

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL VIEW

ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS (Topic No. 4)

GOD'S ETERNAL, SOVEREIGN REIGN

I. **We affirm** that the Triune God has reigned sovereignly as King of the universe throughout all time, both before and since the incarnation, and will continue to reign eternally.

We deny that the reign of Jesus Christ, the God-man, beginning in the first century, suspends the providential reign of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Ex. 15:18; Ps. 96:10, 99:1, 146:10; Prov. 8:15, 9:6-7; Is. 24:21,23, 40:12-17; John 19:11; Acts 4:27-28, 17:30; I Cor. 15:25; Col. 1:16-19; Heb. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:5, 11:15, 17-18, 15:3-4, 19:6, 22:3-5.

DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM

II. **We affirm** that the term Kingdom of God has several applications and may denote (a) the universal rule of Christ over all things, both redeemed and non-redeemed; (b) the special, saving rule of Christ over His people; (c) the life, wisdom, holiness, power, and authority that Christ grants to His people; or (d) the permeating influence of the Word and Spirit in the world.

We deny (a) that the term Kingdom of God refers only to the providential rule of the Triune God, and (b) that Christ's rule and realm are limited to the Church.

Gal. 5:21-25; Eph. 1:20-23, 2:4-9; Phil. 2:9-11; 1John 2:8, 15-17, 3:8, 4:4, 5:4-5; Rev. 1:5, 5:8-13, 19:11-16, 20-21, 22:3-5.

PURPOSE AND FALL OF MAN

III. **We affirm** (a) that God purposed from the beginning to share His rule over the earth with man; (b) that God created man in His own image and endowed man with faculties for ruling the earth; (c) that God, in the Creation Mandate, commissioned man to rule the earth and granted him delegated authority to fulfill this commission; and (d) that man, by God's design, was made to be the highest created being in the universe because he is the only creature that bears God's image.

We deny (a) that man's fall into sin eradicates the image of God in man; (b) that the fall eliminates or reduces man's responsibility or mandate for exercising dominion under God over the earth; and (c) that all mankind, the righteous or the wicked, ever ceased to be responsible to live under the rule of God in grateful obedience to Him as Lord and King in every area of life.

Gen. 1:27-30; Deut. 4:5-8; Ps. 8:4-8; Rom. 1:18-25; 2:6-12; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:13-14, 2:6-8; Rev. 1:5.

INAUGURATION OF THE KINGDOM

IV. **We affirm** (a) that the New Testament phase of the Kingdom of God was inaugurated in fact and history at Jesus' first coming to earth, and (b) that it now operates in reality and power among men in this present age.

We deny that the Church must await the second coming of Christ for the Kingdom of God to be inaugurated on earth in time-space reality and in power.

Is. 9:6-7, 52:13-15, 53:1-12; Jer. 31:31-34; Dan. 3:32-35, 43-44; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9, Matt. 2:2-6, 3:1-3, 4:17, 23, 6:9-10, 10:7, 12:28, 14:40-52, 16:18-19, 21:4-5, 22:42-45, 28:18; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 8:1, 23:3; John 18:36-37; Rom. 16:20; Eph. 1:19-23, 2:6; Heb. 1:3, 8:10-13; Rev. 1:5.

CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM

V. **We affirm** that the Kingdom of God will increase until it is consummated when Jesus delivers it to the Father and that, at the present time, this Kingdom is both already present and not yet consummated.

We deny that the Kingdom of God will be either consummated or realized totally, comprehensively, or perfectly on earth before the return of Jesus.

Is. 2:2-4, 9:6-7; Dan. 2:32-35; Mat. 24:14, 25:31-24; Luke 22:29-30; I Cor. 2:9, 15:23-28, 51-55; Rom. 8:21-25.

THE KINGDOM TOUCHES ALL SPHERES OF LIFE

VI. **We affirm** (a) that the Bible reveals God's intentions for the growth of His Kingdom in all nations of the earth during this present age through the proclamation and obedient application of His stated will in Scripture, and (b) that His intention includes the increasing manifestation of His rule over individuals, voluntary associations, families, the church, the state, and all spheres of human activity, some of which are law, government, economics, business, occupations, education, sports, medicine, science, technology, arts, and media.

We deny that God's rulership is limited to transforming only the private lives of individuals to His will.

Is. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:32-35; Ps. 2:1-10, 96:1,7,9-13; John 1:1-4; Acts 4:10-12, 17:30; Rom. 1:19-20, 2:6-10; 1Cor. 10:31; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 3:17,22-24.

MAN'S DOMINION OVER THE EARTH RESTORED

VII. **We affirm** that Christ alone, as representative man and last Adam, by His life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne at the right hand of the Father, accomplished redemption, the defeat of Satan, and the beginning of the restoration of man's godly dominion over the earth as God's vice-regent.

We deny that the restoration of man's God-ordained dominion (a) lies outside the scope of Christ's redeeming work as mediator on the Cross, or (b) awaits the physical presence of the returned Christ for its inauguration and expansion.

Gen. 1:26-28, 2:19-20, 3:15; Ps. 2:6-8, 8:6, 72:1-2,8, 110:1-2, 132:11; Is. 9:6-7, 11:1, 16:5, 42:1, 45:23; Jer. 23:5, 27:5-6, 33:14-17; Dan. 7:13-14,18,22,27; Zech. 9:9-10; Matt. 16:18-19, 28:18-20; Luke 1:31-33, 9:1-2, 10:18-19; John 5:27, 12:31; Acts 1:6-8, 2:32-35, 4:25-26, 5:31, 7:55-56; Rom. 5:14-15,17, 6:9-11, 8:16-22, 16:20; 1Cor. 15:20-28; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:17-23, 2:5-6; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:2-4,8,13, 2:5-9,14, 10:12-13; 1Pet. 3:22, 4:11; Jude 1:25; Rev. 1:5-6, 5:9-10, 11:15, 12:5, 19:15-16, 20:6.

SATAN'S DEFEAT AND CHRIST'S RULERSHIP

VIII. We affirm that Jesus Christ rules sovereignly over the kings of the earth not only as eternal God but also as the sole mediator between God and men, and that He lawfully defeated Satan *de jure* by His victorious life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

We deny that Satan is the ruler of this world in any sense that undermines the recognition of the rightful rule of Christ over the earth during this present age.

Ps. 2:1-6, 110:1-2; Matt. 4:10, 10:1, 12:24-29, 16:18-19; Luke 10:17-19; John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; Acts 2:34, 4:25-26, 13:9-11; Rom. 16:20; 1Cor. 15:24-26; 2Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:11-13; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:13; Heb. 1:13; 1John 4:4, 5:4-5; Rev. 19:15, 19-21, 20:1-3,10.

ALL AUTHORITY GIVEN TO CHRIST

IX. We affirm (a) that Jesus, the Son of David and Son of God, was given all authority in heaven and on earth by God the Father; (b) that after His ascension He sat down on the throne at the right hand of God; (c) that from this position of absolute authority in the universe He is bringing all things into submission under His feet, exercising His authority ever more widely and fully on earth as the gospel spreads and people are converted to Him; and (d) that His exercise of that authority will become more fully manifest after His second coming.

We deny that Christ will ever be given any more power or authority over the earth than He was given at His first coming.

Ps. 2:1-6; Is. 9:6-7; Dan. 2:32-35; Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 4:10-12, 4:25-26, 17:30; 1Cor. 15:25-28; Eph. 1:19-22, 2:6; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:2-5; Rev. 1:5, 5:5-12, 19:11-21.

EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW TO CHRIST NOW

X. We affirm (a) that now, even before Christ's second coming, every knee in every nation on earth should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of this universe and rightful Ruler of all lives, and (b) that only those who, trusting in His grace alone for forgiveness of sins, repent of their sinful rebellion and submit to Christ as Lord are justified and stand accepted at the bar of God's judgment.

We deny that anyone, Jew or Gentile, believer or unbeliever, private person or public official, is exempt from the moral and juridical obligation before God to submit to Christ's lordship over every aspect of his life in thought, word, and deed.

Ps. 2:1-6; Dan. 2:32-35; Matt. 4:17, 23, 28:18-20; Acts 4:10-12, 17:30; Rom 3:23-24, 5:8, 8:1-4; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 1:5.

SUBMISSION TO THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

XI. **We affirm** that, because the King demands obedience from His subjects and children, (a) repentance is necessary for citizenship in the Kingdom of God, and (b) genuine repentance is evidenced by deliberate and continuing choice to submit obediently to the lordship of Christ.

We deny (a) that anyone can rightly claim Christ as Savior who does not submit to Him as Lord; (b) that Christ will save anyone who refuses to submit in grateful obedience to Him as Lord and King; (c) that this view embraces the idea of salvation by works; and (d) that Christians ever become sinless or outgrow the need for repentance in this life.

Matt. 4:17-23, 7:21-27; John 14:21,23; 15:5-6,10; Rom. 6:1-2,12-14, 8:13-14; Gal. 6:7-8; Eph. 4:20-24, 5:3-6; Col. 3:1-7; Heb. 10:26-29; James 1:22, 2:17-26, 3:11-17; 2Pet. 2:20-22; 1John 2:3-4, 9-11, 2:3-4, 3:10,17-18.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

XII. **We affirm** (a) that the Church, which is Christ's Body and Bride, consists of the redeemed and is manifested in the community of believers; (b) that Christ's Kingdom authority is not limited to His Church but extends over all areas of life; and (c) that the Church is the focal point of Christ's Kingdom work here on earth.

We deny (a) that the Church is to be equated with any denomination; (b) that Christ's authority is limited to His Church or any group of believers; and (c) that any institution other than the Church is God's primary instrument for the spread of the gospel and the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Ps. 110:1-3, 118:22-23, Is. 28:16, 45:23, 60:3,11-15, 61:3-6; Dan. 7:14,18,22,27; Matt. 16:18-19, 18:18-20, 21:41-44, 28:18-20; Luke 9:2; John 17:18-22; Acts 1:6-8, 20:25-28, 28:28; Rom. 8:16-19; 1Cor. 6:2; Eph. 1:18-23; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:13-18; Heb. 2:6-9, 8:8-13, 12:22-24, 12:28; 1Pet. 2:6-9; Rev. 1:6, 2:26, 5:9-10, 20:6, 21:2-7, 23-27.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

XIII. **We affirm** that the Church has an absolute responsibility to obey the Great Commission, and the task of the Church is: (a) to herald Christ as King over all the earth and Judge of all mankind, who now commands all men everywhere to repent; (b) to proclaim the good news of salvation by grace through faith in the atoning blood of Christ; (c) to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all of God's commands in the Bible that apply to us today.

We deny (a) that the Church can disregard the Great Commission and still walk in godly obedience; (b) that the Great Commission is restricted solely to proclaiming the good news of salvation without the accompanying call to repentance and faithful

obedience; (c) that the deliverance believers enjoy from the condemnation of the moral Law exempts them from the obligation to obey it; and (d) that obedience to the Law is a means of salvation.

Matt. 4:17-23, 10:1, 7-8, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rom. 6:12-16; Gal. 3:1-5,23-28; Luke 4:17-20.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

XIV. **We affirm** (a) that the intention of the Great Commission is essentially the same as the intention of the second and third petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the Creation Mandate, namely, that the Father's will should be done on earth as it is in heaven, and (b) that these instructions from God call believers to participate by both prayer and action in the expansion of His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven to whatever extent that is possible before Christ's second coming.

We deny (a) that anyone can pray the Lord's Prayer with sincerity and understanding without desiring that increasing numbers of individuals, private groups, and civil states should grow in obedience to the will of God the Father, and (b) that Christians need to agree in advance to what extent Christ's Kingdom will be operational on earth prior to His second coming before they can work together humbly and productively.

Gen. 1:27-29; Matt. 6:9-15, 24:36, 28:18-20; Luke 11:1-4; Acts 1:7.

THE KINGDOM AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

XV. **We affirm** that the Kingdom of God, however guaranteed in the promises of the Father and embodied in the person of Christ, can never gain entrance or come to full realization in the fabric of human life apart from the agency of the Holy Spirit, who is indispensable to insure Kingdom entrance, to seal Kingdom membership, to implement Kingdom obedience, to build Kingdom character, to furnish Kingdom gifts, to empower to Kingdom outreach, to produce Kingdom growth, and secure Kingdom victory.

We deny that character strength, personal charisma, skillful management, creative imagination, evident talents, financial strength, political action, or educational prowess by themselves can build or advance the Kingdom of God.

Ps. 104:29-30; Is. 30:1, 59:19-21, 61:1-3; Ezek. 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 4:6; Matt. 3:11, 12:28, 28:19; Luke 11:13; 12:12; John 3:5-6, 6:63, 14:26, 15:26, 16:13; Acts 1:5,8, 2:4, 16-18, 2:33, 4:31, 9:31; Rom. 8:4-17, 26-27, 14:17; 1Cor. 2:4,14, 3:16, 6:9-11, 12:4-13; 2Cor. 1:22, 3:3-11,17-18, 10:3-5; Gal. 3:3, 5:16-25, ; Eph. 1:13, 4:30, 6:12-18; Phil. 3:3; 1Thess. 1:5, Titus 3:5; Heb. 2:4; 2Pet. 1:21; 1John 3:24; Jude 1:19.

THE CHURCH RESPONSIBLE FOR ADVANCING THE KINGDOM

XVI. **We affirm** that God holds the Body of Christ responsible for advancing His Kingdom on earth, to whatever extent God has ordained, by applying His biblical principles through service in all spheres of human activity in all nations, prior to our Lord's glorious return.

We deny (a) that any belief regarding the timing of Christ's second coming, the sequence of events leading up to it, and the possible extent of the Kingdom's growth prior to Christ's return releases anyone from such responsibility; (b) that seeking to apply biblical principles to the stewardship of all earthly creation detracts from the believer's heavenly hope; and (c) that one can properly lead without an attitude of humble servanthood.

Deut. 4:5-8; Matt. 10:1,7-8, 16:18-19, 18:1-4, 21:25-28, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; John 15:5-8, 17:13-21.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HEAVEN

XVII. We affirm (a) that our primary citizenship is in heaven, though we are citizens of earthly nations as well; (b) that heaven is our true home and treasure; (c) that the Bible teaches us to be heavenly-minded and that only heavenly-minded men and women are useful for God on earth; (d) that we are seated in the heavenly places to rule in and with Christ; (e) that heaven is the pattern for earth; and (f) that we are to live in eager expectation of our being with the Lord in heaven and of Christ's second coming in glory, when heaven shall come down to earth in fullness.

We deny (a) that our heavenly citizenship reduces our responsibilities in society, and (b) that our expectation of heaven and of Christ's coming gives us permission to neglect our duties in this world.

Ps. 27:4; Matt. 6:19-21,33; Luke 12:31-34, 20:25; Rom. 8:18-25, 13:1-7; 1Cor. 13:12; 2Cor. 4:16-18, 5:1-9; Eph. 2:6-7; Phil. 3:20-21; 1Thess. 4:13-18; 1Tim. 4:8, 6:13-19; Titus 2:11-13; Heb. 12:22-23,28, 13:14; 1Pet. 2:11-17; 2Pet. 3:13-15; 1John 3:2-3; Rev. 21:1-5, 21:10-27, 22:1-5.

THE BIBLE IS THE PLUMB LINE FOR ALL NATIONS

XVIII. We affirm that the Kingdom task of making disciples of all nations requires us to hold forth the Bible as God's standard and plumb line by which to measure the justice, morality, and practice of all human endeavors in all jurisdictions individual, voluntary association, family, church, and civil government.

We deny (a) that the Bible and its view of reality bind only those who voluntarily claim them as their own and are irrelevant to those who reject them, and (b) that unwillingness relieves anyone of the duty to believe and obey the Bible.

Ps. 1:1-3, 2:1-6, 99:1, 96:9-10, 148:7-12; Is. 9:6-7; Obad. 15; Jonah 3:2-6; Micah 1:2; Nah. 1:13; Matt. 2:1-2, 5:18-19, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 17:30; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 1:5.

CAUSE AND EFFECT OF KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

XIX. We affirm (a) that when people—individuals or societies, Christian or non-Christian—generally follow, consciously or unconsciously, the moral, economic, and practical commands of the Bible, they tend to reap earthly blessings as a result, and (b) that when people generally fail to follow the moral, economic, and practical commands of the Bible, they tend to reap earthly judgments as a result.

We deny (a) that God will forever allow people to sow the wind without reaping the whirlwind, and (b) that obedience guarantees the believer whatever he claims from God.

Num. 21:5-8; Deut. 4:2-9, 6:10-19, 28:1-20; Josh. 1:8; Judges 2:1-12, 14-17; Neh. 9:26-30; Ps. 106:10-15; Prov. 1:5-9,16-19, 3:13-18, 4:4, 11:9-11; Jer. 7:5-15, 23; Matt. 5:18-19, 10:32-33; Rom. 2:6-11; 2Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:7-8; 2Tim. 3:8-9.

SUFFERING AS PART OF KINGDOM LIVING

XX. We affirm that suffering and persecution are a normal part of the Christian life by which the believer participates with Christ in His sufferings, in selfless service for the advance of the Kingdom.

We deny (a) that suffering is always a sign of God's judgment or displeasure with sin, and (b) that suffering adds to the work of Christ in redemption.

Matt. 5:10-12, 10:16-25, 16:21-25; Luke 9:23-24; John 21:18-19; Acts 7:52-58, 16:25, 8:1; 2Cor. 12:10; Gal. 5:11; 2Tim. 3:11-12.

CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

XXI. We affirm that there is continuity between the personal and social moral principles of the Old and New Testaments.

We deny that the moral principles of the New Testament are different from the moral principles of the Old Testament, whether individual or social.

Gen. 15:5-11 (Rom. 4:3); Ex. 11:3-8 (John 1:29; Luke 22:14-20; Rev. 5:4-10); Ps. 2:1-6 (Acts 4:25-26), 110:1 (Acts 2:34-35), 118:22; Dan. 2:32-35 (Matt. 21:4,2; Acts 2:11; 1Pet. 2:7); Is. 6:1-4 (Rev. 4:2-8); Jer. 31:31-34 (Heb. 8:8-10); Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:17-18). See also Matt. 5:18-19; Luke 16:17; Heb. 1:1-2; 12:26-28.

THE KINGDOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

XXII. We affirm (a) that the Old Testament Kingdom of Israel was brought about and shaped by the acts of God in history; (b) that this Kingdom was to be based on the principles and laws given by God, but the people fell far short of the ideal and righteous Kingdom that those laws prescribed; and (c) that the development of the Davidic Kingdom was God's way to prepare His people for the coming Messianic Kingdom.

We deny (a) that the Old Testament Kingdom of Israel is to be understood only through naturalistic and nationalistic principles and had nothing to do with God's eternal principles and laws, and (b) that anyone could properly understand or anticipate the Messianic Kingdom apart from Old Testament history and the Davidic Kingdom.

Deut. 4:5-9; 1Sam. 8:3-7; 1Chron. 29:11; Ps. 2:1-12 (Acts 4:25), 6:8 (Matt. 7:23), 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25), 110:1-4 (Acts 2:35); Dan. 2:32-35,44; Mic. 2:12-13,

4:1-4, 5:2-5,15, 7:14-17; Hab. 2:14; Zeph. 3:8-20; Hag. 2:6-9,21-23; Zech. 2:10-13, 3:8-9, 9:9, 14:6-11; Mal. 3:1-3, 4:1-6; Jer. 31:31; Is. 40:3 (Matt. 3:3); Matt. 5:19, 6:10; Acts 1:6; Rom. 9:25-29, 10:19-21; Co.. 1:12-20.

CHURCH AND STATE

XXIII. We affirm (a) that the biblically proper relationship between civil government and ecclesiastical government in any nation consists in each freely conducting its affairs in obedience to God's laws in creation and the Bible, without usurping the other's lawful jurisdiction; (b) that civil government is to enforce on all people laws of civil justice revealed in creation and restated in Scripture, with the physical sword, while ecclesiastical government is to enforce on the church redemption laws of personal and social morality revealed in Scripture, with the spiritual sword; (c) that the state must maintain religious liberty for its citizens without attempting to define correct religious doctrine; and (d) that religious liberty does not grant anyone the right to harm other people physically in their persons, liberty, or property.

We deny (a) that the church ought to rule over the state; (b) that the state ought to rule over the church; (c) that separation of church and state means separation of state and religiously motivated activity; (d) that it is even possible to separate religious motivation from activity in any sphere; and (e) that the church may properly use the coercion of the physical sword.

Deut. 4:5-8; Ps. 2:1-12, 96:9-13; 110:1-4; Dan. 2:32-35; Matt. 22:17-21; John 18:36-37; Rom. 13:1-7; Heb. 5:5-10; Rev. 1:5.

THE KINGDOM TRANSCENDS ALL NATIONAL ENTITIES

XIV. We affirm that the Kingdom of God transcends all national, political, and ethnic boundaries, uniting all believers in its King, Jesus Christ.

We deny that the Kingdom of God can be identified or equated with any geographical, national, political, or ethnic entity.

Luke 13:27-30; John 12:32; Rom. 4:9-13; Gal. 3:7-9, 26-29; Eph. 2:11-22; Rev. 5:9-13, 21:24.

HISTORIC ORTHODOXY SUPPORTS THESE AFFIRMATIONS

XXV. We affirm (a) that the Kingdom of God is a central teaching of the New Testament and cannot be neglected without loss to the Church and the Church's influence upon society; (b) that millennial issues flow from the understanding of the Kingdom of God rather than vice versa; (c) that it is more important strategically for the Church to engage in building the Kingdom of God on earth than for it to resolve its disagreements about the millennium; and (d) that the foregoing affirmations and denials are consistent with the mainstream of historic orthodox Christianity.

We deny (a) that orthodox Christianity has ever adopted a universally accepted position regarding eschatology or regarding the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God,

and (b) that Christians should make views such as Premillennialism, Amillennialism, or Postmillennialism a test of orthodoxy.

NOTE: There are no Scripture references for Article 25 since it concerns an historical period subsequent to the writing of Scriptures.