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# The Two Kingdoms Doctrine in Scripture

Intro: Why Calvin taught the two kingdoms doctrine, and why protestant liberalism made us forget it

Basic clarification: The two kingdoms doctrine is not a distinction between two realms or two spheres. Rather, it distinguishes between two ages, the present age and the age to come, and two governments that regulate those ages. The first government, associated with the creation mandate and the Noahic Covenant, is that which orders life in this age (i.e., the family, civil government). The second government, associated with the covenant of grace and the kingdom of God, is that which communicates the kingdom of God into this age (i.e., the church, through the ministry of the word, sacraments, and discipline).

Basic definition of the word secular: The English word *secular* comes from the Latin word *saeculum.* This in turn was a translation of the Greek word *aeon*, which is usually translated in our English Bibles as the word *age*. Christianity developed the concept of the secular when it described as secular those things which pertain to this age, in contrast to those things which pertain to the age to come.

I. The Secular Kingdom (the natural order of the present age)
   A) The Creation Mandate (Gen 1:26-30; Gen 3:16-19)
   B) The Noahic Covenant (Gen 6:1-4, 11-12; Gen 8:22-9:17

II. The Eternal Kingdom (the Kingdom of God, or the age to come)
   A) The Abrahamic Covenant – promise of the kingdom (Gen 12:1-3; Gen 18:7-9)
   B) Israel – typological picture of the kingdom
      1. Exodus and Conquest as pictures of eternal salvation and judgment
      2. Obedience to Law as picture of justice and righteousness before the nations (Deu 4:5-8)
      3. Penal Laws (i.e., death penalty) as picture of God's wrath on the wicked (Deu 21:22-23; Gal 3:13-14)
   C) Prophets – condemnation of Israel and proclamation of the Kingdom of the Messiah
      1. Suffering Servant, the word, forgiveness, the Spirit (Is 53; Micah 4; Is 2; Jer 31)
      2. Ambiguity of the Prophets concerning Christ's two comings
   D) Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom
      1. Today is the day of salvation, not wrath (Luke 4; Matt 12)
      2. Jesus teaches ethic of suffering service (Luke 22:24-27; 17:20-21; Matt 26:52-54)
      3. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world; it teaches the truth but does not use the sword (John 18)
   E) Jesus as the ascended Lord with all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28; Eph 1)
      1. New Creation (age to come) exists in Jesus' resurrected body
      2. Jesus reconciles all things in heaven on earth – all exists in him (Col 1:15-20)

III. The Two Kingdoms (as taught in the New Testament)
   A) Kingdom of God advances through ministry of the church (Matt 28; Eph 4; 2 Cor 5; Matt 16; Matt 18; Rom 8);
   B) Obedience of believers takes place in context of institutions of enduring secular kingdom
      1. Marriage is of this age but not of the age to come (Luke 20)
      2. Race, gender, economic status are irrelevant to kingdom, but secular vocations are still binding (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 7)
      3. Believers live in Christ and conform to Christ in context of secular institutions (Eph 5-6)
      4. Despite nonviolence of the kingdom, coercive government remains ordained by God (Rom 12-13); Governments serve Christ (Psalm 2) by observing their secular calling.