Christ is the same that a certain segment of the population today are looking for and

working toward. And history is being repeated just as surely as it was in centuries past. The Jews of old would have accepted Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal kingdom and to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make themselves the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But in **John 18:36** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," how plain could He be? And just as He refused to accept an earthly throne back then, He's not going to do it through government authorities today, plain and simple.

Just about a month ago, America celebrated 250 years since the signing of the declaration of Independence on **July 4, 1776**. It marked the original thirteen colonies' decision to separate from British rule and establish the United States as an independent nation. There were 56 men who committed treason against the British government by signing what I believe to be an inspired document, pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for the sake of freedom of conscience, believing that it was their religious duty owed to their Creator to do so.

Our forefathers understood that the best way is for the "government to derive its powers from the consent of the governed," and not the other way around. They understood that man's relation to God cannot be delegated by man, but by God alone. We can celebrate freedom in America today, at least what's left of it, because the courageous men who went before us refused to allow popes and priests and kings and magistrates to tell them what to do in religious matters, and chose instead to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit working upon their conscience. But in spite of all that sacrifice, many leading men today want to now go backwards and let men dictate to other men about what and where and when and how to worship? Yes, they talk of freedom of religion now, but the mistaken idea that our founders didn't intend for there to be a separation of church and state will inevitably lead to the same tyranny and persecution as in ages past.

I'm sure you're all aware by now that this subject is something that's been in the news a lot lately, and something Bible prophecy says will be a point of contention just before Jesus comes. And again, that point is this, was the United States founded upon the principle of the separation of church and state, or not? Well, the answer to that question very much depends on who you ask, and that's true with just about everything, isn't it? But what we must depend upon is the sure word of prophecy and not someone's opinion, even if that opinion sounds reasonable, because according to **Isaiah 5:20** it says, there are those "that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" You see, the devil is able to make people think just

the opposite of the truth, and even that men can become women get pregnant and have babies. That's how confused many people are today. And if the devil is able to confuse people upon such insane points, how hard do you think it will be for him to convince people that the seventh-day Sabbath has been done away with and changed to the first day of the week? Even though the Bible says God does not change. But for the most part Sunday sacredness is already baked into the pie, isn't it?

As you may or may not know, there's a movement on the conservative religious right that is pushing for a union of church and state, and the more this idea is talked about, the more people seem to be getting on board.

In May of 2025 President Trump established, by executive order, what's called the Federal Religious Liberty Commission, and a little over a year later on June 26 of this year the President hosted a meeting in the Oval Office to hear the findings of this yearlong report from this Commission, and standing behind the President were the people chosen to be a part of it, with the Chairman being Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, and vice chairman Ben Carson, realizing that everyone standing behind President Trump agrees with these two men, because this year long report has been a collaborative effort on everyone's part. And so, they're all standing together united.

As I listened to what these two men had to say, I found it very interesting, and troubling at the same time. Perhaps you already heard what they said, but for the sake of those who haven't I'd like to hit just a few of the highlights, and I won't go into too much detail about it, because the internet has exploded over the past few weeks as various people and ministries have already commented about it.

Mr. Patrick started off by thanking the President and asked this question, "What is religious liberty?" And I found his answer to be quite good for the most part. He said religious liberty has to do with our conscience. "It's that little voice inside of us that tells us right from wrong. It's that voice that, when we're in trouble, we can talk to in our quiet moments. It's that voice when we feel unloved and alone that can comfort us through a higher power. When governments can take away your religious liberty, **(he said)**, they're putting their hand in your heart and taking everything, you believe in. And if governments can do that, then they become God." And I agree 100%.

Then he spoke a little bit about the communist movement here in America that is a threat to the country, correct again, and that the purpose of communism is to remove God from the public square; that they close the churches and punish the believers, and that's

certainly true, and that American's deserve to have religious liberty. Then he said the commission interviewed 103 witnesses that had been persecuted for their faith, and after seven months and 200 pages of testimony, he said, "we found there was one constant theme. The overwhelming majority of our witnesses said they were attacked and punished, and what was used against them was one phrase that's not in the Constitution. And that phrase is separation of church and state. The left **(he said)** has used that one phrase, that was one line out of hundreds of letters by Thomas Jefferson, to batter and hammer people of faith for the last 70 to 80 years. And this report will speak very clearly that we want to be sure Americans understand that they cannot be attacked by that phrase any longer." And let me just say hear that he is correct when he says that the phrase "separation of church and state" is not found in the Constitution, but as we have already seen, the principle is there loud and clear, and besides that we have history that tells us what happens when church and state unite together.

Then he and Ben Carson read 12 recommendations from the yearlong report to give to the President for his consideration. I'm not going to take the time to read these 12 recommendations to you, you can do that yourself, and I'll put a link in my sermon notes for those of you that would like to do that, (<https://www.justice.gov/religious-liberty-commission/media/1450071/dl>) but I will tell you what Ben Carson said at the close of his remarks, because he suggested that those who would find fault with the findings of this Federal Religious Liberty Commission report "need to see a psychiatrist."

First off, I want to say that religious liberty isn't the problem here, nor is the motto "In God We Trust," but it's the idea that there is no separation of church and state in the United States Constitution and that it wasn't even in the thinking of our founding fathers. And so friends, we need to do some critical thinking here, because why do you suppose there was a Revolutionary war between England and the United States to begin with? What was the main reason for our founding fathers to want to sever their connection with their own country?

Many of the things Dan Patrick and Ben Carson said were 95% true, maybe even 99% true, but isn't that always the way the devil works? He's not stupid, but mingles just enough truth with error to give it plausibility. All it will take in the very near future is to have a crisis of some kind in order for people to give up their God given unalienable rights to freedom of conscience in order to obtain what they perceive to be a little safety. You may remember when **The Patriot Act** was enacted shortly after the 911 attacks, significantly expanding government surveillance powers and restricting certain civil liberties in the name of national security.

In the book ***The Great Controversy, page 588*** it says it better than I can. “The fact that a movement to establish error is connected with a work which is in itself good, is not an argument in favor of the error. We may disguise poison by mingling it with wholesome food, but we do not change its nature. On the contrary, it is rendered more dangerous, as it is more likely to be taken unawares. It is one of Satan’s devices to combine with falsehood just enough truth to give it plausibility. The leaders of the Sunday movement **(and there is a Sunday movement in this country to try to bring us all together through this false day of worship, which the Bible doesn’t support)** The leaders of the Sunday movement may advocate reforms which the people need, principles which are in harmony with the Bible; yet while there is with these a requirement which is contrary to God’s law, His servants cannot unite with them. Nothing can justify them in setting aside the commandments of God for the precepts of men.” And that’s exactly what Sunday sacredness is, a precept of men, because there is not even one verse in the Bible that gives to Sunday any sacredness, it’s just one of the six working days as recorded in **Exodus 20:8-11**.

Now, just to be clear, there was nothing said about a Sunday law, or the importance of Sunday sacredness in the 12 point commission report, but a union of church and state is a step in that direction, because that’s what the majority of Christians believe in, and it’s the majority that will rule the day. And whenever a government thinks it’s a good idea to unite with religion, persecution will be the inevitable result, and again, all we have to do is look at history to know where this is all headed.

Now, does President Trump and those on this Federal Commission know where this is all headed? No! They think they’re doing the right thing, but just remember what **Proverbs 14:12** says, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.” There is one man on the Commission by the name of Ben Carson who should know, but evidently his brain is oblivious to it, even though he is a retired neurosurgeon.

Here’s another quote from ***The Great Controversy, page 592***, “Though they **(the dignitaries of church and state)** blind their own eyes to the fact, **(in other words, they don’t know what the consequences of their action will be)** they are now adopting a course which will lead to the persecution of those who conscientiously refuse to do what the rest of the Christian world are doing, and acknowledge the claims of the papal sabbath.”

Now let me just say something to those of you who may think all this talk of Sunday sacredness and Sunday laws is all a figment of my imagination and that there's nothing to it. If you are a Christian, and I assume you are since you're listening, are you going to tell me that obedience to the Ten Commandments is optional, or that they are just ten suggestions? Are you going to tell me that faith is all that's required and it doesn't matter how we live? Are you going to tell me that God made a mistake or that He changed His mind about the seventh-day Sabbath that was instituted on the last day of creation week, a day that He blessed and sanctified? It's shocking to me that so many Christians today are so shallow in their understanding of God's word that they miss this point and think that the fourth commandment has been removed from the other nine. Think about it my friends. In **John 15:14** Jesus said, "if you love Me, keep My commandments." Do you love Him this morning? And why does **Revelation 14:12** say that God's saints in the last days just before Jesus comes would "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"?

If you study this topic and not allow anyone else to do your thinking for you, you will find that nearly the whole Christian world is transgressing God's law on this point, and that one day soon, as church and state unite, there will be a law enacted that will not only enforce Sunday worship, but force you to violate the true Sabbath, or be killed. And I know this may sound farfetched to you right now, but as you see it happening, you will remember that you heard it here and hopefully you will join with those who are proclaiming the third angel's message of **Revelation 14:9-12**. And so, I encourage you to study this, and when the Holy Spirit convicts you that it's true, keep it and proclaim it and you will be blessed, because God says so, and He always keeps His promise, but you'll never know if you don't do it.

Ben Carson is a Seventh-day Adventist, and of all people, he should know where the union of church and state is headed. Either he hasn't read what the Spirit of Prophecy says, or he simply doesn't believe it.

Certainly it's clear in the Spirit of Prophecy that there is a serious problem with the false idea that there is no separation of church and state in our founding documents. I did a search in the Spirit of Prophecy and you may be surprised that I didn't find even one statement that uses the phrase "separation of church and state," but I did find several where she mentions the problems regarding "the union of church and state," which on the flipside is separation of church and state, just stated a little differently.

A couple of these statements are in reference to Australia, and that those holding meetings there should be careful about how they present the subject of Sunday sacredness in connection with the union of church and state.

Notice what she says in ***Evangelism, page 227***, “In presenting the Sunday question, or the union of church and state, handle it carefully. It will not answer to present the strong positions that have been and will of necessity be presented in America. These subjects must be broached (**introduced**) guardedly. We have not as yet obtained standing place in this country.” Again, that’s Australia. So very clearly here she says Sunday and the union of church and state is going to be a problem in the future in America, and friends, that future is coming upon us rapidly.

Here’s another one from ***Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4, page 424***, the context being when the loud cry of the third angel is given with latter rain power: “The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results (**the what? “fearful results”**) of a union of Church and State, the inroads of Spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power,—all will be unmasked.” This my friends is coming to a town near you very soon.

Review and Herald, February 21, 1893, “The world is watching our movements with greater interest than we imagine. Many see that what we have told them in regard to the curtailing of religious liberty in our country is coming to pass, although they have denied that such a thing was possible. They have said, ‘When we see that which you predict, when there is danger of a union of Church and State, we will acknowledge that you have the truth.’” This danger is what we see coming to fruition right now in America, and when the deniers see it happening, will they believe? There might be a few, in fact, some of you listening to me right now may be among that number, but the vast majority will continue to make excuses for a day of worship that the Bible does not sanction or bless.

Manuscript Releases, volume 12, page 218, “When religion is mixed with civil government, it means much to Seventh-day Adventists. A union of church and state means a recognition of a spurious sabbath, and a failure to respect the conscientious observance of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.”

Manuscript Releases, volume 20 page 28, “Temptation is coming in the form of a union of church and state.”

Why a temptation? Here’s why: when Sunday becomes an issue with teeth in it, many who now keep and proclaim the Sabbath will be tempted to give it up and go with the flow.

When they are threatened with the loss of property and employment; when they are threatened with treason; when their very life is threatened, do you think they will be tempted to keep Sunday, especially when the leaders of their church are urging the necessity of keeping Sunday in open air meetings? Yes! And unfortunately the majority will give in to that temptation and yield to the powers that be. Hopefully that won't be you, and it won't be me.

The words of Jesus in **Matthew 16:24-26** come to mind here when He said, "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall **(what?)** lose it: **(that's eternal life)** and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The Bible teaches that Jesus is our example in all things, and while He was here there are no examples of Him becoming involved in earthly governments and forcing people's conscience in religious matters. On the contrary, He was clear when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and He told the Pharisees they were to, "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things of Gods."

Was the government under which Jesus lived corrupt and oppressive? It certainly was. On every hand there was abuse, extortion, intolerance, cruelty and bribery going on. Yet Jesus never attempted any civil reforms, did He? I've never read where He tried that. He didn't interfere with the authority of those in power. In fact He made a point of distancing Himself from earthly governments, not because He was indifferent to all these things, but because He knew the remedy to the world's problems couldn't be solved that way. To be effective the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

The leaders of our country and the leaders of the various churches need to realize that the kingdom of Christ cannot be established in this world by Congress enacting laws in religious matters, but it's by the implanting of Christ's nature in the human heart through the work of the Holy Spirit, that's the only power that can work for the uplifting of mankind.

We've covered this in past studies, but it's the second beast with lamblike horns described in **Revelation 13** that begins to speak as a dragon by making an image to the first beast. The first beast is the papacy, the second is America. If you don't think so listen to the sermon titled "The Beast," at gospel-workers.com/sermons (February 2026), because the papacy and America are the only two powers that fit the description in the prophecy. How

does America make an image of the papal beast power? By forming a union of church and state just like the papacy had. And what was the result when the papacy was united with the civil power in the past? 1260 years of persecution for those that valued freedom of conscience over forced obedience to the church. It's the history of the dark ages being repeated. When **Revelation 13** says the beast with two horns "causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast," that means that those in authority in America will exercise that same authority by enforcing the same kind of observance that will be an act of homage to the papacy, which is in direct violation of the principles in The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. What is that observance? It's the day of worship; it's the mark of the papal beast, it's the one point that she says defines her authority.

Let me read it to you from her own mouth. The following quote is from someone who inquired about the Biblical day of worship back on October 28, 1895, and they were answered in a Letter from C. F. Thomas, who was Chancellor (**or chief secretary**) of Cardinal Gibbons. Notice what Thomas writes under Gibbons' direction, "Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change (**that is, from the seventh to the first day of the week**) the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything, in matters spiritual, ecclesiastical and religious without her. That this act (**the change of the Sabbath to Sunday**) is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters."

In other words, this act of changing the Seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday as the day of worship, is the most important thing the Catholic church has ever done, bar none! Let that sink in for a minute. It "is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." That is, nothing else the Catholic church has done, concerning religious matters, is more important than the change of the Sabbath by her own admission. Nothing!

The seventh-day Sabbath was given by God's authority during creation week, and Sunday is given by the authority of the papal beast. In other words, the seventh-day Sabbath is God's mark, or His seal, and Sunday is "the mark of the beast," and it's up to us which mark we're going to receive.

And so, the Catholic church admits that Sunday is the mark of the beast. It's not a barcode or a tattoo or a chip implant, or some physical characteristic that one can see, but it's a sign of allegiance to the beast power. Just as the kingdom of God is not something physical

you can see with your eyes, neither is the seal of God or the mark of the beast. It all has to do with the decisions we make here in this life in the formation of character.

This next quote is from the ***Catholic Record, September. 1, 1923***, "Sunday is our mark of authority. . . The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact." Eat them apples, my Protestant friend. The Catholic church is above the Bible, and if you don't like it, lump it. That's the attitude of this arrogant power.

This next one is from ***Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel, May 21, 1995***, not that long ago, which shows the fact that the papacy never changes, and what the pope speaks ex cathedra cannot be altered. "Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the Church ever did happened in the first century. The holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday. . . not from any directions noted in the Scriptures, but from the Church's sense of its own power." Friends, that is blasphemy in the highest sense.

I don't know if you've ever read about a man by the name of Roger Williams, but he was an English-born minister and theologian who founded the Colony of Rhode Island back in the 1600s. He advocated for religious liberty and the separation of church and state and established Providence Plantations as a refuge for those seeking freedom of conscience, and we owe a great deal to this man because the principles he advocated are the principles of America's founding documents.

Roger Williams believed that government should not impose religious beliefs or practices on individuals. He argued that all people have the right to freedom of conscience in religious matters, allowing them to worship as they choose without fear of oppression and was a key figure in the quest for religious freedom in America. He even advocated for native Americans at the time by stating that their land ought to be purchased from them instead of stolen, and his expression was that he felt safer among the "Christian savages" of the wilderness than among the savage Christians, or the Puritans of Massachusetts, which highlighted his belief that the Puritans, despite their profession of Christianity, were oppressive and intolerant towards those who had differing beliefs. The truth is, those who came over on the Mayflower ended up with many of the same mistaken ideas as the oppressors they left in England and was later corrected when our Constitution was written. And so, Roger Williams faced severe backlash for advocating for the rights of Native Americans and for promoting the separation of church and state while the so called Puritans enforced strict religious conformity, punishing those who deviated from their beliefs, and that's what's coming again.

Without the influence of this godly man, the principles of freedom in The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution probably would have never come to fruition. He was definitely the man of the hour set in place by the God of heaven to establish the freedoms we enjoy in America today, but unfortunately according to Bible prophecy it's not going to last much longer.

So what is it that we need to do? It's very simple, make Jesus first and last and best in everything. It's not the union of church and state that we need in order to become part of Christ's kingdom, but it's Christ in you, the hope of glory, the union of Christ and humanity. It's a union with Christ by living faith that will endure while every other union will fail. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our salvation; and we must in return choose Christ and put Him first. It is a union of utter dependence, and all who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. We must have a change of heart friends. We must submit our own will to the will of God, and we need to realize that this submitting and union with Him will cost us something. We must struggle with the temptations of the fallen sinful flesh if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why so many find the Christian life so extremely hard is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without detaching themselves from their cherished idols. That doesn't work! And after our union with Christ has been formed, it can be only be preserved by earnest prayer and untiring effort through the power of the Spirit to resist temptation. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, and by watchfulness, we can gain the victory. That is my prayer for you and for myself this day, in Jesus name!