

# A Vision Of Christ's Consummate Kingdom

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Date: 07 September 2025

Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[ 0 : 00 ] Once a month, the plan with God's help is to have one sermon that is teaching us from God's word what God says about the church.

The Greek word for a gathering of God's people, an assembly of God's people is ecclesia. And so to study the assembly of God's people is ecclesiology. It's to study the doctrines of the church as God has given them to us.

So this is our our once a month sermon on the church for the month of September. The letter of First Corinthians is written by Paul, the apostle, and it's to a local church in the city called Corinth. And it was a city with a lot of worldly temptations, a lot of worldly power. And yet here's this church. Now, the church had a lot of problems and a lot of worldly pressure and influences and much to be put in order.

But we can notice both how how heavenly the vision God gives this local church is and it's for us as well. And also his grace. The Lord did not give up on a church like that one in Corinth.

[ 1 : 08 ] Instead, he patiently encouraged them through the ministry and through his word. To give us a little bit of context, I'm going to begin reading in First Corinthians chapter five, starting at verse 12.

And he's addressing that there is a man in this congregation who calls himself a brother that is committing sins that bring shame to the name of Jesus Christ.

And within this church, he's admonishing the whole congregation. They have not done their part as members of Christ's body. That's the context. But I really want to focus on chapter six, verses two and three, because he talks about the kingdom of Christ and what would be the role of God's people in that future consummate kingdom.

And that's our focus for today. I'll read this trusting that it's God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, powerful word. And he has given it to you and me, his people.

At the end, I'll say the word of God for the people of God. And if you receive it that way, please respond. Thanks be to God. First Corinthians five, starting at verse 12. For what have I to do with judging those who are outside?

[ 2 : 21 ] Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside, God judges. Therefore, put away from yourselves the evil person. Dare any of you having a matter against another, against another, go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints.

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you and if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?

I say this to your shame. It is so that there is not a wise man among you, not even one who will be able to judge between his brethren. But brother goes to law against another and that before unbelievers.

Now, therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong?

[ 3 : 35 ] Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat and you do these things to your brethren. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Lord, our minds are so limited and so full of concerns of this world.

Lord, please shine the light of your word through Jesus Christ into our minds, Lord. Father, our eyes are so often drawn to things that are visible by the power of your Holy Spirit.

[ 5 : 06 ] Please open our eyes of faith to behold what is unseen. Amen. We pray, Lord, that the reality that we already enjoy through union to Christ in the spiritual realm.

We pray, Lord, that you will show us how this gets worked out in our lives and especially as a gathered congregation. For your glory we ask. Amen. Amen. Amen.

An army at war needs a vision of their home country at peace again. You picture these soldiers in the trenches in a World War I setting.

What is it that keeps them there day after day in miserable conditions? They're thinking of the joy of being back home with their loved ones at peace once again. The church militant now needs to look to God's vision of the church victorious one day.

Proverbs 29, 18 says where there is no vision, the people perish. The vision we need is of Christ's consummate kingdom.

[ 6 : 21 ] The word consummate, according to Noah Webster's dictionary of 1828, it means completed, perfected, finished, carried to the utmost place, the final destination.

That's the consummate kingdom of Christ. And as God elevates our view of his kingdom in heaven, we trust and we pray, and I ask you to please pray with me, that God will elevate our vision of his kingdom on earth as well.

May the vision of Jesus Christ's consummate kingdom in the eternal state strengthen you and me and us as a local church. We gather now as sojourners, as pilgrims, but we are citizens of heaven now.

We need his strength. So I want to walk through four questions relating to the consummate kingdom of Christ. The first one is the concept. Where does this concept of his consummate kingdom in the eternal state, where does this come from?

Does it come from man? Men's ideas? Well, take a look at 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 2. Paul has a clear picture of the consummate kingdom in mind as he's exhorting this church, this local church in the city of Corinth with a bunch of problems.

[ 7 : 44 ] But he says in verse 2, the saints will judge the world. He knows what this is all going toward. Your life as a local body, it's preparing you for the wonderful ministry God is going to give his church in the eternal state, where the saints, who are the saints, former sinners, all true Christians are the saints, anyone clothed in Christ's righteousness.

You will judge the world. And the word judge is to rule. You will rule over the world. Now look at verse 9. It's not just the one thought that Paul has.

This is really in context with everything he has to say here. He asks it in the negative. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

And he's very clear on that point. Do not be deceived. He says there's no place for those who love sin in Christ's consummate kingdom. But to put it in the positive, you saints will inherit the kingdom of God.

Look at verse 11. He says, oh, remember, such were some of you. All of those worst sins committed in the world. That's exactly who the church is made up of.

[ 9 : 06 ] That's us. But now we're washed by his Holy Spirit. We're united to Christ. We have been sanctified already. In verse 11. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.

Though that's what we all are outside of Christ. We who are covered by Christ's righteousness have this promise. We will inherit the kingdom of God.

You see how Paul addresses really practical, messy problems within the life of a church. It's because he has a clear picture and he's confident in what this is all leading toward.

Where did Paul get that from? To take a bit broader context, his second letter to the same church as 2 Corinthians in chapter 12 of that letter.

He talks about how by the spirit he was caught up in what he called the third heaven. So not the atmosphere right here, not even just the stars, but heaven.

[10:12] The presence of God himself. Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. So he's even saying even with that, there's a veil here. We can't try to peer beyond what God has kept veiled in his wisdom.

But yet there's promise there for the church, for our good. He wrote, I was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for man to utter.

Again, God showed him some things. He's not even given permission to give to the church now. But it certainly tells us this vision of the consummate kingdom of Christ is clear.

And there's a witness, an apostle, by the inspiration of the spirit, exhorting the church to look to that day for our good. The realities of God's kingdom in heaven elevated Paul's perspective of God's kingdom on earth.

This concept of the consummate kingdom of God originates with God himself. The consummate kingdom, which is the holy God uniting a people that he redeemed for himself.

[11:28] This is God's eternal decree. This is God's divine wisdom before the foundations of the world. This is the immutable will of God, the creator.

In Ephesians 1 verses 3 through 6, we read that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. As Christ is already seated at the right hand of God, the father, and we're united to him by the ministry of the spirit.

We already enjoy the blessings that are immeasurable through union to Christ now in this life. Just as he chose us in him, when?

Before the foundation of the world. There's the concept of the church in God's mind, so to speak.

That we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Verse 5 of Ephesians 1. Having predestined us to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself.

Listen to this part. According to the good pleasure of his will.

[12:39] It's the love of God that conceives the church. To the praise of the glory of his grace by which he has made us accepted in Christ the beloved.

God designed, decreed, and predestined his future kingdom because of his good pleasure.

According to the abundance of his mercy for his glory and his praise.

This is where the concept of God's consummate kingdom accomplished through Christ originates.

God alone established his kingdom.

Because Christ is the head and the king of kings. He alone rules over his church. Even now in churches like this.

He alone sustains his church. He alone protects it. He alone builds his church. He alone legislates.

And he alone can secure his kingdom until that consummate eternal state.

[13:45] Well, scripture doesn't leave us guessing beyond that. We do have wonderful promises given now about the setting and the nature of Christ's consummate kingdom as well. In our sermon passage in verse 9, he refers to this kingdom that the saints will inherit.

There will be a great day of judgment and those who love their sin and despise Christ and his work have no place in this consummate kingdom. But those who were sinners who are now saints united to Christ, they will inherit this kingdom.

To get the most clear and long description, could you please turn to Revelation 21? As you're turning to Revelation 21, let me read a couple other witnesses.

Through the prophets, God inspired from the Old Testament and the New Testament leading up to that consummate vision. Isaiah 65, 17. God reveals this.

I will create a new heavens and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. Isaiah 66, 22.

[14:58] As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make shall remain before me, so shall the name of the Messiah and those born of Christ remain before God forever.

So what's the setting that's promised? A new heavens, a new earth. How glorious will it be? It'll so fill our minds that this world with all of the trouble and the sin and the sickness and problems, it won't even come to mind.

And what will it be like? What's the nature of this kingdom? The name of the Messiah will be exalted in the consummate kingdom. And the people that this Messiah secured for himself will be before Christ, the Messiah, and before God forevermore.

That's the nature of this kingdom. And this will happen when the Lord returns for his second coming, a great day of reckoning. And we have these promises scattered throughout the Psalms

and the New Testament as well, as well as books of prophecy.

That when the kingdom of heaven comes to earth, it will come in power. And he will reign and he will judge. He'll demolish the strong towers of the enemy and of man.

[16:21] He will crush those who oppose him. He will judge the living and the dead. All will stand before him and give account. Revelation 21, starting at verse 1, another apostle, John, is given a glimpse of this consummate kingdom.

And the spirit breathed out these words through his pen. I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice, verse 3 says, from heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people.

God himself will be with them and be their God. Verse 4, God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Then he who sat on the throne said, behold, I will make all things new. And he said to me, write for those. These words are true and faithful.

[17:38] In verse 6, he said to me, it is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

He who overcomes shall inherit all things. And I will be his God and he shall be my son. Do you see how that the same imagery from Isaiah and from the Psalms is now fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Alpha, the Omega, the one who adopts a people into the family of God.

Jesus Christ, who tabernacled among us, John says, is now inaugurating. Well, he already inaugurated in his work on earth. Now he's consummating. He's bringing down from heaven onto the new earth, this kingdom.

So that's the setting and the nature of how our redemption will be finally completed. Ephesians 1:10 says in the administration of the fullness of the times, he will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in him.

Jesus Christ and John chapter 12, verse 31. He pronounced that the kingdom of heaven is coming and it's now at hand.

[19:03] He said in Matthew, John 12, 31, he says, now is the time for the judgment of the world. Now the prince of the world will be driven out. And so this is the language we get in scripture.

It's already inaugurated, already begun, but not yet consummated. We still look forward to that that great day. We do enjoy a foretaste now of this nature of the new kingdom.

When Christ rules over his people, the setting of this new kingdom will be so glorious and so vast that the earth and the heavens recreated, made new in such a way that we won't even be able to remember what this old world was like.

The third question is, what will we do? What will be part of our job and our role in this consummate kingdom of Christ? There's much that all of the scriptures say, and we could spend many weeks just on all that we can wonder about relating to heaven.

I have to limit it for today to what we've seen in our passage in First Corinthians. One of the things we will do. Would you look at First Corinthians chapter six in our sermon passage?

[20:15] In chapter six, verses two and three. In verse two, he says, you saints. You are worthy to judge all sorts of matters.

Those who don't know Christ are not worthy to judge those matters relating to the church. Even relationships or problems within members of the church. And in verse three, he says, we, we who are saints in Christ, we shall judge angels.

We shall rule over angels. This is quite a statement because in Psalm eight, we're given the order of created beings. So that's God, the creator overall in taking on a flesh.

Jesus Christ made himself lower than the angels. And Adam, you know, in that sense was put lower than the angels, but ruling over the created realm. Now in the new heavens and the new earth, the consummate kingdom of Christ.

It's not angels who get to enjoy union to God. It's human beings. Those those man and woman made in God's image.

[21:24] You know, Christ did not take on the form of an angel. He took on the form of a man. He elevates mankind from our low position being dust of this earth and elevates us above to rule over the angels and his consummate, consummate kingdom in the order of the new creation, the new

heavens and the new earth.

You see, in the messiness of the church in Corinth and Corinthian city, this is what Paul wants them to think about. Want to settle all the problems and issues within your church.

Think about the position. You former sinners listing all these sins that you once were. This is your position in Christ in the consummate kingdom forevermore in all eternity.

How could that not elevate your thoughts about belonging to him now in his local church? The argument Paul is making to this church is from the greater to the lesser.

Since his saints are going to be judging the spiritual beings like angels with Christ in his future kingdom when he ushers in the new heavens and the new earth, then surely his gathered saints have everything we need to judge human beings on matters within Christ's special kingdom on earth.

[ 22 : 46 ] The local church. You see the argument? You have everything you need, church, to be an outpost of the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew 19, 28, Jesus also promised this order in the new consummate kingdom.

He said to his disciples, truly, I say to you in the new world, when the son of man will sit on his glorious throne. That's that revelation 21 vision.

You, my disciples, you who have followed me will also sit on thrones ruling with Christ. That's the spiritual reality Christians enjoy.

The local church is that central to the coming kingdom of God. First Corinthians, this passage that we see, there's a clear line between the church and the world.

In chapter five, verses 12 and 13, which we read, the church is to judge those who are inside in a Christ honoring way.

[ 23 : 54 ] Now, as Christ is the head, there's to be order under Christ as the king of his church. He says God will judge those who are outside of the church.

And there's a clear line. You are of the world or you are of the church. Calvin's comment was this on those verses.

Whenever believers meet in one place, I can clarify, he means as a biblically ordered local body of Christ. There is already in their assembly an image of the future judgment, which will be perfectly brought to light on the last day.

The authority of the church is greater than that of the world because there in the church, Christ's tribunal is erected. There in the local church, Christ exercises his authority.

I love that powerful image. When a local church meets and gathers in the name of Jesus, where they are gathered in his name, he is with them.

[ 25 : 03 ] And the reformers who would agree with John Calvin said there in a local church, Christ's tribunal is erected. Christ sits as the Lord and ruler of all.

And his people, his saints who are united with him, you could say, are getting practice on what it means to rule as Christians. And again, he's writing to the members of this local church.

Everyone who is a believer has a responsibility to be prepared for this high place that God has for us in the eternal consummate kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth.

And Christ's rule is already begun in a special way within the local church. That's the role of God's people. The last question is, who are these people?

Who are these citizens in Christ's consummate kingdom? Taking it from our sermon passage, 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 2, simply calls them the saints.

[ 26 : 04 ] The saints. These are the ones who will judge the world. This is a reference to what the creeds, like the apostolic creed and the Nicene Creed, they call the invisible or universal holy Christian church.

These are the saints, those who are already united to Christ. And they are safe and secure through faith alone, united to Christ. They're the ones who will rule over the world in his consummate kingdom.

Hebrews 12, 23 is helpful to us. The language in Hebrews 12 is the saints are the general assembly. General meaning, meaning the broadest sense, the greatest gathering assembly is, you know, the ecclesia, you know, the broadest view of the church.

And the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven to God, the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect. See, just how it was God's eternal plan to manifest his glory in the church.

It's the church now that becomes the magnifying glass of this glory of God to the world. That's why he leaves his church in the world for this time. Our years on earth are so short.

[ 27 : 26 ] And he's not left us as orphans. As we gather in his name, his spirit is with his church in a special way to magnify his grace and his glory and extend his mission until every last one that Christ purchased with his own blood comes to believe in him.

Colossians 1:18 says that Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may have preeminence.

Christ is displayed to the world as local churches make him preeminent, lift up his glory and show that he is the ruler of our lives individually in our households and in a special way when we come together as a church.

The Second London Confession of Faith, chapter 26, verse one, describes the universal church this way. It's universal, which with respect to the internal work of the spirit and truth of grace may be called invisible.

And it consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the head thereof. This church is the spouse, the body and the fullness of him that fills all in all.

[ 28 : 45 ] Taking some of the images God has given us in the New Testament to describe the church. 17th century congregationalist named Jonathan Edwards wondered at this glorious truth that we've seen today.

He came to this conclusion from scripture. God the Father created the world in order to prepare a bride for God the Son.

God the Son. God the Son. God the Son. God the Son. That's how much the consummate kingdom of Christ is secured. It's God's concept.

It's God's work. It's God's sustaining power from the very beginning to the very end. And it's for sinners like you and me that he will call saints by grace alone.

We heard last week of the criminal on the cross. That man will be a citizen in the consummate kingdom of Christ.

[ 29 : 54 ] If God takes one of our precious children that's in this room who already trusts in Christ as Savior and Lord, before that child gets baptized, before they ever get to taste the Lord's Supper, that child will still be in the consummate kingdom of Christ.

If God has already saved you, already united you to Jesus Christ, you are safe, secure in him forever. Your place in the eternal kingdom of God is guaranteed by God himself.

You can never get kidnapped away. You can never suffer identity theft or be taken hostage. You can't even do anything so bad as to break the tie, the bond that Christ has on you through his covenant of grace.

You could go on the rest of your life. You could accuse me of being licentious for what I'm about to say. You could go on the rest of your life, not obeying a single one of the Ten Commandments. Never make your union to Christ public by becoming a member of a local church. Never commit your discipleship to the oversight of a local body.

[ 31 : 14 ] Never really study what discipleship to Christ means. Never carry out a single duty he has given to Christians. And he calls you a saint.

Amen. Why would anyone want to or bother walk in obedience to Christ if that's the case?

Any step of obedience we take should only have one motive, and it's given to us in 1 John 4:19. We love him because he first loved us.

Our obedience to Jesus Christ is a reflex, a response of love. It's a response of gratitude. And it's only those who truly see how much he has loved us in Jesus Christ that will desire that.

It's the Holy Spirit in a believer that lets you rest in this promise, that this grace that doesn't depend on any work of man, it's all of God because God is that loving.

[ 32 : 33 ] I want to end today by encouraging you and reminding you one more time of how much God loves you in Jesus Christ. Isaiah 49 sends a message out from a prophet of Israel to all the world.

He says, Here, O coastlands, there's a servant prepared. The servant is God the Son.

And he's prepared for the fullness of time to carry out and execute the plan of the triune God. Why? Because God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever would believe in him should not perish, but will have everlasting life in him.

The rest of Isaiah 49, it's a dialogue between God the Father and the servant, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God the Son. The Puritan John Flavel paraphrased this dialogue from Isaiah 49 this way. The Father pulls the Son next to him and says, Look, here is a vast multitude of poor, miserable sinners condemned by their guilt.

[ 34 : 02 ] Divine justice must be satisfied. The Son says, to magnify our divine love and glorious holiness rather than letting them perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their surety.

Bring me all their bills. Let me see all they owe us. I choose to suffer divine wrath rather than they suffer it. Upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt.

The Father continues this conversation. Oh, but my son, if you undertake for them, you must reckon to pay the last penny.

Expect no reduction. For divine grace to spare them, divine justice may not spare you. The Son responds, I am content.

Father, let it be so. Charge it all upon me. I am able to bear it. And though it impoverished me of all my riches and emptied me of all my treasures, for indeed it did.

[ 35 : 20 ] 2 Corinthians 8, 9 says, Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor. God the Son says, yet I am content to undertake it.

You see how the church is Christ's beloved. The church was God's eternal plan to manifest his glory through the church to the world.

And it's the church, not only universal, but also visible. Not only the, you know, the global and invisible church, but also the local, little body, even the simple one here like ours.

Christ says, this is precious. This is the most exalted institution in the world. Think of Jesus' prayer in Matthew 6, 9.

Disciples, when you pray, pray like this. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[ 36 : 30 ] And it's the local church, this is where the prayer of our eternal King Jesus comes true. Until he consummates his reign in majesty, in power, and in dominion.

Till his justice and his peace cover this world with his glory. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God.

Let's pray and thank him. Oh Lord, your spirit stirs up our minds and makes us homesick for this consummate kingdom.

Lord, we confess we're so limited we can barely even receive these glorious truths. We trust, Lord, that there will be a cosmos recreated, a new heavens, a new earth, that Jesus Christ will reign, that his peace will be all that we know and enjoy.

We do long for that day, Father. In the meantime, we are so limited and constrained and weak. We depend on your spirit. We depend on your word to build your church as you say you will.

[ 37 : 49 ] Please do this, Father, even in this small, local congregation. As we decrease, may you increase. May Christ be lifted up. May he be preeminent.

And through this congregation, Father, may the world see how lovely you are in the person and work of God, the Son, Jesus Christ. For your glory we ask. Amen.