

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	23
Sunday AM Worship	36
Sunday PM Worship	24
Wed. Bible Study	28
Offering	\$1321

## My Responsibility to the Local Church

PROMOTE  
ITS UNITY

Ephesians 4:1-3

OBEY ITS  
ELDERS

Hebrews 13:7

ATTEND ITS  
SERVICES

Hebrews 10:25

MAINTAIN  
ITS PURITY

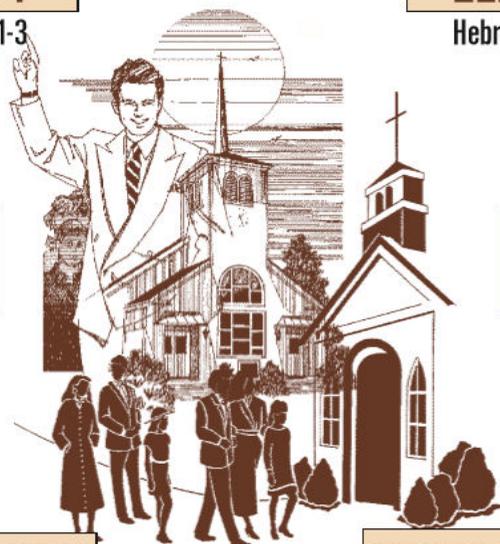
Ephesians 5:25-27

SUPPORT ITS GOOD  
WORKS

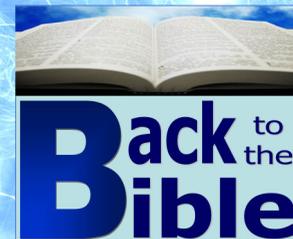
Titus 3:1

RESTORE ITS ERRING

Galatian 6:1



Barnes' Bible Charts



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Minister:

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**Times of Services:**

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am  
AM Worship...11:00am  
PM Worship:...6:00pm  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am  
"Back to the Bible"  
AM 580 WSKK  
93.5 FM

**We Extend A  
Warm & Cordial  
Welcome  
To All Our  
Visitors!**

**IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO REFER TO HEAVEN AS  
GOD'S "KINGDOM"?**

Roger D. Campbell

Jesus and others said that "*the kingdom of God*" was at hand in the first century (Mark 1:14,15). Such statements about the kingdom were references to the upcoming establishment of the Lord's church, which took place in the city of Jerusalem on the first day of Pentecost after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus (Acts 2).

Later in the New Testament, we read that John the apostle was "*in the kingdom*" (Revelation 1:9) while he was still living on the earth. The same is true of the saints in Colosse, about whom it is said that God had translated them "*into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13). There is no doubt, then, that God's kingdom, which the prophet Daniel had prophesied would be set up in the days of the Roman Empire and would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44), came into being on earth in the first century of our era.

That brings us to our inquiry. In view of the fact that the church of the Christ is called "the kingdom," is it scriptural to say that *heaven itself* is God's "kingdom?" It is, and it is not difficult to demonstrate that such is the case.

*Continued Inside*

First of all, on one occasion Jesus told a story that depicted the future judgment, saying that all nations shall be gathered before the Son of man (Matthew 25:31,32). He went on to say that on that occasion, the King will say to those on His right hand, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*" (25:34). Note that after judgment they will inherit the Father-prepared kingdom. Also, in His concluding remarks about the judgment scene, Jesus spoke of those that will go "*into life eternal*" (25:46). Thus, in that context of Matthew 25:31-46, inheriting "the kingdom" of God is the same as entering into "life eternal." Where will the righteous enjoy eternal life? In heaven. Thus, in the context of Matthew 25, "the kingdom" which the Lord prepared has reference to heaven.

In addition, there are New Testament passages in which the apostle Paul wrote about people not inheriting the kingdom of God. He once stated that "*the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9). By the Spirit, Paul also wrote that those who engage in the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). In both of these instances, Paul's inspired message was written to the church, meaning that those who read his message were already in the kingdom. Because of that, his statements to them about not inheriting the kingdom must have reference to its future state in heaven.

In 2 Peter 1:5-7 we read of character traits that the Lord desires for all Christians to possess ("*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to you faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge . . .*"). Again, an exhortation to diligence is given: "*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall*" (1:10). That sounds clear enough. Is there anything else, maybe a reward, to which we can look? There is: "*For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (1:11). There we have it. If we will diligently and faithfully demonstrate these "Christian graces," then we are headed for "the everlasting kingdom." Again, this passage was written to those that were Christians (and thus were already in the kingdom or church), so the reference to "the everlasting kingdom" must be heaven itself, for that is the inheritance to which we look (1 Peter 1:4).

There is one more "clincher" that I want to mention. Paul greatly anticipated "*a crown of righteousness*" that the Lord would give to him (2 Timothy 4:8). Ten verses later the imprisoned apostle wrote, "*And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom . . .*" (4:18). How did Paul describe his eternal destination? The Lord's "heavenly kingdom."

What we have seen shows that, yes, the Bible does refer to heaven as God's "kingdom." I may not understand every aspect of what that entails, but if the Lord Himself calls it His "kingdom," then that is what it is. The King and His throne will be there (Revelation 4:8,9). If by God's grace you and I are privileged to make it into that great kingdom, then, as the old song says, "Won't it be wonderful there?"

.....  
"*Let brotherly love continue.*" (Hebrews 13:1).

## DO YOU BELIEVE IN WATER SALVATION?

Roger D. Campbell

If you have ever expressed to others that the Bible teaches that water baptism is essential to salvation, then more than likely at some point someone has told you something like, "If what you are saying about baptism is true, then that would be water salvation, but water never saved anyone." Does that sound familiar?

The New Testament clearly teaches that sins are washed away or redeemed by the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7). There is, though, another question which must be answered: "When does Jesus' blood wash away a lost person's sins?" The answer to that inquiry is when one obeys the gospel by being immersed into the Lord's death (Romans 6:3,4,17,18). No amount of water could ever wash away a single sin, but the Bible plainly teaches that baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism's purpose is to remit or wash away sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Make no mistake about it: there is water in God's plan to save man from sin. God put it there, and we dare not try to change it.

Do you recall the Old Testament account of Naaman being cleansed of his leprosy? Here is what eventually happened: "*Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean*" (2 Kings 5:14). Would it be true to say that Naaman was cleansed by the power of God? Of course. Could we also say that it was God's grace that provided a way for Naaman's leprosy to be removed? Yes. So, Naaman was cleansed by God – by His power and grace.

When was Naaman cleansed? When he obeyed what Jehovah commanded him to do. Was it the water of the river that took away his leprosy? No. And yet if he had not gone to the Jordan and dipped in it seven times as the Lord had instructed him, *then he would have remained a leper*. God cleansed Naaman, not the water. But going to and dipping in the water was a condition that Naaman could not disregard if he wanted to please the Lord.

"Do you believe in water salvation?" I do not, and I have never met a member of the church that does. But, just as God used water in the process of cleansing Naaman, so He uses water baptism in the Christian Age to cleanse sinners by the blood of Jesus.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- May 15-19 – Gospel Meeting with Steve Canup
- May 29 – Prayer Service after Evening Worship
- June 5 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- June 12 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 pm Worship Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell