

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

“The Kingdom of God is at hand”

Seminary Lecture Notes



Matthew 13:44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
1 PREFACE	13
2 INTRODUCTION TO THE KINGDOM	15
2.1 THE GREAT CONFLICT	15
2.2 PAST AGES	15
2.3 A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE.....	16
2.4 A TROUBLESOME AGE	16
2.5 MAN’S DREAM.....	17
2.6 THE BIBLICAL HOPE	18
2.7 IMPORTANCE OF THE KINGDOM GOSPEL	18
2.8 A MORNING PRAYER: THY KINGDOM COME	20
3 WHERE IS HISTORY HEADED?.....	22
4 THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM	26
4.1 GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM.....	26
4.2 BAD NEWS IN KINGDOM PRACTICE	28
4.3 LYNDON B. JOHNSON.....	28
4.4 RUBY RIDGE.....	29
4.5 THE WACO DEBACLE.....	30
4.6 PROGNOSTICATORS.....	31
5 KINGDOM PERPLEXITY.....	32
5.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO KINGDOM STUDIES	32
5.2 VARIOUS THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD.....	38
5.3 CONTEMPORARY ESCHATOLOGICAL POSITIONS	43
5.4 PREMILLENNIALISM	43
5.5 DISPENSATIONALISM	44
5.6 POSTMILLENNIALISM	44
5.7 AMILLENIALISM	45
5.8 NEW TESTAMENT PERPLEXITY SURROUNDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD	45
5.9 JOHN’S PERPLEXITY.....	46
6 THE KINGDOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT	48
6.1 PRESENT CONNOTATIONS OF THE KINGDOM.....	48
6.2 LIGHT FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT (OT) ON GOD’S KINGDOM	48

6.3	RULE AND AUTHORITY.....	48
6.4	DYNAMIC ACTIVITY WITHIN HISTORY.	50
6.5	CATAclysmic ACTIVITY.	51
6.6	IRRESISTIBLE AND ETERNAL.....	52
6.7	GOD’S KINGDOM IS NOW	52
6.8	SALVATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE DEFEAT OF THE WICKED.....	53
6.9	THE MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING THE RULE OF GOD ON EARTH.....	54
7	THE KINGDOM HOPE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.....	57
7.1	A NEW KING	57
7.2	A NEW ISRAEL	58
7.3	A NEW JUDGMENT	58
7.4	A NEW SALVATION.....	59
7.5	A NEW COVENANT RELATIONSHIP.....	60
7.6	A NEW SPIRITUALITY	61
7.7	A NEW CREATION.....	61
7.8	DANIEL’S VIEW OF THE KINGDOM	61
7.9	JOHN’S VIEW OF THE KINGDOM	62
7.10	SUMMARY OF JOHN’S VIEW OF THE KINGDOM	64
7.11	JOHN’S PERPLEXITY.....	65
8	THE GOSPEL OF GOD’S REIGN.....	66
8.1	THE LORD REIGNETH.....	66
8.2	THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS	68
8.3	GOSPEL INSTRUCTIONS TO IDOLATERS.....	68
8.4	GOSPEL INSTRUCTIONS TO GOD’S PEOPLE	70
9	THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE NT.....	72
9.1	THE KINGDOM AFFIRMED BY CHRIST	72
9.2	JOHN’S CONFUSION.....	72
9.3	MEANING OF THE TERM “KINGDOM”	73
9.4	NAMES OF THE KINGDOM (SEE MATTHEW 19:16FF).....	74
9.5	THE STORY OF THE RICH YOUNG RULER	75
9.6	THE TWO AGE CONSTRUCT	76
9.7	TIME CONTINUUM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD	76
9.8	TWO AGES.....	76
9.9	EVENTS SEPARATING THE TWO AGES	78
9.10	CHARACTER OF THIS AGE	79
9.11	CHARACTER OF THE AGE TO COME	80
10	INVASION OF THE KINGDOM INTO HISTORY.....	83

10.1	REVIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY	83
10.2	ENTRANCE OF THE KINGDOM INTO HISTORY	83
10.3	JOHN’S DILEMMA SOLVED.....	88
11	MEANING OF THE KINGDOM IN JESUS’ MINISTRY	90
11.1	THE MEANING OF CHRIST’S REIGN	90
11.2	DEATH IS DEFEATED	91
11.3	TWO RESURRECTIONS:	92
11.4	CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE:.....	92
11.5	SIN IS DEFEATED.....	92
11.6	SATAN IS DEFEATED	93
11.7	DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM	94
12	REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY	95
12.1	ESCHATOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	97
12.2	FULFILLMENT VERSES	98
12.3	FOUR ESCHATOLOGICAL BLESSINGS ENJOYED TODAY	99
12.4	ESCHATOLOGICAL JUDGMENT.....	103
13	THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM.....	106
13.1	THE PROBLEM FOR THEOLOGIAN.....	106
13.2	THE PROBLEM FOR JOHN	106
13.3	OT REVIEW OF THE KINGDOM.....	107
13.4	JOHN’S PROBLEM WITH THE KINGDOM REVIEWED	109
13.5	JESUS’ INTERPRETATION OF HIS KINGDOM MISSION.....	109
13.6	INTERPRETATION OF JESUS’ PARABLES	111
13.7	SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM	114
14	THE POSTPONED KINGDOM THEORY.....	116
14.1	CLASSICAL DISPENSATIONALISM	116
14.2	DISPENSATIONALISM CREATED A DUALISTIC GOSPEL.....	117
14.3	POSTPONEMENT ADVOCATED.....	118
14.4	DISAGREEMENT AMONG DISPENSATIONALISTS	118
14.5	THE ERROR OF POSTPONEMENT	119
14.6	REASONS TO REJECT THE POSTPONEMENT THEORY	120
15	ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM	122
15.1	THE LORDSHIP DEBATE	122
15.2	FAITH VS. REPENTANCE.....	123
15.3	THE FUNDAMENTAL DEMAND OF THE KINGDOM IS DECISION.	124
15.4	JESUS DEMANDED A DELIBERATE DECISION.....	125

15.5	JESUS DEMANDED A RADICAL DECISION	125
15.6	JESUS DEMANDED A CALCULATED DECISION	127
15.7	JESUS DEMANDED AN UNFETTERED DECISION	127
15.8	JESUS DEMANDED A CHILD-LIKE DECISION	128
15.9	JESUS DEMANDED A JOYFUL DECISION	128
15.10	JESUS DEMANDED A PERMANENT DECISION	129
15.11	JESUS DEMANDED A FAITH DECISION IN JOHN.....	129
15.12	JESUS PROMISED REPARATION FOR DECISIONS.....	130
15.13	ETERNAL SECURITY AND KINGDOM DECISION	130
15.14	SUMMARY OF SALVATION RESPONSES ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.....	131
15.14.1	By Radial Repentance	131
15.14.2	By Radical Confession.....	131
15.14.3	By Radical Loyalty.....	131
15.14.4	By Radical Following.....	131
15.14.5	By Radical Decision.....	132
15.14.6	By Radical Submission	132
15.14.7	By Radical Conversion.....	132
15.14.8	A Bold Invitation.....	132
16	THE KINGDOM, THE CHURCH, AND ISRAEL.....	133
16.1	DEFINITIONS.....	133
16.2	JESUS OFFERED THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL	134
16.3	THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH	139
17	THE AMAZING SCOFIELD BIBLE.....	143
18	SCOFIELD’S DISTORTION OF THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISES.....	148
19	THE KINGDOM AND ISRAEL’S PROMISES	153
19.1	TWO POSITIONS.....	153
19.2	THE DISPENSATIONAL POSITION	153
19.3	THE REFORMED POSITION	154
19.4	GOD PROMISED ISRAEL THE LAND:	156
19.5	THE LAND GRANT PROMISED WAS FULFILLED IN HISTORY:.....	156
19.6	UNBELIEVING ISRAEL FORFEITED THE HOLY LAND.....	157
19.7	THE FIG TREE ILLUSTRATION	159
19.8	EIGHT WOES ON THE NATION.....	160
19.9	ISRAEL AND DISPENSATIONALISM.....	162
19.10	DOES GOD HAVE A SEPARATE PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL?	164
19.11	HOEKEMA.....	164

19.12	REYMOND	164
19.13	BEN MERKLE’S INTERPRETATION.....	165
19.14	THE DESTINY OF THE NEW ISRAEL.....	167
19.15	THREE GREAT QUESTIONS.....	167
19.16	WHO IS ISRAEL OR WHO IS A JEW TODAY?	167
19.17	WHAT IS THE HOLY LAND?.....	169
19.18	WHO IS ISRAEL AS A PERSON?	170
19.19	ISRAEL AS A TYPE OF CHRIST	172
19.20	CONSEQUENCES	173
20	JEWISH MYTHS.....	176
20.1	MYTH 1: ABRAHAM WAS JEWISH.	176
20.2	MYTH 2: IT IS A SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE TO BE JEWISH.	177
20.3	MYTH 3: GOD HAS A SPECIAL LOVE FOR JEWISH PEOPLE.	177
20.4	MYTH 4: THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISES WERE UNCONDITIONAL.....	178
20.5	MYTH 5: ISRAEL NEVER RECEIVED THE LAND GRANT PROMISES.	180
20.6	MYTH 6: THE LAND GRANT PROMISES WERE UNCONDITIONAL.	183
20.7	MYTH 7: THE TEN TRIBES WERE LOST.	185
20.8	MYTH 8: MODERN ISRAEL IS A FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.	186
20.9	MYTH 9: GOD IS STILL INTERESTED IN GIVING PALESTINE TO “JEWS.”.....	189
20.10	MYTH 10: THE LAND GRANT PROMISES ARE STILL RELEVANT.	190
20.11	MYTH 11: GOD WANTS TO REINSTITUTE THE OLD JEWISH ORDER.....	193
20.12	MYTH 12: MODERN DAY JEWS ARE GOD’S PEOPLE.	195
20.13	MYTH 13: MODERN DAY “JEWS” ARE REALLY JEWS.....	200
20.14	MYTH 14: THERE IS A JEWISH RACE.....	202
20.15	MYTH 15: THOSE CALLED “JEWS” ARE SEMITIC.....	202
20.16	MYTH 16: ISRAEL WILL ONE DAY REPLACE THE CHURCH.	205
20.17	MYTH 17: MODERN ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED.	209
20.18	MYTH 18: THE JEWS KILLED CHRIST.	211
20.19	MYTH 19: CHRISTIANS SHOULD ALWAYS SUPPORT ISRAEL.....	211
20.20	MYTH 20: WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.	212
20.21	MYTH 21: THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL SETTLED IN EUROPE.....	213
21	KINGDOM ETHICS.....	217
22	VIVA CHRISTO REY!	228
23	CHRIST REIGNS NOW!	236
23.1	THE MEANING OF ACTS 2	238
23.2	THE MEANING OF CHRIST’S ASCENSION TO THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD	241

23.2.1	Christ is King	241
23.2.2	Christ is Highly Exalted	241
23.2.3	Christ is Reigning Now!.....	242
23.2.4	Christ is Reigning Now as King.....	243
23.2.5	Christ is Reigning now as King of the Church.....	245
23.2.6	Christ is the Victor King	246
23.2.7	Christ is King of the Nations	246
23.2.8	Christ is the King Priest	247
23.2.9	Christ is the Warring King	247
24	CHRIST’S KINGDOM AUTHORITY.....	250
24.1.1	The Crisis	253
24.1.2	The Cure.....	254
25	THE KINGDOM AND POLITICS.....	257
Part I	257	
25.1	THE MODERN DILEMMA	257
25.2	THE PREMISE.....	258
25.3	THE KINGDOM DEMANDS POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT	258
25.3.1	Reason One: The Authority of Christ.....	258
25.3.2	Reason Two: The Titles Christ.....	259
25.3.3	Reason Three: the Arrival of the Kingdom of God	261
25.3.4	Reason Four: Christ Requires the Obedience of the State	265
Part II	267	
25.4	OT POLITICS CENTERED AROUND ISRAEL’S TRUE KING AND THEIR DUTY TO OBEY HIM.....	267
25.5	THE KING’S APPEARANCE AND TRIUMPH IN HISTORY	268
25.6	PETER’S BOLD STATEMENT IN ACTS 4:12	269
25.7	THE MESSAGE THAT TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN	271
25.8	THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH	271
25.9	THE LORD’S PRAYER	272
25.10	THE MODERN STATE.....	273
25.11	A REMEDY	274
26	PSALM 2: KISS THE SON ALL YE NATIONS	276
27	PSALM 101: THE POLITICIAN’S PSALM	283
28	OBJECTIONS TO POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT	288

28.1	CHRIST DID NOT CHALLENGE THE AUTHORITY STRUCTURES OF HIS DAY.....	288
28.2	KINGDOM SAINTS SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN POLITICS.	288
28.3	MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.	289
28.4	THERE IS A SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.	290
28.5	THE KINGDOM IS ABOUT THE GOSPEL NOT POLITICS	291
28.6	YOU CAN'T LEGISLATE MORALITY.	291
28.7	SECULAR GOVERNMENTS ARE PREFERRED OVER RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENTS.....	291
28.8	THE BIBLE IS ONLY ABOUT SALVATION, NOT POLITICS.	292
28.9	RELIGION AND POLITICS DON'T MIX	293
28.10	CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT RESIST AUTHORITY!	293
29	THE KINGDOM AND ROMANS 13	295
29.1	THE ISSUE:	295
29.2	THE TEXT	295
29.3	GETTING TO THE TRUTH OF ROMANS 13	296
29.4	THE PUSH FOR BIG GOVERNMENT.....	297
29.5	THE PUSH FOR MAXIMUM COMPLIANCE	297
29.6	WHO IS LORD, CAESAR OR CHRIST?.....	298
29.7	THE PUSH FOR A BALANCED VIEW OF ROMANS 13.....	299
30	A MORNING PRAYER	308
31	THY KINGDOM COME.....	310
31.1	HALLOWED BE THY NAME	310
31.2	THY KINGDOM COME	311
31.3	THY WILL BE DONE	314
32	WHEN WILL THE KING RETURN?	316
32.1	NO MAN KNOWS THE HOUR.....	316
32.2	INCREASING TROUBLES?.....	316
32.3	LIKE THE DAYS OF NOAH	317
32.4	INCREASE OF SKEPTICS	318
32.5	MORAL DEGENERATION	318
32.6	WIDE SPREAD APOSTASY	319
32.7	RISE OF APOSTASY IN THE CHURCH	319
32.8	DOCTRINES OF DEVILS.....	320
32.9	THE GOSPEL WILL BE PREACHED TO ALL THE WORLD.....	322
33	THE PAROUSIA OF OUR LORD.....	323
33.1	SALVATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS	323
33.1.1	Purpose for writing.....	323

33.1.2	The Reality of a Resurrected Christ	324
33.1.3	The Revelation of Truth	325
33.1.4	The Return of Christ.....	326
33.1.5	What will we see?	326
33.1.6	What will we hear?.....	326
33.1.7	What will we feel?.....	326
33.1.8	What will we say?	326
33.1.9	The Resurrection of the Christian Dead	327
33.1.10	The Resurrection / Rapture of the Living Saints	327
33.1.11	The Reunion with Love Ones.....	328
33.1.12	The Reassurance of Triumph	328
33.1.13	Interpretive Issues:	329
34	Judgment for the Wicked	331
34.1.1	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.....	331
34.1.2	2 Thessalonians 1:5-12.....	332
34.1.3	2 Thessalonians 2:1-16.....	333
34.1.4	2 Peter 3:3-18	335
34.1.5	Jude 4-19	337
34.1.6	Matthew 3:1-12	337
34.1.7	Matthew 13:24-30; 36-41.....	338
34.1.8	Matthew 25:31-46	339
35	THE MILLENNIUM	341
35.1	APPROACHES TO INTERPRETATION:.....	341
35.2	THE BINDING OF SATAN	342
35.3	THE FIRST RESURRECTION.....	344
35.4	GOG AND MAGOG	347
36	THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH.....	350
36.1	O.T. REFERENCES	350
36.2	N.T. REFERENCES	351
37	INTERPRETING REVELATION	358
37.1	FIVE RULES FOR INTERPRETING REVELATION.....	358
37.2	INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES.....	359
37.3	PURPOSE OF THE BOOK	360
37.4	HOW TO INTERPRET THE BOOK	360
37.5	REVELATION AS A BOOK OF SYMBOLS	361
37.6	LITERALNESS VS. THE APOCALYPTIC	363

	37.7	INTERPRETING NUMBERS IN REVELATION	364
	37.8	SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS	365
38		REVELATION 19: THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE	368
	38.1	THE GREAT WARRIOR	368
	38.2	THE GREAT SUPPER	371
39		THE LAMB WILL CONQUER THEM	373
40		APPENDICES.....	376
41		THE BINDING OF SATAN.....	376
	41.1	THE ISSUE	376
	41.2	THE QUESTIONS	376
	41.3	A LOOK AT MATTHEW	377
	41.4	A LOOK AT LUKE 10:18	378
	41.5	A LOOK AT JOHN 12.....	378
	41.6	A LOOK AT ACTS 17:30	378
	41.7	A LOOK AT EPHESIANS	379
	41.8	A LOOK AT COLOSSIANS.....	379
	41.9	A LOOK AT HEBREWS	380
	41.10	A LOOK AT REVELATION 20	380
	41.11	THE MAIN OBJECTION TO LIMITED BINDING	381
	41.12	ANSWERING THE OBJECTION	381
42		IDENTITY OF THE MAN OF SIN.....	384
	42.1	THESIS	384
	42.2	IMPORTANCE.....	384
	42.3	IDENTITY OF THE “MAN OF LAWLESSNESS”	385
	42.4	OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE TEXT	385
	42.5	INTERPRETATION	388
	42.6	PROBLEMS WITH THIS VIEW:.....	388
	42.7	EVIDENCE FOR THIS VIEW.....	389
43		INTERPRETING MATTHEW 24.....	393
	43.1	INTERPRETIVE POSITIONS	393
	43.2	PRETERIST INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW 24	394
44		THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG	397
	44.1	INTRODUCTION	397
	44.2	PROBLEMS WITH THE LITERAL VIEW.....	397
	44.3	OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 38.....	398

44.4	EVIDENCE FOR A MYTHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION	399
44.5	REVELATION AND THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG	403
44.6	CONCLUSION	403
45	BIBLE REFERENCES	405
46	BIBLIOGRAPHY	419

1 PREFACE

As a young minister, I was struggling to define my ministry. The cults of chaos were everywhere. “Christian” beliefs ranged from A to Z on about every subject. The fog in the pew was clearly related to the cloud in the pulpit.

In the midst of the theological clutter, I decided to *major on the majors and minors*. But, what were the majors and what were the minors? A friend and I were discussing this subject, and we decided to make our own list. We each wrote down what we considered to be the twelve most important doctrines of the Bible and then compared lists. Our lists varied a little bit, but my friend had one subject on his record that I did not have on mine—the Kingdom of God. I asked him why he put the Kingdom of God down as one of his top subjects to preach. He responded, “Because it is the major message of Jesus.” Humm?

Not only had I never studied the subject of God’s Kingdom, I had never even heard a message on the Kingdom of God in my entire life — and, I was raised in Bible churches . . . and, I was a Bible teacher in a young church. Yes, I used the term “kingdom,” but I never heard my mentors discuss the subject of God’s Kingdom as a coherent dogmatic. As we talked, I realized I knew nothing about the Kingdom of God—nothing about the major message of Jesus? So, I took the plunge.

I spent the next two years plowing through the Bible on the subject . . . and, when I started reading dispensational literature on the Kingdom, the fog in the pulpit turned midnight black: the eternal kingdom, the Davidic kingdom, mediatorial kingdoms, intercalations, suspensions, and millennial Jewish kingdoms! Some of the experts even predicted Christ would return by 1988. Why? Because Israel became a nation in 1948 . . . and Christ was supposed to return in that generation. Wow! What a maze! A theological spaghetti bowl!! How could it be unraveled?

Thank God for George Eldon Ladd!! He was the only theologian that made sense in my dispensational saturated library. Because of Ladd’s works, I was forced to grapple with the fundamentals, to admit error in my thinking, and to vacate a hefty portion of my classical dispensational theories.

While working on my doctorate, I discovered the works of Blaising and Bock. They too were questioning the tenets of dispensationalism . . . and the cause of their query?—the works of George Eldon Ladd! In my dissertation, I decided to trace the influence of Ladd among progressive dispensationalists. Many dispensationalists had discovered Ladd and began to change their views. Pentecost (1995) even adopted Ladd’s interpretation of the parables. This work came out of my dissertation research and roughly composed for my lectures given at Trinity Theological Seminary on the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God was not only the major message of Jesus, it was the major message of Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Malachi, John the Baptist, Philip, Peter, John, and Paul.

Since the Kingdom of God is the major message of the New Testament, it behooves us to study and proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, I am convinced that the lack of understanding regarding the Kingdom of God among Christians is one reason our society is in a moral freefall. When believers fail to preach Jesus is King and call men to surrender to His law-order, society seeks its own gods and its own moral order.

This work is a collection of unedited notes, lectures, and Bible studies I composed on the subject of the Kingdom of God during my seminary years. Because these lectures were given at different times, there is some overlap of material with differing degrees of detail.

The Kingdom of God is a great treasure. May the Lord enable us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and to discover this Pearl of Great Price.

Professor Brooky Stockton, Ph.D.

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE KINGDOM

2.1 The Great Conflict

Psalm 2:1 Why do the heathen rage (tumult, commotion), and the people imagine (growl, moan) a vain thing?

Before us is the question of the ages. Why can't nations live in peace? Why are countries at war . . . in an up roar . . . existing in the surf and foam of the sea of conflict? As we listen to the news, we hear of regional disputes, of political clashes, of government infringement of rights, of dissidents protesting some perceived inequity, of nations in political chaos ravaged by civil war. Psalm 2 is true! Nations foment because they have declared war against the God's King and in His law-order.

2.2 Past Ages

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Kings and kingdoms rumble with majesty and tension. The very mention of them provoke joy or anger, security or fear, respect or fear. Since men have formed themselves into societies, noise and blood fill the news channels. Disputes for power causes the nations tremble. Politicians enlarge wealth, create graveyards, enslave humanity, and spread misery among men. The contest for power is always contested and has yet to be decided.

It was in this Roman world and its quest for power and control that our Lord was born. Pilate's question, "Are you a king," was not a philosophical dialectic between a Roman and a Judahite, but a political question testing the allegiance and political correctness of Christ. For this claim, Pilate judged Christ a threat to Rome. He charged Jesus with treason. He had to be eliminated. The indictment read, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

That Christ was a king is at the heart of the gospel.

This claim challenged Roman occupation, Caesar's authority, and turned the world upside down (Acts 17:1-7; Revelation 1:5). It is true that Christ is a wonderful Savior, high priest, and a prophet to his

people, but that He is king vested with universal authority demanding allegiance all men and all their institutions provokes the most intense emotion of men whether positive or negative.

2.3 A Technological Age

*It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity-
Albert Einstein.*

Likewise, we live in a marvelous age. Electro power plants transfer energy to our homes. Giant birds made of aluminum fly us around the world in hours. Hundreds of cell towers connect the earth enabling billions to communicate with each other through hand-held, cell phones. Man-made skyscrapers touch the clouds in the sky. Millions of people carry laptop computers that would have taken a barn full of microchips to process in the twentieth century. Microwave ovens cook our food in minutes. Electric cars speed down the interstate challenging gasoline powered vehicles. Every working day large computers process millions of financial transactions in seconds to places around the globe. Polio, heart disease, and forms of cancer have tumbled under the advancements of medical science. In times past, a man was fortunate if he could live past forty. Today, life expectancy is around seventy-eight.

Politically, we have seen the collapse of communism, the destruction of the Berlin wall, and the rise of China as an international financial superpower, and the efforts by the United Nations to control a world-wide pandemic. We are inundated with information and news. World libraries are at our finger tips. People vote, protest, and exercise power. It is indeed a marvelous age.

What does it all mean? Where is this world headed? Does history have an end, a goal, a destiny?

2.4 A Troublesome Age

We live in troublesome times.

Martin Luther King said, "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men" (Strength to Love, 1963).

Ours is a world of pain and death, of disease and despair, and of anger and meanness. Our delicate economy is tied into global networks so that world events affect prices in rural towns. Gas prices threaten our standard of living. Satellites circle the earth collecting emails and telephone records of every man, woman, and child.. Radical third world powers headed by madmen are rushing to develop nuclear weapons capable of destroying urban cities. Three hundred million radical Muslims see the West as the "Great Satan." Mass starvation threatens large populations in Africa and India. Killer viruses like HIV, SARS, Ebola, MERS, and Covid-19 suck hope out of millions and threatened the lives of thousands elderly people. Innocent unborn babies are butchered like sausage in government protected death camps.

Sodomites beg to be married and to spread their Godless values in public schools. The "New World Order" seeks to usurp the sovereignty of the superpowers and bring them under the control of a one-world government. Pollution threatens the skies, lakes, soil, and water supplies needed by all. Madmen run the government overturning laws of life, redefining marriage, promoting same-sex unions, and immigrating millions of third-world people to established nations. It is a fearful age indeed!

2.5 Man's Dream

Since ancient times, men have dreamed of an ideal age. The Greeks pictured an ideal "politeo" based on philosophical principles. Marx envisioned an ideal age based on economic equality. Freud viewed utopia as unrestrained sexual fulfillment. Hitler tried to create the perfect race by eliminating the "unwants" from society. Modern politicians seek to reshape society into a humanistic utopian ideal by legislating thousands of new laws that abrogate human rights. Freedoms disappear faster than a morning mist. Perhaps John Lennon's song expresses what many dream today: a world with "no countries," "no religion," "no heaven," "no hell," "no possessions," and everyone "living for today," "with the world as one" (John Lennon, Imagine Meaning, 1971).

Plato: An ideal political state run by philosophical principles.

Freud: A society which put no restraints on sexual drives.

Marx: Redistribution of wealth: Rich . . . to the poor.

Hitler: Dominance of the blond, blue-eyed, white race.

Huxley: No hope . . . escape into the mystical ideal through drugs.

Amid the laughter and tears, men hope for something better than their present, mundane existence.

Dostoevsky expressed his hope this way:

I trust that the wounds will heal, the scars will vanish, that the sorry and ridiculous spectacle of Man's disagreements and clashes will disappear like a pitiful mirage, like the sordid invention of a puny, microscopic Euclidean, human brain, and that, in the end in the universal finale, at the moment universal harmony is achieved, something so magnificent will take place that it will satisfy every human heart, allay all indignation, pay for all human crimes, fro all the blood shed by men, and enable everyone not only to forgive everything but also to justify everything that has happened to men (Feodor Dostoyevsky, (1970). The Brothers Karamanzou, trans. A. R. MacAndrew. New York: Bantam Books. Quoted by Alison, p. 176).

2.6 The Biblical Hope

Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

The Christian faith expresses its hope in terms of the Kingdom of God. It looks forward to a day when men will know the Lord and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. That's deep and wide! The prophets of Israel preached about a day when God's rule would intervene in human history, disrupt all society, and usher in the dynamic, cataclysmic reign of a messiah (Daniel 2). This age would begin with a powerful, global judgment -- a separation of the wheat from the chaff . . . of the wicked from the righteous (Isaiah 24; Matthew 3:12).

The arrival of the kingdom would spawn an era unmatched in history: an age of peace (Isaiah 2:4), of righteousness and justice (Isaiah 9:6), of environmental transformation (Isaiah 11), of healing (Isaiah 35:3-7), and of unparalleled, universal blessing and prosperity (Isaiah 25:6-9). This is a Biblical hope and for this reason Christians throughout time have prayed, "Father, Thy Kingdom come."

But is this hope only a dream?

The key Biblical truth revealed to man is that history is not going in circles, but that it is moving towards the Kingdom of God.

Figure 1: The Kingdom and History



2.7 Importance of the Kingdom Gospel

After 1000 B.C., the revelation of the Kingdom of God was the main burden of Israel's prophets. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel, Malachi, Jeremiah looked with anticipation towards this event. Even as early as David, the Kingdom was understood (Psalm 72). Since it was the major message of the prophets it behooves the Christian to understand it.

Understanding John the Baptist's message depends on it.

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Understanding Christ's message depends on it.

Matthew. 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Understanding Philip's message depends on it.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Understanding Paul's message depends on it.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God.

Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

Acts 28:31 Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Understanding Peter depends on it.

2 Peter 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Understanding salvation depends on it. The Kingdom must be received: What is received: the church? Heaven? a place? One must receive the Kingdom; i.e., God's rule to enter into it.

Mark 10:15 "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it"

Understanding discipleship depends on it. The Kingdom must be placed first:

Matthew 6:33 Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.

What are believers to seek first? Heaven? The church? A place? A realm? Authority? Seeking first the Kingdom means to come under its power, its authority, and its commandments; that is, to seek to live under its authority and be influenced by the Kingdom now.

Understanding effective prayer depends on it. We are taught to pray,

Matthew 6:9 Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom (basileia) come . . ."

This prayer not only includes the entrance of the Kingdom of God into history, but the recognition of Kingdom reign of our Lord Jesus Christ now.

This is a rebel's prayer . . . the fight against dominion of evil. Jesus is the King of the Nations (Jeremiah 10:7) and our prayer is that men, presidents, congressmen, legislators, governors, and mayors would recognize His authority and surrender to it today. The Kingdom is good for all men and all man's institutions. May men acknowledge His law and obey it now! Every moral problem existing in society is the result of antonymous men rebelling against Kingdom authority (Psalm 2). Like sheep, we are all "going our own way"; that is, following our own law (Isaiah 53:6). Will men pledge allegiance to Christ or will they devote themselves to the flawed regimes of human governments—government that behave like little gods seeking to control us from cradle to grave?

The Kingdom, therefore, is the great hope of mankind; the center of Christian theology; the great subject of Christian prayer. **The Gospel of the Kingdom is the major message of the New Testament!** And, if the Kingdom of God is the major message of the prophets, the major message of John the Baptist, the major message of Jesus, the major message of Paul and the Apostles, then it behooves Christians to strain every gray cell to understand (stand under) the Kingdom of God.

2.8 A Morning Prayer: Thy Kingdom Come

Our precious Lord taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom Come." It is part of the Lord's Prayer a.k.a. the "Disciples' Prayer." Positively, it is a plea that all men and their institutions would surrender to be ruled by God's law; negatively, it is *coup de'etat* against godless authorities and de facto officials.

This is the rebel's prayer — a revolutionary's cry against the immorality of this age and the promotion of wickedness by men in rebellion against the Creator. This prayer is God's permission to resist evil, to take the high road, and swim against the current. It allows men to shout "No King, but King Jesus." It is permission to adopt the motto, "one nation under one God and one absolute law."

It is a prayer against the belief that man is god; that government is god; that man's law or their constitutions are absolute.

It is a prayer against the status quo where ambitious men seek to advance the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is a prayer against abortion, oppression, homosexuality, pornography, and greed.

It is a prayer against secularism, atheism, humanism, socialism, Marxism and every other “ism” wherein secularists seek to build a city where man is the measure of all things.

It is a prayer against rulers in rebellion against “the LORD and His Anointed”—against governments who seek to enslave and control men through coercion, intimidation, and fear.

It is a prayer against governments hostile to the maxim that the Bible is the Source of all Law; and, it is a prayer against governments that break their own laws.

It is a prayer against unjust laws and legislators “who do mischief through law” by creating a system of man-made statutes and codes that enslave their citizenry (Psalm 94:20); who seek to create a new world order through law; who promote alien laws that undermine the Ten Commandments and the virtues they advance: faithfulness, justice, and mercy.

It is a prayer against those who defraud others; against rulers that steal from the people through color of law; against unlawful taxation that transfers power from the family to the State.

If you are angry at godless politicians, this prayer is for you: “Lord, Thy kingdom Come!”

3 WHERE IS HISTORY HEADED?

Isaiah 2:1-5

With all of science's technology, one might think that mankind is improving with time. But, listening to the evening news is nothing but a report on the progress of crime and mayhem.

Reading the newspaper is no better. It's kind of like going to a cemetery and studying gravestones. There are daily reports of terrorist activities, international conflicts, local murders, and unending disputes between donkeys and elephants. It's totally depressing. Is there any good news? Where is history headed?

Every man has a dream about what an ideal society looks like. The Word of God describes its hope in terms of the kingdom of God.

The term "kingdom of God" is not in the Old Testament, but its footprints are everywhere. The word "kingdom" is *malquw* in Hebrew and *basilea* in Greek. Both cases refer to a rule and jurisdiction of a king. When Isaiah says, "Thy God reigneth," he is referencing God's kingdom.

History is not cyclical, nor is it going around in circles. The Scripture informs us that the *terminus ad quem* of history is the kingdom of God. God's kingdom program was the major message of Isaiah, of John the Baptist, of Christ, of Philip the evangelist, and of Paul, Peter, and John (Isaiah 2, 65; Matthew 1-12; 4:17; Acts 8;12; Acts 28:, 23, 31; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 1:9, 12:10, 16:10, 17:12, 17).

Isaiah 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Isaiah begins his ministry informing his listeners of the prophetic "word" (hadavar) he received regarding the final outcome of God's work in Judah and Jerusalem. Things were in such a state of decay, spiritual optimism in Jerusalem was as rare as a smile on seaman apprentice. But, God constructed a lighthouse so His nation could sail their vessel around the rocky shores of the Levant on the turbulent sea of politics.

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Last days: The “last days” is a prophetic marker taking us to the final chapter of history. The “mountain of the Lord” refers to the temple multiplex. The temple area was not only a religious center but the seat of Israel’s government.

What Washington D.C. is to Americans, Jerusalem was to the Hebrew people. There, the king met with his cabinet to conduct their civil ministerial duties. YHWH was not only Israel’s Savior, but Israel’s Lawgiver, Judge, and King.

His throne was called the “Ark of the Covenant” in the holy of holies. Israel’s earthly king, a servant of YHWH, met with Israel’s leaders a few meters from the temple proper to administrate the affairs of state; that is, they were compelled to perform government duties under the eye of God.

The mountain: Jerusalem is a city surrounded by hills. While Mt. Zion was the center of the nation’s concerns, it was an insignificant actor in the theater of international politics. God’s work has always played second fiddle in the screeching band conducted by heads of state. But, here Israel’s King conducts the orchestra. In the last days, the mountain of the Lord will be the headquarters of a Christo-centric world government to the delight of all.

While the temple mount was where priests conducted the ministry of reconciliation¹, the emphasis here is upon international relationships and protecting their borders. Isaiah informs us that the apex for international development will be the LORD’s Mountain. Like the United Nations in New York, a day is coming where Jerusalem will be the place where nations will assemble to negotiate their business – not today’s carnal Jerusalem, but the seat of government represented by Heavenly Jerusalem.

Isaiah sees thousands of pilgrims from all the nations streaming to this city of justice to consult the LORD and to work out their conflicts under the light of God’s Law-order.

¹ Keep in mind the temple complex was heavily guarded by Levitical armed guards, an army of warrior priests; this civil / religious center was not an amusement part. The work was serious, and heavily policed.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

The expression “mountain of the LORD” is Mt. Zion on which the temple was constructed. The term “house” is a reference to the temple. Solomon’s temple was the dwelling place of the “God of Jacob,” a title expressing grace and kindness.

Can you imagine a time when men will delight in going to church to hear sermons on the Word of God . . . on God and Government? Isaiah shows us that day. “Many people” refers to a mass movement where the international community will invite people to go to Jerusalem to learn about God’s law-order. The word “come” is an imperative. It is an invitation term. The people of the nations are bursting with optimism and assurance that answers to their political dilemmas are in Jerusalem. “His ways” and “His paths” are a reference to God’s law-order; that is, civil rulers will learn how to govern by God’s law and not plunge into the wave and surf of legal mischief (Psalms 94:20).

To the original readers, the temple was the center of national life.

In the Christian era, the church is the temple of the Lord – a spiritual construction which is totally superior to the bricks and stones of that ancient house (Ephesians 2:12ff).

Isaiah saw a time when devoted men would encourage rulers and politicians, friends and neighbors, to seek the Lord God and to learn his ways. The major course at Jerusalem University will be law and justice, not how to experience the warm fuzzies. “Think not that I have come to destroy the law,” stated Jesus. The graduates at this institution will be experts on love, for “love is a fulfillment of law” (Romans 8:13).

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

In his vision, Isaiah sees Israel’s Lawgiver governing international affairs. On that day, rulers will take orders from the *King of the Nations* (Jeremiah 10:7). There will be one law order. Governments will be forced to expunge idolatrous man-made statutes based on the slimy values of cultural warriors and govern according to the law of the LORD God. Since every nation adopts one God, one law, and One Source of law, harmony prevails! Peace reigns!

The image of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks suggests closure of the military industrial complex. West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy will shut their doors. Cadets will no longer learn war and prepare for military careers. Rather, the bravest and brightest will master skills where peace and goodwill come to men through Jesus Christ.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Since this is what the future holds and where history is headed, Isaiah invites his own people living under the midnight of political chaos to walk by the starlight of God's law.

Let us take courage that our service to God, whether it be sweeping kitchen floors or teaching a Sunday school class or holding a sign at some abortion clinic is not in vain. Every brick laid contributes to God's grand program known as the kingdom of God. We can't build the kingdom because its growth is of God (Mark 4:26-29). But, we can live in light of it.

Source: Stockton (2015). "Towards Exegetical Eschatology,"©

4 THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM

4.1 Good News of the Kingdom

An appreciation for the Kingdom can only be enjoyed against the backdrop of the New Testament and the explosion of the gospel in the Roman amphitheater during the first century.

For centuries, the voice of prophecy remained silent. Four hundred years passed since Malachi's message to the nation. No prophet appeared in Israel saying, "Thus saith the Lord." The silence was baffling . . . confusing . . . even disturbing. Roman legions patrolled the roads and commercial centers of Israel. No prophet appeared to condemn the pagan occupation or call Israel to national repentance. Had God forgotten His people?

Religious dogma explained by the nation's lawyers and rabbis replaced the light of prophecy which interpreted God's will in terms of external obedience to the Torah. Engaged in the routines of commerce and politics of the day, the Sadducees and Pharisees impacted the culture -- not with power and freedom, but with rigid law enforcement by the powerful over the powerless. Legislating from the top down, these legislators controlled religion and politics. Like today, the nation had its tight-fisted, right-wing conservatives, and its loony-left liberals. Merchants bedded with Rome's appointed governors (the Herodians), and militants stirred up dissension to nibble at Rome's tyrannical rule over the nation. To knife a Roman sympathizer was to strike a blow for the kingdom of God.

The Qumran Sect placed their hopes in the apocalyptic presumption of the nation which appeared in pseudepigraphic form during the Four Hundred Silent Years. Adherents believed they were "the sons of light," and that the angels were going to descend from heaven to help the defeat the "sons of darkness." These reclusive, male celibates dutifully studied and translated the writings of the prophets. Like monks in the Middle Ages, they remained aloof from the politics. The sect had no message for Israel; no condemnation of Israel's sin; no remedy for Roman occupation. They simply self-isolated themselves in the Jordanian dessert. Huddled together in a form of piety, they enforced monastic disciplines among their own members. They assumed no duty and had no interest in preparing the nation for what they perceived to be the "end-times."

Raw from the irritation of Roman rule which displaced God's law, lax Roman morality, and cruel oppression, the people longed for a word from God . . . for deliverance from political despotism, and for the Kingdom promised to them through their prophets.

When John the Baptist matured, he disappeared into the desert to commune with the God and to consider the LORD's will for his time. Then the word of God came to John in the wilderness (Luke 3:2). Dressed in the attire of a prophet combined with a leather belt, John preached a message consistent with the words of Isaiah, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths" (Isaiah 40:3) . . . "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). All flesh "shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). To John, the Kingdom is coming. It is just around the corner. God is getting ready to separate the wheat from the chaff. He is going to gather His wheat into his granary and set fire to the chaff. Repent!!

When the ruling officials of Israel appeared, John queried them, "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7-10). To John, the time had come for God to judge the wicked with fire, and to pour out his Holy Spirit on the earth and men. Regeneration and resurrection were clearly in John's view. The end of the ages had come. In John's mind the dynamic entrance of the Kingdom into history would disrupt society and bring history to its sudden conclusion. "*Get prepared,*" John demanded. *Repentance and conversion are necessary to enter the messianic age.*

As announced by the prophets, two aspects of the Kingdom loomed over Israel – judgment and salvation. Herod murdered John for the seer's narrow definition of marriage and for exposing Herod's second marriage to his sister-in-law as adultery. But, John never saw the consummation of what He proclaimed.

After Herod imprisoned John, Jesus confirmed John's message by preaching, "The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God** is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). No more predictions! Fulfillment of the OT promises was upon the nation. The hope of salvation appeared and the messianic age had arrived in history.

What the prophets had predicted was in some way being fulfilled in and through the ministry of Christ. Jesus pronounced "woes" upon the Jewish scribes and lawyers (Matthew 23)—a form of judgment. He sought the lost (Luke 19:10), and instructed the nation on the necessity of conversion (Matthew 18:3; John 3:3-5). And, Jesus' miracles credentialed his claims. But, like John, Jesus was executed . . . and the "end of history" did not appear. Were both of them wrong?

Fifty days after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the defeated, fragile, disciples announced they had received a power from God; that the age of the Spirit was upon them, that God was offering salvation to all who would repent and believe the gospel (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Thousands responded.

In the midst of hostile rulers and perilous times, the apostles announced salvic blessings (forgiveness and eternal life) to all who would repent and believe their gospel. The message burst through the borders of Israel. Samaritans were transformed by the message which could be summed up under the caption, "The Kingdom of God" (Acts 8:12). By 62 A.D., hundreds of communities cropped up over the Roman Empire testifying that the salvic powers of the messianic age was upon them.

So powerful was the apostolic message, their adversaries accused them of "*turning the world upside down*" and promoting another king, King Jesus (Acts 17:6).

And, what was this message? Luke described it as, “persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God,” testifying to “the Kingdom of God,” and “preaching the Kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12, 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:31).

So powerful was the spread of the kingdom gospel, it did what no other religious message has ever done. It transformed much of the Roman Empire, defeated its humanistic cosmologies, challenged its morality, and cleansed its political structures. Though the conquest was not absolute or faultless, kingdom hope became the dominant religious force in the Empire.

Unlike Islam which won nations through the power of the sword, the Kingdom gospel conquered the known world without bloodshed or assassinations. How do we account for this historical phenomenon? It can only be accounted for by the power of the message and the Spirit of the messianic age that descended upon those who believed its message.

Furthermore, think of all the good that gospel proclamation has done around the world. Without Kingdom proclamation, there would be no Catholic monasteries, St. Mary’s or St. Joseph hospitals, Presbyterian or Methodists’ hospitals, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Samaritan’s Purse, Gospel Rescue Missions, Yale or Princeton, missionary societies, Compassion International, Lutheran World Relief, Children’s Hunger Fund, Catholic Relief Services, Food for the Poor, or Christian schools. Howbeit imperfect, think of what the Puritans accomplished in bringing the Puritan Ethic to America. It was Christians who first launched the antislavery movement . . . and the list could go on and on.

4.2 Bad News in Kingdom Practice

Not only has Kingdom proclamation produced so much good in history, its misinterpretation and misapplications aroused hostility in many.

4.3 Lyndon B. Johnson

During the 1950’s, there was an explosion in the growth and activity of the church in America. Still breathing fumes from the death camps of WWII and engaged in a miscreant Korean War, pastors in Texas and the South denounced the radical liberal policies of Lyndon B. Johnson, a Kabbalist Jew, who secretly hated Christians. Surreptitiously, by offering churches a “tax exempt” status, Johnson enslaved congregations under his 501 (c) 3 re-organization plan (1954). Even though churches were already tax exempt by Divine Right as protected by the First Amendment, Johnson was able to pillow the churches as a political force. His goal was never “tax exemption” as much as it was to silence pastors preaching political, anti-government, anti-Johnson sermons from their pulpit. Johnson’s legislation had a chilling effect upon American politics. Kingdom preaching as a cleansing agent for corruption in American politics came to an end. In its place came eschatological, end-time preaching. Seeing the Second Coming as the only hope to reverse the effects of atheism and humanism, Christians withdrew from politics.

Kingdom theology shifted. Instead of praying, “Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” Christians began to interpret the Lord’s Prayer as, “Thy millennial Kingdom come now to save us because Thy will cannot be done on earth!!” No longer did the majority of Christians seek the Kingdom as a viable force. The church retreated to pietism² to secretly live out a life of private holiness. Private religion replaced Public religion.

4.4 Ruby Ridge

He read the book, “The Late Great Planet Earth” by Hal Lindsey, and became convinced he was in the “last days” . . . and that the world was coming to an end. Randy Weaver moved his family to the mountainous panhandle of Idaho. Convinced the government was totally corrupt, Randy became a Christian survivalists scrounging out an existence on top of a mountain as far away from government as possible. They paid \$7,500 for fifteen acres and began making plans for a rough cabin. Convinced the rapture was near and the tribulation period was upon the nation, Randy’s family became doomsday preppers, homeschooled their children, and avoided statist determined to enslave every man to the will of the state. Randy wanted nothing to do with mainstream American life, or its imperialistic government. He linked the Zionists to the Illuminati, Masons, and the Trilateral Commission. He developed a 300 yard perimeter around his land called the “kill zone.” The home, surrounded by boulders, was perfect for “defenses” against the totalitarian military police state.

Randy and his wife made both friends and enemies. His family practiced firing off rounds of ammunition as if they were preparing for a military conflict. Some neighbors objected, and reported them to authorities. Secret service agents arrived, and what happened next is a scene from hell. The government developed a smear campaign and portrayed Randy as right-wing, racist, gun-tottin’ member of the Aryan Nation hell-bent on starting a war against the United States. All of it false!

Because Randy was hard up for money, he traded two sawed off shotguns for cash to feed his family. The BATF targeted Randy for destruction. Three county sheriffs surprised Randy and arrested him at gunpoint, but released him on an unsecured \$10,00 bond. His wife, Vicky disputed the warrantless arrest to the Attorney General for Idaho addressing the letter to the “Servant of the Queen of Babylon” while defiantly assuring the government tyrant “we will not surrender to your evil commandments . . . whether we live or die.” When Randy did not show up for his court hearing, the U.S. Marshal called in the Special Operations Group (SOG), an elite para-military force designed to exterminate enemies of the government. Their target? The Randy Weaver family!! What happened next is bloody history. The arrogant agents frothing with eagerness to show off their sniper skills initiated the shootout at Ruby Ridge murdering

² Pietism in the good sense is the pursuit of devotion to Christ and a life of holiness. In a bad sense, it involves a subset of religious presumptions and isolationism.

Randy's dog, shooting Sammy Weaver in the back, wounded Randy with a bullet in the arm, and splattering Vicky Weaver brains over the cabin while she was holding her baby. In the debacle, Randy fired back. A government agent was killed. Negotiations ensued, and Randy Weaver was taken into custody and charged with willfully and recklessly murdering a government agent.

At the begging of the trial, Gerry Spence said *this is a trial about murder—the only trouble is, the real murderers are not on trial*. Facing the full force of the United States corrupt justice system with its unlimited war chest, Randy Weaver was amazingly declared “not guilty” and eventually received a civil settlement from the government for several million dollars.

Reading the skewed end-time views of Hal Lindsey's Kingdom theology ended in death for the Randy Weaver family (Linder, 2010). Randy Weaver is clearly not to blame for the deaths on his property. The blame certainly falls on the unhinged, overzealous government snipers. The government murdered members of Randy's family. Clearly, however, Randy and his wife responded to the eschatological frenzy of his day with a “fortress” mentality and by withdrawing from society—a response not encouraged by Kingdom citizens. This case involved a confrontation with the totalitarian State.

4.5 The Waco Debacle

The Branch Davidians are an offshoot of the Seventh Day Adventists. As David Koresh read the *The Late Great Planet Earth*, his heart swelled with an interest and passion for eschatology. Premillennial futurism and the belief that Armageddon was “around the corner” gripped the minds of these people. Studies on the Second Coming of Christ and the Book of Revelation dominated the lectures by Koresh to his flock. Koresh and his followers lived at Mount Carmel near Waco, Texas. Half of the residents were foreign nationals from Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. The First Amendment allows people to create retreat centers to study the Scripture. Clearly, the Branch Davidians were harmless and within their rights.

The study of the Branch Davidians is not so much a study on what went wrong with the people at Waco as it is about what went wrong with the feminist led government of statist Janet Reno and how far the government will go to strip people of their God-given rights. The government marginalized the Branch Davidians and slandered them in the eyes of the public as being a fringe “lunatic cult.” Dehumanizing them, the government announced to the world that they were a “dangerous cult group.” A public relations disaster, the FBI escalated the tension between Koresh and the State. With malice of forethought, the government launched a psych-ops campaign against the Branch Davidians accusing Koresh of adultery, child molestation, gun running, and other despicable acts. None of it true. Slander is a well-worn tool used by the State to hide malfeasance of State officers. The accusation was a smear campaign by the DOJ, the BATF, and FBI to justify their grisly intentions to murder the innocent Branch Davidians and to squash their religious rights. Hundreds of agents eager for action descended on Waco. Tanks and snipers were employed. Janet Reno ordered the assault on the compound with guns and incendiary devices, and the result was the tragic deaths of so many Branch Davidians. Among the 82 killed were 22 minor

children and 2 pre-born babies. Of the 58 adults, 32 were women. Within their God-given rights, male members of the Branch Davidians nobly defended their women and children with the few weapons they possessed on the compound against the snipers. Yes, they shot back! This is what men do: protect their families!! With millions to spend and with the help of the fawning liberal media loyal to President Clinton, the government vigorously defended their inexcusable murderous assault on this “dangerous, religious, end-times, doomsday fringe cult.” For a legal analysis of this fiasco, see Peter Kershaw’s article, “Is Your Church BATF Approved?” (Kershaw, 2005).

The Branch Davidians are clearly not to blame for the tragic results at Waco!! Only to point out, that theology impacts people—whether it be right or wrong. In this case, end-times theology reached all the way to the White House even interrupting the sexual escapades of womanizer Bill Clinton.

4.6 Prognosticators

The interest among Christians about the end times created a market for prognosticators. Tim LaHaye’s *Left Behind Series*, published in 1995, sold over 75 million copies, \$650 million in sales. Every time there is a burp in the Middle East, some dispensationalist writes a book and the Christians gobble it up like starving dogs. Books on the rapture and Armageddon are big business. Many of these books sell in the millions. Though lacking in serious scholarship, these speculators attract huge audiences. The negativity among Christians is at an all-time high. Doomsday preppers abound. Christians abandoned human institutions to the enemy and proclaimed the death of God in politics.

The Kingdom of God is about salvation, power, and hope. A Biblical perspective can correct the madness of our age . . . but it can also stir tensions. When Paul preached the Kingdom of God and taught that there was another King besides Caesar, the freakazoids at Thessalonica stirred up the city officials. The officials, believing the worse, organized a Greek S.W.A.T. team to search out and destroy Team Paul. Government officials have little tolerance for non-conformists and those who adhere to God’s laws in preference to man-made codes and statutes (Acts 17:1-6).

5 KINGDOM PERPLEXITY

5.1 Historical Background to Kingdom Studies

Middle Ages: During the Middle Ages, people did not own a personal Bible. Ecclesiastical leaders used the Bible to advance church dogma; and, church tradition was used to interpret the Bible. Thus, the Gospel of the Kingdom was usually identified with the church. Forms of postmillennialism prevailed, and Christians saw Europe as the Kingdom of God. The great calamity of the Medieval Period was that church tradition usurped authority over the Bible.

Figure 2: Authority during the Middle Ages

Highest Authority	Church Dogma
Other Authorities	Bible, Nature, Man, Tradition, Law

The Reformation: The reformers reacted to the apotheosis of church tradition above the Scriptures and sought to return to a theology based on the Bible alone. Out of the reformation a system of Biblical Dogmatics sprouted from the soil of *sola scriptural, sola gracia, and sola fide*. The emphasis led to a study of the original languages, the role of history, and to compilations of Biblical, systematic theology.

However, the reformers sense of history was imperfect. Moreover they were unable to think through every Biblical doctrine and to properly systematize it. The triumph of the Reformation is the reformers accepted the Bible as it is—the sure Word of God.

Figure 3: Authority during the Reformation

Highest Authority	Bible
Other Authorities	Church, Nature, Man, Tradition, Law, Government

The Enlightenment: Over time, the Bible was used to reinforce dogma and the progress of history became subordinate to dogmatics. The result was **orthodox scholasticism**—a process where history was lost in church doctrine. Separation of Scripture from the progress of history left a void in Europe. Books abounded, and new intellectuals had an appetite for philosophy and history—a period known as **the Enlightenment**.

During this period, Bible study was freed from ecclesiastical and theological controls. However, the Bible was looked at as a product of history and became subordinate to human reason. Skepticism, atheism, humanism, and theism multiplied. The rise of rationalism led to skepticism about Biblical miracles and history contained in the Bible. New on the scene of academia came the naturalists and the development of the historical method of criticism. The Bible was no longer viewed as work of God but a work of man. The Bible was no longer studied as the Word of God, but as a book containing the word of God (Karl Barth). Bible study became a study of the history of religious thought. “Religious studies” included the Bible as a source of religion, but was treated as any other piece of literature. The emergence of higher criticism and the Tubigen Schools of Rationalism unraveled the progress of the Reformers and nearly destroyed the authority of Scripture in the minds of the people. When the cults of chaos reared their ugly heads, the Holy Bible became subordinate to human reason and presumption.

Figure 4: Authority in the Enlightenment



Conservatives reacted to the trend to treat the Bible as the word of man. In the 1830’s America, the liberal north plunged into historical criticism, literary criticism, and the Tubigen School of Rationalism. The result was Unitarianism, liberalism, and humanism.

The southern Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians pleaded with their northern churches to reject literary criticism and to treat the Bible as the Word of God and to return to their Biblical roots. But, the northern churches, basking in intellectual arrogance, refused rationale pleas of Godly intellectuals and broke away from their southern brethren (1830s). Every major denomination was split. Thus, you have the northern Baptist, northern Methodists, and northern Presbyterians. The southern Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians fiercely adhered to the authority of Scripture and became known as the “Bible Belt.”

Not long, thereafter, the nation was embroiled in a civil war (1860s)—the War of Northern Aggression, wherein, the Federalist, Unitarian, liberal north sought the total subjugation of the total man to total government. The nation was fractured religiously, then politically, and now culturally. Within sixty years,

liberals launched a war against Fundamentalism subordinating the Bible to human reason. By the 1920s, the northern churches fired conservative pastors and replaced them with liberals holding to the Tubigen schools of literary criticism a/k/a the Jullian Wellhausen School of Higher Criticism. Not only was Biblical theology lost, Kingdom theology was buried in the debris. Soon thereafter, the “God is Dead” Movements sprang from the coffins of Christianity in Europe. Spiritually exhausted, communists came to power and soon the whole world was embroiled in a bitter world wars (WWI; WWII).

Figure 5: Authority in Liberalism

Highest Authority	Man, Reason, Government, Statutes
Other Authorities	Nature, Bible, Church, Tradition,

Back to the Bible Movement: Having lost their pulpits, conservatives started new churches based on the belief that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. Fundamentalism flourished. By the 1970s, liberal churches were in serious decline and Bible-based churches clawed and scratched their way onto the American landscape preaching the gospel of salvation and the Bible as the sure Word of God. Conservative churches exploded with growth across America challenging the immorality, liberalism, humanism, and secularism which intoxicated mainstream culture.

At the same time, however, President Roosevelt stacked the Supreme Court with liberal judges. The traitors ruled against freedom of speech declaring the prayer, Bible reading, and the posting of the Ten Commandments unconstitutional. What? With the help of the atheist de-educator John Dewey, Public school students became public fools. Graduates couldn’t even read their own diploma.

Figure 6: Authority in Fundamentalism

Highest Authority	Bible
Other Authorities	Reason, Nature, Church, Tradition, Law, Government

Doomsday Fever: After WWII and the “return of the Jews” to the Palestine (1948), there was a revival in the interest of eschatology and the Kingdom of God. With endless wars, the “end of the world” seemed near. Millions of people became Christians just by hearing a message on the second coming of Christ or the coming tribulation. Hundreds of books were written on the Rapture and millions of dollars were made from the sale of these paperbacks. Christians hungered for knowledge about when the world was going to end. Dispensational prophetic radio teachers gave weekly updates on their prophetic time table. When Hal Lindsey and other end-time preachers predicted that Christ would return within 40 years of Israel

becoming a nation, doomsday fever infested the hippie generation. Zionism roared. The “end of the world” was near.

A.D. 1910 *C.I. Scofield, basing his theology upon Darbyism, was writing the notes for his Scofield Bible which advocated an “anytime” coming of Christ from a “secret rapture,” Premillennial view of Scripture. In 1967, Oxford Zionists rewrote Scofield’s notes to prejudice Christians into supporting the modern “other” Israel.*

A.D. 1917 *As WWI engulfed Europe and America, apocalypticism raised the fever of the church. End-of-the-world prophetic schemes were formulated and preached throughout America and Europe.*

A.D. 1917 *In Fatima, Portugal, Catholics reported three visitation of Virgin Mary which unveiled the horrors of WWI, WWII, the rise of Communist Russia, its conversion to Christianity, and predicted the fiery end to the world. The Vatican kept this vision secret lest it cause a world-wide panic.*

A.D. 1926 *Evangelist, Oswald J. Smith, wrote his book, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?**

A.D. 1948 *Following the White Papers and Belford Declaration, Israel declared itself a nation. This single fact of history ignited dispensational beliefs that the “generation” spoken of in Matthew 24 was this generation and that Christ would come within 40 years; that is, by 1988.*

A.D. 1958 *Having completed his dissertation, Dwight Pentecost, a leading dispensationalist, wrote his book, *Things to Come*. His work was the product of eschatological excitement surrounding Israel becoming a nation.*

A.D. 1970s *Hal Lindsey, a dispensationalist, wrote his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* and popularized the dispensational scheme. Lindsey’s message was packaged to young college students through *Campus Crusade for Christ*. He warned Christians, based on Israel’s emergence as a nation in 1948, to not make plans beyond 1985. A best seller, the 60s kids were caught up in an apocalyptic frenzy. While the hippies were making love, evangelical Christians were “forsaking all” and preaching a gospel centered around the return of Christ.*

A.D. 1974 *Leading dispensationalist, John Walvoord, wrote his work, *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis* with a subscript, *What the Bible says about the future of the Middle East and end of the Western civilization*.*

A.D. 1978 *“The world must end within one generation from the birth of the state of Israel. Any opinion of world affairs that does not dovetail with this prophecy is*

dismissed,” said Gary Wilburn, (“The Doomsday Chic,” Christianity Today, 1/27/78, p. 22). This belief saturated evangelical Christianity and is still the dominate view among Christians at the time of this writing.

A.D. 1978 *Salem Kirban, developing his end-day scheme, from a premillennial, “secret rapture” view of Revelation taught that the Antichrist was alive and living somewhere in Europe, or was that the United States?*

A.D. 1978 *Pastor Chuck Smith, a resident of California, wrote his book, Future Survival. Convinced He was in the end times, he led his church to believe that Christ must return before 1981.*

A.D. 1980 *Hal Lindsey wrote a second work, the 1980’s, Countdown to Armageddon. Lindsey taught that his generation was the “generation” mentioned in Matthew 24, and that they would live to see the Coming of Christ. He has sensed revised his view of a generation from 40 years, to 60 years, to maybe even a 100 years.*

A.D. 1982 *Leading dispensationalist, Charles C. Ryrie, wrote his book, The Final Countdown, with the subscript, God’s blueprint for future events.*

A.D. 1985 *Dispensationalist Rob Lindsted wrote his work, The Next Move. Basing his model upon pre-captivity promises about Israel’s return to the land, Lindsted led his audience to believe that the political landscape supposedly predicted by the prophets were upon them.*

A.D. 1988 *Edgar C. Whisenat, a retired NASA rocket engineer and prophecy teacher, circulated his book, 88 Reasons Why the Rapure Will Be in 1988. The next year he wrote his book, 89 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1989 because Christ did not return in 1988.*

A.D. 1989 *Prophecy teacher, Marvin Rosenthal, lost his job as editor of Israel My Glory because he changed his doctrinal position from pretribulation rapture position to a post tribulation position. In 1990, he released his work, The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church, with a subscript, A new understanding of the Rapture, the Tribulation, and the Second Coming.*

A.D. 1990 *Walvoord re-releases his book, Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis with a subscript, What the Bible says about the future of the Middle East and the End of the Western civilization.*

A.D. 1991 *Influenced by the War in Iraq, dispensationalist Charles Dyer released his work, The Rise of Babylon: Sign of the End Times. Basing his work upon the “double*

reference” theory, Dyer announced that Saddam Hussein was rebuilding the ancient city of Babylon to fulfill a supposed prophecy about Babylon from Revelation.

A.D. 1992 *Pastor Lee Jan Rim, Seoul, South Korea, put out his sign, Rapture Oct 28 '92, Jesus is Coming. Don't Receive the 666 Mark. Later, he was sentenced to a two year jail term for defrauding his members of \$4 million dollars.*

A.D. 1999 *Prophecy teachers went wild in the Y-2K panic. Convinced the computer chip would blow up satellites, water systems, and power grids, many Christians stocked up a year's supply of food and water.*

A.D. 2001 *After September 11, 2001, having seen the twin towers crumble to the ground, prophecy teachers are again stirring up dust and predicting that the “birth pains” are upon us.*

A.D. 2002 *Time Magazine, July 1, 2002 issued their weekly publication entitled, “The Bible & the Apocalypse” with a subtitle, “Why more Americans are reading and talking about THE END OF THE WORLD.” According to Time the Left Behind Series sold over 7,000,000 copies.*

A.D. 2008 *Ronald Weinland, Church of God, writes 2008 God's Final Witness, wherein he states “The year 2008 marked the last of God's warnings to mankind and the beginning in a countdown of the final three and one-half years of man's self-rule that will end by May 27, 2012. On December 14, 2008, the First Trumpet of the Seventh Seal of the Book of Revelation sounded, which announced the beginning collapse of the economy of the United States and great destruction that will follow.”*

A.D. 2011 *Following the Japanese earthquakes and nuclear disaster in March, 2011, Fox News reports that Franklin predicts we are in the end times and that the end of the world is near. Jack Hook, prophecy teacher, <http://www.babylonthegreatisfalling.net> says “This disaster in Japan has all the markings of a warning from God. Furthermore, he is beginning to lift his restraining hand of power against the fallen angels who rule over nations, allowing evil to multiply at a greater rate. This is clearly proven by the legalization of abortion and now homosexual marriage in various places. This is the generation which will witness the judgment of God upon the nations and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

A.D. 2011 *The end of the world is nigh; 21 May, to be precise. That's the date when Harold Camping, a preacher from Oakland, California, is confidently predicting the Second Coming of the Lord. At about 6pm, he reckons 2 per cent of the world's population will be immediately “raptured” to Heaven; the rest of us will get sent straight to the Other Place. (Reported by the Independent, March 27, 2011).*

Revival in Kingdom Studies: A cloud hung over Kingdom theology and there was little agreement as to what is or was the Kingdom of God. When doomsday fever reached its peak in the 1960s-1980s and apocalyptic predictions failed (Christ did not return in 1988), progressive dispensationalists began to question their eschatology and their dispensational underpinnings (Blaising, Bock, Hoch, Saucy, Glenny, and others). Thus, this author began his own search for the truth regarding the Kingdom of God and the task of trying to unravel the tangles in this knotted ball of theological yarn.

5.2 Various Theological Perspectives on the Kingdom of God

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) identified the Kingdom as the church, and the church's mission as a Christian duty to transform the world into the Kingdom of God using political power. At first, he asserted a natural interpretation of the Kingdom of God, but came to reject the earthly nature of a millennial reign in favor of the view that the Kingdom is realized in the hearts of men as the believing souls share the life of Christ and reign with Him. He was the first to teach that the Catholic Church was the Kingdom of Christ and the City of God. Following Augustine, the medieval church identified the Kingdom with the ecclesiastical system and banished the Augustine's millennial interpretation from its dogmatic theology (Ladd, 1952, p. 24).

Figure 7: The Kingdom as the Church



Adolf Von Harnack (1851-1930) moralized the Kingdom and took the subjective approach (old liberal view). He related the Kingdom to the human spirit, its relationship to God, and the inner power of the soul. The kingdom was a *subjective experience*. He rejected the eschatology of the gospels and considered them a product of the eschatological imagination of the NT Church. To Harnack, eschatology was the husk and not the kernel of Jesus' teaching.

Figure 8: The Kingdom within Man



Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) said the Kingdom of God “is the unity of humanity organized according to love” (Quoted by Grenz & Olson, p. 55)³. Sin, therefore, is the opposite of the Kingdom. Salvation is the full fruition of the Kingdom of God activated on earth through love and “the association of men for reciprocal and common action from the motive of love” (quoted by Ladd, 1952,p. 25). **He changed the Kingdom from the reign of God to an ethical principle.** Ritschlian Theology ignored the dynamic intervention of God into history and eschatological aspect of the Kingdom in the New Testament. He took a non-eschatological view of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, Ritschl introduced the Kingdom as a principle at work in history and laid the foundation for the great social impetus of the church (Ritschl, 1982, p. 12)

Figure 9: The Kingdom as an Ethical Principle



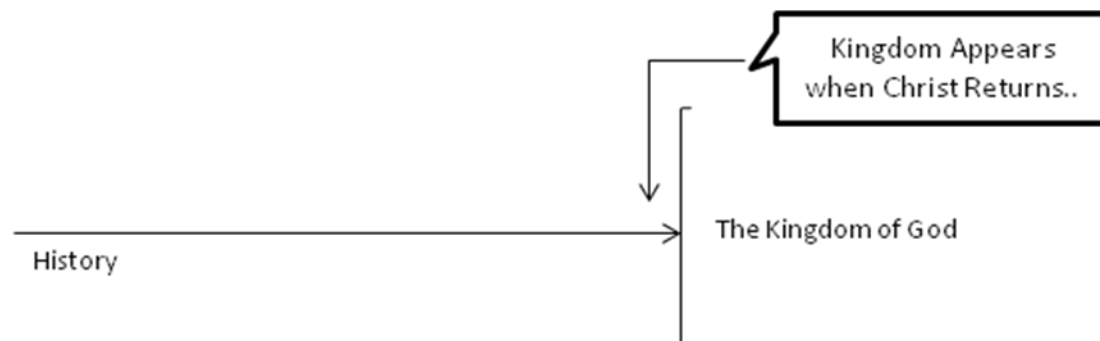
Johannes Weiss (1863-1914) in his pioneer work, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, in 1892 formulated his insight as follows:

‘The Kingdom of God is in Jesus’ view an absolutely supra-worldly factor which stands in exclusive contrast to this world. . . . The ethico-religious use of this concept in recent theology, which wholly strips it of its original eschatological and apocalyptic sense, is

*unjustified. It is only seemingly biblical, for it uses the expression in a different sense from Jesus.*⁴

Weiss published a little booklet called “The Preaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God” and viewed Jesus’ Kingdom proclamation as something altogether future, something to appear when Jesus returns. To Weiss, Jesus’ kingdom kerygma was purely religious, not ethical; purely a future expectation, and not present in history. To Weiss, the eschatological content of the gospels were not the husk but the kernel of Jesus’ teachings. Jesus believed that he would become the Son of Man, if not in His life time, after his death (Johanne Weiss, 1871, Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Trans. R. H. Hiers & D.L. Holland. Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

Figure 10: The Kingdom as the Goal of History



Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) took an apocalyptic approach, which is called “consistent eschatology.” He recognized that the liberal view was simply subjective bias and not the result of sound historical analysis. He agreed with Weiss that the eschatological Kingdom teaching was not the husk, but the kernel of Jesus’ teaching. The key verse Schweitzer struggled with was “*There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom*” (Matthew 16:28). Since the eschatological Kingdom did not appear, Schweitzer concluded that Jesus was a deluded fanatic that related the Kingdom totally to an apocalyptic event at the end of history where a new heavenly order would take place. In Schweitzer’s eyes, the Kingdom is in no sense operational today. To Schweitzer, Jesus was deceived about the Kingdom coming in his day (Schweitzer, 1954, p. 368-69).

C. H. Dodd (1884-1973), the Cambridge scholar, vigorously disagreed with Schweitzer and took an opposite position from him whereby he asserted a position that biblical eschatology was completely realized in Christ. To Dodd, the Christ-event was “*realized eschatology.*” He saw the Kingdom as “the ‘wholly other’ which entered into time and space in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.” To Dodd, *the KOG was not totally futuristic but a present reality in the ministry of Christ.* Jesus brought in the Kingdom.

⁴ J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, Ruprecht, 1892, pp. 49f; zweite, Auflage, 1900.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was an eschatological event. In Jesus, the Kingdom was inaugurated.

Oscar Cullman (1922-1999) saw the Kingdom as both present and future. Cullman penned his work, Christ and Time (1950), and advocated both elements in his thesis. To Cullman, the Eschaton arrived in the person and ministry of Christ in an already-form, but it was not to be completed until the not-yet of the *Parousia*. **The phrase “already, not yet” came from Cullman.** His view became the foundation for “realized eschatology.”

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) took an existential approach to the Kingdom and perceived the moment of decision for Christ as an eschatological experience that created authentic existence (Existential Eschatology⁵).

To Bultmann, realized eschatology was an issue of the heart (subjectivism), not an historical reality in the person and ministry of Christ. Bultmann stripped the Kingdom of its apocalyptic mythology in favor of human decision and transformation here and now (Bultmann, 1951).

Following Bultmann, others identified the Kingdom as synonymous with heaven . . . or the realm of human heart . . . or the salvation experience . . . or some power within man. . . or the pattern for an ideal society . . . or heaven.

Classical dispensationalists (CDs) identify the Kingdom as a form of the Davidic Kingdom. That is, John and Jesus proclaimed a geo-political Kingdom that was offered, rejected, and then postponed. Walvoord retained this view. Classical dispensationalism expressed the Kingdom in a central dualism: the Kingdom of heaven (the Davidic, earthly rule), and the Kingdom of God (Blaising & Block, 1993).

C. I. Scofield (1909, 1917) saw the Kingdom as a mystery -- a form of corrupted Christendom. The Kingdom of Heaven was leavened; i.e., the leaven represented the infiltration of evil into the imperfect church (Scofield, 1917, p. 1015). To Scofield, any application of law to the church was the result of leavened preaching. Thus, dispensationalists are antinomian. Frowning upon any application of the Ten

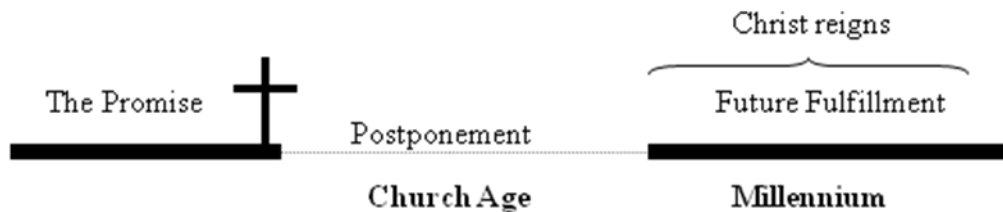
⁵ Existentialism was credited to Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Christian man by training and faith, and a Danish intellectual. In studying existentialism, we need to understand its two states: Early existentialism was theistic and involved the pursuit of God. It is positive and productive. Later existentialism was atheistic and involved the pursuit of radical individualism. It is negative and destructive. Because Kierkegaard was grieved by the complacency of the Danish church and the reduction of Christianity to a set of mental propositions advanced by Hegel. Kierkegaard revolted against religious systems. He wrestled with the question of epistemology and ethics. How does a man know what he knows, and why does he adopt or not adopt a certain standard of ethics during his journey on earth? He objected to Hegel’s dialectic because Hegel made truth impersonal. Truth is not attained by thinking passionately, stated Kierkegaard. Truth is subjective, not just objective. Truth must be experienced to be true.

Commandments, these people promote the “doctrines of grace” which, without law, tend to create a permissive society.

John Walvoord speaks of the Kingdom today as a “mystery form” (the rule of Christ in the church today). He used Scofield’s terminology, but defined it differently. Walvoord insisted on a distinction between the millennium and the eternal state. To Walvoord, all OT promises relate to the earthly millennium. Walvoord saw many different Kingdoms, while PDs see one eschatological Kingdom with different aspects (Blaising & Block, 1993).

Theologically, Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer and John Walvoord perceive the Kingdom of heaven as a term used exclusively in Matthew by Jesus to refer to the establishment of the Davidic Kingdom on earth with a sphere of profession in it. Though Classical Dispensationalists love the Word of God, they suffer from *double vision* with *multiple Kingdoms*. In these varying views, there was a Theocratic Kingdom, a Davidic Kingdom, a Mediatorial Kingdom, a Spiritual Kingdom, and a Universal Kingdom (Walvoord, 1959).

Figure 11: Classical Dispensationalism



Revised dispensationalists (RDs) sought a way to speak of a spiritual Kingdom in this dispensation. McClain did not believe in a Mediatorial Kingdom today. Ryrie dropped Scofield’s terminology and spoke of the Davidic Kingdom. Dwight Pentecost saw ten (10) successive stages of the Kingdom from creation to the millennium. He understood there to be a presence of God’s Theocratic Kingdom today and that the church is an aspect of the Theocratic Kingdom. Further, the RDs advanced the Postponement Theory; i.e., that Jesus offered the Jews the Kingdom; that because the Jews rejected Jesus’ offer, He postponed the Kingdom. The church became an intercalation, a giant parenthesis in God’s prophetic program. RDs advanced the theory that God’s main prophetic program involved a pure Jewish Israel—that pure Jewish Israel would be reinstated as God’s people, and that their history would consummate around a global, antisemitic, political outrage. Thus, Christian Zionism traces its source to the loins of these dispensationalists (Ryrie, 1965; Pentecost, 1958).

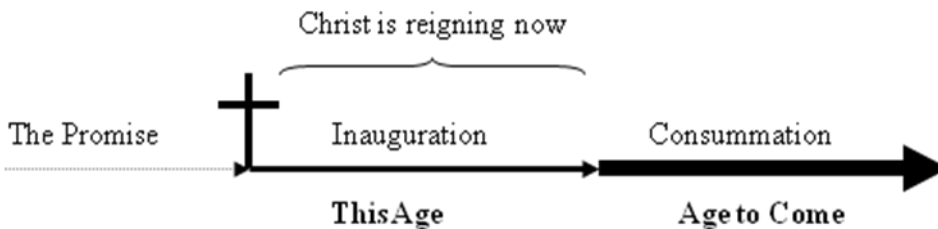
Progressive Dispensationalists (PDs) see one Kingdom with both spiritual and political aspects in contrast to the CDs and RDs who saw multiple variations of the Kingdom. PDs see the Kingdom as inaugurated with Christ’s ascension; that He is now reigning as Christ and Lord from His highly exalted

position at the right hand of the Father. (Ryrie, 1995), however, chides PDs for not defining the Kingdom and for blurring various Kingdoms in the Bible. CDs do not. These multiple views of the kingdom have caused critics to accuse dispensationalists of suffering from *double vision* and rightly so (Blaising & Block, 1993) (Ladd, 1952).

Preterists also wrestled with the same question asked by Schweitzer and concluded that Christ was not deceived but that He did return in power as the ascended Lord to judge Israel as predicted in Matthew 24. To the Preterists, Jesus acted to judge Israel and to retire the nation as God’s principle agent of proclamation in 70 A.D. There are two types of Preterists: (A) consistent Preterist which see all return promises in the church epistles and the Book of Revelation as having been fulfilled in 70 AD, and (B) a partial Preterist which sees the bulk of Matthew 24 as fulfilled in 70 AD while holding to the traditional view that the church epistles hold to a future coming of Christ that will start the clock toward the consummation of history (Bray, 1996).

Covenant Theology contains premillennial, amillennial, and postmillennial positions. However, unlike dispensationalists, covenant theologians proclaim the rule of Christ now! They are not antinomian nor do they permit permissiveness in the church.

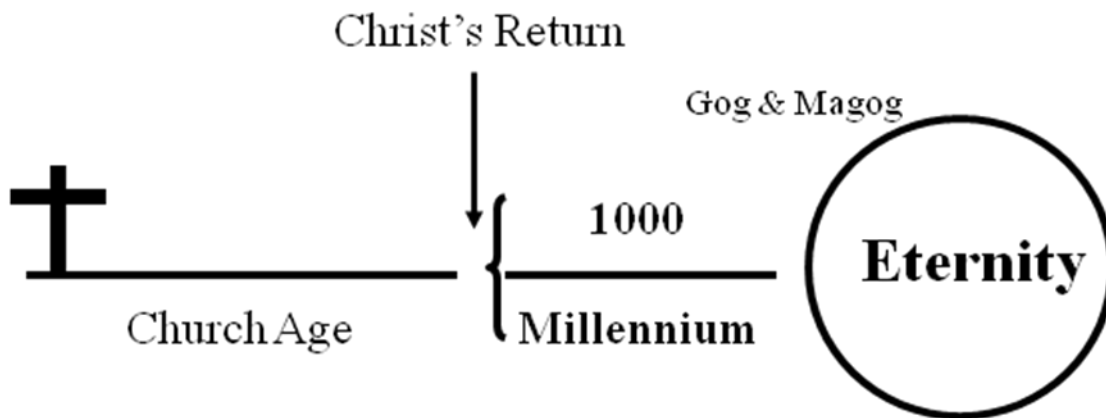
Figure 12: Covenant View of the Kingdom



5.3 Contemporary Eschatological Positions

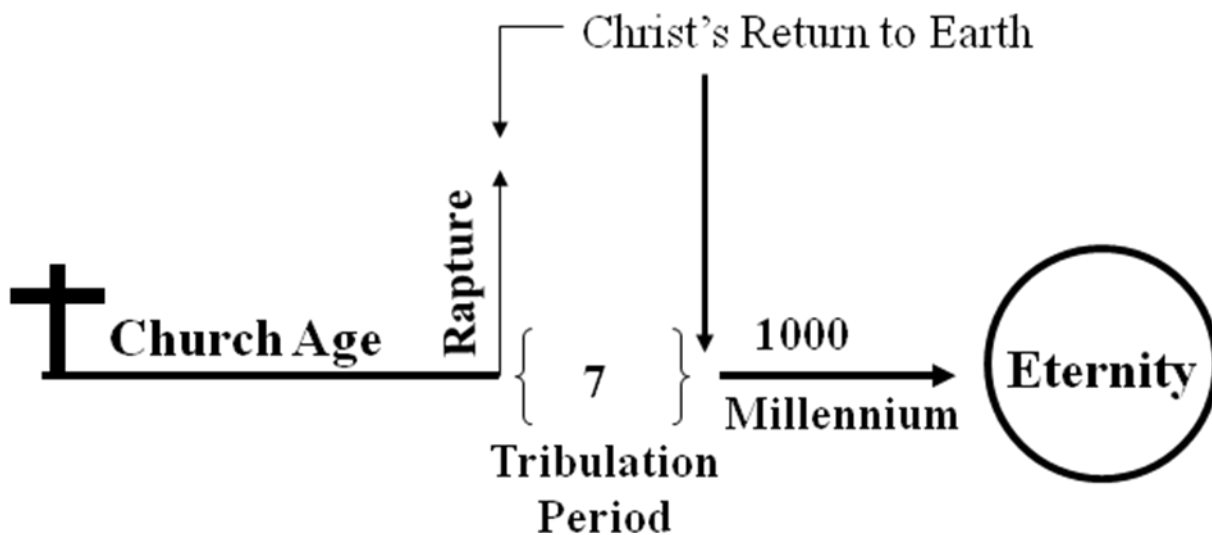
5.4 Premillennialism

Figure 13: Premillennial eschatology



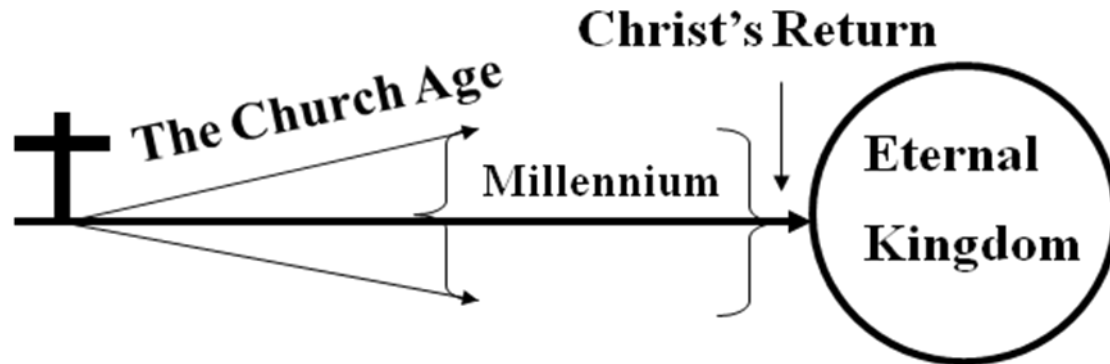
5.5 Dispensationalism

Figure 14: Dispensational eschatology



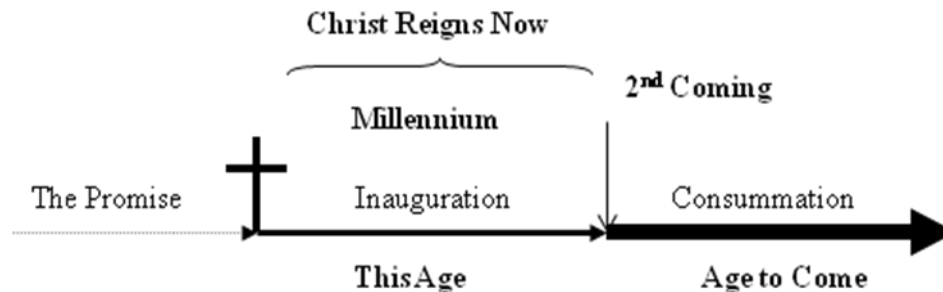
5.6 Postmillennialism

Figure 15: Postmillennial eschatology



5.7 Amillennialism

Figure 16: Amillennial Eschatology



5.8 New Testament Perplexity Surrounding the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God (KOG) was near to John the Baptist: "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." (Matthew 3:2). When John was preaching, the KOG appeared to be in the future, but imminent.

The KOG was present in Jesus' reign and ministry: ". . . the Kingdom of God does not come visibly . . . because the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). And yet Jesus said to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Luke 11:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is (e;fqasen) come unto you.

Note: The verb e;fqasen is an aorist, active, indicative. The use of the aorist indicated that the Kingdom arrived in Jesus' ministry and was a present, historical reality as He was speaking.

The KOG is a present reality today: "For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). The KOG is like a tiny seed which will become a big tree said Jesus in the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

The KOG is a present realm, something believers have already entered: "delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 11:15; Luke 16:16).

The KOG is a future inheritance: Peter discusses a future day when there "will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:11). See also: (Matthew 25:34; Matthew 8:11). Man will come from the east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven. The future Kingdom will come with great glory (Matthew 13:41, 42), on the other hand, it cannot be observed, "The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or, 'There!' for behold the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21).

The KOG appears to be an inward reality: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21).

The Kingdom is spiritual for Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

The Kingdom is a slow gradual process -- like leaven in a lump of dough (Matthew 13:33).

Thus, the teaching on the Kingdom can be confusing. Jesus preached that the Kingdom was near (Matthew 4:17), then He said it was here (Matthew 12:28). On one hand, it is future (1 Peter 1:5ff), on the other it is a present reality (Matthew 12:28). It appears to be an experience as well as realm (Matthew 12:21), an inner, spiritual reality as well as a material, political reality (Revelation 11:15).

5.9 John's Perplexity

Matthew 11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

Matthew 11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

Matthew 11:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Matthew 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see:

Matthew 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Matthew 11:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

John was asking: “Where is the dynamic, powerful, cataclysmic, irresistible entrance of the rule of God into history?” Christ, however, recognized this complexity and added, “. . .blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me” (Matthew 11:6).

The question remains: "What is the Kingdom of God?"

6 THE KINGDOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

6.1 Present Connotations of the Kingdom

One of the problems of defining the Kingdom is its use as a western idiom. The dictionary says a kingdom is “a state or monarchy the head of which is a king; dominion; realm.” (Random House Dictionary) The word *kingdom* means different things to different people. The kingdom of Great Britain refers **to the citizens** over whom the Queen exercises her rule over her **subjects**. **Here it is a dominion, a realm, a citizenry**. Americans tend to think of a kingdom as a place, often synonymous with heaven. But these ideas are an incorrect representation of the Kingdom of God.

A second problem with understanding the term “Kingdom” is theological. Because of the dominance of dispensational theology in America, the average Christian thinks of a future millennial kingdom; when the term “kingdom” is mentioned the average mind think of omething beyond history—something futuristic. Lacking is an understanding of the active entrance of the Kingdom into history in and through the person of the Christ.

6.2 Light from the Old Testament (OT) on God’s Kingdom

In order to understand the meaning of the Kingdom, the Bible student must consult the Old Testament (OT). One will never determine the meaning of the Kingdom of God from the New Testament. When John, Christ, and Paul preached the good news of the Kingdom, they were speaking to a generation who understood the OT prophetic concept of a kingdom; that is, Christ never defined his usage of the term “Kingdom of God.” Indeed, it did not need defining because the people of his time knew quite well what the term “kingdom” meant. They needed no introduction to the word because they were familiar with the use of the term.

6.3 Rule and authority

The Hebrew word for kingdom is "malkuth" (tk,l,m.m). According to Daniel chapter two, Gentile kingdoms would rule the world until the climatic intervention of the Kingdom of God into history.

The idea of authority, rule, and reign is present. The Kingdom of God refers to *the rule of God*. Secondly, the term kingdom refers to *a realm* over which a king ruled:

2 Chronicles 12:1 And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the Kingdom (malkuth), and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

Daniel 2:37 You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the Kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory.

Psalm 145:11-13 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Psalm 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Note the synonyms for Kingdom: *power, might, glory* all are symbols of authority.

Daniel 5:26- of Belshazzar, God says: "God has numbered the days of your Kingdom and brought it to an end"

The authority Belshazzar was removed -- not the realm, or the people, or the state. Here a transfer of authority passed to another.

Daniel 8:23 And in the latter time of their Kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

*Psalm 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his Kingdom (malkuth) **ruleth over all***

*Psalm 145:11 They shall speak of **the glory** of thy Kingdom, and tell of thy power.*

Note the parallelism: *kingdom* and *power* are equivalent. The realm of God's rule is heaven and earth. There is no reference to realm here, only to power.

Psalm 145: 13 Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endures throughout all generations."

Ezra 8:1 speaks of the "Kingdom of Araexerses."

In Summary, the OT understanding of a kingdom is that of authority, power, dominion, or rule; Secondly, it refers to a realm or sphere of rule.

6.4 Dynamic activity within history.

Another fact about God’s Kingdom is that it is active within history. God’s Kingdom is a **dynamic** rule. God is not passive, but active. He is not aloof, but present. His rule is energetic, vigorous, and forceful. It is not something merely transcendent, but something immanent— something at work in space and now-time; not something in heaven, but a power and force being exerted within history in present time. It is a fact that God’s rule has and is manifest in the affairs of men. Therefore, by faith we anticipation that His rule will be made evident in future events.

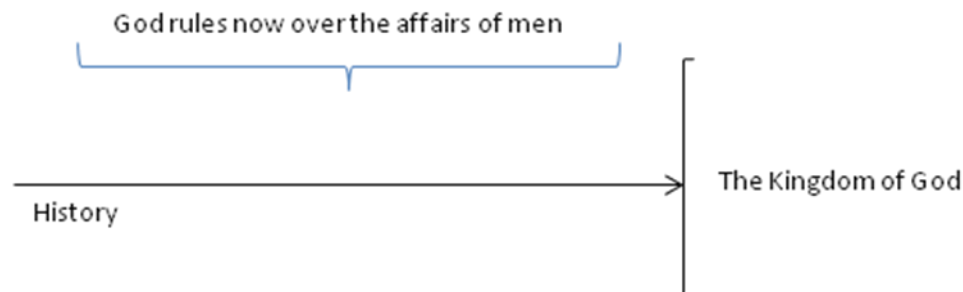
Psalm 96:10-13 Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth (a perfect establishing a fact to know in now-time – a hope for future trust): the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Deuteronomy 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Deuteronomy 33:5 And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

The people are not rejoicing that God sits on his throne in heaven, highly exalted above the Earth, but that God is involved with his people ruling now in time, in space, and on the earth.

Figure 17: God Rules Now



6.5 Cataclysmic activity.

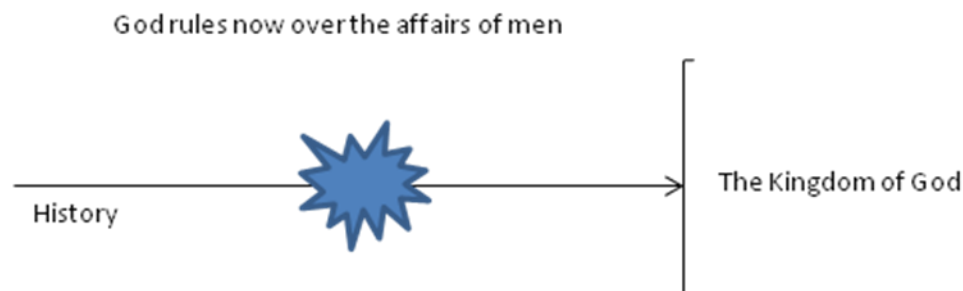
Another characteristic of the kingdom of God is that His rule is sometimes **cataclysmic**. Metaphorically when God works the sky falls, the mountains crumble, the floods flee away, the earth shakes. The metaphoric descriptions are not merely poetry but accurate narrations that accurately articulate that God is at work among his people defeating their enemies, uprooting the oaks of evil, and mightily delivering his people. He is not aloof and out of touch with His people. When God acts, citadels of power crumble and mountains rise.

Judges 5:4-5 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marched out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

Habakkuk 3: 3, 10-13 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

Micah 1:3-4 For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.

Figure 18: Cataclysmic Intervention



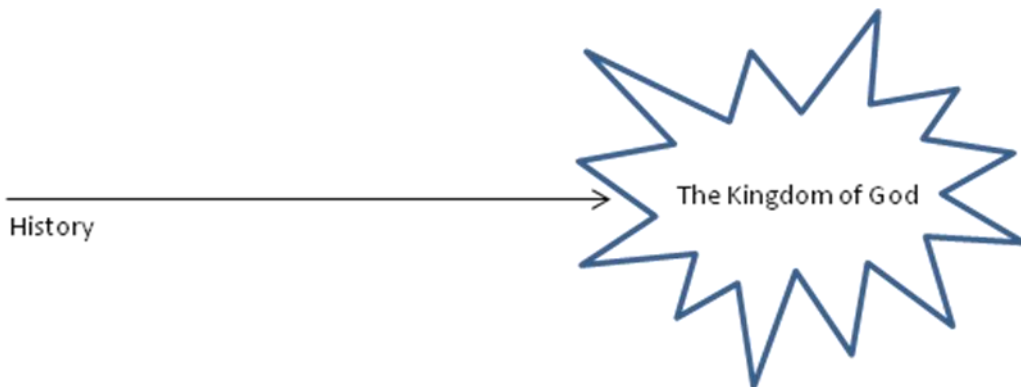
6.6 Irresistible and Eternal.

When God is active among men, who can resist Him? Who is stronger than God? Notice in the Daniel passage that when God's Kingdom intersects history it is *irresistible*. No monarch can prevent it. It smashes and crushes all resistance. This is no salient point. When God works in history His activity is like rods of steel breaking glass and crushing wheat.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Likewise, His Kingdom does not come and go, rise and fall. It is not temporal. It is durable, everlasting, and eternal.

Figure 19: The Goal of History is the Kingdom of God



6.7 God's Kingdom Is Now

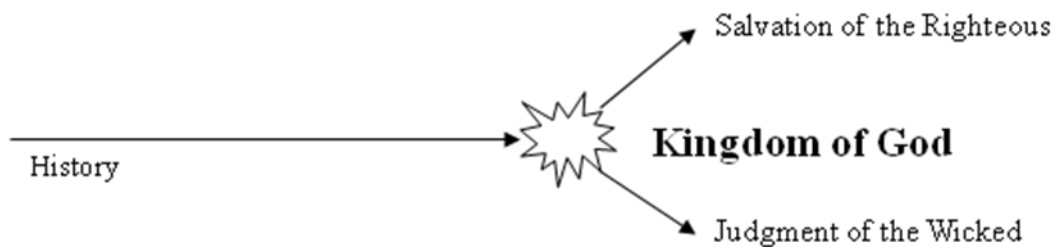
The prophets foresaw a day at the end of history . . . even beyond history where God's kingdom is established on earth. God's people need to know that amidst the evil and havoc of their age, all service rendered to the LORD is not in vain; that their efforts in time culminate and reach a climax in history. No one is a loser for serving God. In the end, Christ triumphs over Satan; God's law defeats anarchy; and the righteous rule over the wicked.

Isaiah 2:1-5 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the

word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

6.8 Salvation for the Righteous and the Defeat of the Wicked.

Figure 20: Salvation and Judgment



The prophets foresaw a day at the end of history where God intervenes **to judge** the anti-God forces and **to save** the people of God. The wicked die and the righteous live. It is an age of regeneration-- the dead come to life and nature transforms into Paradise Restored. His reign extends to the ends of the earth—globally and universally. The whole world will feel the power of His rule among men.

*Isaiah 35:4-10 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, **your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.** Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Isaiah 26:13 O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

Isaiah 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

*Malachi 4:1-3 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and **all that do wickedly, shall be stubble**: and **the day that cometh shall burn them up**, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. **But** unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with **healing in his wings**; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.*

*Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. **Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations**, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And **the LORD shall be king over all the earth**: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.*

When David saw this day by faith in his mind's eye, he exclaimed," The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (Psalm 72:20); that is, he was enabled by the Holy Spirit to see the final victory. All that he prayed for would happen beyond his time through the greater Son.

6.9 The Means of Accomplishing the Rule of God on Earth

The final victory would happen at the end of history in and through a divine personage who we know as the Christ, the Messiah, the Seed of Abraham. Beginning with the Mother Promise (Genesis 3:15), his campaign of redemption culminates in Malachi 4. The Kingdom is established by a special Messenger we

know as “the Christ” (*Yeshua Hamashiach*). His reign will be global and universal, an era or unprecedented peace and tranquility among men and a restoration of balance to nature.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

*Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us **a child** is born, unto us **a son** is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his **government and peace** there shall be **no end**, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Isaiah 11:1-5 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

*Zechariah 9:9-10 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, **thy King cometh unto thee**: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and **the battle bow shall be cut off**: and he shall **speak peace unto the heathen**: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea (universal and global), and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*

Malachi 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

In summary, God rules! His intervention into the affairs of man is not only expected, but noted by God’s people after dramatic deliverances. The God who visited Israel and delivered the nation from Pharaoh’s

bondage would come again at the end of history to defeat the wicked and to save the righteous. Daniel saw with the eye of faith a dynamic, catastrophic, irresistible kingdom intervening into history to disrupt the political order and to establish the global reign of God on earth. The remnant of Israel anticipated a day when YHWH's rule would enter history dynamically, cataclysmically, and unexpectedly to usher in the kingdom of God. This intervention would end history as we know it. The appearance of the kingdom inaugurates the blessed reign of the Living God. Two great acts reoccur as themes in Kingdom proclamation: 1) the judgment of the wicked, and 2) the salvation for the righteous. Regardless of the imagery employed, every prophetic passage in Scripture communicates the righteous win, and the wicked lose (See Ezekiel 39-39; Zechariah 12-14; Matthew 25).

7 THE KINGDOM HOPE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

7.1 A New King

The arrival of the kingdom featured the unveiling of the King. Isaiah predicted a Davidic King rising out of an exhausted ancestry—a unique person who is a son and a Father, a human child and the mighty God, a prince of peace who reigns on David’s throne forever over the people of God. The sevenfold perfections of the Spirit of God rest upon him.

Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Isaiah 11:3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

7.2 A New Israel

The arrival of the kingdom involved the gathering of the true Israel of God. When the kingdom arrives, God gathers His people (the remnant or true Israel) from the nations to care and feed them as a shepherd rounds up his flock. The shepherd is identified as a branch—a shepherd king from the line of David—a king who like Moses led the nation out of Egypt to the Promised Land will gather the scattered, oppressed sheep among all the nations to bring them into one fold in one land provided by God. Here we begin to see the *concept of separation*; i.e. God separating the righteous to Himself for salvation and appointing the wicked to be shattered. (Note: this is NOT a reference to God saving “Jews.” The remnant includes all men who trust YHWH.)

Jeremiah 23:3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

Jeremiah 23:4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, said the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, said the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Jeremiah 23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Jeremiah 23:7 Therefore, behold, the days come, said the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

Jeremiah 23:8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

7.3 A New Judgment

The arrival of the Kingdom spells “doom” for the wicked. The metaphoric language describes the godless being incinerated by executive order. Mountains are leveled; valleys are filled; crooked things are made straight; and the jagged edges of government are made plain. Like the husks of wheat are burned after the harvest, so the proud, antonymous man will be charred in this purging. The final state of the wicked is final, terminal, and hopeless. (Among the wicked are Jews and Gentiles who reject the Son).

Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Isaiah 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, said the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

7.4 A New Salvation

The arrival of the kingdom involves salvation for the godly. Before us is a picture of salvation wherein the Sun of righteousness appears with the unlimited powers to heal — a healing that reaches into the grave to release men from the grip of death. Not only man, but nature itself is energized and renewed by the regenerating power of the Sun of Righteousness. The shame that accompanied the plague of death and the shame thrust on the righteous because of their devotion to the God disappears from the earth.

Malachi 4:2-3 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, said the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 35:3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Isaiah 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Isaiah 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

Isaiah 25:6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Isaiah 25:7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

*Isaiah 25:8 **He will swallow up death in victory**; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.*

Isaiah 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

7.5 A New Covenant Relationship

The arrival of the kingdom involved a new covenant. As history progressed, it became frightfully clear the nation of Israel would never experience covenant blessings if those blessings are dependent on the nation's performance. The OT ends with a curse (Malachi 4:6 KJV). But, God promised to make available those blessings under a new covenant with a new method (infusion of Torah in hearts) that produced a new relationship (they will be my people) and gave new status (all know me from the least to the greatest) because of a new principal of grace at work (forgiveness).

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, said the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, said the LORD:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, said the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, said the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Malachi 4:5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the

children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

7.6 A New Spirituality

The arrival of the Kingdom is marked by regeneration. The Holy Spirit would not only regenerate nature but men; and, He would do so without regard to sex, age, or social status.

Joel 2:27 And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Joel 2:29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

7.7 A New Creation

The arrival of the kingdom spelled hope for creation. Regeneration characterizes the work of God in the Kingdom. Not only does God regenerate men, but nature! The powers of regeneration are global and universal. Salvation is not just for Israel but for all mankind. Before us is a picture of a renewed earth . . . and universe.

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isaiah 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, said the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

7.8 Daniel's View of the Kingdom

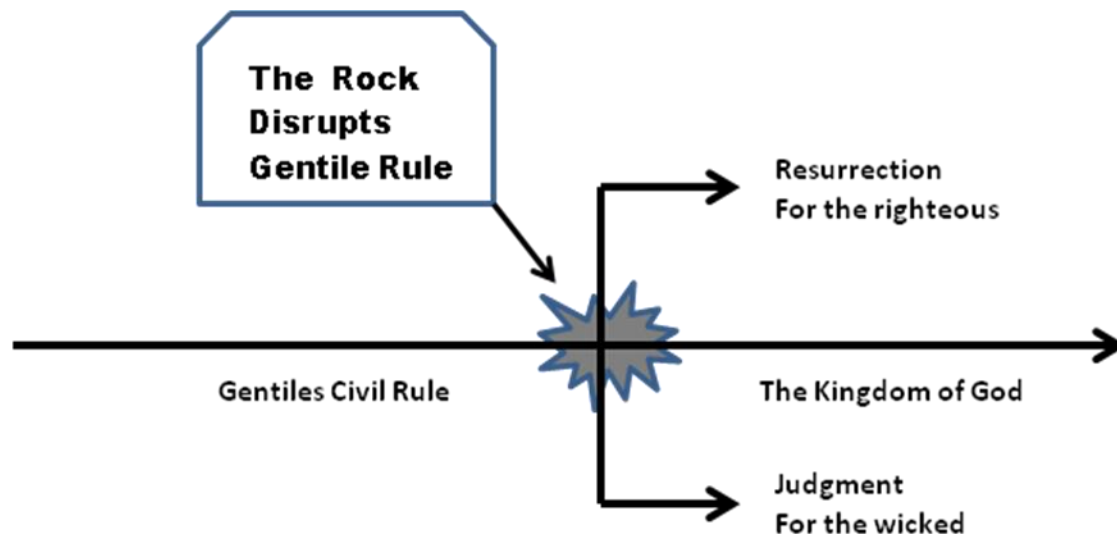
Note the following in Daniel chapter two: The Rock (Christ & His Kingdom) comes in an **irresistible, dynamic, convulsive** way **disrupting** the political structure in order to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The OT prophets looked for a day when God sets up His rule on earth through his appointed administrator, Jesus Christ. At which time, He smashes His enemies (the wicked); brings salvation to the

righteous; restores the potential of creation; and channels joy and harmony to the surviving world. through His righteous government and out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.

For four hundred years, no voice was heard. No prophecy uttered. No prophet arose among the people.

Figure 21: Daniel's Kingdom Vision



7.9 John's View of the Kingdom

When John the Baptist began to preach the Kingdom of God is at hand, he shocked the Jewish world. For hundreds of years, the prophetic voice remained silent. Heaven went *sub silentio*. In Israel, there was no condemnation of sin or call for national repentance. All asked, "Where is the LORD God?"

Two ideologies replaced the prophetic voice: (a) Judaism and its scribal law which developed a strict ethical code beyond the reach of the normal, working man; and (b) apocalypticism, a less known type of literature that embodied the hopes of Jewish people in pseudepigraphical style. Lacking in any sense of "thus says the Lord." The Qumran community composed of male celibates did not try to prepare Israel for a coming Messiah. They withdrew into the wilderness to live out a life of undisturbed, uninterrupted pietism. The Qumran Community was a monastic movement that had no message for Israel. These people sought to reinterpret the OT while looking for hidden meanings and coded messages behind the Sacred Text. We have movements like this in our time. Consider the following:

For 3,000 years a secret code in The Bible has remained hidden. Now it has been unlocked by computer - and it may reveal our future. The code was broken by a

distinguished mathematician, and later corroborated by world-famous academics. It foretells events that happened thousands of years after it was incorporated in The Old Testament - from World War 2 to the Gulf War. Now an extraordinary new book presents what best-selling author Michael Drosnin believes is irrefutable proof of the existence of God in "The Bible Code". It was one murderous deed that finally convinced him it was for real...(A Mathematical Bible Code @ jahtruth)

Among the people, zealous political groups organized to oust Roman rule. To strike a blow against Rome was to strike a blow for the Kingdom of God. Large groups took up arms and initiated acts of terrorism against Rome only to be defeated again and again. In the minds of the activists was the belief they could do something to establish a) national independence, and b) to build the Kingdom of God on earth.

As John the Baptist grew, a strange inner drive sparked his spirit driving him into isolation to pray and deliberate on his life purpose. While alone, "the Word of God came to John" (Luke 3:2). The Spirit led him to announce: the "Kingdom of Heaven is near." In his camel's hair garb, John looked like a prophet, and preached like a prophet. The people recognized in John, a unique, authoritative message from God.

Matthew 3:2 . . . Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand- (John).

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

The term "baptism of the Holy Ghost" is John's way of describing the age of salvation, the arrival Kingdom of God and its regenerating powers within history (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3-5; Ezekiel 36: 27; 37:14; Joel 2:28-32).

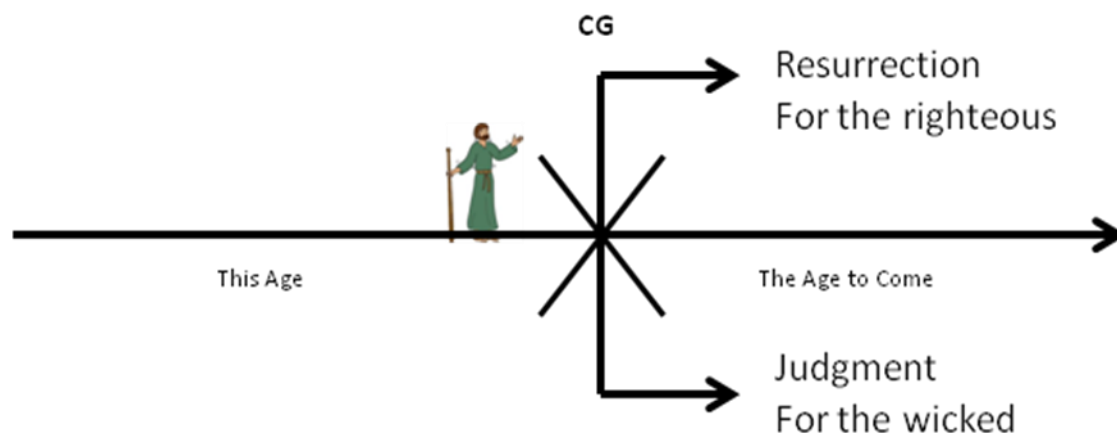
The term baptism of "fire" is John's way of describing the judgmental aspects of Kingdom arrival -- the purging of the wicked from society and their appointed ruin (Isaiah 1:31; Isaiah 66:24; Jeremiah7:2; Malachi 4:1-4).

To John, Kingdom hopes were near and a great separation was about to take place. He saw history at the threshold of the Messianic Age where 1) the wicked would be thrown into the fires of judgment, and the righteous would enter into the blessedness of the kingdom age (Matthew 3:7-10; Luke 3:7-9). These two aspects were a single vision.

John's baptism signified repentance to the Jews, the critical response necessary to enter the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 55:6-7). John rejected political unions where men organized to overthrow the Roman

government. John rejected legalistic⁶ righteousness perpetuated by the Pharisees and their false claim to salvation by virtue of their biological association⁷ with Abraham (Luke 3:8). Salvation was not by law, but by grace; not by enforcement of rule by law, but by men surrendering to the rule of law. John's repentance was moral and spiritual. John rejected Qumran pietism and greenhouse spirituality. He sent men back into society to live out their repentance by participating in sharing wealth, practicing honesty, and pursuing a life of contentment (Luke 3:11-14).

Figure 22: John's Timing of the Kingdom



7.10 Summary of John's View of the Kingdom

John based in preaching on OT Kingdom theology. The Kingdom of God is the **dynamic, irresistible, cataclysmic, disruptive, universal, obtrusive entrance of the rule of God into history** that destroys the wicked (Baptism of Fire) and blesses God's people (Israel) with life and salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit in a renewed creation (Baptism of the Holy Ghost).

⁶ Legalism is not obedience to Biblical law, but a theological position that perpetuates the belief that obedience to rabbinical case law merits salvation. Rabbis didn't study law, they studies rabbinical case rulings. As to God's law, it was given to create an orderly society, not to save souls. Moreover, there is all the difference in the world between trying to obey God's law as a means of salvation, and obeying God's law because one has received salvation. Salvation demands obedience to law and obedience to law is NOT legalism. It's Biblical obedience!

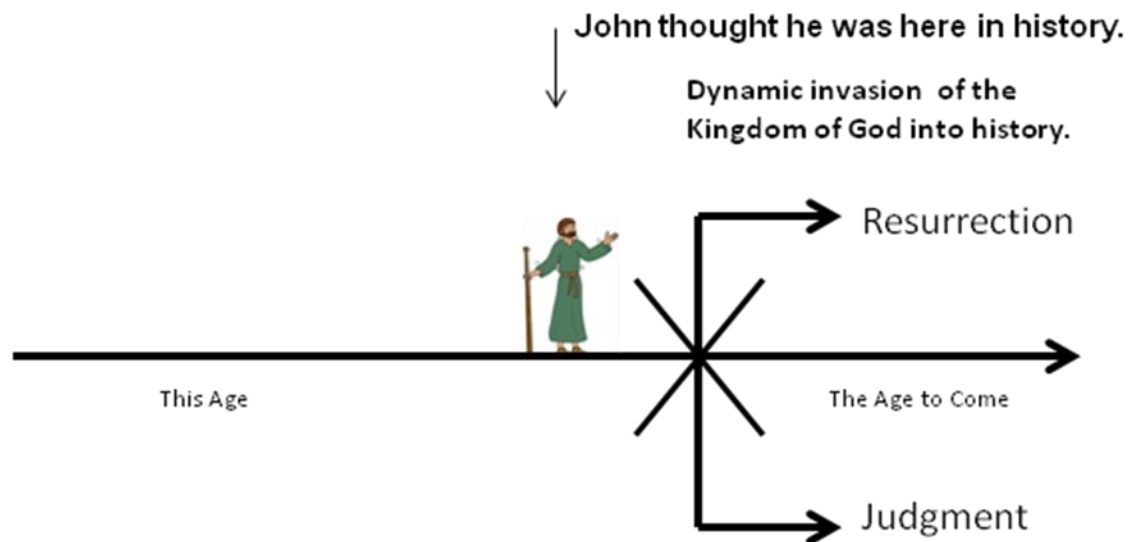
⁷ The reader would do well to distinguish between Biblical Jews with a genetic connection to Abraham and modern Ashkenazi so called "Jews" with a genetic relationship to Askenaz the son of Japheth (Genesis 10). Moreover, the modern term "Jew" has religious connotations as well as racial overtones. The reader must know that though Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, He was not a Jew in the religious sense of the word. He did not practice Judaism. He was a Biblicist that practiced the Biblical law.

7.11 John's Perplexity

John appeared to possess a crystal clear view of the Kingdom of God as reflected in the O.T. But, within a few months after Jesus entered His ministry, Herod arrested the prophet. John knew Jesus; baptized Jesus; and was refreshed by reports of Jesus' ministry. While in prison, John's doubts clouded his mind and depress his soul. He sent messengers to Jesus, "Are you he that is to come or do we look to another?" His question reveals uncertainty about his proclamation and its fulfillment in Jesus.

Thus, we must continue to the next lesson to understand the perplexity.

Figure 23: John's Message of the Kingdom



8 THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S REIGN

Let us take a look at the gospel from an Old Testament (O.T.) perspective.

What was the OT gospel and what is the language of proclamation?

Since there is only one gospel, it behooves the Bible student to understand its O.T. presentment in order expand one's understanding of that glorious message.

8.1 The Lord Reigneth

Psalm 97:1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Before us is the heart of the gospel: "the LORD reigneth."

The "Need of the Hour" said Dawson Trotman, Founder of the Navigators, is not more staff, more equipment, more books, better health, or even more money, but faith to believe that our God reigns (Psalm 99:1). Amen!

While we take great comfort in our Lord's redemptive work, His core message was "the kingdom of God has come unto you" (Mt. 12:28); that is, the central message of Christ was the reign of God.

God's rule entered history in and through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat man's great enemies: Satan, sin, and death. God is offering men peace with Himself on the grounds of Christ's person and work.

Paul quoted a verse from Isaiah declaring the excellence of gospel proclamation: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace."

Paul's quote is from Isaiah 52:7 which says in total, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . . that saith to Zion, 'Thy God reigneth!'"

Thus, the theme “the LORD reigneth” is the crux of the Old Testament gospel; and, the New Testament is simply the grand manifestation of the reign of God in action through Jesus Christ.

By “LORD” we are not referring to any god or some god or some god like Shiva or Allah, but the God of the Bible, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Great “I Am,” YHWH in Hebrew, Jehovah in German, and Yahweh in English. The LORD is His name!

We do not always feel like the LORD God reigns. Madmen come to power to steal property under color of law. Baby butchers are protected by legislative statutes. Criminal officials are granted limited immunity. Rulers permit “donations” (bribes) to high ranking officials. The State protects Sodomy and radical feminism. Government agencies oppress and bully the weak into submission. Disease and death visit every family. Jobs end. Stock markets plunge. Automobiles crash. Things seem out of control . . . and they are depressing . . . unless, of course, we believe God reigns over all things in our lives.

The good news is that the LORD reigns over nations, over politics, over weather, over disease and tragedy, over health, and the nasty storms hovering over us . . . and for those who have repented of their rebellion against God’s law order and surrender to His authority, His reign brings great joy and comfort.

One great cause of melancholy in our lives is that we fail to take sufficient comfort from simple, but profound statements in Scripture.

“The LORD reigneth” is the lightning bolt that lights up the cloudy skies during the cold, dark nights of our lives.

The verbs “rejoice” and “be glad” are Hebrew jussives that enjoin all God’s people to consider the dominions of our Lord and to join the triumphal procession celebrated in Zion, the city of Almighty God, the general assembly of spiritual Israel. The people on vast continents as well as tribes on tiny islands, the great and the small are urged to take comfort in the Sovereignty of Christ. He is not asleep. He doesn’t await an alleged millennium to reign. He reigns now.

Notice that the locus of joy is outside of man and in the Lord’s dominions. Joy is not connected to introspection and self-esteem or inner exploration. It is not associated with profit in business or a large bank account. This psalm takes us outside of self, outside of our pride, outside of human choices, to the Sovereignty of the Lord God. Rejoice!

8.2 The Gospel of Righteousness

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. 3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

The reign of the LORD is good news for those who have made their peace with God and surrendered to His law-order, but it is not good news for rebels. For the self-willed, self-governed lawless man hell-bent on self-governance and asset accumulation, the reign of Christ tastes like garlic.

The psalmist takes us back to Mt. Sinai. The clouds and darkness reminds us that the Lord is holy and unapproachable. There is a veiling of His splendor lest man be destroyed. Fire is an instrument of destruction stoked to torch the proud who refuse to acknowledge His supremacy. If the earth quakes and mountains melt in His presence, how much more should pagans with rock-hard hearts melt like wax / lava and tremble before Sovereignty and Glory.

8.3 Gospel Instructions to Idolaters

7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

A better rendering of the original text is as follows: “Let all be ashamed who serve idols. Worship him all ye gods.”

There are two jussives (commands) in this verse informing us of the response the Lord seeks from those outside His fold.

The first is “confounded be” or “**Be ashamed.**” If a person understands the Lord reigns and that his law is the supreme law, then shame is the proper response to gospel proclamation. The gospel announces the naked sinfulness of man and its effects by eating fruit from the Poisonous Tree.

Man is not sick or mentally ill. He’s a sinner that sins.

Shame is the sense of failure and guilt one has because of disobedience to law. The proper response to God’s reign is fear, alarm, anxiety, trembling, shaking and a deep sense of shame that causes the naked soul to reach for fig leaves.

The second reasonable response to the reign of God is “**worship.**”

The word worship is a rare Hithpael verb form, and it is difficult to translate because the verb is a reflexive action wherein the subject is expected to act on himself.

But, the psalmist is not asking men to worship themselves, **but Him who reigns**. Thus, the verb should be treated as follows: “Fall down and make yourself the object of the LORD’s affection” **by ceasing your war against Him and surrendering to His authority**. He is not calling for sacerdotal worship here but total surrender of the total man to total Sovereignty.

This is Spirit’s way of calling rebels to repent and to make peace with Him. Since the Lord reigns, the only reasonable, sensible response is acknowledgement of the rule of the Lord God and acceptance of his terms of peace.

Now if “be ashamed” and “bow down before Him” is the proper response, then the opposite action exposes the plight of humanity.

All the social ills and problems we face as a society are because men have rebelled against God’s law order . . . and are not even ashamed about it.

What is wrong with men that are not humiliated by their filthy talk and raw cursing; of their fornications and adultery; of their scams and schemes and fraud?

Isn’t the reason we need a government police force because men have declared war against God’s law order? Is not all the corruption in government a result of men who reject God’s law order—men who do not execute the duties of their office with a conscience educated by God’s Word?

Notice the terms “idols” and “gods.” An idol is a fiction, a man-made thing or entity or corporation. The word “serve” (abad) is the word used of a slave who renders service to his masters. Think of it. People are absolutely in love with fictions of the mind and man-made creations.

What’s wrong with man? Men have time to work, watch sports, take their kids to soccer games, watch T.V., eat and sleep. But, they don’t have time for God.

He calls “the gods” to bow down and worship, but the “gods” he is talking about are not “so-called” gods, but proud, arrogant man who sees himself as his own master. After all, Satan said to the first couple, “You shall be as gods;” that is, self-governed, autocratic people.

This text is God's way of telling humanistic man to repent of sin and to surrender to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament equivalent of this text is "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;" (Mt. 11:29) or, "If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord" and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved (Rom. 10:9); or, "God now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. 9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

God's calls to pagans and infidels to repent and surrender to the LORD are sweet sounds in Zion.

Zion is the community of the redeemed, and they rejoice in God's reign and His attention to call the rebels to order. The redeemed have repented of their sins and made peace with God on His terms. Because of their deep desire for others to find grace and forgiveness at the foot of the cross (judgments), there is joy for Christians in gospel proclamation. That "the LORD reigns" is golden gospel!

8.4 Gospel Instructions to God's People

10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. 11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Just as the LORD has instructions for the pagans, God has instructions for believers. Between the two commands He reminds His beloved of the benefit of living under His authority: preservation (eternal life), deliverance, light (increase light and perspective on truth), and gladness.

The first command: "hate evil."

The first command is not to "believe in yourself; or "to love your neighbor as yourself;" or, "be all you can be," or "reach your full potential;" but TO HATE! Something modern Christians don't seem understand!

Our youth are trained to be open minded and to tolerate evil. Moral laxity marks our age. Hate is associated with bigotry and racism. "Hate" of any kind is often viewed as crime by those who have turned "justice" into commercial gain. We define problems as a lack of money. Everything is a commercial problem. We don't see the sinfulness of sin or the ugliness of ugly. We are deaf

to hissing snake near the Poisonous Tree. Americans are more concerned about the economy and equality than we are about evil at work in their own hearts.

To hate evil is a positive command. It takes moral energy to hate evil. We are ordered by our Heavenly Father to break from the pack and to stoke the fires of hatred; i.e., to hate evil and evil men that manufacture evil.

While modern humanists separate man from his actions, Scripture does not bifurcate the man from his sin. Evil is not out there in the environment. It is in the human heart. Man is seen a whole unit. Actions are evil because man's heart is evil (Mark 7:21).

Voltaire taught that man was good and that evil was in the environment. Only a Voltaire could sleep with a prostitute then try to convince her to take the path of virtue. He sent his bastard children off to boarding school, and then wrote a book on how to raise children. Thus, severing the man from his actions has been a product of more than a little evil.

The second command: “rejoice in the Lord.”

Gladness is a benefit of the gospel (97:11), but in this verse the LORD commands His own to rejoice (97:12). Because we live in a negative world, it takes moral energy to “rejoice” and “be glad.”

Thus, the Lord commands his saints to add fuel to fires of gladness by an act of the will. A singing saint is a strong saint. For this reason, Satan tries so hard to keep the Christian defeated and depressed.

The result of surrendering to the reign of the LORD God is “preservation,” “deliverance,” “light” and “gladness” are O.T. concepts for salvation. He saves those who surrender to be ruled by the yoke of Christ the King.

In conclusion, the O.T. gospel is not the offer of “fire insurance” against the flames of hell, but the proclamation of the reign of the LORD God.

Because He rules, men should repent and bow the knee to His authority. Those under His authority will find “preservation” and “deliverance.” Likewise, those who have accepted the yoke of His authority have a duty to hate evil (evil men) as well as to rejoice in His reign.

9 THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE NT

9.1 The Kingdom Affirmed by Christ

The New Testament opens with the concept of fulfillment.

Matthew 2:15 that it might be fulfilled

Matthew 2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,

Matthew 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets

Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, His birth to a virgin, His flight into Egypt, His rejection by His people, His entry into Jerusalem, His being sold for thirty pieces of silver, His death on the cross and His resurrection are all portrayed as fulfillment of the OT.

When John and Jesus announced the "Kingdom of God" is at hand, we sense the drama of the moment. Something wonderful and terrible is about to happen. Anthony Hoekema describes this correctly:

*"When we open the pages of the New Testament we immediately become aware of the fact that **what the OT writers had predicted has now happened** (Hoekema, 1977, p. 13) (Emphasis added).*

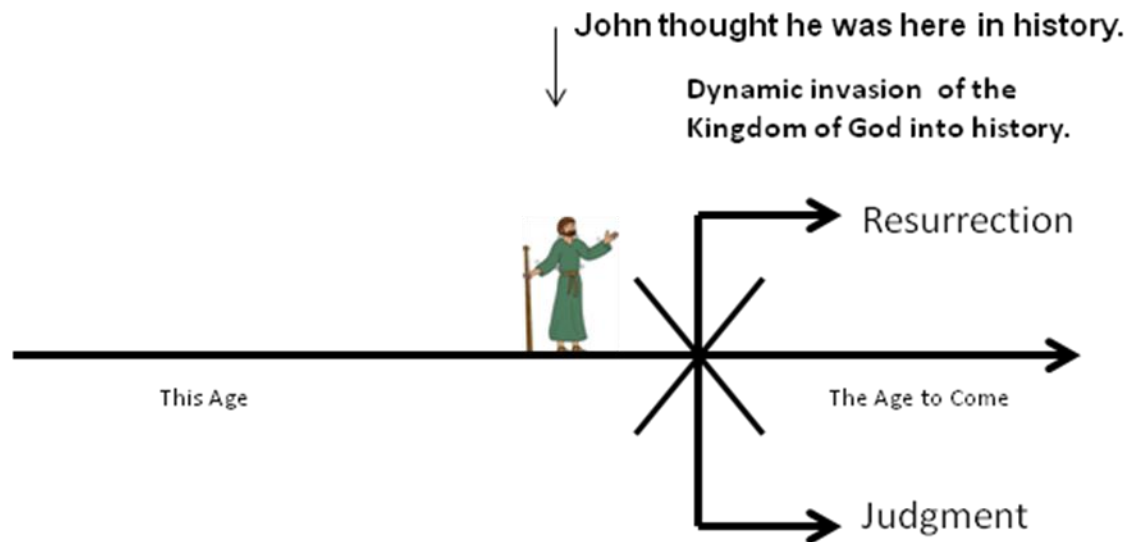
9.2 John's Confusion

As the ministry of Jesus advanced, John became perplexed by Jesus' administration of the Kingdom. Where was the baptism of fire? Where was the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The wicked are not being judged and the kingdom of this world is not falling.

No wonder John queried, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3).

There is more to investigate about the Kingdom and Jesus' management of its fulfillment.

Figure 24: John's Kingdom Timing



9.3 Meaning of the Term “Kingdom”

The Greek word for Kingdom is *basileia* (h` basilei,). The word does not refer to heaven, or to a place, or to a population of people.

As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately He said therefore, 'A nobleman went into a far country to receive a Kingdom (basileia) and then return' (Luke 19:11-12).

The nobleman did not go away to a far country to obtain a realm, or a people, or a territory. The problem is that he was not a king. *He needed to obtain authority, the right to rule, the appointment to kingship.*

From this verse we learn that the word Kingdom means **a rule, a reign, sovereignty, authority, the right to rule**. This interpretation was based on a true event in history when Herod went to Rome in order to receive from Caesar the authority to rule over Galilee and Judea.

Matthew 6:33 Seek ye first the Kingdom. . .” does not mean to seek a realm, or a people, or a church. It means to arrange one’s self under His rule, or to be ruled by heaven.

When we pray: “Thy Kingdom come. . .” We are not praying for a realm to be realized, or a people to rule over, or some future manifestation of God’s government, **but for men to surrender to kingdom authority NOW . . . in this life . . . at this time**. We want God’s rule, as opposed to man’s rule, to be recognized on the Earth. We want men to confess His rule and submit to it now—to arrange themselves under God’s law and to order man’s institutions accordingly. However, in submitting to His rule, Kingdom submission did

not result in docile earthly citizens, nor does it necessarily authorize armed insurgency against the governments of this age by mobs and anarchists.

Kingdom authority demands political action. The Kingdom works through persuasion, not force:

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” declared Paul (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Kingdom rule means the advancement of Christian law. God commands all men everywhere to repent. All men have a duty to surrender to Kingdom authority, to resist evil, and to promote righteousness. Obedience to God’s law is a requisite of righteousness. Resistance to tyranny is a service to God. The Kingdom creates free men who distance themselves from moral corruption within the age and identify themselves with the proclamation of Christ and His gospel. The “Kingdom is . . .” It not only applies to me, but to all men and all of man’s institutions (Romans 14:17). However, a rule without a realm is meaningless.

Mark 9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

From this verse we see that the Kingdom is also a realm, something to be experienced, something to enter into now:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

The Kingdom is also something future the believer looks forward too.

2 Peter 1:11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Summary: The term “Kingdom of God” primarily refers to the rule and authority of God. It is His divine reign and sovereignty in action. Secondly, it refers to the realm of his rule.

9.4 Names of the Kingdom (See Matthew 19:16ff)

The following are synonyms for the Kingdom of God (Matthew 19:23)

- Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 4:17)
- Kingdom of Light (Colossians 1:13-14)
- The Regeneration (Acts 3:21)

- The Age to Come (Mark 10:30)
- Eternal Life (Matthew 13:9; Matthew 19:28; Jude 21)
- Salvation (Isaiah 52:7-10)

9.5 The Story of the Rich Young Ruler

Note the salvic terms in the Story of the Rich Young Ruler. Terms like *kingdom of heaven*, *life*, *regeneration*, *eternal Life*, and the *age to Come* are metonyms of the Kingdom of God (*Matthew 19:28*).

In asking how he could obtain “eternal life,” The young man asked how he could enter into the salvic blessings of the messianic age.

*Luke 18:17-30 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very **rich**. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a **rich** man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.*

Some students make a spiritual distinction between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. But, there is no difference. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven are obviously interchangeable. The “Kingdom of God” is the Greek form; the “Kingdom of heaven” is the Semitic form (Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 1959).

9.6 The Two Age Construct

The KOG is the rule of God which is manifest in several realms. It is something to be experienced **now**, but it is **not** perfectly realized in this age. Its perfection awaits another age, an age beyond history, and age that will one day intersect history.

Schweitzer saw the KOG as something totally eschatological--that is, beyond history (Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, 1925; (Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 1910).

C.H. Dodd saw the Kingdom as here and now, present in the reign of Christ (Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 1935; Dodd, 1940; (Dodd, *The Mind of Paul*, 1953)).

Walvoord saw a spiritual Kingdom working now in and through the Church. He also made a distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven (Walvoord J. F., 1959).

9.7 Time Continuum and the Kingdom of God

The KOG is both present and future. It is out of this world, yet in this world. It is future as well as present. It is from heaven, but it affects earth. But, how?

Oscar Cullman in His book *Christ and Time* showed that the Kingdom world view is linear. It is not circular nor is it headed toward unending time (Cullmann, 1950).

The goal of history is not just heaven, but the linear culmination of the KOG on Earth.

Two words in English translations obscure the linear view:

- Kosmos: The word *world* or *kosmos* (ko,smos) means “order or harmony.” Our word “cosmetic” comes from this word.
- Aeon: Another word for “world” is *aeon* (tou/ aiw/noj) and it refers to a period of time -- an order or structure within time and can best be translated “age.”

9.8 Two Ages

The Bible speaks of **two ages** in linear time: “this age” and “the Age to Come.” The word “world” should be translated “age” below:

Matthew 12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (aeon), neither in the world (age) to come.

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)?

Mark 10:29-30 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time (kairos), houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world (aeon) to come eternal life.

Luke 18:30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world (age) to come life everlasting.

Luke 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world (age) marry, and are given in marriage:

Luke 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (age), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world (age): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

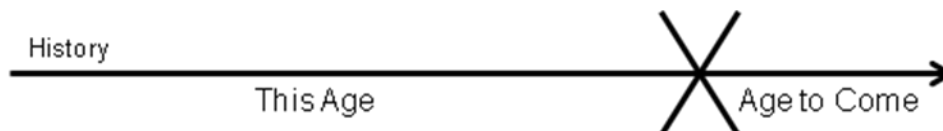
Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (aeon), but also in that which is to come:

1 Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world (age), nor of the princes of this world (age), that come to nought:

Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world (age), according to the will of God and our Father:

These references refer to two periods of time, not two worlds.

Figure 25: Two Ages



9.9 Events Separating the Two Ages

The coming of Christ (CG), the *Parousia*, separates the two ages. The disciples' question referred to the end of this age which will consummate at the *Parousia* of Christ. Keep in mind the disciples did not have a 21st century mind nor were they familiar with many of our sophisticated end-time schemes. The "end of the age" refers to the Jewish age. To collapse of the temple signaled the end of the Jewish age and the initiation of the Age to Come. Later, the church discovered this too is an incorrect / incomplete perspective.

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming (Parousia), and of the end of the world (age)?

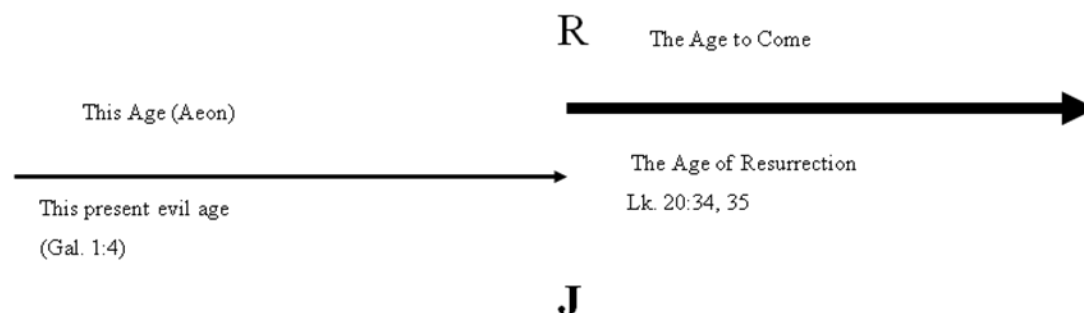
2 Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom;

A second event separating the two ages is resurrection

*Luke 20:34-36 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world (this age) marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (that age), and **the resurrection** from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children **of the resurrection**.*

In this age, marriage is a necessary institution. But in the Age to Come, a different state of affairs emerge. The Age to Come is the age of resurrection, and one enters into it by virtue of the resurrection.

Figure 26: Two Ages Separated by R and J



9.10 Character of this Age

This age is an age marked by propagation of evil. Deliverance is not a future hope, but a present reality through the power of the Age to Come. Deliverance is a consequence of Christ's death.

Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world (aeon), according to the will of God and our Father:

This is an age of fleshly passion. The *cosmos* is an order and arrangement in this age. The character of the *cosmos* bears the imprint of prince of the power of the air. Passions are from the flesh (Galatians 5:19ff).

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past (evn ai-j pote) ye walked according to the course (aeon) of this world (kosmos), according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience among them we too all formerly walked in the lusts of the flesh . . . and mind:

"Those who are wed to this world will find themselves divorced from the next."

This is an age that resists God's Word. The problem is not just making a living, but the entire character that inspires This Age. The character of This Age chokes the Word. This Age is hostile to the Gospel. Conformity to This Age is easier than conflict with it.

Matthew 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world (aeon), and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

"The opposite of courage is not cowardice, but compliance."

This age (aeon) is under the authority of Satan. Satan is the "god of This Age." This is not a dualism between God and Satan, good and evil. Evil is not in nature, it is in men. There is evil but it is not disorganized. Good will never triumph over evil in this life because men are evil. There are not good men and bad men, white hats and black hats. All are sinners. Only when the kingdom and its regenerative powers arrive in history will "good" triumph over "evil."

The work of evil is under the direction of a single will whose purpose is to frustrate the redemptive purpose of God. The crippled woman in Luke 13:16 is spoken of as having been *bound by Satan* for eighteen years. He plants weeds called "sons of the evil one" (Matthew 13:38), and he snatches away the seed a.k.a. "the word of God" from the hearts of men (Mark 4:15). He entered into Judas to betray Christ (Luke 22:3), and he sought to shift Peter like wheat (Luke 22:31). Satan blinds men. This is more than putting them under some temporary sociological deception. His blindness maims and disables men.

The root of evil is ignorance of the gospel, blindness, darkness, and unbelief (Ladd, 1959, p. 30). Moral and ethical evil is **secondary** to religious evil; i.e., the “. . . ungodliness and wickedness of men” (Romans 1:18f).

Furthermore, evil men in this evil age are in control of the apparatus of government (1 Corinthians 2:6); therefore, man’s institutions become instruments of evil (Revelation 16:10). Sin is a refusal to acknowledge grateful dependence on the Almighty which manifest itself in a rejection of God's law order. The primary manifestation of evil is religious. These political parties have a policy to never mention the Creator. Satan has blinded men to the gospel. Hence, there is darkness. (Ladd, 1959,p. 30)

*2 Corinthians 4:3,4: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world (aeon) hath **blinded the minds of them** which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Furthermore, the Kingdom of God is the historic drama of conflict and conquest over the kingdom of Satan; i.e., the Kingdom of God defeats the dragon in and through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 12). In the Synoptic Gospels we are introduced to Christ's confrontation with demonic spirits. The demons should not be (a) interpreted as various forms of insanity. Demon affliction is distinguished from epilepsy and other diseases (Mark 1:32); (b) nor should Jesus be interpreted as a product of his age wherein the ancients interpreted mysterious evils in terms of unseen spirits. The character of Jesus’ wisdom demands we interpret his consciousness of demons as conforming to reality and as an essential part of His ministry to defeat the serpent and destroy the fruits of the poisonous tree.

The Age to Come stands in juxtaposition to “this age.” The KOG does not belong to this age. The rich young ruler was interested in the wealth of this age as opposed to the eternal life which is the wealth of the Age to Come: eternal life, justification, regeneration, and resurrection belong to the Age to Come. The Kingdom of God belongs to the Age to Come (Mark 10:23) and that kingdom entered history in and through the Promised Seed in the first century.

This age will end with the Second Coming of Christ and His coming will usher in the new age (1 Corinthians 15:24).

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

9.11 Character of the Age to Come

The Age to Come is characterized by eternal life. Those who follow Jesus now will experience blessings of the life to come.

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

The Age to Come is characterized by resurrection.

*Luke 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that **world**, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:*

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

The KOG follows the resurrection. The resurrection separates this age and the Age to Come.

Only in transformed bodies will one enter the fullness of the KOG.

Matthew 13:41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

*Luke 20:35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (aeon), and the **resurrection** from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:*

The two ages are separated by judgment. The evil and righteous exist side by side until the judgment. Judgment will terminate this age.

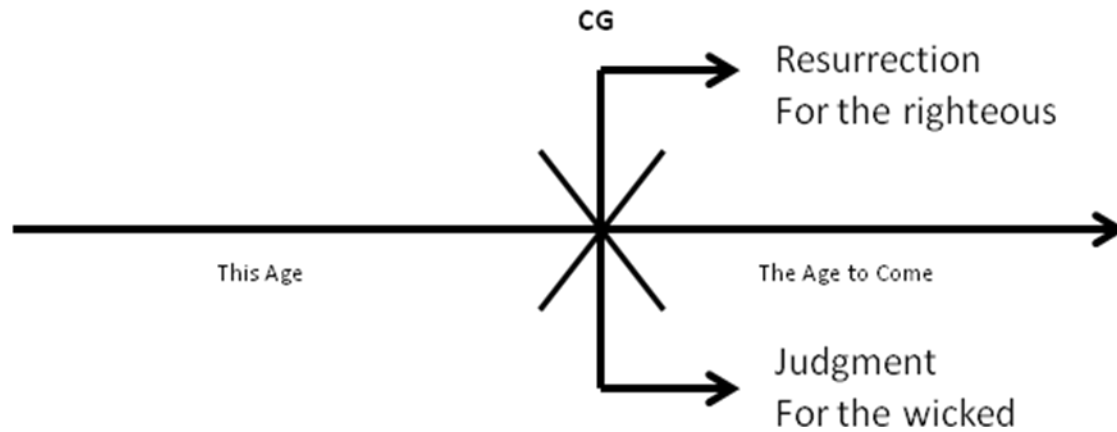
Then the wicked will be separated from the righteous.

Matthew 13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Matthew 13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

OT saints called this the “Day of the Lord.”

Figure 27: Two Ages Separated at the Coming Glory of Christ



Summary: The KOG belongs to the Age to Come (reign of eternal life) and is contrasted with this age (an age of death). In this age the righteous and wicked live together. Good will not triumph over evil until the Kingdom appears in history.

In the Age to Come, the wicked will be weeded out of the Kingdom as sheep are separated from goats. The righteous will go into the age of eternal life and the wicked will be taken to judgment.

We will never experience the full blessing of God's Kingdom in this age until the *Parousia* (coming glory of Christ). The perfect Kingdom belongs to an age beyond history. The Kingdom will never be fully realized apart from the personal, glorious, triumphant return of Christ. However, its powers are available now and triumph over Satanic forces is probable for Kingdom citizens. Christ reigns! And, where He reigns, evil cannot triumph.

10 INVASION OF THE KINGDOM INTO HISTORY

10.1 Review of the Controversy

Albert Schweitzer saw the Kingdom as something totally eschatological, something totally beyond time.

Ritschl, Harnack, and Dodd saw it as exclusively present here and now.

Scholars like Geerhardus Vos and Oscar Cullmann saw the Kingdom as both present and future—present in one sense and future in another.

Ladd saw the Kingdom of God as the dynamic invasion of the Reign of God in and through Christ.

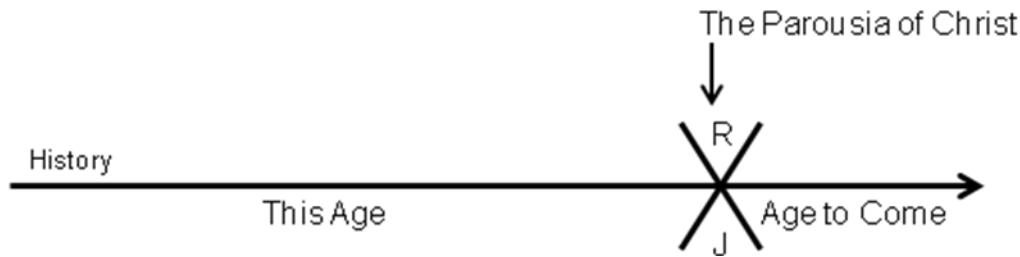
Most dispensationalists see the Kingdom as the proclamation of the Davidic, geo-political Kingdom. Most do not like to mention the gospel of the Kingdom. Scofield separated Kingdom theology from Gospel theology. Ryrie and Walvoord understand the Kingdom to be Davidic and postponed, and that the Kingdom today is God's spiritual rule over the church.

Is there a Kingdom today? What is its nature and character?

10.2 Entrance of the Kingdom into History

There are two ages: The *Age to Come* and *this age*. They are separated by the *Parousia* of Christ. The KOG belongs to the Age to Come. However, if the salvation of the KOG is only future, then it has no practical value today! It is merely a dream, a fantasy. It acts as an insurance policy, a form of eternal security. However, the kingdom is more than this.

Figure 28: The Parousia of Christ



With the coming of Christ, there is an overlapping of this age with the Age to Come. **The Kingdom of God intersected history.** The Kingdom was present according to the announcement of Jesus, but without consummation! **The salvic powers of the Messianic Age were present in Christ** in a limited but powerful way in advance of the climatic end of history. The Kingdom of God invaded history to establish a beach front in order to create sons of the Kingdom.

*Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God **is at hand** (h;ggiken): repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

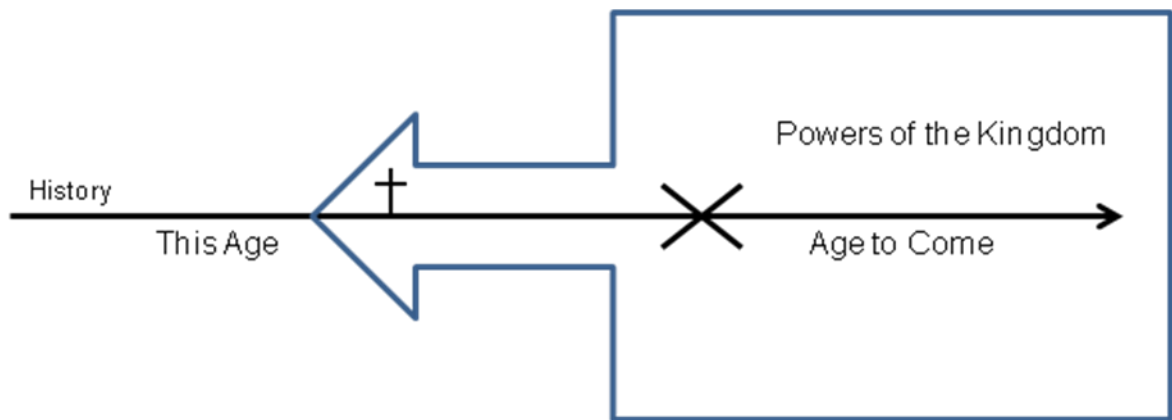
*Matthew 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed **good seed** in his field:*

*Matthew 13:38 The field is the world; **the good seed** are **the children of the kingdom**; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

John announced the coming of the Kingdom, but Jesus asserted that the promised Kingdom had appeared in and through his ministry. The Greek verb *eggiken* (h;ggiken) in Mark 1:15 is a perfect⁸ active indicative indicating that the Kingdom (the rule of God) arrived in history and was active during the ministry of Christ. His sermon in Luke 4:18-19 assured fulfillment. His Kingdom is not an apocalyptic Kingdom but a Kingdom offering the blessings of salvation to men without the final, climatic, cataclysmic, disruptive judgment of mankind associated with the end of history.

Figure 29: The Arrival of the Kingdom in History

⁸ Greek Perfect Tense: The perfect tense in Greek is used to describe a completed action which produced results which are still in effect all the way up to the present.



The Kingdom was present because the Bride Groom was present for the wedding—a metaphor for messianic salvation. The day of salvation arrived and fasting became an inappropriate response. (Hosea 2:20; Ezekiel 16:8; Isaiah 54:1; Isaiah 62:4).

Mark 2:19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

The Kingdom was present because Satan was being defeated. He was not obliterated, but his authority was challenged and his work diminished. He did not become powerless, but his power was frustrated. The tide had turned. Righteousness was on earth breaking the power of Satan over the minds and bodies of men. Whereas O.T. saints saw the enemies of God’s people as hostile nations, the focus in the Synoptics is upon the source of evil—upon the spiritual powers of evil behind the scenes of history. The victory of God’s Kingdom is an invasion into the kingdom of darkness –an attack on Satan at the Gates of Hell.

Luke 10:17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

Luke 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

The Kingdom of God entered history in the person and ministry of Christ. Note the connection between the gospel of the Kingdom and healing those possessed of Devils. In Mark’s gospel, the first recorded miracle is one of casting out an unclean spirit. The people, called it a “new teaching.” It was new because **Satan was being defeated**. It was not new because it was a new teaching, but because it was **a new reality** -- a new phenomenon. It was novel because deliverance was with authority. Christ proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom and then proved its power with proof of claim by defeating Satan.

Matthew 12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Matthew 12:26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his Kingdom stand?

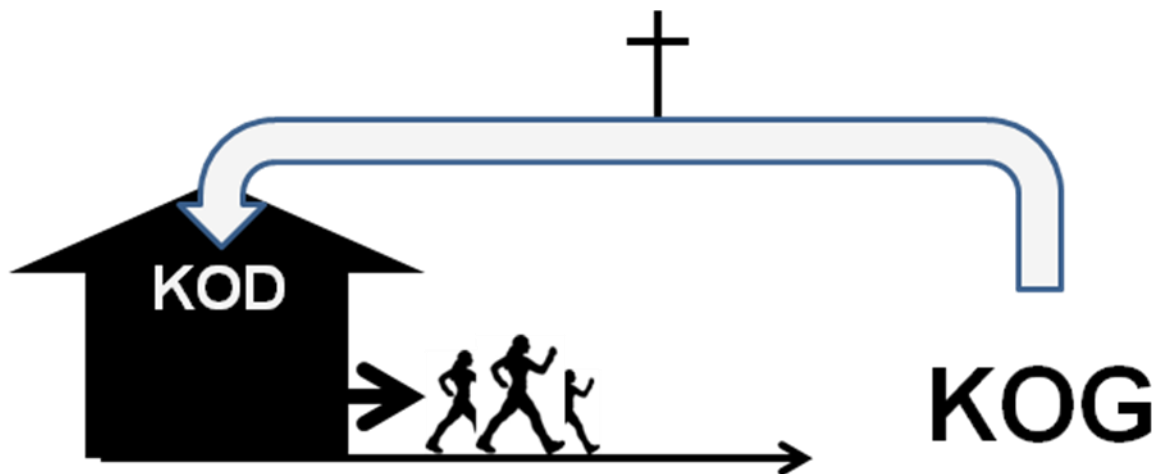
Matthew 12:27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come (e;fqasen) unto you.

Matthew 12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

What is the meaning of the word “is come” (e;fqasen) in verse twenty-eight? This verb is an **aorist** active indicative indicating **punctiliar, completed action**. The KOG has come and is now active among men to deliver them from the power of Satan. If Satan is being defeated, then the Kingdom of God has arrived in history, reasoned Jesus. But, it has arrived without consummation. The Messiah entered the Kingdom of Darkness (KOD), not to judge men, but to deliver them from the power of Satan.

Figure 30: Invasion of the KOG into the KOD



The Kingdom was present because the OT hope appeared before men in NOW-TIME. Sins were being forgiven, NOW. Diseases were cured, NOW. Death released its grip at the command of Jesus. Men obtained the blessings of the Kingdom in NOW-TIME during the ministry of the Savior.

Luke 10: 23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

The Kingdom was present by virtue of the fact Jesus said people could enter into it.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses (biazo: violently forces or pushes his way) into it.

Matthew 21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

The Kingdom was present because the Scribes and Pharisees who prevented men from entering the Kingdom in their time were being exposed. Light drove away darkness.

Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the Kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

The Kingdom was present as a divine activity because of fulfilled prophecy:

Matthew 11: 11-15 Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

John did no miracles. He stood at the threshold of fulfillment and announced the new order. Kingdom fulfillment was not obvious to the casual eye. People had to accept it. A willing heart was necessary to perceive its activity among men. Many did not recognize John and did "whatever they pleased" to him (Mark 9:13). Messianic salvation was present in time and space, but in unexpected ways – in first fruit ways not revealed in the Old Testament.

The New Testament announces the "good news" that the Kingdom of God entered history in the person of Jesus Christ. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He demonstrated His authority to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to control the elements. In every way, His life vindicated the hope of the prophets. Jesus Himself affirmed by his miracles the powers of "the Age to Come" were present in His ministry.

God mounted a heavenly offensive on the beach of Satan’s kingdom in order to rescue people from the chains of slavery.

Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you.

10.3 John’s Dilemma Solved

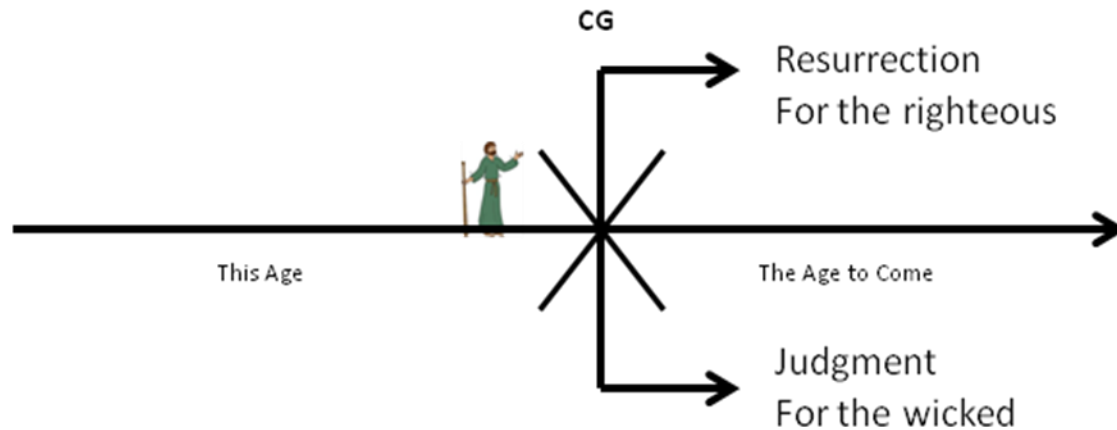
When John was in prison, he sent messengers to query Christ, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3), Jesus answered, “Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see.”

Jesus knew that His Kingdom was genuine and true. Jesus announced John’s preaching was correct. Jesus recognized the Kingdom he preached was consistent with the OT revelation of the Kingdom. **BUT**, he also understood that His presentation of the Kingdom was dissimilar to John’s perception of the kingdom. The Kingdom in and through Jesus ministry was dynamically present defeating man’s enemies, Satan, sin and death . . . **but not with irresistible force**. It was present, **but not taking global dominion of the earth**. It was present in a true, but limited way — something not anticipated in the OT.

John was **not** wrong in his interpretation or preaching of the Kingdom. He simply did not know where he was in history.

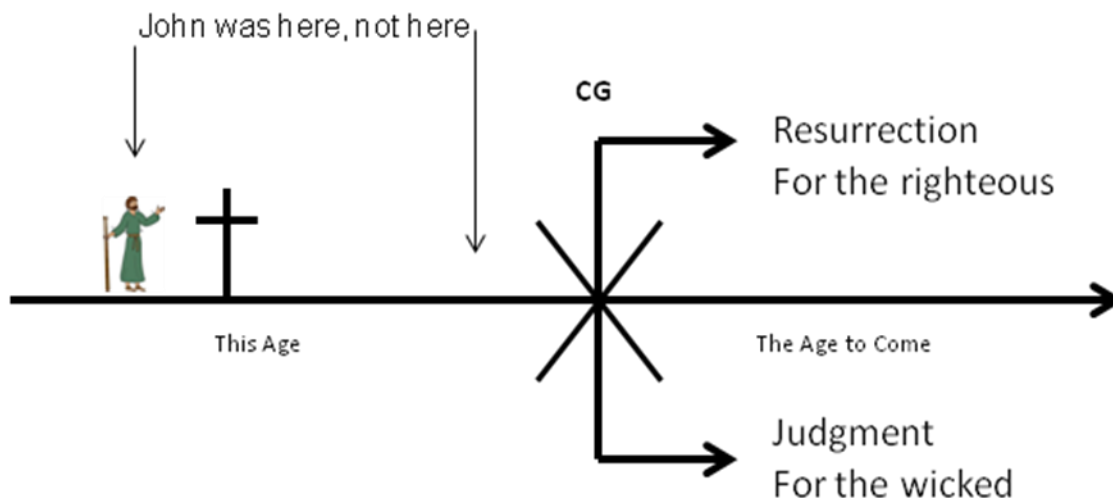
John thought he was at the end of history. When John announced “the kingdom of God is at hand,” he was expecting the dynamic and irreversible intervention of God’s reign into history to usher in the age of regeneration through the Holy Spirit and the climatic, radical, ultimate defeat of the wicked through His Appointed King.

Figure 31: John’s Confusion About the Kingdom



John was actually in the middle of history. He did not know the Kingdom was present only in a preliminary way, or that it was a secret invasion of God’s rule into history in a limited way. He did not perceive there would be a time gap between its inauguration and consummation . . . or that there would be a church age between the inception of the Kingdom of God into history and the dynamic, irresistible, universal realization of the Kingdom at the conclusion of this age.

Figure 32: Where John was in History



The Kingdom of God is real and true. The powers of the Kingdom were manifest in and through Jesus’ ministry. The first stage of the Kingdom was open for all to see. **Men could enter the Kingdom and experience its powers, but the full, dynamic, irresistible, universal manifestation of the Kingdom awaits the end of the age.** It was present in and through Christ in advance of its climatic conclusion and judgment of the wicked.

The Kingdom of God is **a living hope** -- a hope illustrated in the miracles of a carpenter from the hill country of Nazareth. Jesus’ presentation of the Kingdom was dynamic, **but it didn’t rise to the level of the cataclysmic, disruptive, irresistible rule of God proclaimed by Daniel and the prophets.**

Christ did not judge the wicked, disrupt society, or crush His political enemies. **The Kingdom invaded history, but without disrupting society.** Jesus was a seed sower, not Alaric the Visigoth the brutal warrior who sacked Rome. This global upheaval is reserved for His Second Coming. He came the first time, not to destroy His adversaries, but to redeem men spiritually, and deliver them from the power of sin and Satan. He came not to bring judgment, but to offer men the life of the Kingdom in advance of its future climax. He came not to condemn men before God, but to bring men into a right relationship with God before the ominous Last Judgment.

11 MEANING OF THE KINGDOM IN JESUS' MINISTRY

11.1 The Meaning of Christ's Reign

The Kingdom of God is described as the rule of God—the authority Christ over all things. God's rule is being exercised in and through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ to the right hand of God. The purpose of this reign is the defeat of God's enemies— man's fundamental enemies such as Satan, sin, and death as well as political adversaries, authorities and powers.

*1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when **he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.***

*1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all **enemies under his feet.** The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (Emphasis).*

This victory is accomplished in at least **two stages**, (The first coming of Christ, and at the second coming of our Lord).

Ladd, a strong premillennialist, saw **three stages** of the defeat of His enemies (Christ's first coming, the *Parousia*, and the defeat of His enemies after the alleged millennial reign). Ladd came to this conclusion by separating the following three phrases: (1) "Christ the first fruits"; (2) "Christ's at his *Parousia*"; and, (3) "then cometh the end." Ladd inserted a thousand years between the *Parousia* and "the end." But, a natural reading of the text would support the view that "the end" succeeds *the Parousia*. His second coming contains complete salvation for the righteous and final judgment of the wicked. A natural reading of 1 Thessalonians chapter four and five supports the view that the ominous wrath of God upon wicked men follows the rapture; that the rapture, the second coming, and the resurrection are essentially the same event — an event that cannot be exegetically supported by an insertion of a thousand year separation.

Figure 33: Two Stages of the Kingdom

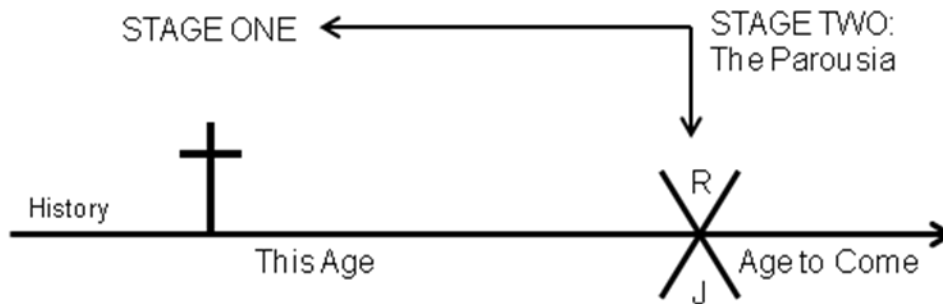
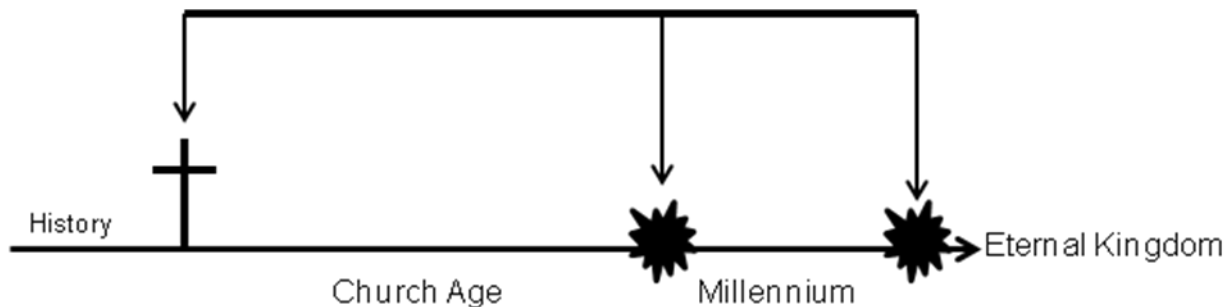


Figure 34: Three Stages



This professor understand the Kingdom comes in **two stages**: (1) at our Lord’s first coming and (2) at our Lord’s second coming; a sort of first fruits v. the full harvest; a down payment of kingdom blessings, and the full inheritance at His *Parousia*.

Satan’s defeat occurs in two stages; at Christ’s first coming, and at His *Parousia*. Nowhere in the New Testament can we find a concept of a three stage development of the Kingdom unless it is in 1 Corinthians 15. Likewise, the whole concept of a millennial reign is absent from apostolic teaching unless it is Revelation 20 . . . and this text is in the midst of the challenge of interpreting apocalyptic literature correctly.

11.2 Death is defeated

Death is man’s fundamental enemy. All get sick. All die. Religion is about man’s fundamental problem—the toll of death on body and soul. Is there any tangible proof that death can be overcome? That the grave is not the end? That death is not lord of history?

The marvelous answer is “Yes!” Christ delivered the initial blow to death in and through His death, burial, and resurrection. **If Christ defeated death, He solved man’s fundamental problem.** (Hebrews 2:14)

11.3 Two resurrections:

The meaning of the Kingdom of God is the reign of God through Christ destroying the enemies of God's reign. However, the conquest of God's enemies is not accomplished in a single act. Christ is the first fruits of the Age to Come. Two more resurrections will follow: 1) the resurrection of the just and 2) the resurrection of the unjust. In Christ's resurrection we see resurrected Son as the first fruits of a harvest to come (Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 1959; Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 1974).

11.4 Christian Assurance:

"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Because Christ's resurrection is an eschatological event revealed in time, we have the assurance that our resurrection is not a dream derived from eating poison mushrooms . . . but a future reality to be experienced at the end of history when the Kingdom of God is manifest in glorious power. See: Philippians 3:10 and Ephesians 2:5: these verses speaks of a spiritual resurrection, realized eschatology (Pate, 1995)

Death is defeated in two stages: First, death was defeated legally at Jesus's resurrection. Secondly, death will be defeated corporally at Christ's *Parousia*. Then comes the end (1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 20:10, 14).

The Kingdom of God means the defeat of God's enemies -- the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ until all rivals are put under His feet. Since Christ has risen from the grave, his triumph is begun. Sitting at the right hand of God, His reign is now . . . and not something postponed to an alleged millennium.

11.5 Sin is Defeated

Since death comes because of sin, **sin must be defeated.**

*Romans 6:2 God forbid. How shall we that are dead to **sin**, live any longer therein?*

*Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of **sin** might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve **sin**.*

Not only is sin's *penalty* paid, but its *power* is broken. Sin is shattered by virtue of the believer's "justification," "regeneration," and "identification." When a man believes, God *counts the man righteous and treats him as such* (justification). Once justified, the sinner is regenerated by the Spirit of God (born again); and, simultaneously baptized (transferred judicially or placed) into the victorious history of Christ to share in the benefits of our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 4, 5-6). Understanding the

judicial nature of the cross and one's change in status before the court empowers men to "say **NO** to sin" and "to keep God's law" (Romans 6:11-14; 8:4).

11.6 Satan is Defeated

Is Satan bound? What sort of bond will hold him? Certainly chains and leg irons cannot restrain a spiritual being like Satan. He can only be bound by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is what happened when Christ was on earth. Satan was being defeated in and through the ministry of Christ.

Luke 10:9;18 the Kingdom of God has come near unto you. . . And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

This is not a cosmological drama, but a metaphor to describe Satan being thrust down from his pinnacle of power. Since Satan evoked sin, Satan must be defeated (Ladd, The Gospel of the Kingdom, 1959).

Satan's defeat is accomplished in two stages: 1) at the cross and 2) at our Lord's *Parousia*. Judicially, Jesus "cast out" Satan at the cross; that is, our Lord Jesus wrest away the authority of Satan to dominate mankind. Satan's defeat is legal and forensic. The word "cast out" is the same word used in Revelation 20:1-3; that is, Satan experienced his judicial defeat at the cross, is now out on bond, and will be sentenced at the *Parousia* of Christ.

When Christ was on earth, He broke the power of Satan over the elect. Christ did not banish Satan, but He nullified the legal powers of the evil one over "God's children" by discharging His blood bond for sinners.

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (ekballo).

Observe that the term "was bound" is different in Hebrews 2 than in Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound (edasen) him a thousand years,

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy (katergeo) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

katergeo = to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, abolish; to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, effect, influence, power

Edasen = to bind or fasten with chains

It is not through the *Parousia* that the Devil is put out of action, **but through Christ's death.**

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Hebrews 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Summary: The Kingdom of God means the divine conquest over the enemies of God. In Christ's ministry, Satan's power was defeated. He fell from his pinnacle. He was bound by the power of Christ and cast out (*ekballo*) of a position of complete authority (Revelation 20:2; John 12:31). Therefore, men and women may experience the blessings of the Kingdom of God now in this present evil age, deliverance from sin, Satan, and the fear of death. While we do not enjoy the fullness of kingdom blessings, we do enjoy the first fruits of power, eternal life, and redemption.

The Kingdom of God has entered history and men have "have **tasted** the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come" (Hebrews 6:2-5). It is **not** a full banquet, but men can enjoy the appetizers. The Kingdom is more than a promise. There has been actual penetration and historical demonstration of its power and authority through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

The Kingdom of God belongs to the "Age to Come," yet **its power is here NOW** delivering men from the powers of darkness and the power of evil.

Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this age.

These verses suggest an overlap of the Age to Come with This Age.

11.7 Definition of the Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is the dynamic invasion of the rule of God into human history through the redemptive reign of Christ, the purpose of which is to deliver men and women out from under the tyranny of Satan, sin, and death and to bring them under the blessings of God's reign. It involves two great moments: fulfillment within history, and consummation at the end of history (Ladd).

Since the Kingdom of God is about the rule of God, why aren't more preachers preaching the Rule of God and the need of men to surrender to His law-order?

12 REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY

Some writers approach the subject of the Kingdom of God as if it was something totally proleptic⁹, and intangible belonging to the eschatological future. However, *the NT writers approach their subject on the Kingdom as if the eschatological hope appeared in history as a reality!* Nevertheless, there is little agreement among scholars — even confusion about the nature and character of what Jesus meant about “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

Dodd advocated realized eschatology, the view that the Eschaton moved from the future to the present, from a sphere of expectation and pure fantasy, into that of realized experience within the primitive church. After Dodd, there was a search for synthesis between the eschatological aspects of Jesus’ teaching and the arrival of the Eschaton in Jesus’ ministry.

Oscar Cullmann favored both elements in his thesis. To Cullman, the Eschaton arrived in the person and ministry of Christ in an *already form*, but it was not to be completed until the *not yet* of the *Parousia*. The phrase “*already*,” and “*not yet*” came from Cullman (Cullmann, 1950; Pate, 1995; Dodd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 1940)

Ladd advocated a form of realized eschatology (RE), the conviction that Christ brought the spiritual blessings (salvation) of the Age to Come (the eschatological Kingdom) as a gift of God’s rule. Salvation is an “eschatological gift,” something believers can enjoy now. The spiritual blessings are gifts of the Eschaton: election, justification, regeneration of the Holy Spirit, reconciliation, redemption, sonship, adoption. The gifts of God’s Kingdom are blessings to be received now in advance of the dynamic, convulsive, cataclysmic entrance of the eschatological Kingdom in to history at the end of This Age (Amos 9:11; Joel 2:30-32; Zech.. 12; Matthew 13:49-50; Matthew 24:3; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15; Revelation 19:11-16). These blessing are partial, but real (the now of RE). The consummation awaits the *Parousia* of Christ (the not yet of RE) (Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 1974).

Theologically, Ladd defined the Kingdom to be “. . . the reign of God through Christ destroying the enemies of God’s reign.”

⁹ Proleptic: something existing before it arrives in history.

Ladd drew upon Dodd's interpretation of the Kingdom *as the defeat of God's enemies* particularly the overthrow of Satan's authority (Matthew 12:26-29). Christ remonstrated with the Pharisees that if He cast out demons, then Satan was being defeated. If Satan was being conquered, the Kingdom was present; that is, it appeared in the Christ-event as an apocalyptic fulfillment of the eschatological promises. Jesus likened his mission to a thief who invaded a strong man's house (Satan's house) and bound him (defeat him) in order to steal treasure (men).

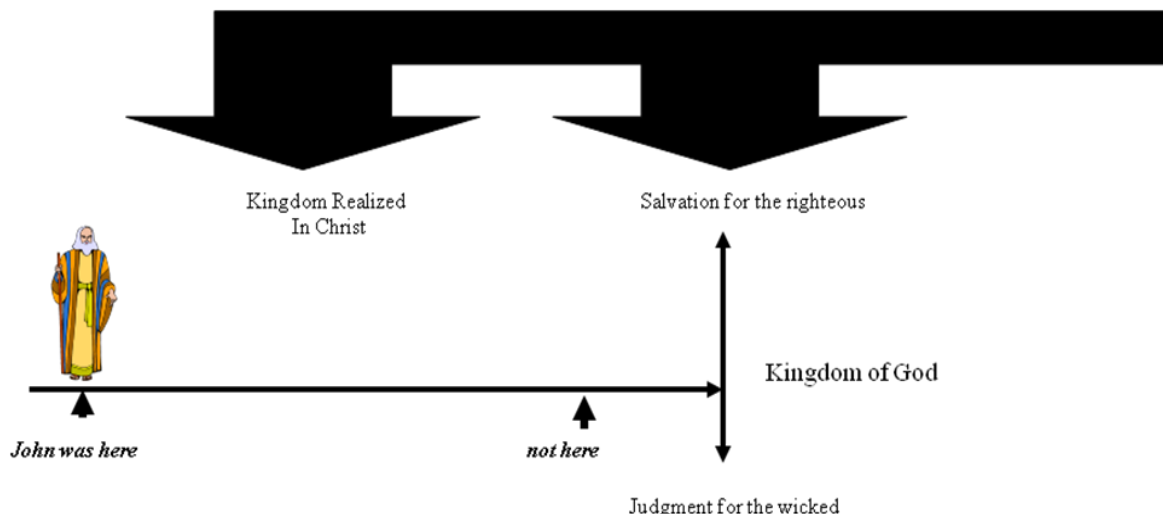
Dodd and Ladd interpreted this illustration as the redemptive invasion of the Kingdom of God into history in the person and ministry of Christ to deliver men out from under the authority and power of Satan in advance of the future, dynamic, cataclysmic, disruptive, eschatological entrance of the Kingdom into history at the end of the age (Appendix 0; R).

The presence of God's Kingdom meant nothing less than realized eschatology -- the in-breaking of the Kingdom into this age (aeon) -- a violent opportunity demanding a violent response (Matthew 11:22; Luke 16:16). Furthermore, since the author of Hebrews spoke of those who "tasted . . . the powers of the Age to Come" (Hebrews 6:5), and Paul declared Christ "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), then the powers of the Age to Come resided in the space-time continuum of history in the person and ministry of Christ!!

Believers, by virtue of present eschatological power, experience existential deliverance from this "present evil age" (Galatians 1:4); that is, there is real power freeing men from real sins – far removed from imaginary dream-like religious fantasies.

The Kingdom of God exists now delivering men from bondage to Satan (1 Corinthians 1:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-8). This is not a platonic, transcendent, or metaphysical daydream paradigm, but a condescending, substantial, authentic, existential reality. Ladd summarized his own position:

Illustration:



Our central thesis is that the Kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish His rule among men, and that this Kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign (Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 1974, p. 91).

Classical dispensationalism erects a wall between Israel's promises and the church. The system discourages using the term *realized eschatology*. To them, the theory decreases the emphasis and need for the rapture-tribulation-millennium. Progressive Dispensationalists, on the other hand, by claiming the church is a messianic community departed from the classical system in favor of Ladd's views. Christ is indeed coming again, but the antidote for man's problems are not deferred to the *parousia*. There is remedy now for man's spiritual problems. Kingdom salvation entered history in a first fruits way to save men, and it is in effect NOW!

12.1 Eschatological Implications

How deep is the death and resurrection of Jesus, and what are its implications theologically? The Christ event is deeper than any of us realize. In the death and resurrection of Christ, OT promises find their fulfillment. Judgment warnings and salvic promises thread their way through the needle of the cross.

Dale Allison draws a strong parallel between Mark 14 and Zechariah 13:7-14:4. In Zechariah, the prophet predicted the shepherd would be smitten (13:7), the sheep scattered (13:7), a time of great testing (13:9) and fleeing would come (14:4), the arrival of YHWH on the Mount of Olives (14:4; Mark 14:26) and that there would be a resurrection (an old interpretation of Dodd: 14:4, 5). In Mark, Jesus arrived on the Mount of Olives (14:26), announced the strike (arrest) against the Shepherd (14:27), the sheep scattered (14:27, 50), testing occurred, men fled (14:50-52), and Christ rose from the dead (14:28; 16:1-8). Consequently, Mark's presentation challenges us to not only to interpret Zechariah Christologically, but apocalyptically as a fulfillment of OT kingdom judgment and salvation (Allison, 1985)

The "darkness" mentioned in Amos 8:9 shows the sweeping effect of Jesus' death. Not only was the earth affected, but the entire universe became midnight black. What happened, therefore, is similar to what will accompany the Day of Judgment according to 23:24. Therefore, the death of Jesus is compared to that event (Allison, 1985).

Biblical writers believed the world had a beginning and an end. The end-of-the-world language used in the OT was applied to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Zechariah 13:7-14:5

Mark 14

1. An apocalyptic passage	An historical narrative
Shepherd smitten	Jesus was struck
The sheep scattered	The disciples fled
Lord arrives on Matthew Olives	Jesus was on the Matthew of Olives
The Mount was split in two	Jesus rose from the dead

George Caird argued in regard to the apocalyptic language of the OT that the apocalyptic teachers no more intended their eschatology to be taken literally than the prophets did. He argues that the apocalyptic similarity between the cross and eschatology acts more like a metaphor (Allison, 1985, p. 85).

The NT does attach the language of the apocalyptic to the passion of Christ which to us is not eschatological. For example: Mark 15:33 surely rest upon Amos 8:9,

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.”

This appears to be more than a metaphor, but genuine, realized eschatology. Jesus and the early Christians spoke as if the messianic age appeared in history. Satan fell from heaven (Luke 10:18). The hour of resurrection arrived in history and those who hear the voice of the Son of God experience resurrection power now (John 5:25). They are called new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). Eternal life belonging to the Age to Come can be experienced now in a first fruits way (John 5:24).

In Mark 14:62, Jesus said before the Sanhedrin, “You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” The word “see” can easily mean, “perceive.” That is, in the resurrection of Jesus, the Sanhedrin would face the fact that the Jesus fulfilled the splendor of the Son of Man mentioned by Daniel seven. Surely, the disciples learned this truth when Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me!” (Matthew 28:19). When the disciples interpreted the Easter event, they did so in light of their own eschatological expectations and concluded eschatological fulfillment. ***They believed in eschatological fulfillment without eschatological consummation.***

12.2 Fulfillment Verses

Again, classical dispensationalists do not approve of using the term “fulfillment” because they believe “fulfillment” distracts from the hope of the Second Coming. Therefore, a quick review of “fulfillment” verses is in order.

Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Matthew 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Matthew 2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

Matthew 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

Matthew 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Matthew 12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

Matthew 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which said, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Matthew 13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Matthew 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

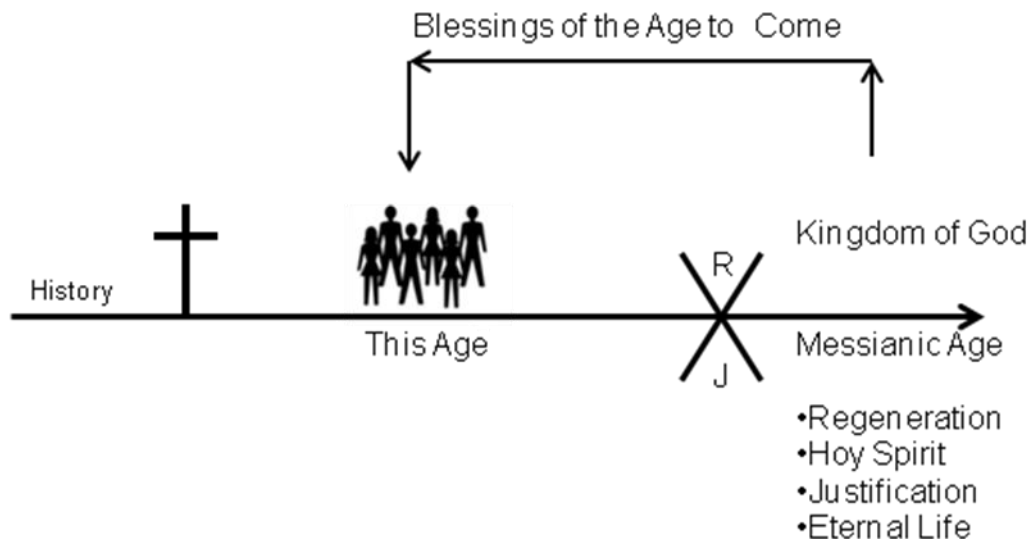
Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Matthew 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Matthew 27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

12.3 Four Eschatological Blessings Enjoyed Today

Figure 35: Blessings of the Age to Come



Justification: The term “justification” (*dikaioo*) or “justify” or “righteous” is a legal, forensic term related to the eschatological judgment at the end of the age. There is a day of judgment and it is closely associated with the final event of history where Christ will separate the sheep from the goats. The transcendent judgment is also declared an immediate event following death. Yet, those who believe in Christ are declared just in God’s eyes now (Romans 4:1-5; 2 Peter 3:7; Hebrews 9:27; 10:27; 1 Timothy 5:24; Matthew 10:15; 12:42; Matthew 25-32-33).

Judgment Day — a truth proclaimed throughout Scripture: What a fearful thing (Hebrews 10:31)!! Job raises the question, “How can a man be just before God? Likewise, the psalmist asks, “Who shall abide in thy Tabernacle Who shall dwell in Thy Holy Hill?” The answer is: Only the righteous (*tsaddiqu*) will enter the kingdom. The apostle Paul declares the same truth—that God will render to everyman according to his deeds. God saves the righteous and reserves judgment for the wicked (Psalm 15:1-5; Job 9:2; Romans 2:5-12).

This Biblical conclusion ought to be a grave concern for every person on earth. Who is just? The Scripture declares a truth, “For all have sinned!” (Romans 3:23). A verdict of “guilty” and a sentence of death is a foregone conclusion in God’s Courtroom (Romans 3:29-20; 6:23).

In Kingdom proclamation two judicial outcomes are announced by John: “a baptism (placing into) of the Holy Ghost (salvation) for the righteous, and a baptism of fire for the unrighteous (judgment)” (Matthew 3:22). As the progress of redemption unfolded, an eschatological event related to the final judgment is offered to believers in advance of the judgment in the Eschaton — justification is now by virtue of one’s faith in the cross.

Paul expounds the legal nature of the work of the Son and proclaimed that when men place their faith in Christ, believing men are “declared righteous” in God’s Court in advance of eschatological judgment. A

verdict of “justified” is published to believing men because of the accomplishments of Christ. Salvic blessing offered are based on the doing and dying of Another! He is **not** declaring that God makes men righteous and then pronounces them as such. He is not declaring that if men are born again they shall be just before God. He is not teaching that if men change, God forgives and then accepts them as just men.

God declares a sinner just when he believes due to the *faithfulness of Christ* (Romans 3:21-22). Believers are declared righteous and treated as such. So grand is this truth, it results in reconciliation--a “peace with God” and “joy in God.” If the Supreme Court of Heaven announces a verdict of “justified”, who can bring a charge against believers (Romans 8:33)?

Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

*Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that **justifieth the ungodly**, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Romans 5:10-11 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The Holy Spirit: the Divine power of creation, the eschatological phenomenon regeneration, has come into this age to baptize, unite, and gift the people of God now in advance of the restoration of all things.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

The *ruah of Yahweh* is God’s power and source of all living things; the One who empowered the prophets and delivered the revelation of God to men (Genesis 1:2; 2:3). The O.T. prophets looked forward to the Eschaton wherein the Spirit would regenerate this created order and usher in new life among men (Isaiah 32:15; 35:1-10; 65:1ff; Joel 2:28; Ezekiel 36:26-27). The Spirit came upon Mary and created Christ

without the agency of a man (Matthew 1:18) and it was the Spirit that empowered the ministry of John the Baptist and of the Son (Matthew 3:1ff; 4:1ff). Jesus attributed the defeat of Satan to the Spirit (Matthew 12:28), and taught them that it was the Holy Spirit who would help them remember his instructions on earth after His passing (Luke 12:12).

The Spirit that will create a new heaven and a new earth regenerates men so that they become a "new creation" now when they come into relationship with the Son (John 3:3, 5: 7:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

The prophets looked forward to a "new thing" (Isaiah 43:19; Jeremiah31:21:), a "new covenant" wherein men receive a "new heart," "new spirit," and a "new name" along with all his people (Jeremiah31:31ff; Ezekiel 34:25; 37:27; Isaiah 62:2).

Likewise, the promise of something "new" and wonderful is preserved in the New Testament wherein believers are promised "new wine" (Mark 14:25); a "new name" (Revelation 2:17); a "new song" (Revelation 5:9), a "new heavens and earth;" and a "new Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:1ff). Thus God through the Spirit of the Eschaton is creating a "new anthropos" (a new humanity) in this age in advance of the eschatological judgment.

The Spirit is often contrasted with the flesh (*sarx*). The flesh / body is not evil, it just does not have the capacity to reach up to God and grasp divine realities. The Spirit regenerates and empowers men to fathom the things of God and to experience victory over various forms of evil. The Spirit v. flesh (carnal man) in Paul is not a dual of two powers in the heart, but references to the regenerated man v. the unregenerated man. The "old man" (Romans 6:6) is not the sinful nature, but the old condition of an unregenerated heart.

All Christians are baptized by the Spirit or they are not God's children (John 1:10-13); that is, they are placed "into Christ" to enjoy a relationship to Him and to experience the first fruit blessings of Kingdom life now. All Christians have the Spirit, but not all Christians are filled with the Spirit. Quality of life and experienced power differs among believers (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 5:18-20).

Regeneration: Regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God. The Age to Come is characterized by the reign of eternal life. That life will come by the regenerating work of the Spirit. The Spirit who will regenerate the earth at the Eschaton is creating a new kind of humanity now (1 Corinthians 5:17). The very Spirit that will regenerate creation in the Eschaton has been sent to regenerate men now in advance of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:19, 21; John 3:3ff). God regenerates the just and declares them to be His children. One is not regenerated in order to be justified; men are declared just so they can be "born again." The *ordu salutis* is justification, then regeneration (logically) (John 1:12-13; 3:3; Romans 5:2-5).

Through the death of Christ, deliverance from evil is a present reality (Galatians 1:4). Therefore, meaning and hope is not shelved to the future age, but has pragmatic force and effect now.

Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Eternal life: Eternal life is an eschatological gift, a relationship of the body and soul to the eternal God (Revelation 22) that is possible to be enjoyed now, not in its fullness, but in its inaugural form. It is the major theme of John.

*John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have **eternal life**.*

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The emphasis in John is that eternal life can be experienced now in a first fruits way by those who are in relationship with the resurrected Son. The term “eternal life” is not found in the OT. It is deeply connected with the fact that YHWH is life and created life and therefore has the power to restore life. Eternal life in John is built upon the antithetical structure of the two ages (John 12:25). One who drinks the water of eternal life has its headwaters in the Age to Come. The harvest of life is fully experienced at the last day when the righteous will be enjoined in the resurrection of life (John 4:14; John 5:29).

The goal of John is not to point to the Age to Come, but to bring men into the experience of eternal life here and now by faith in Christ! This life is not only mediated through the Savior, but is resident in every true Christian. This life is nothing else but the life of the Age to Come. It is an eschatological gift given to all who believe in Christ (John 5:26, 6:5ff; 4:10, 14; 11:25; 14:6).

This life comes in two stages: Those who hear and believe the voice of the Son come to life now (new birth) and they have the assurance they will participate in the regenerative powers on the day of resurrection (John 5:21-26). All of this is possible because Christ has life in himself (John 5:21-26).

To have eternal life is to know God and enjoy fellowship with Him (John 17:3). Knowledge here is not just illumination of thought or good feelings, but participation in an intimate, mutual relationship that exists between the Father and the Son. To know Christ is to know God (John 10:14-15; 14:7). This relationship is not created by fasting or denials of the flesh or mantras or visions, but by exercising faith in our Lord. It does not lead to a “god within” or “merging with God.” Rather, eternal life means fellowship with God that leads to a life of love (John 15:1-15). For this reason, John places great emphasis on knowing Christ and seeing God (John 1:14; 6:36; 9:37; 14:19; 16:16-17).

12.4 Eschatological Judgment

The Kingdom of God arrived in history in the person and ministry of Christ to defeat man’s enemies and to bring men under the blessings of God’s Kingdom. The first fruits of a whole harvest of blessings are

bestowed on those who believe. In the Easter event we see eschatological fulfillment without eschatological consummation. This is realized eschatology.

The Kingdom of God entered history without the dynamic, cataclysmic judgment of the wicked, without full expression of the “the wrath,” and without separating the sheep from the goats. This judgment of God was present in the ministry of Christ without taking men into custody for eternal punishment. Jesus was not all sugar and spice and everything nice. At times His holy gavel came down in holy judgment against godless men.

Realized eschatological judgment is seen in the following ways:

The Lord cleansed the temple (John 2:13ff): Judgment began at His Father’s house. Our Lord took charge of the temple and drove out the moneychangers. This was judgment without consummation.

The Lord exposed the sins of men (John 8:12ff): In exposing the deeds and spiritual condition of the Pharisees, Jesus judged the spiritual state of the accused. His judgment was true, fair, and authentic.

The Lord decided legal issues (Matthew 22:46): The scribes and lawyers of Jesus day came to Christ with many legal questions (Matthew 15:1ff; 19:1ff; 21:23ff; 22:46) and asked him to make a legal determination on some controversial question. Our Lord was never without an answer and never undecided. His verdict seemed just and true even to His adversaries.

The Lord pronounced a judgment on the fig tree (Matthew 21:18ff). The fig tree, a symbol of the nation of Israel, was cursed in a premonitory manner as a teaching lesson of the coming judgment on the nation of Israel in 70 AD.

The Lord announced eight woes on the lawyers of his time (Matthew 23:13-35). Exposing the lawlessness (anomia) of these men, he announced their judgment—“You shall not escape the sentence of hell.” The verdict was pronounced, but the sentence was postponed, stayed, deferred, and rescheduled.

The Lord gave the verdict and executed judgment on Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-24:1-31): Jerusalem, which should have been the light of the world, had become recalcitrant and rebellious – a den of darkness. Judgment is pronounced. The walls are coming down. Destruction hovers over the city . . . and as proof that our Lord is Judge and that His verdict is authentic, the Son ordered the destruction of the city in 70 A.D. and personally supervised its demolition.

From His position at the right hand of God, the Lord exercises judgment in the Christian era. He judged Ananias and Sapphira for deception and fraud (Acts 5). He walks in the midst of the candlesticks judging defectors and perfecting his church (Revelation 2, 3). He comes to wage war against the anti-god forces and to deliver his people (Revelation 19:11ff). He delegated judgment to the church to excommunicate workers of iniquity from their fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:1ff). Some goats are separated from the sheep in the church age.

Even now, wrath leaks from the throne (Romans 1:18ff). Some sins are judged in time, and other men's sins await the final judgment (1 Timothy 5:24). In one sense, every time Christians judge their own sins now, they execute an eschatological judgment. To judge sins now means they won't be judged later (1 Corinthians 11:31).

In conclusion, both salvation and judgment belonging to the Age to Come have entered history in and through the ministry of Christ without consummation. Both salvation and judgment have been inaugurated in a proleptic way but without saturation. Consummation awaits the Parousia.

13 THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM

13.1 The Problem for Theologians

Albert Schweitzer wrestled with Jesus' presentation of the Kingdom, in particular Matthew 16:28, and concluded that the Kingdom Jesus preached was totally beyond history (eschatological); i.e., Jesus was a poor, misguided, deceived, apocalyptic teacher (Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, 1925).

Dispensationalists, in trying to wrestle with the problem of the Kingdom, offer us multiple Kingdoms: a universal Kingdom, a theocratic Kingdom, a Davidic Kingdom, a spiritual Kingdom, a mystery Kingdom, a millennial Kingdom, a Kingdom of heaven (mere profession of being right with God), and a postponed Kingdom. Dispensationalism's multiplication of kingdoms is not helpful!

Scofield believed that Jesus came to establish the *millennial Kingdom*. Because it was rejected by the Jews, Jesus introduced a *mystery form of the Kingdom*; i.e., the kingdom is corrupted Christendom leavened by the sin of men. If the Kingdom is "corrupted" as Scofield taught, it is little wonder why so many Christians shun Kingdom truth and so few are affected by it (Scofield, 1917; 1967).

Walvoord speaks of the Kingdom today as a "mystery form" (the spiritual rule of Christ in the church today). He used Scofield's terminology, but defined it differently. He saw the Kingdom proclaimed as the "Davidic Kingdom" and introduced the concept of the "postponed Kingdom" theory. In Walvoord's scheme of things, the Kingdom is postponed until the establishment of the millennial Kingdom. The church is an "intercalation" or "interim" plan until the Jewish Kingdom program is reintroduced into history. He made a distinction between the Kingdom of heaven (the sphere of profession) and the Kingdom of God (a spiritual rule) (Blaising & Block, 1993). But, Walvoord erred.

13.2 The Problem for John

John the Baptist preached that the Kingdom of God is near. Though he was amazed with Jesus' exhibition of divine authority, he exhibited perplexity by Jesus' presentation of the Kingdom. Frustration grew because he expected the appearance of the dynamic, disruptive, irresistible display of Kingdom judgment rather than the docile manifestation of power that appeared in Jesus' ministry.

13.3 OT Review of the Kingdom

The prophets spoke of the Kingdom of God. Did John misunderstand the Kingdom?

The Kingdom would bring judgment to the wicked and salvation for the righteous (Malachi 4:3).

Passage	Judgment Language	Salvation Language
Malachi 4	Every evildoer will be chaff	With healing in its wings
Zechariah 14	Now this will be the plague	Celebrate the feasts of booths
Micah 7	They will lick dust like a serpent	You will give unchanging love
Amos 9	All the sinners . . . will die	I will raise up the fallen booth of David
Daniel 2	It will crush and put an end to all these Kingdoms	God of heaven will set up a Kingdom
Ezekiel 39	I will send a fire on Magog	I will restore the fortunes of Jacob

Isaiah 11:4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

The coming of the Kingdom is **dynamic** (Isaiah 2: 4;12; 11:9ff; Daniel 2).

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

Isaiah 24:23 Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders.

The Kingdom will be **catastrophic and disrupt all of society** — so shaking that Isaiah describes the making a new heavens and new earth (Isaiah 11:1ff ; 65:17).

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 66: 22 For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure.

The Kingdom will be **universal and global** in influence and authority (Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:9).

Isaiah 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Isaiah 11: 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

The Kingdom reverses **the effects of sin** (Isaiah 11).

- Man would be restored to God (Jeremiah 31:34).
- The environment would be transformed (Isaiah 11).
- An era of peace would be ushered in (Isaiah 2:4ff).

Dwight Pentecost list the following characteristics of the Millennium (Pentecost, 1958)

- Peace
- Joy
- Holiness
- Glory
- Comfort
- Justice
- Full knowledge
- Instruction
- The removal of the curse
- Sickness removed
- Healing of deformed
- Protection
- Freedom from oppression

- No immaturity
- Reproduction by the living peoples
- Labor
- Economic prosperity
- Increase of light
- Unified language
- Unified worship
- The manifest presence of God
- The fullness of the Spirit
- The perpetuity of the millennial state

Pentecost saw a day when the millennial Kingdom would be established on this earth for a literal thousand years. Hoekema saw these concepts fulfilled in the new earth following the destruction of this cosmos (Hoekema, 1977).

13.4 John's Problem with the Kingdom Reviewed

John announced the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; that is, it is just around the corner. He was expecting the sudden appearance of the dynamic, cataclysmic irresistible rule of God in history through Christ as presented in the OT that would disrupt society, destroy the wicked, and reward the righteous.

Matthew 3:11 . . . he shall baptize you (the righteous and the wicked in the crowd) with the Holy Ghost (salvation), and with fire (judgment):

Did John misinterpret the OT? Hidden from him was the Kingdom program would come first in a quiet, local, resistible way in the person and ministry of Christ in advance of the dynamic, catastrophic, irresistible intervention of the Kingdom at the consummation of history. The Kingdom arrived on earth, but the powers of the Kingdom were limited to the local, provincial, presence of Jesus.

13.5 Jesus' Interpretation of his Kingdom Mission

Jesus demonstrated to His disciples the rule of God was present in His ministry by giving sight to the blind, strength to the lame, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead (Matthew 11:5).

Jesus understood the conflict between His demonstration of the powers of the Kingdom and the OT presentation of the Kingdom (Matthew 11:6). He taught that the Kingdom of God had appeared in His work. The presence of the Kingdom existed in the ministry of Christ without transforming it into the eschatological age.

Matthew 12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out (evkba,llw) devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come (e;fqasen: has come)¹⁰ unto you.

Matthew 12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil (a`rpa,sai: take by force) his goods, except he first bind (dh,sh|)¹¹ the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

The “strong man” is Satan;

The “thief” is Jesus; the “spoil” is men;

The “binding” is Jesus’ power at work to restrain the evil one.

It appears from this passage, Jesus interpreted His mission as His entrance into the domain of the Kingdom of darkness to redeem and deliver men out from under from the authority and power of Satan.

Jesus spoke of the entrance of the Kingdom of God into history as an invasion into the domain of Satan (Matthew 12:26). Jesus refers to two ages, **this age** (Mark 4:19) and the “**Age to Come**” (Mark 10:23, 30). “This age” is under the control of Satan and will be terminated at the second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:3). “The Age to Come” will be under the control of the King.

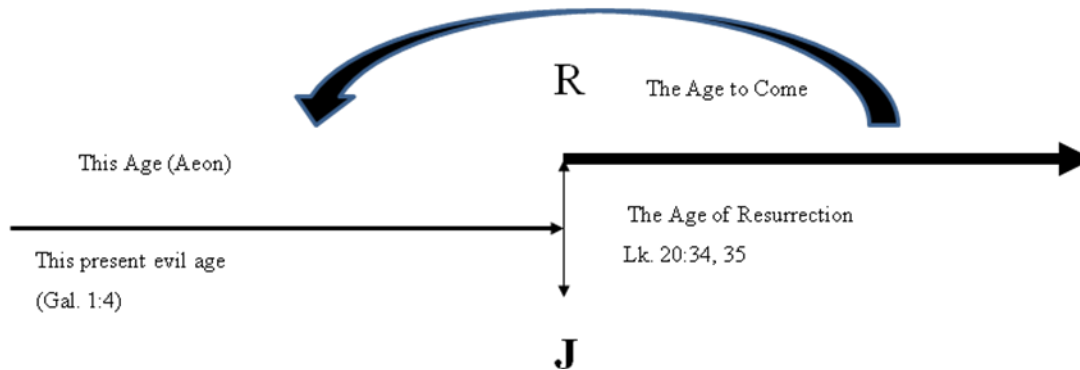
Jesus taught His ministry was a mystery (not something mysterious -- a conception outside the range of natural consciousness).

The mystery of the Kingdom is “the coming of the Kingdom into history in advance of its apocalyptic manifestation” (Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, 1974).

Figure 36: Entrance of the Kingdom into History

¹⁰ e;fqasen is an aorist, active, indicative.

¹¹ Same word used for “bound” in Revelation 20:2.



13.6 Interpretation of Jesus' Parables

The following interpretation is contrasted with dispensationalism because dispensationalists are devoted Bible students, and because dispensationalism dominates the minds and hearts of many Bible readers. However, that does not mean they interpret the parables correctly.

Classical Dispensationalists consider the parables as representing “Christendom” and the difficulties of gospel proclamation in this present time. Their theories are built upon the belief that Jesus offered the Kingdom to the Jews and then postponed the Kingdom until the Millennial Age. Scofield said the parables relate to the sphere of profession and that the mysteries of the Kingdom as “Christendom.” Jews love Scofield because he preaches a gospel where Jews are superior to Christians and pre-eminent in the Bible’s eschatological program. Unwittingly, dispensationalists preach a hope of a restored Israel with a 3rd temple in contradistinction to God’s auxiliary, inferior, intercalation church program. This blind flaw runs so deep that Southern Baptist John Hagee calls antichrist Jews his “brothers.” John the Revelator called them members of the Synagogue of Satan (Scofield, 1917; Walvoord J. , *The Rapture Question*, (1957); John Hagee, *Four Blood Moons*; *Revelation 2:9*)

The following presentation is a contrast between a general dispensational understanding of the parables and Ladd’s interpretation of the parables. To the credit of Dwight D. Pentecost (*Thy Kingdom Come*, 1995), he adopted Ladd’s interpretation of the Kingdom in his second great work on eschatology— and in doing so, Pentecost departed from classical dispensationalism (Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, 1974).

THE SOWER AND THE SEED: Dispensationalists treat this parable as the contemporary opposition to gospel proclamation in this age. Bill McDonald, former president of Emmaus Bible school, says Jesus coming out of the house represents Israel and that the seaside represents the Gentiles. He calls the parables an “interim form” of the Kingdom in this age and perceives the parable as referring to the resistance of gospel here and now (McDonald, 1974).

Ladd: The Kingdom of God was present in the person and ministry of Jesus, but not with irresistible power. His ministry was characterized by sowing. It worked quietly and secretly among men. It did not force itself on man in an irresistible way nor did it act like a stone grinding an image to powder. In fact, the Kingdom of God could be resisted. Men could reject it. The Kingdom will not achieve uniform success in this age. The varying responses were dependent on the varying conditions of men's hearts. Who can resist God? Who can resist His power? Yet, this is what this parable teaches. *The Kingdom was present and men could resist it!* As emissaries of the Kingdom, therefore, we must speak with authority. We plead, not demand; beseech, not force; persuade, but not compel men to accept the rule of God in their lives. To one who knew the OT, this was something brand new in theology. Oh, the harm that has been done by crusaders using the sword to convert tribes and nations!

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES: Dispensationalists understand this parable to represent two diverse responses among men: true believers (wheat) and professors (unbelievers) in this present dispensation.

Ladd: The Kingdom of God has entered this age, not to purge out evil among men, but to create "sons of the Kingdom" who will enjoy its blessing now. Society will not be disrupted by the presence of the Kingdom. In fact, the sons of the evil one and the sons of the Kingdom live together during this age. Society will be disrupted, but not until the end of the age. At that time there will be a severance of the wicked from the righteous. To one who knew the OT, this was an amazing announcement. Jewish Bible students understood that when the Kingdom arrived, the wicked would be destroyed. However, the kingdom of God did arrive in history without crushing its opponents.

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED: Dispensationalists teach that this Kingdom represents the humble beginnings of the church / Kingdom. When it was small, it was pure as a result of persecution; but, with the patronage and protection of the state, Christendom suffered abnormal growth and became a haunt for false teachers. The birds to a dispensationalist represent evil, even Satan himself who finds a nesting place in church. Therefore, when preachers cock-a-doodle doo the kingdom, they unwittingly advance pagan geo-political powers nesting in the false church.

A corrective: just because the birds represent evil in the first parable does not mean we should interpret them as evil in this parable.

Ladd: The Kingdom of God was present in the person and ministry of Christ. It seems insignificant, unimportant, and tiny, but from the seed of his work will come the great Kingdom as pronounced by the prophet Daniel. Though Jesus' ministry was small, the disciples were not to let its insignificance deceive them. Do not despise it. Though it has humble beginnings, it will one day be the fulfillment of blessing and hope for the entire world as predicted in the OT. Growth is not the point of this parable. This parable is not about the future manifestation of the Kingdom. One truth is announced: The Kingdom of God which shall one day fill the earth is here among men now in the person and ministry of Christ . . . but in a form which was not announced in the OT.

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVENED BREAD: Scofield taught that the Kingdom was the meal and that leaven represents the corruption to invade “Christendom.” Heresy comes through a woman (false teachers) introducing “false doctrine” turning it into an “apostate church.” McDonald saw it as warning against corrupting influences in the church, particularly the leaven of evil doctrine. The woman, therefore, is a false prophetess (Scofield, 1917). This view appeals to Christians who are rightly concerned about the influence of feminism upon the church. Scripture condemns the amplification of female voices in the pulpit. The requirement of silence for women is black letter law (1 Timothy 2: 11-12).

The problem is that dispensationalists identify leaven as evil when in fact the Lord Jesus said the Kingdom is like leaven. Though leaven is sometimes a symbol of evil, it is not an absolute symbol of evil. Here, leaven is symbol of the Kingdom—and the Kingdom is good, not evil!! “Adam” became a symbol of sinful humanity, but the second “Adam” represents Christ, the new holy humanity. A “serpent” is a symbol of evil in Genesis three, but is also a type of the Christ (John 3:14). Leaven in the exodus was not a symbol of evil, but a symbol of haste. Israelites did not have time to leaven bread because they were leaving immediately. Scofield errs here.

Ladd: This parable is not about growth nor is it about corruption introduced into the kingdom. This parable contains no symbolism of evil. Dough swallows up the leaven so that one is hardly aware of its presence. It is unobservable and imperceptible in how it works. It illustrates the truth that the kingdom in Jesus’ ministry seemed insignificant and small. The world may not recognize it or perceive it . . . but it was here . . . among men . . . employed . . . planted . . . fermenting . . . and working. The Kingdom of God is operative among men in Christ. Though relatively unknown and hidden, it will one day be universally unchallenged so that no rival exists.

THE PARABLE OF THE HID TREASURE: Dispensationalists see the man in this parable as Jesus and the treasure as the godly remnant of believing Jews such as those that existed at the time of Christ. This treasure represents believing Jews scattered throughout the world.

Ladd: The treasure is not Jews, but the Kingdom. The pearl does not mean we can purchase the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is extremely valuable, but it is hidden in history. Though it may cost all one has to possess it, it is a small price to pay considering the value the Kingdom holds and the joy it brings. Do all you can to find this treasure!

THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL: Dispensationalists see the pearl as the church formed under the pressures and irritations of persecution.

Ladd: Though the Kingdom of God is undetected by most, when found, it is worth whatever sacrifice is necessary to obtain it. It is a wise investment, and prudence demands its possession. Do all you can to obtain this pearl!

PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET: Dispensationalists see the “sea” as the nations and the fish as men caught in gospel proclamation.

Ladd: The Kingdom of God is pictured as a giant net designed to catch men. False and true subjects are caught in the great net of gospel proclamation. It is not a pure state. Evil men will find their way into the fellowship of Kingdom citizens. Good fish and sea monsters are caught in this gospel harvest. A great severance will take place, but not until the end of the age.

THE PARABLE OF GROWING SEED (Mark 4:26): Many interpreters see this parable as having to do with the growth of the kingdom or man's effort to expand the kingdom. Build the Kingdom, they say. The parable, however, shows the supernatural character of the kingdom: it is of God, not man. Man can sow the seed, but he cannot contribute to the growth of the kingdom. The growth and expansion of the Kingdom belongs to God and to God alone!

Ladd: The Kingdom is like a seed, which has resident power within itself. It grows independent of man's work and effort, even while men sleep. Man can sow (preach) the Kingdom, but only God can make it succeed. Both seedtime and harvest are supernatural works of God. There is NOTHING good men can do to make the Kingdom grow. Men sow gospel seed, but expansion is an act of God.

Summary Definition of The Mystery of the Kingdom: The Kingdom which will one day transform the entire external order has entered This Age in advance of its cataclysmic, dynamic, irresistible appearance at the end of history. It entered This Age in order to bring men and women into the blessing of the Age to Come without transforming the old order.

13.7 Supernatural Character of the Presence of the Kingdom

A question remains: "What can man do to make the Kingdom grow?" or "Can man do anything to further the Kingdom of God?" Since verbs define action, we need to look at key verbs associated with the Kingdom.

- (is): The Kingdom can be near men (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15), and men can be in the Kingdom (Matthew 5:19; 8:11; Luke 13:29).
- (come): The Kingdom can come (Matthew 6:10; Luke 17:20).
- (arrive): The Kingdom can arrive in history (Matthew 12:28).
- (appear): The Kingdom can appear to be (active) among men (Luke 19:11; Matthew 11:12).
- (give; take): God can give and take the Kingdom to and from men (Matthew 21:43), but men cannot take it away from other men. But, they can prevent others from entering into it.
- (enter): Men can enter the Kingdom, but they cannot establish the Kingdom (Matthew 5:20; 7:21; Mark 9:47; 10:23).

- (receive, inherit, possess): Men can receive (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), inherit (Matthew 25:34), and possess the Kingdom (Mark 5:4), but they cannot build the Kingdom.
- (reject): Men can reject the Kingdom (Luke 10:11), refuse to enter the Kingdom (Matthew 23:13), but they cannot dismantle God's Kingdom.
- (seek, look): Men can seek the Kingdom (Matthew 6:33), and look for the Kingdom (Luke 23:51), but men cannot bring it or make it appear.
- (preach): Men can preach the Kingdom (Mark 10:7; Luke 10:9) and do things for the Kingdom, but only God can give the Kingdom to men (Luke 12:32).

In Summary, the Kingdom of Jesus is not of this world; i.e., its origin and organization is from heaven (not the Vatican). It is not from man (John 18:36). For this reason, Jesus' disciples did not take up arms and fight to establish the Kingdom or to try to overthrow the Roman government, or any government for that matter. God's Kingdom is of a higher order than the world's governments. It is from God. It is related to men and it can work in and through men, but it is never subject to men. It remains the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom does not come when men receive the Kingdom or preach the Kingdom. The Kingdom came with the presence of Jesus and was inherent in Jesus' mission bringing men into the Messianic era. Even though the Kingdom remains a divine act, the presence of the Kingdom requires a human decision. It can be received and acknowledged, but only God can make it grow.

14 THE POSTPONED KINGDOM THEORY

14.1 Classical Dispensationalism

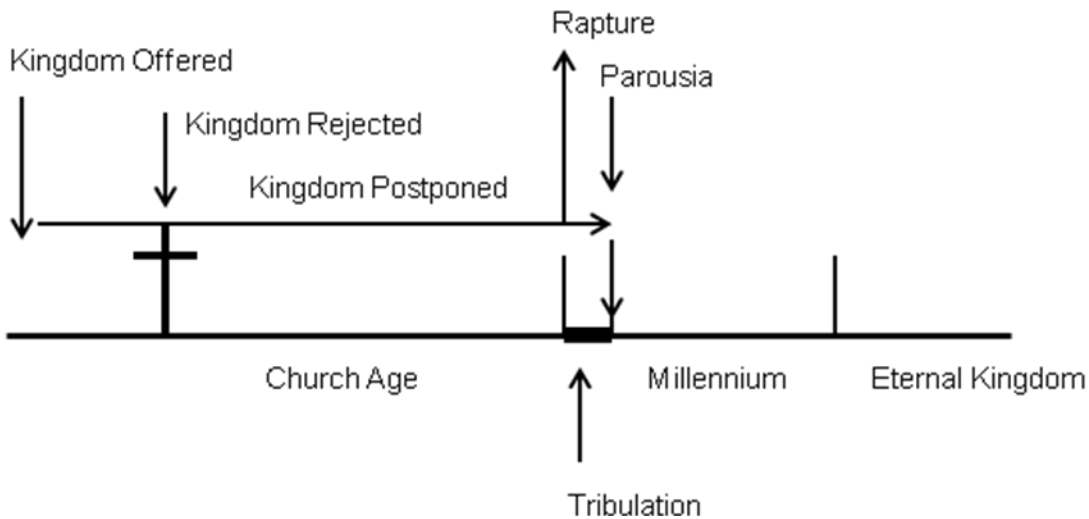
The postponement theory is built on a pseudo distinction between the Kingdom of Heaven (KOH) and the Kingdom of God (KOG). Mark, Luke, and John exclusively use the phrase “Kingdom of God.” However, the term, “Kingdom of heaven” is used thirty-three times by Matthew, and the phrase “Kingdom of God” is used only four times in Matthew (Chafer, 1947-1948; Gabelein, 1910)).

Classical dispensationalists (CDs) saw the Kingdom of Heaven as a form of the Davidic Kingdom and the Kingdom of God as a universal, heavenly Kingdom. According to dispensationalism, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are not the same. They represent two different concepts altogether.

CDs perceive an earthly, Davidic form of the Kingdom that was postponed during our Lord’s ministry. James Gray said (Gray, 1915), “The Kingdom of heaven . . . means the earthly Kingdom promised to Israel in the OT, over which the Messiah was to reign” (p. 295). A. C. Gaebelein declared, “Not only did John preach this Kingdom in its Jewish, earthly form, but the Lord Himself declared that it had drawn nigh” (Gabelein, 1910, pp. 60-61). John Walvoord (Walvoord J. , Biblical Kingdom Compared and Contrasted, 1994) works from a premise the Kingdom offered to Israel by Jesus was the Davidic form, that it was postponed, and that Christ’s reign as Davidic King “will coincide with the beginning of the millennial Kingdom” (p. 90). Since the Davidic Kingdom was rejected, Christ, therefore, postponed the establishment of the Davidic Kingdom until the *Parousia* of our Lord. Hoyt employs the term “suspended” (Hoyt, 1977, p. 94); J. Randall Price, President of World Missions, adopts the term “apostlesmatic approach” (Ryrie C. C., 1994,p. 137) to describe the purported parenthetical period in God’s program. The postponement theory emerged as a tenet of classical dispensationalism Kingdom theology. Ryrie and Pentecost still retains this view (Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come*, 1995; Ryrie C. , 1965).

*Jesus validated His offer of Himself as the Messiah by the miracles which He performed . . . Though Christ warned of judgment on that generation if they persisted in their rejection, the leaders did indeed reject Him; and thus He withdrew His offer of the Kingdom to that generation and announced judgment instead (Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come*, 1995, p. 214).*

Figure 37: Postponement



14.2 Dispensationalism Created a Dualistic Gospel

A dualistic gospel emerged within the classical system. To CDs, Matthew 12 is the Rubicon of Kingdom opportunity. When the Jewish leaders rejected the Kingdom, the new form of the Kingdom emerged (the mystery form or Christendom--Matthew 13). The gospel of grace (for humanity) replaced the gospel of the Kingdom (for Jews). Early dispensationalists bifurcated the gospel of the Kingdom (the Davidic form) and the gospel of grace as preached by Paul.

Gaebelein represents this view, "It is the Gospel of the Kingdom which he (Christ) preaches. The Gospel of Grace is something different" (Gaebelein, 1910, p. 100). The Davidic Kingdom was offered, but rejected by the Jews.

According to CDs, the gospel of the Kingdom (the earthly, Davidic form) will be re-announced through 144,000 Jewish evangelists during the tribulation period after the Church is *raptured* out of this world (Revelation 7:1ff). Afterward, the alleged Millennial Kingdom will be established on earth for a literal thousand years or after 365,000 days (Chafer, 1947-1948; McDonald, 1974; Hoyt, 1977; Pentecost, Things to Come, 1958; Walvoord J. ; The Millennial Kingdom, 1959).

Though this view has undergone some self-correction by dispensationalists, Christianity still feels the effects of its error. Christians influenced by dispensationalism believe there are two-peoples of God: the Jews (God's earthly people) and Christians (God's heavenly people). American Evangelical support for modern Israel is not based on politics as much as it is based on dispensational theology. To these people the Gentile Ashkenazi Polish and Russian Jews are the true people of God and the church is a ho-hum, run-of-the-mill secondary back up plan reluctantly initiated by Christ until the love of his life, the Jews, rebuild his precious temple in Jerusalem (sarcasm intended).

Any view that separates the gospel of grace from the gospel of the Kingdom to make two gospels must undergo serious scrutiny!! While most modern dispensationalists have abandoned the two-gospels view, they have not abandoned the underlying presuppositions of the system that gave birth to the two-gospel theory.

14.3 Postponement Advocated

Ladd quotes E.S. English: “The Lord Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom from this time until its final rejection by Israel, recorded in Matthew twelve” (Ladd, *Crucial Questions About the Kingdom*, 1952, p. 103). L.S. Chafer believed that Jesus offered the Jews the Kingdom, and that because they rejected it, Jesus initiated a “mystery form” of the Kingdom *that makes even the birds cough* (Chafer, 1947-1948: Vol. V, p. 350). Charles Feinberg asserted the same view, “The Kingdom now takes a form where its administration is in the hands of men while the King is absent from the Kingdom” (Feinberg, 1975, p. 95). “It (KOH) includes the whole sphere of Christian profession saved and unsaved, so-called Romanists and Protestants, all who are naming the name of Christ” (A.C. Gaebelein, quoted by Ladd, 1952, p. 104).

Ladd (1952) says this view has its most serious consequences while reading the Sermon on the Mount. Quoting the Scofield Reference Bible, Ladd shows this error: “The Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church. These are found in the Epistles. Under the law of the Kingdom, for example, no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven” others (p. 104). For other references on the expulsion of Sermon on the Mount, see Ladd’s work pp. 104-106).

Consequently, any view that restricts the application of the Sermon on the Mount to the church must be examined very closely.

14.4 Disagreement Among Dispensationalists

A variation between the CDs and progressive dispensationalists (PDs) erupted during the 1980s regarding the nature of the Kingdom -- particularly the Postponed Kingdom Theory. The Postponed Kingdom Theory became a fundamental tenet of classical and revised dispensationalism. PDs distanced themselves from this view and sided with Ladd asserting that a distinction between Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God could not be maintained (Ladd, *Crucial Questions About the Kingdom*, 1952).

To depart from the postponed kingdom theory is to depart from dispensationalism. Nichols is emphatic about PDs departing from normative dispensationalism:

Progressive dispensationalism has departed from one of the historical distinctives of normative dispensationalism, that of the offer, rejection, postponement, and exclusively future fulfillment of the Davidic kingdom. It has also failed to include a related

distinctive, the church's separateness from the Davidic kingdom. Dispensationalists from the successive periods of history have repeatedly emphasized these distinctives, an emphasis that nondispensational critics have also noted. Progressive dispensationalism, on the other hand, has not advocated these distinctives, raising the question of whether that movement deserves the label "dispensational" or whether it belongs more in the category of nondispensational historical premillennialism. Nichols (1966) says a defense is needed for the postponed Kingdom theory. Kaiser (1992) says the need is to completely disavow the postponed Kingdom theory. Kaiser is correct! (Nichols, Fall 1996)

14.5 The Error of Postponement

The Revised Dispensationalists (RDs) dropped Scofield's distinctions between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven, but they did not drop his definition of the Kingdom of heaven, which was the Davidic form of the Kingdom.

CDs appear to mistakenly interpret the Kingdom the same way the Jews did at the time of Christ. They define the Kingdom beginning with the OT and derive a geo-political kingdom installed with a Davidic king (Scofield's Kingdom of heaven concept). This was the Jewish interpretation of Jesus' mission at the time of Christ: If Christ was the Davidic King, He should establish an earthly, physical Kingdom. "However, Jesus did not present himself to Israel as the Davidic king, as Israel interpreted that kingship," declared Ladd (Ladd, 1952, p. 114)!

Difficulty apprehending the difference between Jesus' presentation of the Kingdom and Jewish interpretation of the Kingdom is understandable. Even John the Baptist was baffled by our Lord's quiet, unobtrusive Kingdom administration. The Savior, cognizant that His mission was dissimilar from OT revelation, said: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (Matthew 11:1-6).

Ladd says that Jesus did not offer the Jews the earthly Kingdom "any more than he offered himself to them as their glorious, earthly King" (1952, p. 113). Christ presented to the Jews a spiritual Kingdom and Himself as the meek, Savior-King who came to defeat the spiritual enemies of His people: Satan, sin, and death. Jesus' presentation of the Kingdom emerged as a secret, local, quiet, invasion of the rule of God into human history in advance of the dynamic, cataclysmic, disruptive, and irresistible consummation of God's Kingdom at the end of the age. His purpose was to redeem those who endorsed the rule of God in their lives (Ladd 1952, 1959, 1974).

Based on the Davidic Kingdom interpretation, CDs advocate a postponed Kingdom. PDs do not (Bock, 1992, p. 60). However, Saucy in his article, "*The Kingdom of God Sayings in Matthew*" appears to retain the postponed Kingdom theory -- the Kingdom offered and declined (Saucy, 1995:April-June).

14.6 Reasons to Reject the Postponement Theory

Ladd (1952) raises three difficulties with maintaining a distinction between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God: Linguistic, exegetical, and theological (1952, pp. 101-117).

There is **linguistic difficulty** in making a distinction between the KOH and the KOG. If the Kingdom of Heaven is used interchangeably with the Kingdom of God, then it becomes impossible to distinguish between the two. See the following references:

Reference in Matthew	Reference in the other Gospels
4:17 Kingdom of Heaven is near	Mark 1:15 Kingdom of God has come near
10:6 KOH offered to Israel	Luke 9:2 KOG is offered to Israel
5:3 Sermon on the Mount is the law of KOH	Luke 6:20 Sermon is the law of the KOG
13:1ff Parables are the teaching of the KOH	Mark 4:11 Parables are the teaching of the KOG
24:14 The gospel of the KOH is preached	Mark 13:10 It is the KOG that is preached

In the story of the Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19, we see the following terms used to describe the Eschaton: Kingdom of heaven (23), eternal life (16), heaven (21), Kingdom of God (24), saved (25), and the regeneration (28).

In the story of the Rich Young Ruler in Luke 18, we see the following terms used to describe the Eschaton: eternal life (18), heaven (22), Kingdom of God (24), saved (25), Age to Come.

As one can see, the terms kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God are used interchangeably. No viable difference between the two terms can be advanced.

Exegetical difficulties appear when one makes a distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. In the classical position, the KOH is the false Christian church. Christendom is the sphere of mere profession which lacks substance and reality. This position cannot possibly be maintained when looking at the story of the Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19. Jesus said it was impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. If the KOH is merely the sphere of profession, why would it be impossible for the rich man to enter into it? It is not impossible to enter Christendom by profession, but it is quite easy to enter the sphere of profession.

A second illustration can be found in Matthew 6:33. If the kingdom here is the kingdom of heaven, and the KOH is merely the realm of false profession, why would Jesus encourage men to seek first the Davidic Kingdom or Christendom or sphere of profession?

Over and over again in Matthew, men are exhorted to enter the KOH; i.e., to repent and surrender to its authority . . . and law-order. If this KOH is merely the realm of profession, why would anyone need to repent to enter into a pseudo realm of profession? We conclude, therefore, the KOH is not “Christendom,” or the realm of false profession, but that the KOH is equivalent with the Kingdom of God.

Thirdly, there are **theological difficulties** with the theory. The Davidic Kingdom was never postponed because it was never offered to Israel. Kaiser rightly states: “The postponed Kingdom theory has raised more problems than it has solved” (Blasing and Bock, p. 374). The position mocks God’s eternal plan, making Christ’s death a consequence of the postponement. We reason that if the Jews had received the Davidic Kingdom, the cross and His vicarious death suddenly becomes unnecessary.

There is little biblical evidence that Jesus ever offered Jews the earthly, Davidic Kingdom. If He had offered them the geo-political Kingdom (John 6:26), they would have gladly accepted it (Ladd, 1952, p. 113)! The Kingdom Jesus offered was the opportunity to accept His rule and reign in order to experience deliverance from the power of sin and dominion of Satan. The movement away from the postponed Kingdom theory is an improvement within dispensationalism.

The Postponed Kingdom Theory plays havoc with the purpose of the Christ-event. Did Christ come to offer the Jews the geo-political Davidic Kingdom, or did He come to redeem humanity through His shed blood? When the Jews rejected Christ, was the cross Plan B? And, if the Jews had received the Davidic offer, what would have happened in regards to the atonement at the cross? Would Christ still have died?

Jesus did not offer the Davidic Kingdom to the Jews any more than He offered them His Davidic Kingship. Our Lord King came in meekness to save his people from their sins, not to organize a military force to rid Jerusalem of Roman occupation.

Finally, just because the Jews of Christ’s day erred by interpreting Christ’s message as the Davidic Kingdom does not mean that we should jump off the same cliff!

We are under no more obligations to interpret Jesus’ offer of the Kingdom in light of the Jew’s understanding of it than we are to interpret His Messiahship in light of Jewish interpretation. It is the inspired record, not Jewish theology that is our guide (Ladd, 1952, p. 114)!

15 ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God is the rule of God exercised through His Son. The Kingdom is, has come, and will come. It is now and it is not-yet. The Kingdom is present now and offers men divine blessings--the blessing of the Age to Come: deliverance from sin, severance from servitude to Satan, and relief from the bondage and fear of death. The fullness of the Kingdom will be realized when Christ comes again when the Holy Spirit will transform men's bodies and the environment. But the Holy Spirit is at work now giving individuals the life of the Kingdom now so believers can enjoy fellowship with God now.

How does one enter into that experience? How does one experience the power and life of the Kingdom of God? How are the powers of the Holy Spirit obtained? How is one delivered from the domain of darkness, sin, death, and judgment to come: hence, how is one saved from “the wrath to come” as John warned? Is there a more important question in life than this one? No, unless it is this one, “How shall we escape who neglect so great a salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3).

15.1 The Lordship Debate

The Lordship debate between John McArthur and Charles Ryrie (1990's) made this study of supreme importance. How does one become a Christian? In America, you will hear answers like “accept Christ into your heart,” or “accept Christ as your personal Savior” or make a choice for Christ. Yet, these are not the terms laid down under Kingdom proclamation. Phrases like invite Christ “into your heart” are very Catholic, but they are not Biblical invitation concepts. How could Nicodemus “receive Christ into his heart” with Christ standing right in front of him?

Zane Hodges said, a conversion to Christ takes “no spiritual commitment whatsoever.” No commitment whatsoever? What? Hodge reveals dispensational paranoia of “commitment,” “Lordship Proclamation,” and “surrender” of the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ! In the dispensational system, demanding a person “repent” and “accept Christ as Lord and Savior” feels like a works campaign. But, this should not be! (Hodges, 1981, p. 14)

John McArthur interprets Ryrie as saying, “There need be no turning from sin. . . no commitment -- not even a willingness to yield to Christ's lordship” (McArthur, 1988, p. 22).

Chafer (DTS) contributed to the confusion of gospel proclamation when he created a dichotomy between the spiritual Christian and the carnal Christian. The idea conceives that it is possible to be carnal and still be a Christian (McArthur, 1988, p. 24). However, the term “carnal” (sarx) refers to the unbelieving, non-

Christian in Romans 9, not a backslidden Christian. The “sarx” is all that a man is without Christ and the regenerating work of the Spirit. To be “in the Spirit” is to have experienced the regenerative powers of the Age to Come.

McArthur observes many have considered “Lordship salvation” a view that demands a sinner “trust Christ as Savior and commit himself to Christ as Lord” as something heretical. What? Preaching Christ as Lord is heretical? A.W. Tozer correctly observed, “The Lord will not save those whom He cannot command. He will not divide His offices. You cannot believe on a half Christ” (McArthur, 1988, p. 29).

Tozer is correct, we do not preach a divided Christ. He is both Lord and Savior! To enter the kingdom one must acknowledge His authority and re-organize his life around the law of the King. No, we are not saying a man is saved by law. There is all the difference in the world between being saved by law, and being saved in order to keep His law (Romans 8:4).

McArthur says that “grace does not change a person’s standing before God yet leave his character untouched” (1988, p. 31). Preaching the Lordship of Christ is not the opposite of grace!

- The opposite of Lordship is maintenance of personal autonomy;
- the opposite of law is lawlessness (anomia); and,
- the opposite of grace is not law but lasciviousness or permissiveness.

Can a study of Kingdom proclamation resolve this issue?

15.2 Faith vs. Repentance

Are faith and repentance in opposition to each other, or do they exist in a dynamic tension like heads and tails on a coin? The opposite of faith is not repentance. Faith and repentance are simply two sides of the same coin. Likewise, the opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness; the opposite of grace is not law, but permissiveness.

The word believe is used ninety-one times in John as the fundamental requirement for entrance into the life of the Kingdom, but today "faith" has been so misconstrued that readers are forced to retreat to the other gospels to understand the nature of faith.

The word "believe" is used nine times in Matthew, but it is never used as a command or invitation to come into the Kingdom. Though it takes faith to enter the Kingdom, faith is not the demand of the Kingdom in Matthew. Matthew presents salvation in context of Kingdom truth. Surrender to Christ’s authority and you will be saved. To preach Christ as Savior and not as Lord is to preach a half gospel. What are we asking people to believe? We are asking people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the King

of Israel, Lord and Master. He is Lord by virtue of His resurrection and Master by virtue of one arranging himself under His authority.

Luke summed up Paul's ministry this way:

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul called autonomous men to repent of their self-willed, independent, libertine ways and to place their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since sin is compared to men "going their own way" like sheep (Isaiah 53:6), the Kingdom of God calls men to lay down their crowns and to acknowledge the crown of Christ whose kingdom they seek to enter. Would you welcome a man into your home that did not acknowledge your authority over your household . . . or even worse, that believed he had a right to enter your home and rearrange your stuff? If a man wants to enter the kingdom of God, he must repent of his rebellion against God's law and surrender to the rule of God. This is Matthew's call.

Ladd is helpful here.

15.3 The Fundamental Demand of the Kingdom is Decision.

Jesus demanded a decision.

Matthew 11:28,29 Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest . . . Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Notice the invitation terms in this verse: "come," "take my yoke," "learn of me." Jesus is demanding a decision. "Come to me" and stop going to pseudo religions and false teachers. "Take my yoke"; that is, surrender to my authority, my rule, my laws, and my will; and "learn of me" and stop learning from the Pharisees and Greeks and humanists.

His message was to "repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Life is a series of decisions: a job, a place to live, things to buy, the values we adopt. These decisions often determine our success or failure.

Decision expected: "as you go, preach this message: The Kingdom of heaven is near . . ." (Matthew 10:7) People had to choose to receive or reject God's rule, to receive or reject Jesus' messengers. The consequences were real. For those who rejected the rule of God over their cities, Jesus stated: ". . .it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that city (Matthew 10:15).

Basis demand: The gospel of the Kingdom was an appeal to the will. One must receive His authority. One must decide . . . repent . . . turn . . . surrender. He does not ask men to find in themselves righteousness, or to create that righteousness, or to bring forth it's life, but he does ask the hearer to receive the Kingdom, to received the life of the Kingdom, to receive its power, to surrender to its authority, and to receive the enablement of the Holy Spirit. This is not saying that men are saved by works. One's surrender to the authority of Christ is not meritorious. It is an act of faith, an act of repentance. Faith submits and surrenders to our Lord's authority; Unbelief commits *anomia* (lawlessness) and maintains that he is the Captain of his ship and the Master of his fate.

15.4 Jesus Demanded a Deliberate Decision

The decision must have resolve, firmness, and determination. It must be "thought-through," intelligent, and calculated. Entrance into the Kingdom involves a firm, rational embrace of the King and His authority. "Yes" to Jesus as Lord means "No" to my will and my way.

Mr. Too Quick: "I will follow you wherever you go." This self-proclaimed candidate's response to Christ appears to be sanguine, superficial, and random lacking any consideration of the cost of following Christ. Was he serious?

Matthew 8:19 "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

The Son of man was homeless. He had no international fame, or social prominence. He was rejected by the officers of Israel and unpopular with the ruling class. Jesus was not interested in the spurious, artificial, half-hearted, and uncalculated. The man needed to understand the cost of following Christ. He did not men health and wealth, but pain and poverty.

Mr. Too Slow: Jesus came to the man and said, "Follow me." But the man responded, "Lord let me first go and bury my Father" (Matthew 8:21). He expressed readiness and good intentions, but his present plans were more urgent than following Jesus. In fact his plea contained these words, "Let me first go . . ." This man had a different set of priorities than our Lord. Thus, Jesus answered him, "Let the dead bury the dead" or "get your priorities straight."

Jesus demanded a deliberate, resolute, and calculated decision. There is no room for reluctance, uncertainty, milquetoast, cream-puff, straddle-the-fence, weasel-worded, or weak-kneed decision.

15.5 Jesus Demanded a Radical Decision

Matthew 11:12 "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven works mightily, and men of violence take it by force."

The term “violence” is the Greek word *biazō* which means “to use force.” “Violence” describes the radical nature of the opportunity to enter the Kingdom. Entrance was paramount but it demanded a radical decision. The more powerful the will embraces sin, the more costly and dynamic the decision has to be. A violent decision involves a reversal - a turbulent, cataclysmic, convulsive decision.

The word “strive” means to "strain every muscle," and that is what one must do to enter the Kingdom.

This is not works theology! Indeed, nothing man does is meritorious. Men are saved by the works of Christ, not their own weak, flimsy good wishes and charities. However, for some, a decision for Christ can be violent --an end to one’s worldly ambition of collecting gold or obtaining fame; and, an end to one’s narcissistic lifestyle. In some places in the world, the choice is between Christ and family.

Consider the rich young ruler’s story and the radical decision Christ ordered him to make: “Sell that thou hast . . . and thou shall have treasure in heaven” (Matthew 19:21). How was the man going to enter the Kingdom? By obeying the King, selling all he had, and following Christ. Christ’s mandate did not set well in his soul. Christ gave a radical answer to the man’s good question and Christ’s answer disturbed the man’s wealthy, comfortable, powerful, peaceful world.

Matthew 10: 34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but sword.

People have wrong ideas about Christ. Many think that Christ came to bring peace, happiness, and to make people wealthy. He corrected their errant theology. A sword severs, cuts, wounds, and causes pain. It is an instrument of violence. Some things must be severed to enter the Kingdom: a salacious lover, money, an immoral lifestyle, shady jobs, and yes “money.” When was the last time you heard a preacher tell a rich man in the community to sell all that he has and give it to the poor so he can enter the kingdom?

Matthew 5:29 If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out . . .and if your right hand cause you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

The metaphor: Jesus declared that the opportunity was violent . . . that is, it takes a radical, sword-severing, Samurai slashing decision to enter the Kingdom. There is no room for casualness, double-mindedness, hesitancy, or laggardness.

Modern man is quite radical about accumulating wealth and pursuing pleasure. Fans explode over the accomplishments of the favorite sports teams. Business men go to extreme measures and takes enormous risks to accrue fortunes, but most are quite casual about religion. What’s important is government, not God. Jesus assaulted passive religion. He hammered passivity. The person who is a mountain of lethargy should not expect to enter the Kingdom. The greatest sin on earth is the neglect of the Son of God and the greatest need is for men to realize how great Christ is—and to violently pound on the gates of heaven and surrender to his authority.

15.6 Jesus Demanded a Calculated Decision

Matthew 10:37 Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worth of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Anything that stood in the way of following Christ had to be plucked up, cut off, and severed whether it be wealth, or family relationships, or personal pleasure. Jesus is not advocating poverty, or suggesting that men hate other men. He seeks decision. He seeks severance from everything and anything that stands in the way of a Kingdom life.

A decision may affect a man's wealth. God does not ask all men to forsake their wealth, but He did ask the rich young ruler to go sell all that he had. And, this is exactly what the man needed to do to embrace eternal life. How many people have had opportunity for personal advancement . . . and love for the Kingdom atrophies. Love for things may conquer the love of God in some people's lives.

The Kingdom of God challenges man's values:

Romans 14:17 The Kingdom of God is not in food and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

A decision for Christ may affect one's relationships. Human affections are strong. Family pulls are powerful, but when they interfere with the rule of the Kingdom, they must be released even if others protest. For this reason, Jesus said a man must "hate his father and mother . . . yea, and his own life also."

A decision for Christ may affect one's total and precious self. Cross bearing is not man's ills, pains, and sicknesses. Jesus is not asking men to give up something for lent, or to deny themselves a luxury. It is far deeper than this. It is nothing less than death itself -- a complete dying to one's precious all. It involves His ownership, rulership, and lordship over a man's life. It involves yielding the right to choose, the right to cast a vote regarding God's will for one's life. When man dies to self; Christ rules. The cross-bearer can then take possession of life wherein the life of the Kingdom becomes his personal possession.

15.7 Jesus Demanded an Unfettered Decision

Matthew 12:39 A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign . . . the Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

Today people have all kinds of excuses for not following the Master. It is costly, expensive, and hard. It takes time and commitment.

But the Queen of South will stand in judgment on this generation. Consider the cost this Royal made to leave her country and to caravan to Jerusalem in order to hear Solomon. She heard only a rumor, but she left her Kingdom in hope of meeting the greatest king on earth. She risked her political future. The trip cost her money, manpower, and time. She overcame her excuses to hear Solomon's wisdom. How much more should all who hear of the hope in King Jesus and pay the price to find Him?

Jesus doesn't like excuses! Whatever binds men to the pleasure of this world must be severed and laid at his feet. Curious people that approach kingdom gates with reservation and hesitancy may not find the door of the Kingdom open to them again (Luke 13:35).

15.8 Jesus Demanded a Child-like Decision

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The term "except" (ean me) narrows possibilities; that is, it limits the width of the door into the Kingdom. The King informs us that the door into the Kingdom is so narrow that only the trusting can enter into it.

The term "converted" means "to turn" and holds out the possibility of a demand.

"As children" does not mean "childish" or "with ignorance" but with simplicity. Jesus is King. Children readily accept the authority of adults. Most children do not question the wisdom or authority of a grown up; that is, to enter the Kingdom one must accept the authority of Christ like a child. The Kingdom is not made up of proud, autonomous, self-willed, self-made men, but of child-like people who willingly accept the regency of King Jesus. Kingdom citizens have turned from pride and arrogance to humbly and gladly accept the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives.

15.9 Jesus Demanded a Joyful Decision

Matthew 13:46, 47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Before us is a merchant who recognizes the value of things. When he finds a beautiful set of rare pearls, he notices one that is of greater value than all the others. If he does not have enough cash to purchase it, he makes a radical decision to liquidate all his worldly assets in order to procure the priceless gem. He does not sell his possession begrudgingly or out of sorrow, but joyfully. Possession of this one pearl is a greater asset than all his former treasures.

Likewise, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a great pearl. When a man hears Kingdom proclamation, he immediately recognizes the value of entering this golden city. He lets nothing stand in his way of obtaining Kingdom blessings. A decision is necessary! He gladly forsakes all that is of value to him in order to obtain the riches of the Kingdom. We have a contract¹²: An offer is made. Consideration is demanded. A voluntary decision must be made (acceptance) in order to obtain the benefits. A payment is demanded . . . and the price is gladly paid. Abandoning his precious all, he joyfully surrenders his stuff in order to obtain this expensive jewel. Possessing new wealth, he feels nothing but joy. He knows now that He has eternal wealth.

15.10 Jesus Demanded a Permanent Decision

Matthew 10:32 Whoever acknowledges (confess) me before men, I will also acknowledge (confess) him before my father in heaven, but whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my father in heaven.

The word “confess” means “to own,” “embrace,” “swear allegiance to,” or “to affirm” His authority and claims. Confession involves decision. This decision has to be public. It is pensive, definitive, significant, absolute, final, once for all. It is the kind of decision marked by permanence. It cost a man little to have a girlfriend, but marriage involves a permanent, calculated, life-long, public decision. There is something permanent and public about Kingdom decision. To those who declare allegiance to Him, He promises to embrace and honor them before the Father in heaven.

15.11 Jesus Demanded a Faith Decision in John

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

It takes faith to make a decision. It takes faith to pledge loyalty to a King without seeing His Kingdom. Note the relationship between Kingdom, new birth, the death of Christ (redemptive), and faith. Faith is not a virtue, or a feeling in the heart; it is a view, a confidence, a conviction, a commitment that what is promised will be delivered.

¹² So much of Scripture is about contracts or covenants. The difference between the two is only in name. A contract has to do with an agreement between men; a covenant has to do with an agreement between God and men.

15.12 Jesus Promised Reparation for Decisions

Reparations to the fickle:

Matthew 12:20 Woe to you Korazin! Woe to you Bethsaida . . . I tell you it will be more tolerable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

If he judged a primitive, ignorant, Neanderthal, perverse society, what will he do to an advanced, perverse, know-it-all, have-it-all, want-it-all society that swims in Bibles, churches, and gospel testimony?

Reward to the Faithful:

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest . . .

The “rest” is Christ’s way of addressing the subject of salvation. The “rest” is the blessing of the Kingdom: salvation, the Holy Spirit, freedom from sin, escape from Satan, and deliverance from judgment. For those who make that permanent decision, who receive the rule of the Kingdom now, the blessings of the Kingdom and the life of that Kingdom will be created within that person. And those who have life now, will enjoy the fullness of blessing to come at the *Parousia* of our Lord and Savior.

The decision itself is not meritorious; it is not a work; but it does open the door so the merits of Christ can be applied to one’s life.

15.13 Eternal Security and Kingdom Decision

A question some might ask is, “Can I be eternally secure?” The answer in part depends on the kind of decision one makes. Was the decision deliberate, radical, calculated, unfettered, and permanent? If so, one’s salvation is secure; but if it was dubious, spurious, lukewarm and superficial. . . then one can’t lose it. That person never had it!!

Can you lose your salvation? Yes, you can. Most men can lose anything. If salvation was up to man, he would lose it, but for the one who makes a true faith-decision, Jesus won’t lose him! The works of Christ on the cross are sufficient and effective toward all who believe. The true believer is eternally secure and takes comfort in the promises of God.

15.14 Summary of Salvation Responses According to Matthew

15.14.1 By Radical Repentance

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

15.14.2 By Radical Confession

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

15.14.3 By Radical Loyalty

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

15.14.4 By Radical Following

Matthew 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 10:40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

15.14.5 By Radical Decision

Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

15.14.6 By Radical Submission

Matthew 11:28-29 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 16:26 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?

15.14.7 By Radical Conversion

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

15.14.8 A Bold Invitation

Where are you? Have you made a bonafide decision to receive the rule of God in your life? Or has your decision been spurious, superficial, convenient and shallow? An authentic decision has the strength of iron and will unlock the door of the kingdom, but a superficial decision is like the wind that slams the door shut. If Christ is King, then accept His yoke. Come forward and make your confession today. Don't put it off, don't keep it private, make it public. Then, you will find rest for your soul.

16 THE KINGDOM, THE CHURCH, AND ISRAEL

The Kingdom of God in the NT is the redemptive work of God active in history for the defeat of His enemies, bringing to men the blessings of His divine rule in advance of its cataclysmic entrance into history. It is the dynamic reign of God and not a proposed millennium.

16.1 Definitions

Before we begin this study we must define the term “Jew” and “Zionist.”

A Jew can refer to a person from the tribe of Judah. In this sense, Jesus was a Jew because He was from the tribe of Judah. In this sense, Paul was not a Jew because he was from the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:1-5).

In this sense, there are no Jews today for no man can trace his genealogy back to Judah. In this sense, Abraham was not a Jew, because he was the father of Isaac, Jacob, and Judah.

A Jew can refer to the survivors of the nation of Israel. During the captivity, those exported to Babylon were called “Jews” by the Persians without regard to their tribal distinctives (Esther 2:5; 8:7). Moreover, the term “Jew,” in first-century cultural spiritual sense, referred to anyone with a connection to Abraham.

A Jew can refer to one who practices Judaism. The Pharisees were Jews in the religious sense of the term. But, Jesus was not a Jew in the religious sense. He did not practice Judaism. He practiced obedience to the law as given to Moses.

In modern times a Jew is used in a racial sense. Modern Jews have no Hebrew / Abrahamic blood in them. They are Ashkenazis from the Kazarian Empire (Ukraine) or Sephardics from Spain or another country. In Israel, a Jew is one with a Jewish mother, and since most Jewish mothers are of Ashkenazi origin all so called “Jews” are Gentiles from the Ukraine, Russia, or Poland. In this racial sense, neither Jesus or John or Peter are Jews (Consider doing research on the conversion of the Gentile Khazarian Empire circa 800 AD to Judaism and their diaspora into Poland and Russia).

The term “Jew” can improperly refer to a Zionist; that is, one who follows the Zionist, banking, new world order. While some Jews are Zionist in the political sense, not all Zionists are Jews. Thus, Zionism refers to a political agenda without racial connotations.

The term “antisemitic” is *a loaded propaganda term* designed by the Marxist Zionists to shut down criticism of any modern-day Zionist political activity. Since no modern Jew has Semitic blood in them, it is impossible to be antisemitic when criticizing them. Further, no Christian can be antisemitic because his best friends are true Jews: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Jeremiah, Jesus, John, Peter, and Paul.

Oh, the irony of it all. The Zionist propaganda has been so affective, anyone who dare criticize the Palestinian genocide by Ashkenazi Jews is labeled “antisemitic.” While all Zionists and all those who practice Judaism reject Christ and should properly be labeled antichrists, Christians are afraid to use the term correctly out of fear of being labeled “antisemitic.” The whole notion that Christians are obligated to support modern Christ-rejecting, militant Ashkenazi Israel because they are “Jews” shows either ignorance or how far people have apostatized from the Christian faith.

16.2 Jesus Offered the Kingdom to Israel

The King was on a mission to Israel and Kingdom power was active among the nation in and through the person of Christ.

Matthew 10:5-7 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 8:12 But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Kingdom was Israel’s right by election, history, and heritage. The age of the prophets ended with John (Matthew 11:16-17).

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

Israel rejected the reign of God.

Matthew 11:16-17 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

Luke 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Mark 6:1-6 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

The Kingdom, which the Jews rejected, was not the Davidic form that dispensationalists promote. The Kingdom that Jesus offered was a spiritual Kingdom: the defeat of God's enemies (Satan, sin, and death), deliverance from the Kingdom of Darkness (KOD), and the offer of gifts made available due to His redemptive accomplishments. Our Lord no more offered the Davidic Kingdom to the Jews than He offered Himself to them as their Davidic King. If He had offered the Davidic Kingdom and Himself as their King, they would gladly have accepted it.

John 6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Those who rejected Jesus and His kingdom refused the terms of the new covenant demonstrating to all they were not God's true people. Those who did respond to our Lord's Kingdom offer became **the true Israel**; that is, the **spiritually responsive** among the nation of Hebrews were the disciples. The twelve and those who accepted Christ among the Greeks became the **true Israel, spiritual Israel**, the genuine sons of God. These are the "sons of the Kingdom;" the believing remnant who's only bond is Jesus (Matthew 5:3; 10:32; 13:38; 25:34-40; Jeremiah 7:23; 31:33; Ezekiel 11:20; Isaiah 26:2; Romans 9:6).

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven

Matthew 13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

Matthew 25:34-40 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was

a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Jeremiah 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

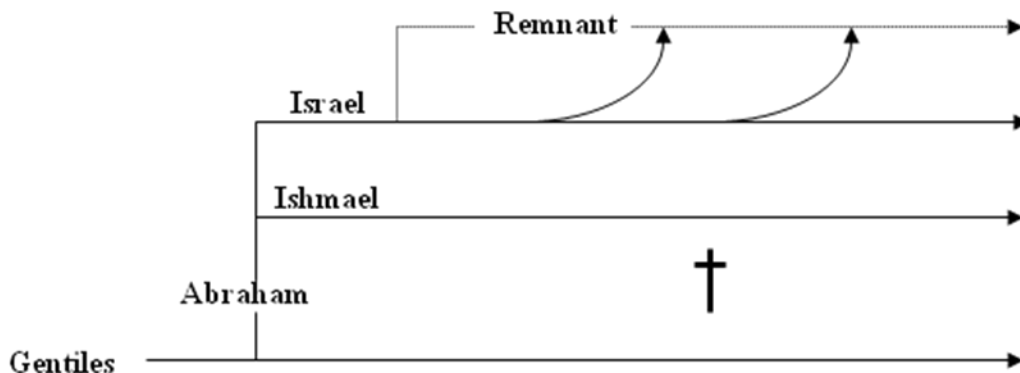
Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, said the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ezekiel 11:20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Isaiah 26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Romans 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Figure 38: Spiritual Israel



The Kingdom of God was present in Jesus' ministry, but the people of Israel did not respond positively to it. Like obstinate children, they refused John and they rejected Jesus. Those who did respond became **sons of the Kingdom**. Those who rejected Christ proved to be sons of the evil one. They were unbelieving Hebrews; unbelieving Jews; unbelieving Israelites destined to be cast out into outer darkness (Matthew

8:22). The king, therefore, appealed to individuals (Matthew 11:28). The blessings of the Kingdom would come on an individual basis, **not a national basis**, nor on the basis of the family unit, not on the basis of the Hebrew or Jewish genetics (Mt 10:35-36) as previously happened under the OT. In fact, family ties would be ruptured based on relationship with the Messiah.

Matthew 11:28-29 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 10:32-33 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10:35, 36 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. dispensation.

When it became clear that the nation was not going to respond to Christ's Kingdom as a whole, the Savior announced His plan to call out of the nation a people to Himself beginning with the disciples—the church. These new people were Jewish individuals, the remnant of Israel, the spiritually responsive within the nation, believers who accepted the rule of God in their life. Christ brought in a new people, the ecclesia that replaced the old, geo-political Israel as the stewards of the gospel / Bible / revelation. The unit was distinct from the old nation, but not separate from its foundation:

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Thus, the key of knowledge was taken away from the Pharisees (Luke 11:52) and given to the Apostles (Matthew 21:33-42). The lawyers took away the “key of knowledge” probably due to their faulty hermeneutics regarding the Torah and the Prophets. Thus, the church became the stewards of the Word of God. The Kingdom of God and the knowledge of how to enter it was taken away from Israel and given to the church.

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

Matthew 21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Those Jews who rejected Christ persecuted the early Christians. They did not please God and were not true Jews in spirit or faith (Romans 2:28). Paul said these people were contrary to all men. John called them “antichrists” and members of “the synagogue of Satan” (1 Thessalonians 2:15; Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

Any simpleton view that holds up Jews as the chosen people merely because of race or genetics exposes a deeply flawed understanding of the Bible and progress of history. God did not promise the Holy Land to Jews. He promised it to Abraham and his “spiritual” descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ. Modern day “Jews” are not God’s chosen people. Peter called believers in Christ the “elect” of God which is composed of a believing Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and those of other nations (1 Peter 1:1-2). A true Jew is a good thing but being a true Jew is a matter of heart and faith, NOT GENETICS. Consequently, all men who have repented of their sin and come to Christ have Abraham as their father and can be considered true Jews (Romans 2:29; Matthew 2:9; Galatians 3:1-14).

The church is a nation of priests without geographical boundaries or a centralized government on earth (1 Peter 2:4-11). Geo-political Israel was cut off from the vine of privileges (the people of God), and the church (individual believers of all ethnicities) is being grafted in (Romans 11:17ff ; Galatians 3:7).

“The Kingdom of God does not belong to the race of Abraham but to ‘an elect race,’ ‘for it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham’” (Ladd, 1959, p. 114).

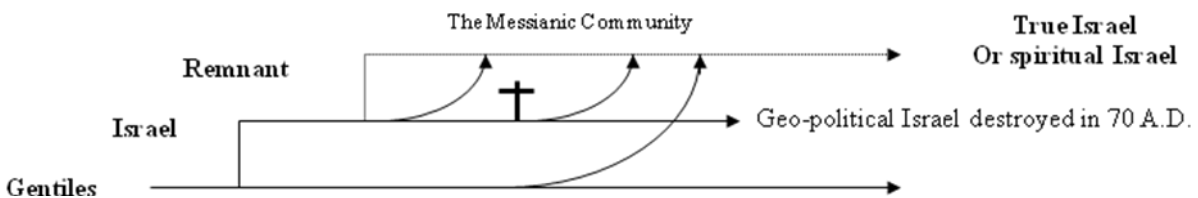
Though Israel as a whole rejected the Kingdom, the Kingdom brought salvation to believing people in the nation. The preaching of the Kingdom ultimately brings all of true Israel into God’s Kingdom.

The church is not geo-political Israel, but it is composed of the spiritually responsive of Israel. The Church is a fellowship of men composed of both spiritual Jews and spiritual Gentiles who have a common bond in Jesus. All possess the life of the Kingdom (Acts 8:12). The Kingdom of God created the church and works through the church, but the church is not the Kingdom. The church is a product of the Kingdom proclamation, and therefore, is an eschatological community.

The church is composed of the people who enter the Kingdom and live under God’s rule (and His law-order), but the Church is not synonymous with the Kingdom. The Kingdom and the church are two separate entities. ***The church is the people of God, and the Kingdom is the rule of God.*** The church are subjects of the Kingdom and the steward of the Kingdom, but not the Kingdom itself. It preaches the reign of Christ, submits to His reign, ***but the church is not the Kingdom.*** The church has the keys to eternal life and uses gospel preaching to allow entrance for individuals into the Kingdom. An individual enters the Kingdom by accepting the yoke of Christ and confessing His Lordship, not by joining a particular local church. The Kingdom and the local church are not equivalent.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Figure 39: True Israel



16.3 The Kingdom of God and the Church

The Kingdom exists today, but the Kingdom is not the church (Romans 14:17). The Kingdom is the rule of God, and the church are the people who enter it, submit to it, and are governed by it. The Kingdom is a government; the church is **the society of men** who acknowledge God’s reign. God is the sovereign; and individual Christians are His subjects. God rules, and it is the church who recognizes His authority and surrenders to His law-word.

The Kingdom is not the church, but Kingdom proclamation creates the church. The dynamic reign of God was active in Christ challenging men to repent and to respond. Those who experienced the power of God in their lives enter into **a new fellowship**. The presence of the Kingdom is a fulfillment of OT messianic promises to Israel; but, the geo-political nation rejected it. Those who accepted Jesus as Messiah constitute **the new people of God, the true Israel, the spiritually responsive of both Jews and Gentiles**. It is not a pure fellowship. Sheep and goats graze together. Wheat and tares grow in the same field. The Kingdom is like a dragnet catching good and bad fish in the net. The church is a mixed fellowship. Not everyone is true. Even Jesus had a Judas. The church contains the true sons of the Kingdom, but not everyone in the fellowship is true to the Son of God.

The Kingdom is God’s reign and the realm in which the blessing of His reign are experienced: The church is a fellowship of people who have experienced the redemption of Christ and enjoy the spiritual

blessings of the Kingdom (Ephesians 1:3). The church, therefore, is a fellowship of men who enjoy the first fruits of Kingdom blessings. The Kingdom has entered history without disrupting society (Matthew 13:38) in order to create a society of men . . . and a fellowship of believers. Good and evil; faith and doubt; the righteous and the unrighteous will live side-by-side until the eschatological consummation at the *Parousia*.

The blessings have come in a “first fruits” way, and will come in their fullness when the Kingdom comes in its fullness (Romans 8:18-25; 1 Peter 1:10-12). The spiritual blessings that await the righteous in the future Kingdom have been thrust into this present age to be experienced now in advance of the eschatological consummation at the end of history. The physical blessing will be manifested when Christ reigns in the future.

The mystery of the church is that both Jews and Gentiles share on an equal basis the blessings of the first fruits of the eternal Kingdom NOW because of Christ’s redemptive work (Ephesians 2:3).

“The Kingdom creates the church, works through the church, and is proclaimed by the church. There can be no Kingdom without a church, those who acknowledge Christ’s rule, and there can be no church without God’s Kingdom; but they remain two distinguishable concepts: The rule of God and the fellowship of men” (Ladd, 1959, p. 117).

The church is not the Kingdom; it is a witness to the Kingdom. It cannot build the Kingdom or bring in the Kingdom, but it can proclaim the Kingdom and be a witness to the Kingdom.

The Jews believed there were seventy nations in the world and that Torah was the first book to be translated into seventy languages. When Christ sent the 70 disciples to preach the Kingdom, the mission was an implicit claim that the Kingdom Gospel must be preached to the entire world. When the Jewish nation rejected the Kingdom, the decision was permanent and irreversible. Jesus cursed the fig tree, a giant metaphor that God permanently rejected geo-political Israel as a mediator between God and man (Mark 11:12-25; 1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus announced the Kingdom would be taken away from the nation and given to responsive people-- a people of integrity—the church (Mark 12:1-9). Israel (ancient or modern) is no longer the vineyard of God or the flock of God or the people of God. Citizens who identify with the character of Christ-rejecting Israel will be cast into outer darkness.

There are not two peoples of God. Israel’s light was extinguished and given to the disciples: “You are the light of the world,” announced Jesus. The church is the true Israel of God and the true candlestick (Revelation 1:19ff). The church is the steward of all of Israel’s sacred symbols. Only the church has the right to wear the star of David. Israel rejected its King and crucified Him. Only the church who believes in Jesus as Messiah can mediate the gospel to men. Israel is no longer a witness to the Kingdom. Unbelieving Jews have Satan as their Father (John 8:44). The church has replaced Israel in the plan of

God and it is the church that has the duty to proclaim Christ and offer men the Kingdom. (No, 144,000 alleged Jews are not going to replace the church in some alleged eschatological, man-made scheme).

We, therefore, labor for the advancement of the cause of Christ in a world that still rejects Him (Mark 13:35-36; 2 Thessalonians 1:5). The church bear witnesses to the Kingdom. **It cannot build the Kingdom or become the Kingdom, but it can testify to the existence of the Kingdom.**

The church is an instrument of the Kingdom. God uses the church to testify to His rule. “The LORD reigns” is the message of the church (Psalm 97:1). The disciples not only experienced the powers of the Kingdom, testified to the Kingdom, they are instruments of His Kingdom. The church’s ministers are called “soldiers” because they wage war for men’s souls against the forces of darkness (2 Timothy 2:3). The church is not under attack, **it is on the attack!** All churchmen are called to be God’s attack lambs. Jesus said the “gates of hell shall not prevail against it;” that is, Kingdom proclamation in and through the church is stronger than death. Hell must release its grip on men. In Christ, life reigns; and, all who bow the knee to King Jesus experience the powers of the Age to Come—eternal life in a first fruits way.

During Christ’s ministry, the Kingdom was manifest in His ministry and limited to His presence on earth. After Pentecost, the blessing of the new age has become available to all believers, and the powers of the Kingdom are no longer limited by geographical boundaries. Dynamite from Heaven is available to all gospel preachers (Acts 1:8). The eschatological age dawned upon men in and through the coming of the Spirit. Kingdom blessings transcend ethnicity, space, land, language, nationality, sex, culture, wealth, and social status.

The church is the custodian of the Kingdom. Formerly, Israel was the custodian of the Kingdom truth (Luke 22:29; Matthew 21:43). But, now the church has the duty of proclaiming the reality of God’s Kingdom and its invasion into history in and through the Son (Matthew 10:14-15). Israel rejected the Messiah; the church received Messiah for who He claimed to be (John 1:10-13). Thus, the Kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to another (Mark 12:9). The unbelieving nation and its infrastructure was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. Titus was Christ’s instrument of the wrath upon the recalcitrant, unbelieving nation. Israel’s Torah, sacred symbols, law, Word, prophetic teaching, and Messianic hope was taken from these Christ-rejecting Jews and given to the Church. Peter was handed the keys of the Kingdom; that is, the Church is now the custodian of the Word of God and the principal interpreter of the gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 23:13; Matthew 16:16-18). The church has the power to bind and to lose; to open and shut; to admit or exclude men from the fellowship of the Kingdom of God. The church has the power to lay down rules and to establish Godly traditions to educate and mature local assemblies. Thus, the church can create *dogmatic traditions* to preserve the faith and prevent heresy.

Those nations that receive the disciples “receive” Christ; those that reject the church, reject Jesus (Matthew 10:40; Mark 9:37). The disciples were the custodians of the Kingdom; to reject the disciples was to reject the Kingdom. **The destiny of nations is determined NOT by how they treat Ashkenazi Jews (the real anti-Semites), BUT BY HOW GOVERNMENTS TREAT THE CHURCH – THE**

TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD. To pray for the church is to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” because the church collocates with Mount Zion, the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . the general assembly and church of the firstborn” (Hebrews 12:22)!!

While we make a distinction between Israel and the church as two separate concepts, we hold to the idea that **there is only one people of God** (Ladd, 1959, p. 117).

In summary, Ashkenazi Jews are NOT the chosen people of God. True believers in Christ are the true people of God, the true Israel, the spiritually responsive among the nations to gospel proclamation. Moreover, the church is not the Kingdom. The latter is the rule of God and the former a fellowship of men. The Kingdom is the reign of God while the church are citizens who acknowledge that rule; one is a government, the latter is a society of men who share together the blessings of God’s reign. There can be no church without the Kingdom, and no Kingdom without the church. The Kingdom is present today in the sense that the citizens of the Kingdom are on earth. The Church is a steward of the Kingdom, witnesses to the Kingdom, instruments of the Kingdom, and custodians of the Kingdom, but the church is not the Kingdom . . . nor does the church build the Kingdom. The reign of God is active in and through the risen Christ who sits at the right hand of God. When churchmen proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom, they use the keys to open doors for men to experience the blessings of God’s reign. Be a blessing, and preach the gospel.

17 THE AMAZING SCOFIELD BIBLE

The Scofield Bible printed in 1909 and 1917 sold more copies than any other Bible in its time. Every Christian home in America had one. When I asked my tutors what Bible to purchase, the overwhelming answer was “The Scofield Bible.” Its popularity is nothing short of amazing.

The Scofield Bible used the traditional KJV translation as its basic text. Scofield took notes on various chapters interpreting key sections of Scripture in light of dispensationalism and its eschatological scheme of a restored, revived Jewish Israel.

As one reads Scofield’s notes, he will discover Scofield’s supported for the Gap Theory, rightly dividing the Word of Truth into Darby’s Seven Dispensations, the sin qua non of dispensationalism which is a wall between ancient Israel and the NT church, pretribulationism, the rapture, a future earthly millennial kingdom, a separation of law from grace, and a powerful end-time theory declaring that Christians are in the last days, the Laodicean Age of compromise and spiritual lethargy.

While modern Biblical scholars have been able to see through many of Scofield’s mistakes and the errors of dispensationalism, this Bible was used of God during the error of radical liberalism.

Its popularity and success?

I believe we can appreciate the Scofield Bible and its importance to Christians for the following reasons:

The Rise of Rationalism: During the 18th century, intellectuals bought the philosophical principal that man’s reason was equal to or superior to revelation; that man’s problems could be solved by following the mathematical, orderly processes of human thought. French skepticism and French confidence in man’s intellect attached itself to the American Revolution (1776). Eventually, man’s confidence in human reason and science outpaced the authority of Scripture among intellectuals and social engineers. Modern America rebuilt society on the foundation of evolution and science . . . and the consequences are nothing short of startling. Modern man’s faith in science and pseudo-science is the religious cult of our time.

The Rise of Liberalism: Between 1810 and 1840 German skepticism known as “Higher Criticism” developed a critical, humanistic view of the Word of God that poisoned all of Europe and most of the United States. Charles Spurgeon was kicked out of the Baptist Union because he forcefully exposed the exposed the wretchedness of German skepticism that was choking the life out of its adherents – a faith that brought the world the 180 million deaths due to WWI, WWII, the Korean War, et. al.

In America, with fists pounding, voices shouting, and pulpits rocking, conservative pastors fought tooth and nail, hand and fist, to defend the historicity and veracity of the Scriptures. But, they lost. Presbyterian, Methodists, Episcopalian, Congregational, and Baptist denominations took the lure of German Higher Criticism hook, line, and sinker. “God was dead!” Bible believing, Bible defending, Bible teaching pastors lost their pulpits, and were forced to start new churches in America.

Along came the Scofield Bible which defended the inspiration of Scripture. At last, there was one man and one Bible that did not bow to Higher Criticism and the flawed god of human logic. Christians loved it, and went out and purchased Scofield Bibles.

The Scope’s Trial: Circa 1850 Darwinian evolution captured the fancy of Europeans and Americans. Suddenly, Biblical creation was doubted, attacked, and viciously criticized. The famous Monkey Trial took place in 1925 and the drama arrested the American mind. The creation account was tried by two of America’s best lawyers, Clarence Darrow, the ACLU lawyer, and Williams Jennings Bryan, the ardent Christian. Bryan won the battle but lost the war. Darwinism entered the classroom and eventually bullied creationists out of public schools. Even today, a creationist cannot find a job in secular schools devoted to pseudoscience.

Christians were rightly upset. Following the Fundamentalist War of all Wars, the insane acceptance of evolution was more than the Christian community could take. But, there was the Scofield Bible and the Gap Theory that offered another view of the Creation Account. Though the Gap Theory was flawed, it supported the creation record. It would take another 40 years for Christian apologists to expose the flawed presuppositions of Darwinism; and, once again confirm the Biblical record with facts from science.

The Balfour Declaration (1917): Darby and Scofield interpreted the Bible to teach that God was going to restore ancient Israel in the last days. In the middle of WWI, the British government pressured by Marxist Zionists came out politically supporting the idea of a Jewish homeland. Suddenly, the return of the Jews to Palestine became a possibility. The work supporting this view was none other than the Scofield Bible.

Treason of Scholars: The Scofield Bible made much about apostasy and how the last days would become worse and worse. It also supported the laity and the belief the average man could read Scripture and understand it.

When seminaries went south and betrayed the faith by buying into German skepticism, there was the Scofield Bible that identified the twentieth century as the age of apostasy.

Christians were convinced they were living in the last days and the Scofield Bible was their proof. Bible schools like Moody Bible Institute and Emmaus Bible School and many others sprang up all over America defending the inspiration of Scripture. Because Presbyterian and Methodist scholars betrayed the faith, Bible-based schools flourished. In the minds of Scofield Bible students, seminaries of the 1930-1950s were cemeteries . . . and they were 94% right.

In the 1960s, Bible school students entered the debate and began to battle the treason committed by liberal professors. Slowly, gradually, whole denominations began to take back their seminaries. And, the engine that pushed this new confidence in the veracity of Scripture was none other than the Scofield Bible. The Scofield Bible was the “little engine that could.”

Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS): While mainstream seminaries committed treason to Christ, DTS graduated students defended the authority of Scripture. Though they were entrenched in dispensationalism, they stood firmly for the truth while liberal seminaries sank into the tar pit of apostasy. These graduates believed the Word of God, used the Scofield Bible, and began to defend the Christian faith that had taken a flogging from secular liberals for over 100 hundred years.

As the flawed arguments of liberals were exposed, many seminaries began to grow in confidence that maybe the Bible was correct after all. New Bible professors gained hold of faculty chairs and launched a war against liberalism using the sword of truth as its weapon.

Independent Bible Churches: While the mainstream denominations drank the poison of German liberalism, Bible believing pastors planted new churches -- non-denominational churches that build their ministries on the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

Non-denominational churches flourished in the United States while mainstream denominations suffered horrific losses in membership and revenue. Though mainstream denominations suffered tremendous reduction all through the 20th century, Wiki says the attendance at mainstream churches dropped more than 25% between 1958 to 2008. Underneath all the political chaos, one of the greatest revivals in history broke out on American soil. Within decades, the Berlin Wall came down, Russia opened its doors to the nations, and China’s home churches flourished.

The Bible of choice for these revivalists? The Scofield Bible!

World Wars: The Scofield Bible advanced an eschatology that characterized the last days as a time of war and rumors of wars. WWI, WWII, Korean War, Viet Nam, and Middle East conflicts verified Scofield’s assertion that we appear to be living in the last days. Dispensational books advocating the arrival of the end of days flourished. Thousands of books were published. Among them was the “Late Great Planet Earth” by Hal Linsey – a big seller.

Israel Becoming a Nation in 1948: Dispensationalism in contrast to Reformed Theology, proposed that God was literally going to recreate the nation of Israel and bring them back to the Holy Land. When the Ashkenazi “Jews” declared themselves a nation for Jews in 1948, this historical phenomenon poured gasoline on dispensationalism. Christians everywhere were fused with hope that they were indeed living in the end times. Though dispensationalists didn’t have it all correct, the Lord used current events to provoke Bible study. No other book has stirred minds like the Scofield Bible.

Hal Lindsey: In the middle of this political chaos, Hal Lindsey, a speaker for Campus Crusade for Christ, and author of the “Late Great Planet Earth,” was predicting the end of the world by 1975, 1988. The Scofield notes confirmed this interpretation of history. With 180 million people dead in the 20th century because of war and revolution, who could deny the world was in turmoil . . . We appeared to be living in the last days before the return of Christ?

But, Christ did not return in 1988, and Christians, including this author, began to think critically about dispensationalism and Scofield theology. By this time Christians were seeing the lies of evolution, and that Darwinism was not science, but childish unprovable presumption and speculation. A new generation of scholars arose who exposed the errors of German higher criticism. New theologians, especially among the Reformed Movement, began to defend the historical, faith. Hope was in the air. People smiled. Home Bible studies flourished. Churches cropped up everywhere. America experienced the greatest revival in history and no one knew it.

Scofield dispensationalism is flawed on many subjects, but it is correct on several vital issues: (1) It augured well for the gospel and orthodox Christianity; (2) It refused to let the church be identified as a continuation of OT geo-political Israel. It is a new Israel or spiritual Israel, but it is not a nation in the sense of having a centralized government on earth. (3) From beginning to end, it shined a light on the second coming of Christ and that the saints are not the object of the wrath of God to be poured out on all unbelieving mankind. We may disagree on the hows and whens, but Scofield dropped an anchor in this sea of eschatological hope, and no man can pull it up.

Finally, it can be argued that the Scofield Bible has created more Bible students than any other work in history! Agree or disagree with Scofield’s notes, they forced many a man to dig into God’s goldmine of truth. Many great Bible preachers today can thank Scofield for making them dig deeper and to think harder about the gospel and its unfolding hope of redemption. This author is one of them.

Yes, I am aware of the errors in the new Scofield notes more than most, but bitter criticism of him or the Scofield Bible is like being a Monday morning quarterback arrogantly identifying the errors committed on the gridiron without having played in the game. The Scofield Bible was in the game, alone, and single-handedly knockin’ heads against the knuckleheads of liberalism sweeping Europe and the Americas. Yes, Scofield made many errors, but his work was the only one fighting the giants of skepticism. Yes, let’s correct the errors and help Christians to understand the Scripture more perfectly, but not with a spirit of pride.

In conclusion, when mainstream denominations were poisoned with liberalism and raised doubts about the Scripture, and when mainstream Presbyterian-Episcopalian-Methodist ministers were suckin’ on fruit from Germany’s poisonous tree, the Scofield Bible stood on holy ground and refused to budge. Though there has been much theological progress in recent times, and many of Scofield’s errors have been identified, the amazing Scofield Bible was the only flag on the Battlefield signaling Christians to charge forward and not retreat.

(Note: there are many theological errors in the Scofield Bible study notes the student needs to consider: the Gap Theory; allowance for theistic evolution; misidentification of fake Jews as real Jews; lack of knowledge that fake Jews are gentiles from Khazaria; interpretive errors on Genesis 12, misinterpretation of the parables, pitting civil law against grace; and limiting the Sermon on the Mountain to an alleged millennial age; failure to see the grandeur of the church, and more)

18 SCOFIELD'S DISTORTION OF THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISES

The Scofield Bible, edited by Oxford Zionists' scholars in 1967, sought to convert Christians to Tamuldic Zionism with an allegiance to the Ashkenazi conquest of ancient Palestine and their justification of killing and stealing the property of Palestinians. Remember how the Palestinians kept the keys to their homes when forced out of the region at gun-point.

GENESIS 12

Genesis 12 is the foundation of all prophecy, and one of the most abused passages by American theologians. Lots of spiritual capital is invested in this text. Let's take a look at some facts and some current theological issues related to this passage.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him;

Abrahamic Covenant: This passage has been properly called the Abrahamic Covenant. But, the covenant promises come in stages. Genesis 13, 15, and 17 complete the promises.

Four clauses: This promise can be broken down into four parts as long as the parts are not disassociated from the whole purpose and intent of the promise.

The national clause: "I make thee a great nation."

The personal clause: "I will bless thee and make thy name great."

The international clause: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee."

The spiritual clause: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Because of modern day distortions of Scripture, we must address the following errors.

The 1967 Scofield Bible produced by Oxford Press, an organization under the control and influence of Zionists, inserts a page and a half of textual notes proposing the promises given to Abraham are “unconditional;” that the modern State “Israel” has a claim on the Palestinian land, houses, and farms. This grandiose presumption is based on the Abrahamic land grant promises; and, that a curse is “laid upon those who persecute (modern unbelieving) Jews;” that is, modern Zionists use this passage as hammer to pound on those who object to the military land grab by modern Christ-rejecting, Ashkenazi “Jews” – Jews who have committed racial genocide against the Palestinian people.

The whole idea that modern Jewry can arm themselves with guns and tanks to seize Palestinian property as an “everlasting possession” is theological, historical hocus pocus -- a magician’s trick – a media illusion -- a devil’s deception – malice aforethought (John 8:44).

The Nature of the Covenant: The Abrahamic Covenant has been wrongly labeled “an unconditional covenant,” a convenient tool that leads to unconditional support of Zionist / Jewish criminal activity around the world.

Before us is a contract offer by the LORD God and its acceptance by Abraham. While the intent is to bless, it is NOT unconditional. The word “unconditional” is not in the text or in the Bible. The unconditionality of a contract is a fiction. The whole idea that Abraham would have received the benefits of this contract offer without fulfilling the obligations of the covenant is patently offensive. The LORD God informs Isaac that the covenant promises became effective . . .

“because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws Genesis 26:3-5).

The Covenant Promise is to Abraham, NOT THE JEWS: The pronoun “thee” refers to Abraham, not the Jews. The term “Jews” is not in the text. But, Zionists want you to think that it is – a part of the indoctrination program of Zionists in general.

The first mention of the term “Jew”¹³ in the Bible is 2 Kings 16:6 where it refers to men from the Tribe of Judah. Abraham did not know what a Jew was or would become. For Zionist Christians

¹³ The term “Jew” today is a loaded term: It can refer to ancient Jews, men from Judah, the nation of Israel as made up primarily of men from Judah during the post exilic period, the religion of Judaism, men who follow Talmudic Judaism, Gentiles of the Ashkenazi Empire who converted to Judaism, men who are racially Ashkenazi, or men with an Ashkenazi Jewish mother. Jesus was not a Jew because he did not follow Judaism, but he was a Jew in the sense

to claim these promises belongs to modern day fake, so-called “Jews” is a violent distortion of the text and of theology. It is a modern deception -- a result of Jewish propaganda.

Consider for a moment the propaganda coming out of modern day Israel.

- (1) *“A people without a land and a land without a people.”* This specious phrase is nothing but propaganda. The Jews had lands in Germany, Europe, and the Ukraine. Further, Palestine was inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. It was no way uninhabited.
- (2) Israel has a right to defend itself. This specious argument is used to justify killings of thousands of unarmed Palestinians with modern tanks and fighter jets – Palestinians forced out of their homes into the Gaza strip -- a people who fight back with sticks and stones against a modern army equipped with the most sophisticated weapons.
- (3) If you criticize any policy of the aggressive, Zionist, Ashkenazi government then you are “antisemitic. “That you can’t criticize modern imperialistic Zionists is nothing but Zionist clap trap to stifle freedom of speech. The real anti-Semites are modern day Jews that hate Christ, the Bible, the gospel, and Christians. Christians are not antisemitic, BUT the Zionists are ANTICHRIST and antisemitic!

The Covenant Promise is given to Abraham, not the modern State of Israel or “the other Israel.” The whole idea that a group of Ashkenazi gentiles, claiming to be Semitic Jews, have a right to take by force land belonging to Palestinians (1948, 1967) is nothing but government propaganda in a psyche war stemming from a twisted political religion. To call this land grab a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy is treachery and treason to the law of the LORD God. While ancient Israel was a temporary beneficiary of the Abrahamic promises, modern Christ-rejecting, atheistic Israel has no righteous claim on the Abrahamic promises or the land of Palestine!! The modern State of Israel, or the other Israel, is the result of clever, sustained political chicanery during the twentieth century by Marxist Jews. (See Benjamin Freedman’s: Warning to America).

To claim that God will bless those who bless modern Christ-rejecting “Jews” who are not even Semitic Jews and curse those who don’t support the Zionist land grab and pillage and looting of

He was from the tribe of Judah. Jesus was anti-Jewish in the religious sense of the word and was crucified because He confronted the lusty, lying Jews of His day.

Palestinians is a great political tragedy -- a product of men listening to the hissing snake in the American Zionist media broadcasting under the Poisonous Tree and not the LORD God.

The “seed promise” (12:7) refers to Jesus Christ and not to Jews. In verse seven, the LORD said to Abram, “Unto thy seed will I give this land.” The word “seed” is singular and refers to the Lord Jesus Christ and not modern Jewish impostors. The apostle Paul is quick to identify the promise as “in Christ” and not in “Jewry” in Galatians 3:16-19. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the “seed.” He is the true Israel of God and in Him all the nations of the earth are blessed. Moreover, the promise to Abraham was not for a piece of real estate in the Levant but a promise that his children would inherit the entire world (Romans 4:13).

Men are commanded to believe in Jesus, not modern day Israel; Men are asked to bless Christ, and not modern day Jews. Nations are under duty to protect Christians and the Biblical gospel, not perverted Talmudism. Christian must love with discernment (Philippians 1:9). Men are blessed “with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” when they believe the gospel (Ephesians 1:3-7). When men believe, they are placed “in Christ” the true Israel of God and become “the sons of Abraham.” Those who reject Christ, the true Seed of Abraham, are under the curse; that is, modern day Christ-rejecting Jews are under a curse and can never be blessed (Galatians 3:10-14; Psalm 1:1-3).

When men believe, they become de jure citizens of Heavenly Jerusalem, not carnal Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). Believers should pray for Christians who are members of true, spiritual Jerusalem conducting the work of the gospel on earth and NOT be praying for the rancid political ambitions of Jewish Zionists in carnal Jerusalem which was only a type or shadow of heavenly Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; Hebrews 13:18).

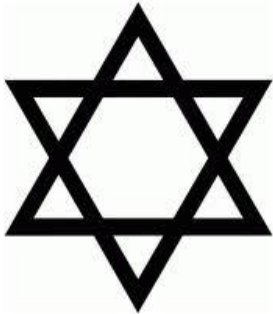
Men are not blessed because they believe in modern Israel, but because they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessings and curses of the Abrahamic promise applied to Abraham and not modern Jewry. Much has happened in history since Genesis 12. And, eternal blessings and curses are connected to one’s faith in Christ or rejection of Him. Those who believe in the Son are blessed; and those who reject the Son are under the curse (John 3:36). Correct?

Modern Jews are not God’s chosen people. When Christians believe in Jesus, they learn that they are God’s chosen people. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, the “true Israel,” are said to be “in Christ;” and are, therefore, the true Israel of God, beneficiaries of the commonwealth of Israel, a holy priesthood, a holy nation, and a people used to build up the fallen tent of David. Christians are the true sons of Abraham. Further, Christians are not “spiritual brothers” with modern day Christ-rejecting so called Jews. Modern Jews belong to the

synagogue of Satan. (Galatians 6:16, Ephesians 2:11-3:10; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:2; 2:5-9; Acts 15:16; Revelation 2:9, 3:9).

In conclusion, the misinterpretation and misapplication of Genesis 12 by Zionist Christians has given modern militaristic Israel a license to murder Palestinians and loot Palestinian land to which they have no lawful claim. The human tragedy is beyond words; and, the spiritual debacle is an embarrassing blight on Christianity — a view not shared by historical Christianity and a view not embraced by the majority of Christian in the world today. We intend Ashkenazi Jews no harm, but we must question their claim to be God's chosen people because they lack proof of claim upon which relief can be granted.

19 THE KINGDOM AND ISRAEL'S PROMISES



Jesus called the people of Israel “children of the kingdom” (Matthew 8:11). They were the tenants in the parable of the vineyard that killed the servants and the son (Mark 12:1f).

When Jesus came to Jerusalem he cursed the fig tree, a symbol of the nation of Israel, and said, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again” (Mark 11:14).

A natural interpretation of the text would extend the curse to the nation.

In 70 A.D., the nation was crushed under the mighty hand of Titus. Survivors of the siege scattered among the nations, integrated with the peoples of other nations, and lost their unique, genetic characteristics. While Judaism survived as a faith, the actual people of the nation lost their distinctiveness being assimilated into the nations. Today’s Jews are of European origin.

Does Israel Have a Future?

19.1 Two Positions

Yes, Israel has a future: Dispensationalism says Israel as a nation has a political, religious future in the Holy Land, that Israel’s promises are unfulfilled. Sometime in the future, the nation will repent, believe the gospel, and God will restore the nation to a privileged status. A temple, sacrifices and the priesthood will be reinstated. This will last for a 1000 years.

No, Israel does not have a future. Amillennialism denies Israel has a future as a privileged nation and sees no prophetic hope for Jewish people except as they believe the gospel.

Question: Are the Abrahamic promises regarding the ancient land promises still a valid, future hope for geo-political Israel?

19.2 The Dispensational Position

The grant covenant: The promises given to Abraham are unconditional, i.e., God was determined to bless Abram regardless of how he responded.

The land grant: God promised Abram the land of Canaan, and Israel has never received this land completely. Therefore, God is obligated to restore Israel (her Kingdom) and give all the land to Israel. This will happen during the alleged millennium.

Postponement: Christ came to restore Israel, but Israel rejected their promised Messiah. The Kingdom was postponed, and the church was installed as a temporary vehicle until Israel's restoration and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Two peoples of God: The fundamental premise of dispensationalism is that God is pursuing two purposes, one for Israel, his physical, earthly people, and the other the church, God's spiritual people; that is, there are two peoples of God. But, in dispensational theology, Israel and the church must be kept separate.

Return of Israel: No doubt, the return of Israel to Palestine in 1948 empowered the dispensational system. The dream of a Jewish return to power after 2000 years of exile in the modern state of Israel is a miracle of history. To the dispensationalist, the modern state of Israel is simply the setting of the stage for the final events of history: Israel's conversion, the rapture, the tribulation, the rise of the antichrist, Armageddon, the second coming of Christ, and the millennium.

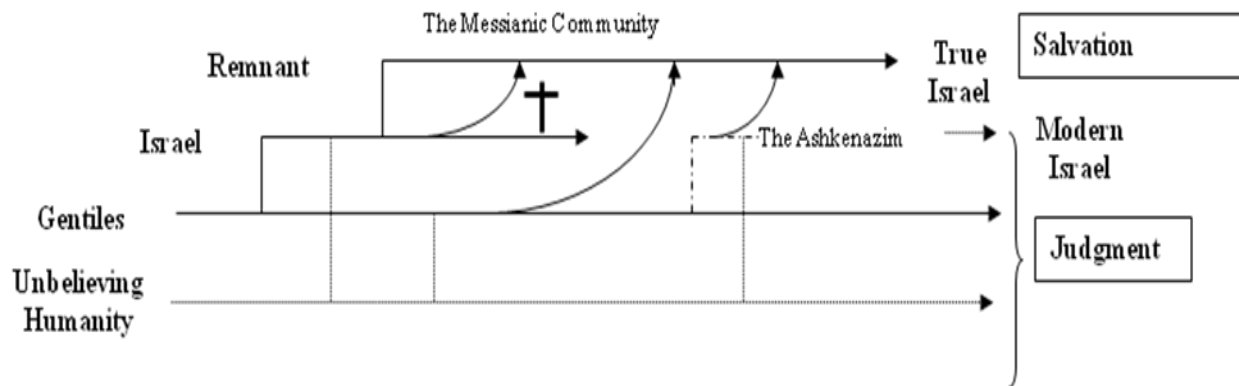
The millennium: To a dispensationalist God has not fulfilled his promises to Israel. Therefore, Israel must receive the land sometime in the future. To the dispensationalist, Israel's (European) people will be restored to fellowship with YHWH, a 3rd temple rebuilt, and the religious Jews will be given all the land promised to Abraham in the Levant during the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth.

19.3 The Reformed Position

Who are the people of God? Do the people of God have a genetic relationship to Abraham or a spiritual relationship to Abraham? Genetics do commend anyone to God (Matthew 3:5ff/John 8:44). Rather, it is a meek and quiet spirit that God prizes (1 Peter 3:4).

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Ruth were all Gentiles who placed their faith in Elohim. These people of faith gained a standing before God, not because of their nucleotide triplets of DNA, but because their hearts were circumcised. Likewise, today, not everyone who says he is a Jew is a Jew. Only those who have repented of their sins and placed their faith in Christ can rightly be called true Jews, Israel, or the people of God (Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6; Galatians 3:5ff).

Figure 40: The True Israel



The promises given to Israel were conditional. Because Abraham obeyed, he was blessed. Because the nation as a whole, did not obey, they were cursed and eventually removed from the land. No nation will “eat fruit” from the nation again (Mark 11:14).

This appears to be true. In Genesis 12: 1, the verb “Get the out” is a Qal imperative meaning, “to you, walk away from your land and your father’s house.” This is a command, and God expected obedience.

The next line begins with a vav (יָו) and can be translated “and” connecting the promise with the command. That is, God is saying to Abram, “Walk away from your land and family to a land I will show you, *and* I will bless you.” Though God intended to bless Abraham, His blessing rested also on Abram’s obedience (Genesis 26:3).

Later, when Israel became a nation, God initiated the Sinaitic Covenant with Abraham’s sons, the children of Israel, or the Hebrew nation. The Sinaitic Promise was also conditional. As Israel obeyed His law, they were blessed. As Israel disobeyed His law, God was obligated to discipline the nation (Leviticus 27).

All God’s promises have a condition attached to them. Take for example, the promise in Jonah that would destroy the Ninevites, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” There is no condition attached. God says He will destroy the Ninevites. But, the Ninevites repented, and God then relented. Though not stated, the condition existed in the mind of God. Because the Ninevites met the condition, they were spared.

The condition of circumcision was pressed into operation by YHWH’s command to Abraham (17). If the nation would not obey, they would be “cut off.” Abraham immediately obeyed. The covenant was renewed with Isaac because, “Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge (Genesis 26:5; Hebrews 11:8). (Note that Abraham believed and then circumcised. Isaac and true Israelite men were circumcised, and then believed.)

19.4 **God Promised Israel the Land:**

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

But, the Land of Canaan was only the beachhead. Abraham understood the land grant promise included the whole world (Romans 4:13).

19.5 **The Land Grant Promised Was Fulfilled in History:**

Deuteronomy 1:7-8 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

Deuteronomy. 11:24 Every place where on the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

*Joshua 21:43 And the LORD gave unto Israel **all the land** which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.*

*Joshua 21:45 There failed **not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken** unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.*

*Nehemiah 9:7-8 Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and **hast performed thy words**; for thou art righteous:*

Jeremiah 32:21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror;

2 Samuel 8:3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

1 Kings. 4:21 And Solomon reigned over all Kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

The problem with the belief that God must still give Israel the land is that God's Word says **the promise was fulfilled during the days of Joshua and the Judges!** If this promise was fulfilled, then the dispensational premise that the promises have not been fulfilled and that geo-political Israel must inherit all of Palestine in the future **is a false presumption** and a flawed hermeneutic. Beware of "Jewish myths" cropping up within segments of Evangelicalism (Titus 1:14).

19.6 Unbelieving Israel Forfeited the Holy Land

As the history of the nation progressed and Israel deteriorated in obedience, God promised to vomit them out of the land (Leviticus 26:33; Jeremiah20:4). As history progressed, it became clear the nation would never inherit the blessings based on their performance. In 586 B.C., God expelled the nation and deported the survivors to Babylon. Because Israel disobeyed, they were severed from the land.

The nation was not punished because they disobeyed their government, but because they obeyed their kings who adopted the corrupt, liberal, permissive policies of the surrounding nations:

*2 Kings 17:7-8 And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and **had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations** whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.*

Promises of restoration: Before and after 586 BC, God promised to restore the nation and bring them back to the land (Ezekiel 37:12-14; Jeremiah30:3). God repatriated the people back to the land of Canaan in 536 B. C. During this same period of time, God promised to rebuild and restore the temple. The second temple was completed in 516 BC. Both the land and temple promises appeared in the sacred record before the return to the land and rebuilding of the temple.

Dispensationalists take the return promises and the promises to rebuild the temple that belong to the post exilic period and hold them out as promises from God to give Israel the land and to rebuild a 3rd temple future **to our time**. This slant, however, lacks hermeneutical validity! The hermeneutic that takes the return promises that apply to 536-516 B.C. and applies them to 1948 AD and then assert the formation of Ashenazi "Israel" in 1948 is fulfilled prophesy is a fiction perpetrated on the church.

Dispensationalists justify their hermeneutic based on a principle called "double fulfillment." But, this is a slippery hermeneutic at best and unethical deception at its worst. Using this principle you could end up with double exiles, double exoduses, double returns, double temples, double raptures, double

resurrections, double returns, and double destructions of Jerusalem. In short, the criticism that dispensationalists suffer from double vision rings true here.

This author asserts, therefore, that all the prophecies given to Israel about returning to the land and rebuilding the temple relate to the return between 536BC and 516BC and that to apply these same promises to a time future to us is a hermeneutical error that creates a false hopes and false expectations.

Man's hope is in the gospel, not in a restored Israel!

Another fact emerges with the land grant doctrine. Typologically, Paul indicates that God's promises to Abraham were larger than Palestine--that it really included the entire world:

*Romans 4:13 For the promise, that he should be **the heir of the world**, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Paul asserted that in promising Abraham the land, that God was actually promising Abraham and his Seed the entire world!! A characteristic of God's Word is that fulfillment is greater than the promise! Always! This being the case, the land grant promise was twofold: (a) God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, but (b) His promise involved His plan to redeem the earth in order to give it to Christ and His people.

God's redemptive program is bigger than national Israel and the land of Canaan! *His ultimate goal is to redeem men from every race and tribe and to create a new heaven and a new earth.* His blessing extends to the nations, not just Israel. And, in the preaching of the gospel, men from every tribe and nation are entering the Kingdom of God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us (Jews and Gentiles) with all spiritual blessings . . ." (Ephesians 1:3).

When Christ came, He preached the gospel of the Kingdom to the Jews. He came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him (John 1:10-12). They thought the promises were unconditional and that they were heirs of the Kingdom by virtue of their genetic relationship to Abraham (Matthew 3:9). Through John, the Spirit warned Jews that God would cut down the Jewish tree if they did not repent (3:9, 10). Refusing to listen, they rejected their Messiah, and plunged headlong into the fires of hell.

Jesus commanded the nation to come to Him (Matthew 11:28, 29) and to enter the narrow gate which leads to life (Matthew 7:13). When the Gentile Centurion responded by faith, Christ used his positive example to teach the broad view of redemption, "Many will come for the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast (redemption) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven"

Furthermore, Jesus announced the subjects of the Kingdom will be thrown outside into darkness . . ." (Matthew 8:11-12). The subjects (ui`oi. th/j basilei,aj) were unbelieving Jews who failed to respond in faith and obedience to Kingdom proclamation They rejected Christ . . . and Christ cursed their tree to the root! (Mark 11:25-25).

When it became clear the nation was not going to repent, Christ announced his plan to build his church—His called out ones (Matthew 16:17ff). Initially, these “called out ones” were believing Jews, the true Israel of God, the remnant of Israel, the true people of God. This company was a “new Israel” or “renewed Israel,” or “spiritually responsive of Israel.” Later, the spiritually responsive among the Gentiles were added to this community to form a new movement in history. The church, therefore, is the “New Israel”—the children of the Kingdom, the true people of God.

*Galatians 6: 15-17 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, **but a new creature**. And as many as walk **according to this rule** (only believers understand this born again truth), peace be on them, and mercy, **and (even) upon the Israel of God** (the church who walks according to the rule of regeneration). From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

19.7 The Fig Tree Illustration

During the final week of Christ’s ministry, the political climate burst into flaming animosity against the Lord. Having turned the house of God into a den of thieves, Jesus indicted the nation’s leaders and illustrated the consequences of their unresponsiveness by cursing the fig tree—a symbol of the nation.

And when our Lord saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it. And finding fruit thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away” (Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:13-26).

The verb “Let no fruit grow” is the Greek verb *genatai* (ge,nhtai) meaning “become.” It is either an aorist imperative or an aorist subjunctive. Either Jesus is commanding that this tree never bear fruit again, or he is expressing a wish that it may never bear fruit. The use of the subjunctive expresses the possibility of a thing. The strong negation (Mhke,t; ,makete) is in the emphatic position; i.e., it is a strong negation of any possibility the geo-political nation will survive and grow again. The use of the term “forever” reinforces the negation. Interestingly, the fig dried up immediately indicating that it was indeed a curse in the form of a command. All agree that this tree is a symbol of Israel. It appears that Christ cursed the nation and willed to destroy it.

Shortly after the cursing of the fig tree, Jesus called the leaders of the nation “tenants” (Matthew 21:36), but the disciples called them “wretches” (Matthew 21:41). In the Greek, it is very clear (Kakou.j kakw/j avpole,sei avvtou.j). The people addressed are called “those wicked” tenants.

“Will destroy” is a future indicative verb that announces a future slaughter of the nation’s leaders. The adverb “kakos” means “severely.” The NIV translates it correctly, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end.”

Continuing this theme, Jesus announced the farm would be taken away and given to another people. The word “people” is the Greek word for “other farmers” or other tenants (αλλοι γεωργοι/). Who are these “other tenants?” Later, Jesus called these tenants a nation (εθνη, ethnos) (Matthew 21:43).

Dispensationalists would have us believe the gifted nation refers to another, future generation of Jews. But, it is an indisputable fact authority was taken from unbelieving Jewish leaders and given to his apostles or the church. The Hebrew Jews melted into the nations surrounding the Mediterranean. Genealogical records were buried in the ruins of Jerusalem.

Jesus announced He was a stone of stumbling to the Jewish nation. Since our Lord was God’s ultimate revelation, He was Israel’s ultimate responsibility. Because they failed to receive Him, He became a stumbling stone breaking and crushing to pieces the nation that rejected Him. The word “broken” in Matthew 21:44 is used in connection with the broken bread at communion (1 Corinthians 11:24) and the breaking of bowls made of pottery (Revelation 2:27) and the breaking off of a limb from a tree (Romans 11:20). This “breaking” was not temporal. It was consummate, terminal, and final.

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

19.8 Eight Woes on the Nation

In Matthew 23, Jesus announced seven woes on the leaders of the nation. He held them accountable for all the martyrdoms of history (23:35). He even accused them of murdering Zechariah. Jesus then said something absolutely amazing, “this will come upon this generation.” In other words, there were Jewish leaders present who would see the withering of the fig tree and the grinding of the nation into the dust of broken empires.

Jesus said, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” The word “*desolate*” means *an actual desert, a wasteland*. The disciples wanted to know when this was going to happen. Matthew 24 appears to be totally dedicated to predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel. Jerusalem came tumbling down in 70 A.D. and her people were killed by the sword, starved, crucified, or thrown to the lions. For two-thousand years, Jerusalem remained a wasteland like Timbuktu in Mali.

Historically, God demolished Jerusalem and the nation, the land, and the temple in 70 A.D. under the bone crushing hand of Titus. Theologically, the nation’s purpose came to end in 70 A.D. Today, God’s people are made up of faithful Jews and Gentiles. He is using the church to proclaim His gospel and to bring people into the Kingdom. The modern state of “Israel “ (1948) does not appear to have any spiritual

purpose other than being stewards of the Land loved and desired by three religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

By teaching the church will be displaced and Israel will be installed as God's people creates an ethnic division in the church of Jesus Christ. Giving priority to people with a specious genetic relationship to Abraham is a giant step backward in theology. Furthermore, historical studies show that the "modern Jews" are not Semitic at all, but Ashkenazi gentiles through and through; i.e. the whole idea that those calling themselves "Jews" in the State of Israel that have a genetic relationship to Abraham is a deception perpetrated by Zionists -- a powerful delusion (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

When Christ returns, the earth, including Palestine, will be burnt up (2 Peter 3:10-13).

Israel's present attempt to rebuild Palestine is atheistic and secular—It is not built on Christ the rock nor is it based on Judaism.

The Kingdom of God was taken from Israel and given to another:

*Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and **given to a nation** bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

The CDs say the "nation" refers to Israel's future generation (the last generation). However, the natural reading of the text would lead one to conclude Jesus means the "Gentiles" or "the church" which is made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. The parable following texts support the fact that it is the Gentiles that are invited to the banquet.

Matthew 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

Matthew. 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

The word "desolate" (e;rhmoj) means *lonely place, desolate place, abandoned place, and uninhabited place*. It is translated "desert" in Matthew 14:15. This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD when Jerusalem was demolished by Titus and the region became a barren wasteland.

The "Commonwealth of Israel" now consists of Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 2:11-22) who share together in the blessings of the Kingdom of God. The "middle wall of partition" was broken down forever by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The church is either spiritual Israel or the new Israel of God. In Revelation, by calling each of the seven churches a "candlestick" or minora—Israel's most sacred symbol, John identifies the church as the true Israel of God—stewards of all of Israel's sacred

symbols—stewards of the Torah—stewards of Israel’s Revelation – stewards of its law – and stewards of its gospel. The church does not have a minora, it is a candlestick!. **Israel’s hope is in the gospel of Christ, not Palestine!**

19.9 Israel and Dispensationalism

Robert Saucy (Saucy R. , 1995), has an excellent section representing the dispensational position on Israel’s restoration and future conversion.

Saucy argues for a non-forfeiture of the promises: “despite a strong element of judgment upon Israel, there is no indication of a forfeiture of the promises” (p. 246).

Several problems exist with this statement.

- First, there is much evidence the promises have been fulfilled in history.
- Secondly, Our Lord said the Kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to another people (Matthew 24:43).
- Thirdly, the locus of blessing has shifted from “the land” to “in Christ.” All the promises can be experienced “in Christ” and are “yes” and “amen” in Him (Romans 3:24; Romans 8:1; Romans 8:2; Romans 8:39; Ephesians 2:6).

Saucy argues: if the promises to Israel have failed (Romans 9:6), then the future people of God have no basis of trust. How can the new community trust God’s Word if it failed the Jews? asks Saucy.

The error with this argument is that Paul answers the question. Paul emphatically states, “it is not as though God’s word had failed” (Romans 9:6). Paul argues the promise comes through Isaac by faith in Christ. Those who believe experience God’s promise. Part of Israel did not experience the promise because of unbelief when they went about trying “to establish their own” righteousness (Romans 10:3). Paul argues that Christ is the end of the law; that is, in His obedience He fulfilled all the law required. Christ is the means of Israel fulfilling their covenant with God; furthermore, He is the means or instrument through whom God blesses all his people with salvation.

Saucy argues that Paul’s use of the term “first fruit” (Romans 11:16) indicates a future, climatic, geo-political conversion of the nation.

But, this is reading too much into this verse! Paul is arguing historically. Those Jews who first believed became the first fruits of the nation to Christ. As Jews believe in Christ throughout history they are added to the tree. The harvest has been going on throughout church history in every generation. Paul is not arguing for an eschatological conversion of the Jews during the terminal time of history.

Saucy argues that Israel has a future based on the dispensational definitive verse, Romans 9:25: (a) The term *Israel*: “All Israel” refers to Jews as opposed to Gentiles; the Jews refers to the eschatological community; to Israel as a whole—a nation; (b) the time of Israel’s salvation: that the phrase “until the full number of Gentiles has come in” refers to the future, to an eschatological conversion of the nation; and, (c) the nature of Israel’s salvation is that Paul is referring to a national restoration of Israel to the promised land.

It is important to understand the importance of the above text to a dispensationalist. The NT never discusses a future conversion of Jews, a return to the land, or a Jewish hope in a millennium unless it is Romans 11:25-26. In other words, the entire dispensational scheme of a Jewish return to the land and their subsequent national conversion depends on the interpretation of Romans 11. Nowhere does the New Testament discuss a future hope for Israel, unless it is this verse.

Saucy argues that “Israel” refers to the nation as a whole.

I have no argument with this. A part of Israel has experienced a hardening. Historically, Jews as a whole have been hostile to the gospel.

Secondly, Saucy argues that the hardening will end and the geo-political hopes revived in an eschatological future when there will be a conversion of the Jews. The problem here is one of *eisegesis*; i.e., reading into the text more than is there. *Even if Israel as a whole turns to Christ in the future, they must do so on church ground, not on nationalistic, geo-political grounds*—that is, they must believe the gospel. And, in so doing they become part of the church, not a revived geo-political Israel.

Furthermore, even if there is an eschatological harvest of Jewish people at the end of history, and our hope is that there will be a conversion of Jews in the end times, one cannot read into this text a rapture of the church, a seven year tribulation period, a 144,000 Jewish evangelists, a return to Palestine, a second rapture of the dead, a 1000 year Jewish millennium, a rebuilt temple, an established priesthood, and a typological upstart of animal sacrifices. Clearly, this is an agenda one cannot find in the passage.

Thirdly, Saucy understands “all Israel shall be saved” confers “nationalistic elements.” Here again, this is *eisegesis*—a reading into the text what is not there.

Indeed, there may be at the end of the age a Herculean harvest of Jews who believe and partake of the Messianic hope through faith in the gospel. The door into the Kingdom is not shut for Ashkenazi Jewish people! But, if they are to be saved, they must repent of their unbelief and embrace Jesus the Messiah; that is, they must come to him through faith in the gospel.

However, if this new Messianic community rebuilt the temple, they would be denying the existence of the true tabernacle (Hebrews 10); if they reestablished a priesthood, they would be denying the true priesthood (Hebrews 7, 8); if they tried to establish Jerusalem as the Christian center of the world, they would be denying the Jerusalem above (Hebrews 12); If they reinstated sacrifices, they would be

denying Christ's perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9); if they ordered their lives by the old covenant, would they not be denying the new covenant? So, if there is a harvest at the end of the age, it is difficult to see how any of those alleged "believers" could participate in OT practices and still be in the faith. A dispensationalist might argue they will do so "commemoratively," but this would deny the end of the old and the establishment of the new in Christ.

The phrase "and so" refers to God's work and the historical shift that took place during Paul's day of saving the elect of Israel who believe rather than to a future, eschatological work.

"All of Israel" does not refer to a populace conversion of Jews at the end of history. Rather, it refers to "all the elect of Israel" who believe during this present dispensation. After all, only the elect will inherit salvation (Romans 11:7). No Jew, or Gentile for that matter, has any hope apart from the gospel of Christ. To hold out an eschatological hope using Romans 11:5, which is uncertain at best and hopeless at worse, is doing injustice to **the urgent need for present day proclamation!** Ashkenazi Jews need to be saved today! "Now is the day of salvation." Enough of "Christian" Zionism! Believe the gospel and be saved!

19.10 Does God have a Separate Purpose for Israel?

The whole idea of a national conversion of Jews to Christ for geo-political purposes not only runs counter to the New Testament (The N.T. is silent on the subject), it is contrary to the wonderful truth of Jewish / Gentile unity in Christ as sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:28, 29), of Jewish / Gentile equality in the church (Ephesians 2:12ff).

19.11 Hoekema

Hoekema is dogmatic on this point: "The New Testament makes quite clear **that God has no such separate purpose for Israel**" (Hoekema A. , 1979, p. 199). The idea of a national conversion of the Jews into an elitist nation denies the truth of one tree in Romans 11 of which Gentiles are privileged to partake.

19.12 Reymond

Reymond gives six reasons to reject the futurist's interpretation of Romans 11 (Reymond, 1988, p. 1029).

- Paul's employment of a single olive tree: The idea that a separate future, salvation, or spiritual organism for saved Jews is excluded here. Jews obtain the blessings of redemption the same way Gentiles do, by faith!

- The phrase “until” (*axris ou, achris hou*) in Romans 11:25 has the force of a *terminus ad quem* with no indication that a prevailing circumstance will then be reversed. The condition of partial blindness extends until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Nothing is said about a reversal after this time.
- The term “then” (*tote, tote*): Paul does not say Israel has experienced a hardening in part until all the Gentiles come in and *then shall all Israel be saved*. The idea that Israel shall be saved after this period is missing in this section. Jews are saved by placing their faith in Christ now.
- The third “now” in verses 30-31: The three “nows” indicate that Israel is receiving mercy now, throughout this age. Now they are bound over to disobedience, but now they can come into the fold by repentance and faith.
- The binding of all men over to disobedience (11:32): This view strengthens the significance of the gospel for Jew as well as for Gentile. As Jews believe throughout this age, they experience the “riches” of 11:12 which is “life out of the dead.”
- Romans 11:26: refers to Christ’s first coming, not his second coming. After God takes away Jacob’s sins, He will come and comfort them. He did this in at Calvary. Moreover, this passage is not eschatological, it is “here and now” theology.

I would add that the Greek word “kai” can be translated “even.” “Even so, all Israel shall be saved.” Israel here refers to all believing Jews, not the nation. In other words, the real, true, spiritual, believing Israelites will be saved.

19.13 Ben Merkle’s Interpretation

Ben Merkle list four reasons why Israel in Romans 11 refers to the elect (Merkle, 2000).

- **The context of Romans 9-11:** God’s promises never included unbelieving, ethnic Israel or ethnic identity (9:6). True Israel are children of the promise, not the flesh. God never promised all Jews would be saved. Only the elect of Israel will be saved and this is true Israel. Paul shows two examples. Ishmael and Esau were descendants of Abraham, but were not children of the promise. God’s promises only apply to the spiritual within Israel.
- **The nature of the question:** Paul asks, “Has God cast off his people?” The question is not, “Has God cast off ethnic Israel with respect to his special plan for the future?” The second question prejudices interpretation. The same is true of the question, “have they stumbled that they should fall?” He is not asking if there is going to be a mass conversion of the nation. He is asking if Israel, by their failure, has completely forfeited their privilege? There stumbling is not as serious as it sounds. It is not a complete fall. There is abundant hope of life in Christ.

- **The use of the three “nows” in verse 30, 31:** The emphasis is on the present situation, not a future conversion (vv. 1, 5, 13, 14, 30-31):

“For I am an Israelite” If you doubt, look at me now (v. 1).

“at this present time there is a remnant of grace” The emphasis is now, in Paul’s day.

“For I speak to you . . . I am an apostle . . . I magnify my ministry.” The means of provocation of Israel to jealousy is not a future conversion, but his own ministry!

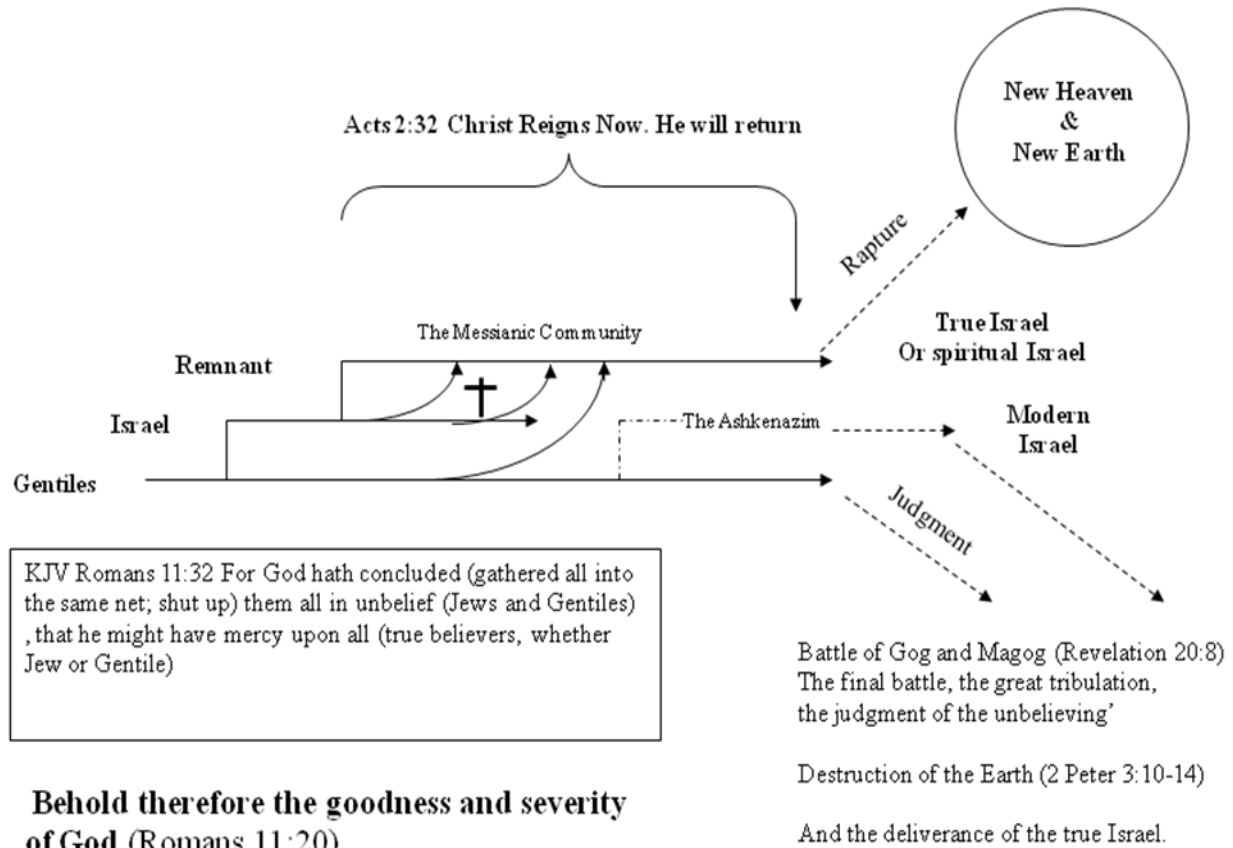
- **The nature of the term “mystery” (v. 25):** The mystery includes (a) the partial hardening, (b) coming of the fullness of Gentiles, and (c) the salvation of Israel. What is this “hardening in part?” “In part” should not be translated “for a while.” He does not mean, “all Israel is partially hardened,” but, “that some are fully hardened” while the elect remnant is being saved.

The word “until” does not mean something is going to happen afterward. The phrase “until” does not refer to eschatological termination. The hardening will continue throughout the whole of the present age until the return of Christ. He is not suggesting the “hardening” will be reversed at the end of time.

There are three usages of “ou(tws” are as follows: (a) temporal, (b) logical, (c) **modal**. The word “ou(tws” in verse 26 never has a “temporal” usage, i.e., it is not “but, then, after that” all Israel will be saved. If it were logical the verse would read, “and in consequence of this process (v. 25b) all Israel will be saved.” **The best usage is modal;** i.e., “in this manner all Israel will be saved.” The fact that it is the manner which is under consideration is supported by Paul’s argument in 11-24.

Merkle says “Israel” can refer to (a) Israel, both Jews and Gentiles, or (b) the ethnic nation of Israel as a whole.

19.14 The Destiny of the New Israel



19.15 Three Great Questions

Who is Israel as a people? Past, present, and future?

What is the holy land? Past, present, and future?

Who is Israel as a person? Past, present, and future? (Main source: Robertson, 2000)

19.16 Who is Israel or Who is a Jew Today?

This question will help us clarify present day misconceptions about God's people. The key issue here is not a political question or a cultural question, but a spiritual question. Who is Israel in God's eyes?

Was Abraham a Jew? No, he was actually a Gentile from the family of Shem, but because he believed God, he was declared to be Father Abraham, the father of faith.

Was Ishmael a Jew? No, he was a son of Abraham, but not a Jew.

Was Isaac a Jew? No, he was a Gentile, a physical and spiritual son of Abraham.

Was Jacob a Jew? Jacob was first called “Israel” because he wrestled with God—that is, he trusted God like never before.

Was the wife of Moses a Jew? No, she was a Midianite. The Midianites were the descendants of Midian, who was a son of Abraham and his wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2).

Was Ruth a Jew? No, she was Moabite who was included in the Messianic family.

Paul tells us directly that it is not one’s physical relationship to Abraham that identifies them with Israel, **but their spiritual relationship and shared faith:**

“For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,” (Romans 9:6) that is, one is not a Jew or a member of Israel because of a genetic relationship with Abraham.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.” In other word, Jewishness is a matter of the heart, not of the flesh!

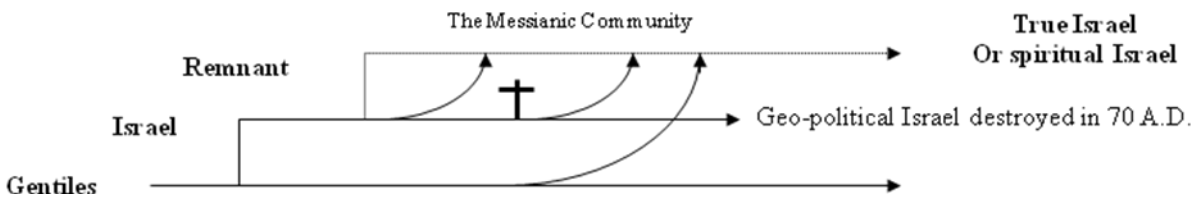
Is a Jew one who decides to be a Jew? No! Paul is emphatic, He “is not . . . “ (Romans 2:28). John is emphatic, “I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, but are not!” (Revelation 2:9, 3:9). Not all who claim to be Jews are Jews (Romans 9:6). They may possess a genetic relation to Abraham, be circumcised, live in Canaan, eat Matzah Ball Soup, and associate with Jewish people, and still not be a Jew!

In fact, John says that those who have a genetic relationship to Abraham, but do not believe the gospel, ARE NOT JEWS! To be a Jew, one must have a heart that is right with God—a heart that has placed its faith in the Lord Jesus Christ – a heart circumcised by the Spirit. Even Nicodemus, apart from the new birth, had no inheritance in the Kingdom of God Jews living in the Promised Land, unless born from above, do not have a stake in God’s promises or the Kingdom of God (John 3:3; Romans 2:28-29)

Positively, everyone who has faith in Christ and has been circumcised in heart is Abraham’s seed, and “heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:28, 29). If being a true “Jew” means a right relationship to God, then all Gentiles who believe Jesus is Messiah are true Jews and have the right to wear the star of David and showcase a candelabra. Unbelieving people who call themselves Jews do not!

Jacob was the first to be called “Israel.” But, this very human man was anything but a Prince with God. Though a man of integrity, his greatest virtue was that God loved him. Were his twelve sons part of Israel? His sons were manipulative characters at best. While we must admit a filial relationship, the question remains whether all twelve were sons of Abraham by faith.

Who is Jacob / Israel today? Moses predicted that a star would rise of Jacob, the true Israel of God. He is David’s greater son (2 Samuel 7:14), the righteous branch who stands in stark contrast to the other unrighteous branches in David’s line. He was the true Israel of God, called out of Egypt, passing the tests in the wilderness, and arriving on Jordan’s shore by virtue of His resurrection. He promised to create a new nation, his called out ones, the church, the sons of the true Israel of God (Matthew 16:16f). As the twelve sons of Jacob were called the sons of Israel by virtue of natural birth, Jews and Gentiles become sons of Israel to form “spiritual Israel” through faith by virtue of a spiritual birth (John 3: Galatians 3). It is through the gospel that believing Gentiles share together the promise of Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:6), draw near to the commonwealth of Israel, and become fellow citizens of the saints of the household of God (Ephesians 2:13ff).



Does political, genetic Israel have a future? One looks in vain through the New Testament to find a word that offers a hope for any Jew apart from “Yeshua.” Salvation belongs only to those who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Together, Jew and Gentile, will inherit paradise because of their faith in Christ. Only the debatable passage in Romans 11 appears to offer a hope for geo-political Israel, but after looking at this passage closely, one will notice that “all Israel will be saved,” i.e., all true believers from the nation will be saved, are being saved, or have been saved through Christ.

19.17 What is the Holy Land?

What makes a land holy? Is it not the manifestation of God? “Take off your shoes,” God said to Moses. The land is holy. The spot where God manifest himself became a holy site. But, was it holy after God departed? If someone today were walking on that site, would he desecrate it? No, because God is no longer there. What makes a site holy is God’s presence.

What made Canaan holy? Was it the presence of Abraham or the twelve sons of Jacob? No, it was the fact that Shekinah¹⁴ glory tabernacled among men in that land for a thousand years. God departed and the

¹⁴ Shekinah Glory is a visible manifestation of God on earth, whose presence is portrayed through a natural occurrence. The word *shekinah* is a Hebrew name meaning “dwelling” or “one who dwells.” Shekinah Glory means “He caused to dwell,” referring to the divine presence of God. The etymology of “*Shekinah*” is from the Hebrew word *shākan*, which means “to reside or permanently stay.” (Exodus 19:16-18; Exodus 40:34-38; I Kings 6:13; 2 Chronicles 7:1) (Christianity.com).

Babylonians ravaged the land. When He left, was the land still holy? Did He ever return, and if not, is the land still holy? Is the temple site still holy? No, the land is no longer “holy.”

The land grant promise foreshadowed God’s ultimate redemptive plan to redeem all of earth. Paul said that when God promised Abraham the land, He was actually promising Abraham the “cosmos” (Romans 4:13). The goal of redemption is not Palestine, but the world which includes Adam’s pristine garden, in the New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 21). The land could only serve as a shadow, a typological anticipation of the final goal of history, Paradise Restored.

In 70 AD, Israel lost her land, her religion, and her temple. These shadows were destroyed to remind humanity of God’s larger purpose which is to redeem not only the Jews but the Gentiles, not only Canaan, but the whole cosmos through the blood of Christ. When Stephen gave his famous sermon (Acts 7), he announced that God’s purpose was greater than the Jews, greater than Palestine, and that God’s throne was greater than the shadow of the temple:

“Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? (Acts 7:49).

Stephen lost his life because he repudiated the heresy that God’s redemptive program was limited to Israel, her land, and her temple.

Does modern Israel / Palestine have a future in God’s eschatological program? Dispensationalists would say, “Yes.” No doubt, the modern state of Israel has fueled this belief. However, as one looks at all the “return” promises and “temple” promises, they have to do with the return of 536 BC under Zerubbabel, not with something future to us.

When Joseph gave orders for his bones to be buried in Canaan, it was not that Canaan was more holy than Egypt, but because he wanted to make a statement that he believed in the God of resurrection and that one day he would participate in ultimate redemption of God’s people. The return of his remains symbolized his hope in the resurrection — not the holiness of the land (Hebrews 11:22; Exodus 3:6; Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37).

Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones, not only pointed to the hope that Israel would return to the promised land after their 70 years of exile, but it also forecast the complete redemption of God’s people in a redeemed cosmos of which Abraham and his spiritual children will inherit (Romans 4:13).

19.18 Who is Israel as a Person?

Jacob was first called “Israel” — a prince with God. But, this unloved man never embodied princely characteristics needed to perfect God’s plan of redemption. A star out of Jacob would complete God’s

redemptive plan (Numbers 34:17). Jesus is God's Israel, the Star out of Jacob, the Prince who will establish the Kingdom on earth.

The dispensational view holds to the belief that Israel's promises are unfulfilled. In contrast to the dispensational view is the covenant belief that all of Israel's promises are fulfilled in Christ.

God gave promises to Israel's patriarchs. God promised to bless Abraham and His Seed, not seeds. He renewed those promises with Isaac and Jacob and Israel (Exodus 2:23, 24; Exodus 6:1-8; Psalm 105:8-10).

The Seed came, lived, died, and rose again "to save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

God's promises are fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. During Paul's day, recalcitrant Jews were offered evidence of fulfillment, ". . . we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this *he has fulfilled* to us their children by raising Jesus (from the dead) . . ." (Acts 13:32, 33).

The resurrection of Jesus was declared by Paul to be the *fulfillment* of what God promised to Abraham, Israel, and David. If those Jews in Paul's day were considered backward for not believing that God fulfilled His promise in Christ, what must we say about Jews and dispensationalists who are still waiting for the promises to be fulfilled?

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

The blessings enumerated by God's promises were distributed based on the response and obedience of the people. If they obeyed, they would be blessed. If they disobeyed, they would be under a curse (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 13; Psalm 106:3; Isaiah 1:19).

They promised to obey (Exodus 19:8). Israel could only receive all the promises if they obeyed all the commands. But, their history records one failure after another.

The last word in the OT is the word "curse" (~r,xē, cherem). It means "to mutilate," "ban," "slit," or "destroy." Israel's throat was slit (cursed) in 70 AD because they refused to believe.

Malachi 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (cherim).

The **True Israel** was born from the stock of Abraham, and a new voice was heard, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7).

He was the **Surety of the Covenant** (Hebrews 7:22). A "surety" means pledge. He was the mediator of the covenant (Hebrews 9:15), the One given "for a covenant of the people" (Isaiah 42:6). *Christ became a*

double agent – a representative of God to men to represent His concerns to mankind, and a representative of men to represent believing humanity’s concerns to the Father.

As **Israel’s Representative**, He became the One through Whom Israel could fulfill all her promise to God. His obedience was accepted on their behalf.

As **God’s Mediator**, He became the One through whom God would bless His people Israel. Blessing comes to men, not through law-keeping, but through believing in Christ. Jesus, not law, is the true Mediator.

God promised to bless Israel. Israel promised to obey God. Total blessing could only be obtained for Israel through total obedience. Christ was not only **the Agent** of God’s fulfilling His word to Israel, He was **Israel’s Agent** of fulfilling the promises of God!

In His life, **the Agent** kept all of God’s law on Israel’s behalf. In His death, He took the curse belonging to Israel in order to protect them from the curses of the law. Because of the Agent’s obedience, God blessed Him. **As God’s Agent**, the resurrected Christ becomes the sphere, the land, the realm where believing Israel could obtain the blessing promised to Abraham (Galatians 3:10-13).

In Him, Israel fulfilled all her obligations to God. In Him, God fulfilled all His promises to Israel!

Thus, Paul was correct when He said, “. . . we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children **by raising Jesus** (from the dead) . . . (Acts 13:32, 33).

2 Corinthians 1:20 RSV “All the promises of God find their ‘Yes’ in Him.”

19.19 Israel as a Type of Christ

All the promises of God are but a shadow of the ultimate reality which is Christ.

- Israel was from the stock of Abraham, and so is Jesus. The promised Seed is Jesus.
- Israel kept the Passover, but Jesus is the true Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).
- Israel was healed by the brazen serpent which foreshadowed Christ the One made sin for us (John 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Israel’s greatest king was David, and Jesus is David’s greater son, the King of kings.
- Israel was circumcised, but real circumcision happens in the heart (Romans 2:29).
- Israel had a temple, but Jesus said he is the true temple of God (John 1:14; 2:12ff). In believing, the church joins that temple (Ephesians 2:22, 23).

- Israel worshipped on Mt. Zion which foreshadowed the real heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22).
- Israel had a temporal priesthood, but Jesus is a high priest forever (Hebrews 5-8).
- Israel offered sacrifices in the temple to God, but Jesus was the ultimate, final sacrifice for the sins of men (Colossians 1:19-24 Hebrews 9, 10).
- Israel found hope and salvation in the land (Palestine), but the people of God now find hope and salvation in a new land, “in Christ.”
- Israel was led out of Egypt by Moses the great deliverer, but Christ is the Great Deliverer (Deuteronomy 18:18) who led a new exodus out of sin into righteousness (Isaiah 52; 53; Romans 5-8).
- Did Israel come out of Egypt? So did Christ (Matthew 2).
- Was Israel tested in the wilderness (failed)? Jesus was tested in the wilderness (and succeeded)!
- Did Israel receive God’s Law (the Torah)? Jesus is the living Torah, Israel’s subjective standard of righteousness.

Jesus was Israel representative that fulfilled the law where Israel had failed. Because of His obedience on their behalf, the Father could bless Him. Because He was God’s mediator of the new covenant, true Jews could inherit the blessing of the new covenant in Him. Accepting Christ means that the blessings promised to Abraham can be appropriated by faith due to the obedience of Another. Christ is the Redeemer, the Greater Moses, the Greater High Priest, the Ultimate Sacrifice, the New Temple, the New Land, the True Israel of God.

19.20 Consequences

To believe that Israel has a future place in God’s program apart from the gospel or the church, or to believe that the church will be displaced has several **negative results**:

- This belief produces a false hope about salvation:

... it is today helping to encourage and deceive Jewish people with a false hope of salvation (T.H. Salmon. What about Palestine? (T.H.Salmon, Retrieved April 2012).

- This belief denies the true need of the Jews. Those who do not know the gospel will be punished, including unbelieving Israel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). The need is to come to Christ now; the hope is the Kingdom of God.
- This belief erects a false eschatological scheme involving a restored Israel that cannot be supported exegetically. As recent history has shown us, a belief in Israel's return to the land and a rebuilt temple, produces a false time table about future events that cannot be sustained by Scripture. Moreover, this expectation turns a blind eye to all the modern atrocities committed by Israel's government against the Palestinians.
- This belief fails to grasp the wonder and splendor of what God is doing through his people to spread the gospel today. When the church is seen as a "parenthesis" or "intercalation" or "deviation" in God's program, people fail to grasp the historical shift and the superior place the church has in God's plan to colonize the earth with Christians.
- This belief creates a presumption that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of Scripture.
- This belief creates a presumption that the land of Palestine is somehow more holy than the ground on which the church worships
- This belief advances a false claim without proof of claim that the Jews are still God's people and that physical Jerusalem is God's city.
- This belief misdirects prayer and creates a false presumption that to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is a holy prayer when in fact today's Jerusalem is no more holy than Chicago or Kansas City. Rather, Christians should be praying for churches (members of heavenly Jerusalem) in Muslim countries wherein the true people of God are being persecuted and killed.
- This belief discriminates against Arab Christians who, as sons of Abraham, have as much right (and more so) to own land in Canaan as a modern non-believing Jew. Arab / Palestinian Christians are "true sons of Abraham," while unbelieving Jews are children of the Devil.

Conclusion: As one looks at the issues, this student is forced to side with the covenant camp in regards to the nation of Israel. Israel's place in the premillennial dispensational scheme is profound: Israel's rejection, Kingdom postponement, the parenthetical church, and Israel's alleged future conversion. All of dispensational eschatology hinges on Israel's future, geo-national conversion. **If this dispensational presupposition is faulty, the whole system crumbles.**

The promises made to Abraham were conditional. Because he believed and obeyed, God was pleased to fulfill his promise to Him.

- The land grant promises were fulfilled during Joshua’s day.
- Israel was displaced from the land because of unbelief and disobedience.
- All the return promises about the land and about the temple were fulfilled prior to the return or before 516 BC.
- When Christ came to his people, Israel rejected him. Because they rejected Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise, God ultimately judged this nation and retired them from service. He is the ultimate stumbling stone over which history tumbles.
- Believing Jews and Gentiles form the new Israel, the true people of God.
- Jesus as the true Israel, the star out of Jacob—the One who merited and inherited all the promises and hopes of Israel.
- If Jews want to be saved, they must come to the Lord Jesus Christ through the gate of the Gospel, not through the door of Talmudic Judaism. Any attempt to rebuild a temple, set up sacrifices, or establish a priesthood or rabbinic traditions would be an act of treachery to the Christian faith – an insult to Christianity and an vigorous act of unbelief that will widen the gates of hell.
- In understanding eschatology, we must study what is revealed, not build on phantom theories. Therefore, the reader needs to beware of elaborate eschatological systems that build on an alleged geo-political conversion and return of Israel to her native land.
- The land was merely a shadow of God’s ultimate plan to restore paradise lost.
- The belief that modern Ashkenazi “Israel” will replace the church is sheer heresy.

Modern Jews have a hope, but only in Christ. Christ, not a “geo-political” nation, is the Promised Land. Only by believing in the True Israel can a man of Jewish faith find the blessings of the Kingdom. Because Christ was Israel’s Agent, He fulfilled true Israel’s obligation to the Father on their behalf; because Christ is the Father’s Mediator, He is the one through whom true Israel can obtain the blessings promised to Abraham. If you (Arab or American or Chinese) have received Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are a true son of Abraham, a true Israelite indeed, a true Jew, a member of spiritual Israel and a child of the Kingdom. You and only you have a right to claim the Star of David and enjoy the light of Israel’s candlestick. Selah.

20 JEWISH MYTHS

*Titus 1:14 Not giving heed to **Jewish myths**, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*

The term “fable” comes from the Greek word *muthos* from which we get the term “myth.” The use of “not” is a negation forbidding Christian theologians from plunging into Jewish mythology to advance end-time schemes that involve Jewish Marxist Zionism.

Because dispensationalism participates in Zionism and believes promises given to ancient Israel will find their completion in the modern state of Israel in an alleged millennium, it is important to discuss some of the myths surrounding Israel today.

It is important for the student to understand that though some of the following statements may unsettle the reader, none of this material is intended to be antisemitic or anti-Jewish. Everything this author loves; everything I admire; and everything I hold dear came from Jews: Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul, Peter, and James. The following information is designed to encourage believers to rejoice in our glorious gospel and the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and to not become entangled in modern Jewish Myths and fables.

20.1 MYTH 1: ABRAHAM WAS JEWISH.

Some people believe that Abraham was the first Jew. Actually, Abraham was a Gentile (Genesis 10, 11). He was from the stock of Shem -- a Gentile. The first time the word *Jew* is used is in the Book of Esther 2:5 around 480 B.C., The first time the word “Jews” is used is in 2 Kings 16:6 around 840 B.C. Traditionally speaking, Jews came from the tribe of Judah, but as the history of Israel unfolded and Judah became the dominant tribe, all Israelites were referred to as Jews by other nations regardless of their heritage among the twelve tribes.

Was Jacob a Jew? God called Jacob “Israel” because he wrestled with God—that is, he depended on God like never before. Was the wife of Moses a Jew? No, she was a Midianite. Was Rahab a Jew? No, she was a Canaanite. Was Ruth a Jew? No, she was Moabite who was included in the Messianic family. Paul tells us directly that it is **not one’s physical relationship** to Abraham that identifies them with Israel, **but their spiritual relationship**: “*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,*” (Romans 9:6) that is, one is not a Jew or a member of Israel because of a genetic relationship with Abraham. “For he is

not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.” In other words, Jewishness is a matter of the heart, not of the flesh.

20.2 MYTH 2: IT IS A SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE TO BE JEWISH.

This of course, is not true. Jesus said, “The flesh profits nothing” (John 6:63). By using the term “nothing” (ουδεν) Jesus meant that one’s genetic makeup does not commend one to God. The advantage of having Jewish blood counts for nothing, zero, zilch, nada. Moreover, modern so called “Jews” are all from Ukraine (Kazaria); that is, they are Gentiles from Noah’s son Jephthah – NOT Shem.

John the Baptist corrected this same myth when he said, “do not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” (Luke 3:8). Any notion that one’s race commends them to God or condemns them before Him is a Jewish myth.

*Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but **faith** which worketh by love.*

In our time, the phrase “Jewish lives matter,” or “black lives matter,” or “blue lives matter” have become racially offensive political slogans. The truth is that “innocent lives matter;” that governments have a duty to protect innocent life including but not limited to Christians, Jews, Muslims, and unborn babies. Nations are blessed or cursed based on their treatment of the gospel.

In Romans, following Paul’s indictment of the Gentiles, Paul charges the Jews with committing the same atrocities as the Gentiles (Romans 2:1-12). The advantage to being a Jew was having God’s Word in the nation (Romans 3:2-3), and one does not have to be Jewish to know the Word of God. One’s DNA and excitable mitochondria does not merit favors from the Creator.

20.3 MYTH 3: GOD HAS A SPECIAL LOVE FOR JEWISH PEOPLE.

Some people really believe that God has a “special” love for Jewish people. But, the Bible says God does not show favoritism (Romans 2:11). All are bound over to disobedience (Romans 11:32). God loves the whole world: the Chinese, Russians, Indians, Africans, Mexicans, the Europeans, and Jews (John 3:16). To say that He favors Jews over Africans or some other ethnic group is to say that God is prejudicial and racist. People do not become God’s children because of their race, ancestry, or family background. People become God’s children by receiving Christ (John 1:12-13).

Christians agree that “God so loved the world he gave His only begotten Son” until the subject of prophecy is raised. Suddenly, in the minds of many, God is going to show special favor toward the Jew at the end of history. This too is a Jewish myth.

20.4 MYTH 4: THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISES WERE UNCONDITIONAL.

According to this view, the promises of God to Abraham are unconditional and irrevocable.

God did graciously extend to Abraham what we know as the “Abrahamic Promise” (Genesis 12:1-5; 13, 15, 17). The promise included the following:

- A personal clause: “I will bless you.”
- A national clause: “I will make of you a great nation.”
- An international clause: “I will bless those who bless you . . .”
- The messianic clause: “In you¹⁵ shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”¹⁶

A land grant portion: “For all the land¹⁷ which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed forever¹⁸” (Genesis 13:15).

There is a belief that the Abrahamic promises are unconditional and that no matter what Israel does or how wicked and disobedient Israel became, God is obligated to bless these people. Consider the following evidence that the Abrahamic promise was conditioned upon obedience.

In Genesis 12:1, the verb, “Get the out” is a Qal imperative meaning, “to you, walk away from your land and your father’s house.” This is a command, and God expected obedience. The next line begins with a vav (י) which is translated “and” connecting the promise with the command. That is, God is saying to Abram, “Walk away from your land and family to a land I will show you, *and* I will bless you.” His blessing is conditioned on Abram’s obedience.

¹⁵ The phrase “in you” has been interpreted, and rightly so, as the right to be the messianic progenitor.

¹⁶ One should notice that God planned to bless all the Gentile families on earth through Abraham and not just “Jews.”

¹⁷ One should notice that Paul interpreted this promise, not limiting it to Palestine, but as a promise for Abraham and his believing children to possess the world (Romans 4:13). In the biblical world of things, the fulfillment is always greater than the promise.

¹⁸ The term “forever” or “everlasting” (17:3) should not be interpreted as having no qualifications or requirements. Israel forfeited their rights to the land because of their disobedience.

Again in Genesis 17, God gave Abraham a list of promises. Notice, however, they were conditioned on obedience to “walk before me and be blameless” (17:2). Again, the Hebrew vav (חנ"ט.א,ו>)¹⁹ connects the promise “to give” with the obligation “to obey.” In verse 14, failure to “circumcise” a male results in being “cut off from his people.” That is, the one who “breaks the covenant” would be cut off. Blessing depended on obedience to the law of circumcision.

It is clear in Genesis 22:16 that God promised to bless Abraham because of his obedience: “Because thou (Abraham) hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.”

If God’s promises are unconditional, why did God connect blessing with obedience when He commanded Isaac to “Sojourn²⁰ in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father” (Genesis 26:3). Again, the blessing is conditioned on obedience.

In Genesis 26:5 God extended the promise to Isaac “because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” We can see that God was willing to bless and wanted to bless. Second, we see that he was able to bless because Abraham obeyed His voice. But, it is also conclusive that if Abraham had not obeyed, God would not have blessed Him. This is not the same as saying obedience merits salvation. God forbid.

Furthermore, this raises the issue whether the term “unconditional” is even a biblical concept. The word “unconditional” is not a biblical word. It is a “coined” Christian word used by students of the Bible to explain the exceedingly great love that God has for us. In trying to describe His inexplicable love, Christians have used the term “unconditional.” No doubt, this is a noble attempt to exalt Christ’s love for sinners. But, in reality, this love must be received to be enjoyed and Christ must be believed to possess eternal life. The gift of eternal life is predicated on the condition of faith. Consequently, it does not appear appropriate to use the term “unconditional” as an adjective over all of God’s promises.

Later, when Israel became a nation, God initiated the Sinaitic covenant with Abraham’s sons, the children of Israel, or the Hebrew nation. If God’s promises are unconditional, then why did God say, “if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all

¹⁹ The word “give” (חנ"ט.א,ו) is an imperfect; that is, it is incompleting action. The vav connects the command to “be blameless” with the promises that follow.

²⁰ The Hebrew word for “sojourn” (רׁוּג) is an imperative. Again, the vav (ו) connects the promise that God would be with Isaac (חַיִּי,ו) and bless him with the command to sojourn in the land.

people:” (Exodus 19:5). The Sinaitic promise was conditional. As Israel obeyed, they were blessed. As Israel disobeyed, God was obligated to judge the nation (Leviticus 27).

If God’s promises are unconditional, then why did God say to the second generation of Hebrews:

*Deuteronomy 7:12 “Wherefore it shall come to pass, **if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them**, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers”?*

If God’s promises are unconditional, then why did God say to Solomon,

*“And as for thee, **if thou wilt walk before me**, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, **and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments**; Then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel. But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations” (2 Chronicles 7:17-20)*

All God’s promises have a condition attached to them. Take for example, the promise in Jonah that He would destroy the Ninevites, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” There is no condition attached. God says He will destroy the Ninevites. But, the Ninevites repented, and God then relented. Though it is not stated, the condition existed in the mind of God. Because the Ninevites met the condition, they were spared.

In regards to Abraham, we must keep in mind that Abraham obeyed, and God in His faithfulness blessed Abraham. Having fulfilled the covenant obligation, the Abrahamic covenant is now irrevocable. All who have faith become sons of Abraham and inherit what Christ accomplished through His achievements at the cross. ***In Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles find that all “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29).***

20.5 MYTH 5: ISRAEL NEVER RECEIVED THE LAND GRANT PROMISES.

According to this proposition, Israel never possessed the “Holy Land.” Because God’s promises are unconditional, He is obligated to give Semitic Jews the land of Palestine from the Euphrates River to the River of Egypt. Consider the following:

God promised Abraham His descendants would possess the land.

Genesis 15:18

In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates..

God promised the nation of Israel they would possess the land.

Deuteronomy 1:7-8 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

Deuteronomy 11:24 Every place where on the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

The Scripture says, the land grant promise was fulfilled in the days of Joshua around 1400 B.C. Inspired by the Spirit of God, Joshua declared:

Joshua 11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Joshua 21:43 And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

Joshua 21:45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

During the days of King David, he expanded the borders of Israel to the borders God promised Abraham.²¹ From David's perspective, the borders belonged to Israel.

2 Samuel 8:3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

The Scripture says that Solomon reigned “over **ALL** the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:21). And, “he reigned over all the kings from the river

²¹ Some may object saying that David did not possess this land, but only controlled it. However, 2 Samuel 8:3 says, “David went to recover his border at the River Euphrates.”

even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt” (2 Chronicles 9:26). Solomon says this in his prayer:

*1 Kings 4:21 Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms **from the [Euphrates] River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt**; they brought tribute and served Solomon*

*1 Kings 8:56 “Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: **there hath not failed one word of all his good promise**, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant”..*

For modern interpreters to say that Israel never received what God promised is to contradict Solomon.

Nehemiah also records the fulfillment of the promise.

*Nehemiah 9:7-8 Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, **to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words**; for thou art righteous:*

Jeremiah also records the fulfillment of the promise.

Jeremiah 11:5 "in order to confirm the oath which I swore to your forefathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day." Then I answered and said, "Amen, O LORD."

Jeremiahs 32:21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror.

The problem with the myth that God must still give Israel the land is that God’s Word says **the promise was fulfilled during the days of Joshua and the Judges** (Joshua 23:43-45). If this promise was fulfilled, then the belief that the promises have not been fulfilled, and therefore, Israel will inherit all of Palestine in the future is a false presumption – a Jewish myth!

Furthermore, the Scripture says, “What God promised to the fathers, this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus from the dead” (Acts 13:32, 33). What most fail to understand is that every promise, every hope, every dream created by the promises of God in the OT were realized in and through the resurrection of Christ because God made Him to be a Covenant for the people (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah

42:6)²². If the Jews in Paul's day were considered several eggs short of dozen in their understanding of this truth, what might be said of Christians who are still waiting for God to fulfill His promise to Israel two thousand years later? Christ is the new land and He must be possessed by faith. And, when one stands on the ground of Christ and His cross, he inherits all the blessings of the Kingdom.

20.6 MYTH 6: THE LAND GRANT PROMISES WERE UNCONDITIONAL.

Some forget that not only did God promise Israel the land, but He also promised they would be expelled from the land if they disobeyed His laws. Possession of the land was predicated upon obedience to God.

*Leviticus 26:31-33 **But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments . . . And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And***

²² The blessings of God were conditioned upon Israel's obedience (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2; Isaiah 1:19; Psalms 106:3). At Sinai, Israel pledged obedience (Ex. 19:8). Unlike Israel who disobeyed God in their time of testing, Christ obeyed the law. He obeyed God's law on Israel's behalf. In his **life**, He was Israel's Representative and fulfilled Israel's covenant responsibilities to God. In His **death**, he removed the curse of covenant breaking by becoming a curse for them (Galatians 3:1-14). In his **glorification**, all believers, Jews and Gentiles, will share in the glory and blessing of his covenant accomplishments. ***Not only is Christ Israel's Representative and means of obeying God's law for them; He is God's Representative (Mediator), the means or locus of covenant blessings promised to Israel by God if they obeyed Him.*** When God entered into a contract with Israel, he promised to do certain thing for them. Israel promised to do certain things for God. Because Israel did not fulfill its part of the contract, God could not ethically give them the blessings of the covenant. Disobedient, God was obligated to judge the nation. But, God sent Jesus to be the "messenger of the covenant" (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 42:6). First, God poured out the curses of the covenant on Christ and took for Israel what Israel could not take for itself. He was God's Representative to be punished for Israel. He was Israel's Representative to be punished for Israel. Second, because Christ obeyed the Father, He fulfilled Israel's responsibilities to God on behalf of Israel. ***He did for Israel on behalf of Israel what Israel could not do for itself.*** "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:8). He was obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8). He finished the work God gave Him to do. God was able to complete His part of the contract because Christ performed the duties of the contract. Christ was God's Mediator or means of fulfilling His word to Israel. ***As Israel's representative he obeyed the law for them; as God's Representative, He became the means by which God could bestow the blessing of the covenant to Israel.*** In His **life** Israel had kept all the statutes of the law, and in His **death** Israel bore all the curses of the law. In His **death**, He bore the curses. In **resurrection**, He received the blessings. In believing in Christ, Jews accept Him as their Representative before God and as God's Representative to them. Confessing Christ, Jews become members of spiritual Israel (true Israel or the New Israel which is composed of Christ and the community of the redeemed--Romans 9:6). For this reason Acts 13:32 says, "What God promised to the fathers, this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus from the dead."

I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste ().

But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see (Deuteronomy 3:27).

*Deuteronomy 4:23, 26-27 Take heed to yourselves . . . I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that **ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land** whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; **ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.** And **the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.***

*Deuteronomy 8:19, 20. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, **I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.** As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, **so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.***

*Deuteronomy 28:58, 63, 68 **If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book . . . ye shall be left few in number . . . so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land** whither thou goest to possess it . . . And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt²³ again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.*

God reminded the people that their fathers would indeed possess the land and that if the land was ever lost due to disobedience, it could only be regained by complete repentance and obedience (Deuteronomy 30:1-5). No regathering of people was ever promised apart from obedience and faith. No regathering of people was promised in UNBELIEF! No national regathering of Jews is found in the NT.

The land was forfeited through disobedience: As the history of the nation unfolded, and Israel became more and more disobedient, God promised to remove them from the land (Leviticus 26:33; Jeremiah 20:4). The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and the survivors were deported to the region of Assyria where they were assimilated among the Assyrians. In Jeremiah, God announced Judah's total disobedience to Him. Consequently, He would bring upon Judah all the curses announced in the Torah.

²³ Here the term "Egypt" could be literal or it could be a symbol of a second bondage.

*Jeremiah 11:18 **Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked everyone in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.***

God announced His judgment for disobedience—a 70 captivity in Babylon for the unbelieving nation:

*Jeremiah 25:8, 11 **Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words. . . And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and **these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*****

The deportation began in 606 B.C. and was consummated in 586 B.C. when the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem. God expelled the nation and exiled them to Babylon – 70 years of captivity (606-536 BC). Because Israel disobeyed, they were vomited from the land. The territory rested for seventy years (589-519 BC or in the alternative 586-516 BC).

*2 Chronicles 36:17-18 **Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.***

*2 Chronicles 36:17-21 **And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.***

20.7 MYTH 7: THE TEN TRIBES WERE LOST.

There are “Bible” teachers²⁴ today that teach that the Northern Ten Tribes were lost, but still exist in history, or that they formed the nations of the British Empire, or they somehow managed to maintain their Jewish identify after the Assyrian destruction in 722 B.C. or the Roman destruction in 70 A.D. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the theory of the “Lost Tribes of Israel,” history demonstrates that the disobedient Jews that were deported to Assyria were absorbed into the culture and lost their identity following their deportation.

Those remaining in the land intermarried with displaced Assyrian captives, and formed the people group known as *the Samaritans*. The whole idea that one of the lost tribes are Ireland, South Africa, Canada, or

²⁴ Herbert Armstrong and others.

America is a Jewish myth. The view that God knows where they are even though we do not sounds pious, but it is based on the presupposition that the deported Jews maintained racial continuity after their dispersion. This simply does not have any biblical or historical support. God promised to expel the rebellious from the land and to "make them few in number." To suppose that somehow the rebellious became ten great nations, though unknown, via disobedience after their expulsion from the land is a fiction beyond explanation. **It is simply a Jewish myth.**

20.8 MYTH 8: MODERN ISRAEL IS A FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.

There are all kinds of fictions and numeral manipulation schemes floating around in Christian circles that the creation of "another Israel" by Ukrainian Ashkenazim in 1948 is a fulfillment of prophecy.

"God unconditionally promised Abraham's descendants a literal world-wide kingdom over which they would rule through their Messiah who would reign upon King David's throne...Even the animals and reptiles will lose their ferocity and no longer be carnivorous," (The Late Great Planet Earth, Hal Lindsay, p 165)

"The nature of the blessings are earthly, territorial, and national, and have nothing to do with a spiritual church to which none of these blessings has been promised ...Christ is not now on the throne of David bringing blessings to Israel as the prophets predicted, but He is rather on His Father's throne waiting for the coming earthly kingdom and interceding for His own who form the church," (The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology, John F. Walvoord, p 205, 1983 AD)

"The foundation of the state of Israel in recent years has been a part of the predicted regathering of scattered Israel back to their ancient land...The present partial possession of the land is a token. The complete possession awaits the coming of Israel's Redeemer" (The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology, John F. Walvoord, p 185, 1983 AD)

But, the belief that Modern Day Israel is a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy is another "Jewish Myth" (Titus 1:14).

All the promises used to support a modern Israel phenomenon occurred before the return of Israel in or around 536 BC. All the promises regarding a return were made before biblical Israel returned from Babylon. Before 536 BC, God spoke through His prophets and promised to restore Israel and bring them back to the land (Ezekiel 37:12, 14; Jeremiah30:3).

God brought the people back to the land of Canaan in 536 B.C. by the decree of Cyrus. During this same period of time, God promised to rebuild and restore the temple. The temple was completed in 516 B.C. Both the land and temple promises appeared in the sacred record before the return to the land and

rebuilding of the temple. Since the promises apply to Israel's 536 B.C. return, it is not hermeneutically accurate to use these same verses to apply to the political development in 1948. They do not and should not be applied to the Ashkenazi invasion of Palestinian lands in modern times.

While some use the "double fulfillment" principle, the hermeneutic is as slippery as Penzoi to say the least. To take the return promises to rebuild the temple that belong to the Persian Period and hold them out as a promise from God to give Israel the land and to rebuild the temple future to our time lacks hermeneutical integrity. To take the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37) away from the context of the Babylonian Captivity and apply it to formation of "Israel" in 1948 is a flawed hermeneutic.

We assert, therefore, that all the prophecies given to Israel about returning to the land and rebuilding the temple relate to the return between 536 BC and 516 BC and that to apply these same promises to a time future to us is a miscreant hermeneutical error that creates a false hopes and false expectations. **Man's hope is in the gospel, not in a restored Israel!**

Furthermore, NO BIBLICAL PROPHECIES CONCERNING A RETURN TO PALESTINE WERE GIVEN AFTER 536 B.C.

Doesn't Isaiah eleven say that God will restore/recover²⁵ Israel a second time; that is, from a second exile which lasted until 1948? From this question, people assume that the "first time" recovery refers to 536 B.C. This is not so. The first recovery from the grips of a foreign power was during Israel's enslavement in Egypt during the time of Moses and Israel's exodus from Egypt around 1446 B.C. In Isaiah 11, Isaiah discusses a second recovery from exile—a highway from Assyria. The second recovery is compared to Israel's from recovery "out of the land of Egypt" (1446 B.C.). The two returns are respectively (a) the exodus from Egypt (1446 BC), and (b) the promise of restoration from the land of Babylon²⁶ (536 BC).

Doesn't verse 12 say he will gather them from the four corners of the earth? Yes, but again the context is the Babylonian captivity. In Jeremiah 32:37, God says, "Behold I will gather them out of all countries . . ." The context is the Babylonian Captivity. When the Babylonians armies came to Israel, many Jews fled to Egypt, Edom, and Arabia. It was from these countries that God retrieved His people.

It should be noted that Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10 as a fulfillment that Gentiles would gather around the "Root of Jesse" (Jesus) for salvation. Nothing is said of Jews, only the salvation of Gentiles (Romans 15:12). Furthermore, James informs the brethren at the first Jerusalem Council that it was the salvation of

²⁵ The word "recover" (qanah) means "to erect," "to create," "to own," "to purchase." It is often translated, "bought" (Genesis 25:10; Nehemiah 5:8). That is, it is through the gospel, not a restored Palestine, that God redeems the Gentiles and builds the fallen tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16).

²⁶ It should be noted that the means to this return was via horses, chariots, litters, and mules (Isaiah 66:20). This could hardly describe the repatriation of "Jews" in 1948.

Gentiles and their addition to the people of God that God was **building up the fallen “tabernacle of David.” It is not through a restored geo-political Israel that God builds true Israel, but through the addition of Gentiles into the messianic community by the proclamation of the gospel** (Acts 15:14-16).

Doesn't Isaiah 43:5-6 apply to the alleged “return in 1948?” No, the context is regarding the Babylonian captivity: “For your sake I have sent *to Babylon*, and have brought down all their nobles, and *the Chaldeans*, whose cry *is* in the ships” (43:14). In chapter 44:28, the prophecy regards the influence of Cyrus in rebuilding Jerusalem.

Doesn't Israel have to be back in the land to fulfill the “time of Jacob's trouble” that is predicted in the Book of Revelation? First, the Book of Revelation does not predict a time of “Jacob's trouble.” Second, the “time of Jacob's trouble” is found in Jeremiah 30:7. The context is the Babylonian Captivity (Jeremiah 29:10)²⁷. Jacob's trouble was their deportation to Babylon (606, 597, 586 BC)! And, these chapters deal with Israel's restoration from Babylon, not a restoration after WWII in 1948.

Doesn't Ezekiel 11:7 refer to Israel's restoration in 1948? Again, this prophecy was given around 597 B.C. where God gave the captives hope that He would be with them, protect them, and bring them back to the land. This happened between 606 BC and 536 BC.

All return promises are conditioned upon faith and repentance (Deuteronomy 4:29-11).

Deuteronomy 30:1-5 promises a return from among the nations if they return “with all thine heart and with all they soul.” Sadly, the people who call themselves “Jews” and who live in Middle East today are there in militant Christ-rejecting unbelief. They are not there because of fulfilled prophecy. They are not God's people. They are not believers. They are unbelievers in need of a Savior. They are Zionists with a political agenda.

*Deuteronomy 4:29 But **if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.***

*If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; . . . **Yet if they shall . . . repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness . . . And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies . . . Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause . . .***

²⁷ In Jeremiah 30:24, the text refers to the “latter days.” This is a reference to the restoration from Babylon, not a restoration 2500 years removed from the context.

And forgive thy people . . . give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them (1 Kings 8:46, 53).

*Jeremiah 29:12-14 **Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity.***

As we can see, a return was based on genuine repentance. Modern day Israel is not the result of repentance, but the result of political prowess, propaganda flim flam, money trees and military strength. The nation may indeed expand its control in the Middle East. It may even build a temple, but if so, it is not because some Bible prophecy is being fulfilled. Furthermore, any modern day support for Israel must be because Modern so called "Israel" acts morally and responsibly as a democratic nation in the region -- not because of some purported biblical prophecy. If by some miracle, the atheist people who call themselves "Jews" do repent, they will come into the kingdom on Church ground (the gospel), not on some promise of a restored Israel.

The Bible warns us about giving heed to "Jewish myths" (Titus 1:12). The Church's occupation with the people who calls themselves "Jews, but are not" (Revelation 2:9) who live in "Israel" which is not Israel, is entirely a Jewish myth rather than accurate Biblical teaching.

However, this does not mean we discount the "good" accomplishments of modern day Israel who has produced a stable democracy and who have proved to be good stewards of the land. Modern Israel has preserved archaeological sites from the Muslims who would destroy any evidence of Biblical accuracy. For this, they deserve commendation.

Politically speaking, every Christian ought to condemn this "other Israel" and their genocide of the Palestinian People, the plunder of their lands and homes, and not to turn a blind eye to these atrocities.

20.9 MYTH 9: GOD IS STILL INTERESTED IN GIVING PALESTINE TO "JEWS."

In the Dispensational Theory, adherents believe that God's Word would be untrue if Semitic Israel did not inherit all the land of Palestine; that God's integrity hangs in the balance until "Israel" gains control of its original borders; that a Nation called "Israel" with "Jews" back in the land somehow enhances the Bible's credibility. **This is another Jewish myth.**

God said that if Israel disobeyed, and were expelled from the land, they would be few in number (Deuteronomy 4:29). We should expect that if God's Word is true, and Israel disobeyed, they would decrease in size and number racially. An unsaved, unregenerate, unbelieving, Christ rejecting Ashkenazi people in control of ancient Palestine does not enhance God's credibility. If anything, Jewish wanderings and difficulties through the centuries are what testify to God's existence. Remember, Jesus cursed the fig

tree (Israel: Matthew 21:20). Henceforth, we would expect them to have a troubled history for rejecting their Messiah. Jewish history is a documentary on Leviticus 27:33- “You I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword against you.” Their plight exposes the curse on the nation for rejecting Jesus. And, it is this troubled history that reminds us what a terrible thing it must be to reject Jesus as the Messiah (John 3:18; 36). It is this troubled history that tells us the Bible is true.

Typologically, Paul indicates that God’s promises to Abraham were larger than Palestine -- that it really included the entire world:

*Romans 4:13 For the promise, that he should be **the heir of the world** (kosmos), was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Since this be the case, the land-grant promise was twofold: (a) God promised Abraham a piece of real estate called the Land of Canaan, but (b) we learn from Paul **the promise was much larger than the earnest pledge**. His plan was not just to rule the Land of Canaan, but it involved God’s intention **to redeem the entire earth for Christ** and His people. The capture and control of Palestine is simply a shadow -- a type of God’s grand plan to redeem the world and to create a new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21, 22).

God’s redemptive program is bigger than national Israel and the land of Canaan. His interest is not only redeeming Jews, but Gentiles. His ultimate goal is to redeem men from every race and tribe and to create a new heaven and a new earth. Man’s hope is not in a restored Palestine, but in Christ and His redemptive plan for the whole world. This plan is called “the Kingdom of God.”

The truth of the matter is that when Christ returns, the whole earth will be burned up including Palestine (2 Peter 3:10ff) and replaced with a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21). “The land of Canaan was only a type of that ‘better country; that is, an ‘heavenly’ one which those of faith looked forward to (Hebrews 11:16). Jerusalem and the kingdom of David were at best only a shadow of the ‘city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.’ Hebrews 11:10” (Brinsmead, 1974) “The Jews in Christ’s day tried to turn the shadow into the reality, and not a few are still trying to do this today . . . the real Jerusalem is ‘above’ (Galatians 4:26, the real Mount Zion and the real Jerusalem are heavenly (Hebrews 12:22), the real tabernacle is in heaven (Hebrews 8:1-5) . . .” (Brinsmead, 1974, p. 8).

20.10 MYTH 10: THE LAND GRANT PROMISES ARE STILL RELEVANT.

In Dispensational Theory, a belief exists that the people in Modern Israel who call themselves “Jews” have an automatic right to the Palestine because of ancient land grant promises given to Abraham

(Genesis 13), and that the Palestinians are equivalent to modern day Canaanites²⁸. This is a myth and a grievous political sin – a crime against humanity. Modern Israel won the land of Palestine by the right and might of war. Today, Israel has control of this region because of its superior military powers and strategic plan to control the region – not because they are recipients of ancient land grant promises.

We should remember that when ancient Israel rejected Christ, they forfeited any right to the Holy Land. When Christ came, He preached the gospel of the kingdom to the Jews. He came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him (John 1:10-12). They thought the promises were unconditional based on a genetic relationship with Abraham. John corrected their Jewish myth: “Do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our Father . . .’” (Matthew 3:9). This is the same argument the Jews used with Jesus:

John 8:33 We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham (John 8:39).

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

John the Baptist saw the “handwriting on the wall” when he said, “*The axe is laid at the root of the tree*” (Luke 3:9). He warned that God would cut down the Jewish tree if they did not repent (3:9,10). Jesus commanded Jews to come to Him (Matthew 11:28, 29) and to enter the narrow gate, which leads to life (Matthew 7:13). When the Gentile centurion responded by faith, Christ used his positive example to teach the broad view of redemption and to instruct the unbelieving nation that they were losing their grip on kingdom hopes:

Matthew. 8:11-12 Many will come for the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast (redemption) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west (believing Gentiles), and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom (Semitic Jews) shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

²⁸ We should remember that just as a being a Jew is a matter of heart (Romans 2:19), so is being a Canaanite a matter of heart. To treat the Palestinians as Canaanites based on some genetic or historical theory is as bigoted and bias as labeling modern day Jews as “Christ killers.”

Jesus announced that the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside into darkness . . .” The subjects (uì`oi. th/j basilei,a) were unbelieving Jews who failed to respond in faith and obedience to kingdom proclamation. They rejected Christ, and Christ rejected them! All contracts must be accepted or there is no contract. Because the Jews rejected the Kingdom contract, they forfeited Kingdom benefits.

As opposition mounted against Jesus, the Jews of that day accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, of being in league with the Devil, and of casting out demons by the power of Satan. Thus, the nation exposed their true colors as an “evil and adulterous generation” (Matthew 12:39). Subsequently, Jesus revealed His plan to build his Church; that is, to call out of the Jews and Gentiles a people for Himself (Matthew 16:15-18).

As the nation’s rejection became a final decree, Jesus announced a severe, irrevocable curse on the nation as a whole:

*Matthew 21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, **Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.** And presently the fig tree withered away.*

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? (Matthew 21:42).

By “no fruit,” I take that to mean the nation as a whole will never again be used of God as an instrument of the gospel to produce “sons of the kingdom.”

With Israel’s rejection cemented in unbelief, Jesus said:

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matthew 21:43).

The kingdom of God²⁹ is the “rule of God” and the blessings that flow out of that jurisdiction. That rule was taken from Christ-rejecting Israel and given to a nation bringing forth fruit. By using the term “nation” here, Jesus is not referring to governments or states, but a “multitude of people” -- a population we know as the Church of Jesus Christ, the true people of God.

²⁹ The term “basileia” means “rule” or “reign.” It is therefore, the rule of God. But, it also has an eschatological connotation because it refers to the “eschaton”—the final eschatological order. Ladd defined the kingdom theologically as the entrance of God’s rule into history in and through the Messiah to defeat man’s enemies (Satan, sin, death) and to bestow upon the sons of the kingdom the blessings of that kingdom: justification, eternal life, regeneration, and the Holy Spirit (1959, the Gospel of the Kingdom).

In Matthew 23, Jesus pronounced seven woes on Israel's leaders. In Matthew 24, he announced the destruction of the nation and a terrible tribulation that would come upon these people that had never come upon any people previous to this time. Refusing to listen, they rejected their Messiah, and in were destroyed in 70 A.D.

Matthew 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Luke 14:24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Paul says, "The wrath of God has come upon them at last" (1 Thessalonians 2:16). The Greek word of "last" is *telos*. Either Paul determined that God was judging the nation because of the Jews' rejection of the gospel in his day or he was anticipating the destruction of the Jews as announced by our Lord in Matthew 24.

Some may object by quoting Jesus' promise: "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon **twelve** thrones, judging the **twelve** tribes of Israel." Those who insist on the disciples sitting on 12 thrones do so based on a premillennial end time view.

First, the word "regeneration" is a kingdom term and refers to "the age to come," that is, the resurrection age (Luke 20:34-36).

Second, if the amillennial interpretation of Revelation is correct, the dead are with Christ now reigning with Him (20:4).

Further, by using the phrase "twelve tribes," Jesus could be delimiting his presentation of truth to the limited capacities of the disciples who at that time could not conceive that the gospel they preached would one day go into all the world and include believing Gentiles. Even in Acts 15, the disciples had difficulty juggling the fact that so many Gentiles were embracing the faith and that God was using Gentiles to rebuild the "fallen tent of David." It is probable then, the twelve tribes, in Jesus' mind would in the near future to His time include Gentiles inheriting Citizenship as de jure members of the true Israel of God.

Furthermore, every believer, Jew or Greek, is indebted to the disciples for the New Testament. We use their writing as their rule of faith. In one sense, all that the disciples recorded rule the Church today.

20.11 MYTH 11: GOD WANTS TO REINSTITUTE THE OLD JEWISH ORDER

In the dispensational scheme of things, Israel will replace the Church, build a temple, and offer sacrifices in the supposed millennium. What most fail to see is that Israel and all its institutions including but not

limited to its sacrifices, priesthood, festivals, temple, and covenants are a type or shadow of a greater reality in Christ.

- Did Israel have angels? Jesus is superior to the Angels.
- Did Israel have a priesthood? Jesus is our great high priest.
- Did Israel go into and come out of Egypt? So did Jesus.
- Was Israel tested in the wilderness? Jesus was also tested in the wilderness but passed the exam.
- Did Israel offer sacrifices for sins which could never take away sins? “By one offering *Jesus* has **perfected** forever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).
- Was Israel a picture of the people of God? Those “in Christ” are the people of God.

In other words, all of Israel’s promises and institutions were merely a shadow of a greater reality of what was inaugurated in the Church age and what is to be consummated at Christ’s return (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1).

2 Corinthians 1:20 For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

Philippians 3:19, 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Colossians 2:17 Which (festivals) are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Romans 5:14 Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Hebrews 11:19 Isaac--from which he also received him back as a type.

Hebrews 12:22-24 But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Furthermore, the Church is the locus of OT promises, hopes, and aspirations. Paul says, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). What promises? Quoting from the OT in 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18, Paul is claiming promises and expectations belonging to Israel for the Church. Selah.

In Romans 9:23-26, Paul says “He made known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy (evpi. skeu,h evle,ouj a) . . . even us (ouj kai.), whom He called, not from among Jews only (ouv mo,non), but also from among Gentiles.”

First notice that the term “vessels,” and “us” is plural. The “us” refers to Jews and Gentiles (9:24). Both Jews and Gentiles are considered part of God’s elect. To prove the inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessings of the elect, Paul quotes from Hosea 1:10. This passage refers to the Northern Kingdom.

Robertson properly observes, “Hosea refers to the ten tribes, Paul applies the principle here to the Gentiles” (Commentary on Romans, Word Pictures).

The indisputable fact that God was saving Gentiles who were not His people and making them His people is a fulfillment of the OT promise. The text is unmistakably applied to the Gentiles (9:30). Consequently, **the Church becomes the locus of OT promises.**

20.12 MYTH 12: MODERN DAY JEWS ARE GOD’S PEOPLE.

Many influenced by classical dispensationalism hold to a view that there are two peoples of God³⁰, Semitic Israel and the Church; that modern Israelites are really brothers of Christians and fellow members of the entire family of God because they believe the OT. This is another Jewish myth.

Dispensationalism, says Craig Blaising yielded “an anthropological dualism: one humanity fit and destined for heaven, and another fit and destined for the earth” (Blaising & Block, 1993, p. 24)

There is only one people of God—the Church. “The historical plan of God, therefore, is one unified plan,” said Saucy (Saucy R. , 1995) There is only one family (Ephesians 3:10-14) and one olive tree (Romans 11). The Church is composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles; that is, those who believe that Christ is the Messiah. The unbelieving Jews are called “enemies of Christ” whose “end is destruction” (Philippians 3:18).

Romans 9:6 For they are not all Israel (true spiritual Israel) who are descended from Israel (genetic descendants).

*Romans 9:8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh (genetic descendants) who are children of God (spiritual children, true Israel), but **the children of the promise** are regarded as descendants (true Israel).*

³⁰ As far as I can tell, the theory of two peoples of God can be traced back to C. I. Scofield, 1896, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth. Influenced by J.N. Darby, Scofield made a strong distinction between Israel and the Church.

Galatians 3:7-9 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham . . . So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham.

Galatians 3:26-28 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Revelation 2:9 I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not³¹, but are the synagogue of Satan.

The Church is the true people of God. When it became clear that the nation was not going to repent, Christ announced his plan to build his Church — his “called out” ones (Matthew 16:17ff). Initially, these Jewish “called out ones” like Peter, James, and John constituted *the true Israel of God, the remnant of Israel, the true people of God*. This company of disciples was the “true Israel,” the “new Israel” or “renewed Israel,” or “spiritually responsive of Israel.” Later, the spiritually responsive among the Gentiles were added to this community to form a new movement in history to build up the “fallen tabernacle of David” (Acts 15:15-18).

Figure 41: True Israel

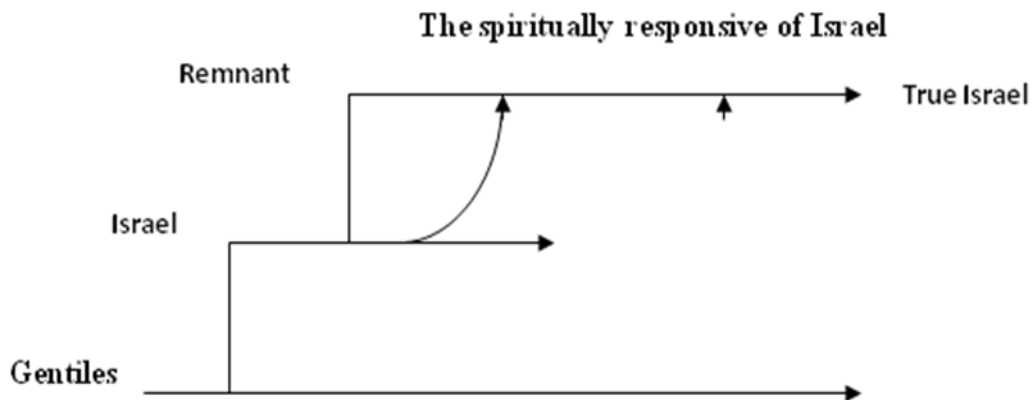
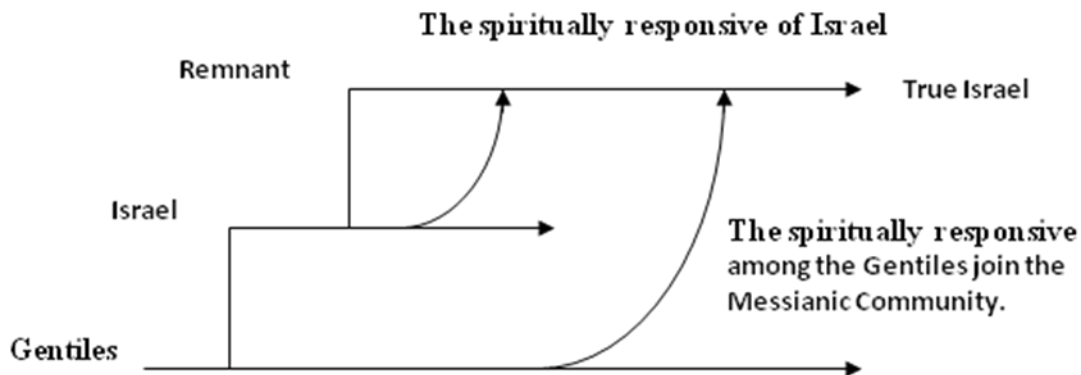


Figure 42: Gentiles Join True Israel

³¹ Who are these people that say they are Jews, but are not? It is not Gentiles claiming to be genetic Jews, but genetic, unbelieving, Christ-rejecting Jews claiming to God’s true people. This was a unique problem in the 1st century facing the early Church made up of believing, genetic Jews and believing Gentiles.



Robert Reymond augurs well for the covenant of grace and the unity of God’s people: “We can assert here that *the Church in Scripture is composed of all the redeemed in every age* who are saved by grace through personal faith in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, “the seed of the woman” (Genesis 3:15)” (Reymond, 1988, p. 805.).

During the final week of Christ’s ministry, the political climate burst into flaming animosity against the Lord. The Sanhedrin turned the house of God into a den of thieves. Therefore, Jesus indicted the nation’s leaders and illustrated the consequences of their unresponsiveness by cursing the fig tree—a symbol of the nation.

*Matthew 21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, **Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.** And presently the fig tree withered away..*

The verb “Let no fruit grow” is the Greek verb *genatai* (ge,nhtai) meaning “become.” It is either an aorist imperative or an aorist subjunctive³². Either Jesus is commanding that this tree never bear fruit again, or he is expressing a wish that it may never bear fruit again. Interestingly, it dried up immediately indicating that it was indeed a curse in the form of a command. **All agree that this tree is a symbol of Israel.** Christ cursed the nation and willed to destroy it. The axe John the Baptist predicted would hit Israel’s tree has been realized in Jesus’ curse on the fig tree.

³² The Greek verb *ge,nhtai* is most probably an aorist subjunctive of prohibition expressing a wish of negation. The aorist subjunctive is used to forbid the initiation of an action in contrast to the present subjunctive which forbids the continuance of an action. This being the case, this is an eschatological statement forbidding any future beneficent eschatological program for this nation. This, of course, does not prevent any individual genetic Jew from entering God’s kingdom by faith in Christ. This is proved true because on the Day of Pentecost over 3000 Jews entered the kingdom when they repented and believed in Jesus, their Christ and Lord.

Shortly after the cursing of the fig tree, Jesus called the leaders of the nation “tenants,” but the disciples called them “wretches” (Matthew 21:41). In the Greek, it is very clear, *kakou.j kakw/j avpole,sei avvtou.j*; i.e.. “he will destroy those wretches to a wretched end.” The people addressed are called “those wicked” tenants.

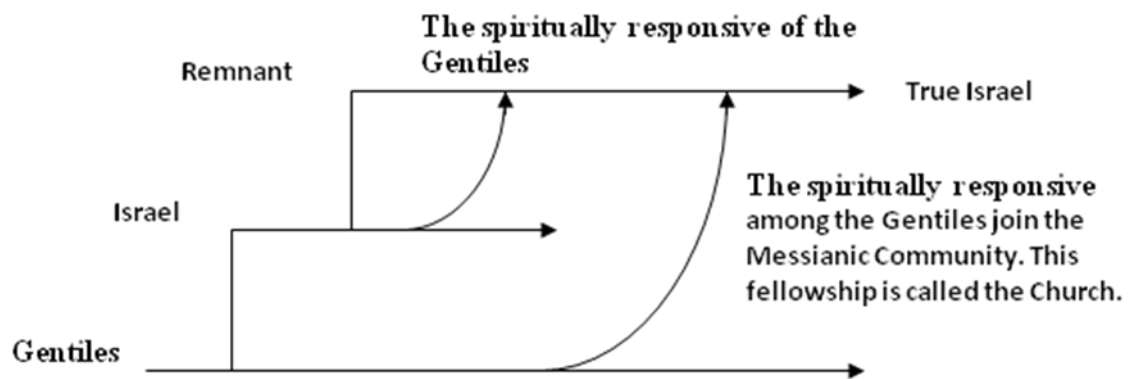
“Will destroy” is a future indicative verb that announces a future destruction of the nation’s leaders. The adverb “kakos” means “severely” or “wretchedly.” The NIV says it well, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end.”

NIV Matthew 21:41 "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

Continuing this theme, Jesus announced that *the farm (the Kingdom)* would be taken away and given to another people (Matthew 21:43). The word “people” is the Greek word for “other farmers” or other tenants (*a;lloij gewrgoi/*). Who are these “other tenants?” In Matthew 21:43, Jesus called these tenants “a nation” (*e;qnei, ethnos*). Some would have us believe it refers to a future generation of Jews. But, historically, it appears the spiritual leadership was taken from unbelieving Jewish leaders and given to Jesus’ apostles or the Church.

Jesus said he would build his “Church” (Matthew 16:16ff). His Church or “called out ones” were at the first the spiritually responsive within the nation (Peter, James, John, etc.). They were the true messianic community. ***Think of it, in the time of Christ and apostles, there was not one true, God-seeking Jew that did not become a Christian.*** To this messianic community, God added the spiritually responsive among the gentiles. There was not one, God-fearing, God-seeking Gentile that did not become a Christian and join this Messianic community in the first century. This messianic community (Jews and Gentiles) is the true Israel of God.

Figure 43: The Spiritually Responsive Among the Gentiles



2.

Jesus announced that He was the stone of stumbling. Since He was God's ultimate revelation, He was Israel's ultimate responsibility. Because they failed to receive Him, He became a ***stone of stumbling breaking and crushing to pieces all that rejected Him***. The word *broken* is used in connection with the broken bread at communion (1 Corinthians 11:24) and the breaking of bowl made of pottery (Revelation 2:27) and the breaking off of a limb from a tree (Romans 11:20). ***This "breaking" appears to be consummate and final.***

In Matthew 23, Jesus announced eight woes on the leaders of the nation. He held them accountable for all the martyrdoms of history (23:35). He even accused them of murdering Zechariah, the last martyr in the OT. Jesus then said something absolutely amazing, ***"this will come upon this generation"*** (23:36). In other words, there were leaders present who would see the withering of the fig tree, the destruction of the nation.

He said, "Your house is left unto you desolate³³." The word "desolate" means an actual desert, a wasteland. The disciples, of course, wanted to know when this was going to happen. Matthew 24 appears to be totally dedicated to predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel³⁴. Jerusalem came tumbling down in 70 AD and her people were killed by the sword, starved, crucified, or thrown to the lions.

Matthew 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

³³ The word "desolate" (e;rhmoj) means lonely place, desolate place, abandoned place, and uninhabited place. It is translated "desert" in Matthew 14:15. This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD where Jerusalem and the surrounding region became a barren wasteland.

³⁴ Matthew 24 is one of the most perplexing chapters in the Bible for the modern Biblical interpreter. There is no doubt Jesus is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. However, many futurists see in this passage an eschatological prophecy. They do this either by saying Jerusalem's destruction is a type of the eschatological destruction of the world, or by dividing the passage; that is, by saying that verses 1-28 is about the destruction under Titus and that 24:29ff is about Jesus' eschatological coming. The difficulty of course is that a division between verse 28 and 29 seems artificial. All three views have difficulties. From what I have been able to tell, the majority of Biblical exegetes before 1900 A.D. interpreted Matthew 24 preteristically; i.e., that Matthew 24 was a prediction of the destruction by Titus in 70 A.D. With the formation of Israel in 1948, futurists use this passage to announce a third destruction of Jerusalem in the eschatological future.

Furthermore, Ladd says the purpose of the last five chapters of the Book of Acts is not about the establishment of Churches, or new doctrines expounded, but “to illustrate in detail how Judaism rejected the gospel” and how the rejection of the gospel that Paul experienced in other cities became public policy in the Jews capital city, Jerusalem. “The Holy City and official Jewry had no room for the Christian faith. ***The Jews thus disqualified themselves as the true people of God***” (Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, 1974).

Historically, God totally shattered the nation, the land, and the temple to the root in 70 A.D. Spiritually and geo-politically; the nation’s purpose came to end in 70 AD. Today, God’s people are made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. He is using the Church to proclaim his gospel and to bring people into the kingdom. Israel as a nation does not appear to have any spiritual purpose distinct from other nations. There is no room for pride here. All men are bound over to disobedience, and all are saved through grace. The great hope is that many, many of those who call themselves “Jews” believe in Christ and identify with the new Israel, the Church. Likewise, we hope that more and more Gentiles will find the Savior.

20.13 MYTH 13: MODERN DAY “JEWS” ARE REALLY JEWS.

A popular myth is that a true Jew is one that is genetically connected to Abraham. Jesus said, “The flesh profits nothing” (John 6:63). In Revelation, John speaks of those “who say they are Jews, and are not” (Revelation 2:9; 3:9); i.e., there are those who claim to be Jews but are in reality not true Jews at all.

Paul dispelled this myth when he said the following:

Romans 2:28, 29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The Jews of Paul’s day prided themselves in having been circumcised. They thought that just because they were circumcised and genetically related to Abraham, they were “true Jews” as contrasted with Gentiles and proselytes to the Jewish faith who were deemed second class citizens in the Divine plan of things. Paul stated ***that being a Jew is a matter of the heart***; that is, it is matter of faith and not the possession of preferred DNA. This being the case, could a Gentile who had a pure heart and faith be considered a Jew? Of course, if being a true Jew is a matter of heart and a Gentile has a heart for God, then he is a true Jew. ***Being a “true Jew” in pursuit of the rule of God should be the goal of all men.***

Paul asserts a truth that being a child of Abraham is not a matter of genetics, but of faith. All those who believe in Christ are lawful children of Abraham: “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7). Uncircumcised, believing Gentiles who believe in Christ are just as much a child of Abraham as believing, genetic, circumcised Jews. However,

unbelieving, genetic, circumcised Jews are not considered people of God nor are unbelieving, uncircumcised Gentiles considered part of God's family.

Paul asserts that being "in Christ" is not a matter of ethnicity, nor social status, nor of sexuality (male or female). Being a child of God is a matter of heart.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

In Galatians 6:15, Paul said the following;

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth³⁵ any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule³⁶, peace be on them, and mercy, and³⁷ **upon the Israel of God.***

The question arises, "Who is the Israel of God?" Paul asserts that neither circumcision or uncircumcision commends a man to God; Rather, what commends a man to God is faith in Christ that results in a new creation. Paul pronounces a blessing of peace upon all who follow this principle. Those who follow this rule are the Israel of God; that is, the Church who experiences the power of regeneration. Since the Jews of Paul's day did not believe this truth, and the Church did, the Church is the Israel of God.

Furthermore, the great truth in Ephesians is that God is creating one new man out of believing Jews and believing Gentiles where both share in the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 3:12-3:8). The community of believing Jews and believing Gentiles have become the temple of God (naos), the place where God dwells. No longer does God dwell in a stone temple; Rather, He dwells with living people, the Israel of God.

The "Commonwealth of Israel" now consists of Jews and Gentiles who share together in the blessings of the Kingdom of God (Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 2:11-22). The "middle wall of partition" was broken down forever by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The Church can be called spiritual Israel or the new Israel of God. In Revelation, by calling each of the seven churches a "candlestick" or minora, John identifies the Church as the true Israel of God. ***Ancient Israel had a minora, but each local church is a***

³⁵ The word "availeth" means "to have power", but this word is not in the original Greek text. The text should read: "Circumcision is not anything," that is, it profits nothing and empowers nothing spiritually. In other words, there is no profit of being a genetic Jew related to Abraham if one's heart is not right with God.

³⁶ The word "rule" is the Greek word *kanon*. It refers to a standard of measurement.

³⁷ The word "and" can easily be translated "even."

minora -- a light to the world that Kingdom salvation has arrived in history through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Ladd says about the addition of Gentiles to the Jewish Community (the Church) resulting from Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God:

It therefore follows that the "rebuilding of the dwelling of David" (Acts 15:15-17; Amos 9:11-12) which had resulted in the Gentile mission, must refer to the exaltation and enthronement of Christ upon the (heavenly) throne of David and the establishment of the Church as the true people of God, the new Israel (Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, 1974, p. 355.).

20.14 MYTH 14: THERE IS A JEWISH RACE.

"There is no Jewish race" (Encyclopedia Britannica).

"A common error and persistent modern myth is the designation of the Jews as a 'race.' This is scientifically fallacious, from the standpoint of both physical and historical tradition. Investigations by anthropologists have shown that Jews are by no means uniform in physical character and that they nearly always reflect the physical and mental characteristics of the people among whom they live" (Collier's Encyclopedia, 1977, vol. 13, p. 573).

"Though there are many deleterious versions of genes shared within the Ashkenazi community, there are no DNA sequences common to all Jews and absent from all non-Jews. There is nothing in the human genome that makes or diagnoses a person as a Jew" (Pollack, March 7, 2003)

The truth of the matter is that after the destruction in 70 A.D., the Jewish people were scattered into Mediterranean where they intermarried with Gentiles among the nations. Subsequently, genetic distinctions were lost forever. There is not a so called "Jew" alive today that can say with any certainty that He is related to Abraham. Because this is the case, the greatest question facing the Jewish community is, "What is a Jew?"

20.15 MYTH 15: THOSE CALLED "JEWS" ARE SEMITIC

There is a common belief, a supposition, that those called "Jews" are related to Abraham and Shem; i.e., that they are Semitic. Following the destruction of Jerusalem and the dissolution of Israel as a nation and the scattering of surviving Jews among the nations, the Jews lost all genetic continuity with Abraham by intermarrying with other ethnic groups in nations around the Mediterranean.

After two thousand years of intermarriage with Gentiles, the question, “What is a Jew?” is not only a Christian question, but also a Jewish question.

*“In 1970 the Israeli Knesset) adopted legislation defining a Jews as one born of a **Jewish mother** or convert” (Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia, vol. 14, p. 214).*

This belief is widely held as can be seen by the following quote, “There are two ways someone can be a Jew. You can either be born a Jew or you can convert. (A convert is called a *ger* which literally means stranger.) Being born a Jew is pretty simple. If your mother is Jewish then so are you, if she isn't then neither are you. It doesn't matter whether your father is Jewish or not.” What matters to modern so called Jews is the Jewishness of one's mother (Who is a Jew? March 5, 2004).

Unlike Christianity, being Jewish is defined by birth, not by belief. If a person's mother is Jewish, then that person is Jewish, regardless of whether or not they actually believe in the God of the Bible (Notts, 2009)

Furthermore, the government of Israel decided that a Jew is one whose mother is a Jewess, or who has been officially converted. But as for the question of what really makes a Jew a Jew, ***no one seems to know***” (Sorko-Ram, 2011)

"Late in 1996, I called the Israeli consulate in New York to inquire about making aliyah, about exercising a right to return to the homeland as an Israeli citizen and a Jew. I asked the young woman who answered the phone to define a Jew. She said, 'If you have a Jewish mother.' I said, 'My mother isn't Jewish, but my father Isaiah I am a Jew.' She said, 'No, you are not a Jew,' and hung up the phone. I was dismissed by the first person I called." (Website, March 6, 2004).

It should be noted that the above definition **is not a biblical statement**. If it takes a Jewish mother to be a Jew, then what about all the grandsons of Jacob, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, or Bathsheba? Were they Jews? Not according to the modern fake “mother theory.”

Furthermore, it has been estimated that between 75% and 98% of those who call themselves “Jews” are **Ashkenazim** Jews³⁸. The ***Ashkenazim people were Gentiles*** living under the Khazars in the Khazarian Empire³⁹ who converted to Judaism by a Khazarian decree around 700-800 A.D. That is, a whole nation composed of Gentiles without a speck of Jewish blood in their veins were declared Jewish by the decree of the Khazar.

³⁸ Socio-Economics History Blog at <http://socioecohistory.wordpress.com/2011/05/26/ashkenazi-jews-are-not-descendants-of-the-biblical-israelites-2/> estimate 90+% of modern Jews are Ashkenazi Khazars.

³⁹ The Kazarian Empire is geographically located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea just north of Turkey.

As the political climate changed over the centuries, many of the Ashkenazim Jews moved into Russia, Poland, Germany, and the Baltic states. It was these Ashkenazi Jews Hitler put in his work camps, and it was primarily the Ashkenazim “Jews” who repatriated to “Israel⁴⁰” after 1946. This being the case, the majority, if not all of those called “Jews” living in Palestine are non-Semitic, that is, they are unrelated to Abraham⁴¹.

“The history of Ashkenazi Judaism is essentially the history of the Jews east of the Rhine from the fifteenth century onwards” (Dimont, 1962).

Robert Kirsch of the Los Angeles Times stated in his lengthy review that 'Arthur Koestler publicizes with his customary skills a daring hypothesis: that THE KHAZAR JEWS MIGRATED TO POLAND AND BECAME THE FOREBEARS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWRY...' Then Kirsch quoted Prof. A. N. Poliak of Tel Aviv University, who stated that "The large majority of world Jewry is descended from the Jews of Khazaria." Then he again quoted Koestler in THE THIRTEENTH TRIBE, "If so, this would mean that their ancestors came not from the Jordan but from the Volga; not from Canaan but from the Caucasus, once believed to be the cradle of the Aryan race; and that GENETICALLY THEY ARE MORE RELATED TO THE HUN, UIGUR, AND MAGYAR TRIBES THAN TO THE SEED OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB..." (Koestler, 1976).

“Charzars: A people of Turkish origin whose life and history are interwoven with the very beginnings of the history of the Jews in Russian. The kingdom of the Khazars was firmly established in most of South Russia long before the foundation of the Russian monarchy by the Varangians (855). Jews lived on the shores of the Black and Caspian seas since the first centuries of the common era. Historical evidence points to the region of the Ural as the home of the Charzars. Among the classical writers of the Middle Ages

⁴⁰ It is important to understand the term “Israel” has several different meanings: (a) Israel can refer to the ancient peoples of the Bible; (c) to the Church, the true Israel of God; (c) to those people who call themselves “Jews” that live in the modern State of Israel; or (d) those who by faith choose to be a “Jew” by religious preference and therefore are identified with “Israel” politically and idealistically.

⁴¹ The Sephardic Jews are from Spain who have their own separate history as Spaniards. In modern times, Sephardic Jews has been expanded to include African Ethiopian Jews, Kurdish Jews, Indian Jews, Arabic Jews, and any Jew that is not from Eastern or Western Europe. All of these “Jews” are Jews “by faith” with a common cultural tradition. That is, the term Sephardic is not express a genetic relationship, but a religious and cultural relationship. None of them can say with any certainty they have any Jewish blood in their veins. It is because of this non-genetic relationship of those who call themselves “Jews” the issue, “What is a Jew?” is so prevalent in this community.

they were known as 'Chozars', 'Khazirs', 'Akatzirs', and 'Akitirs'" (Jewish Encyclopedia,, vol. 4, p. 1).

The Khazars “was of the white race, but their language and polity were akin to those of the Huns and Turks . . .” (Margolis & Marx, 1980., 9th printing).

The Bible establishes the fact that the Ashkenazim are not Hebrews from the family of Abraham and Shem:

Genesis 10:3 The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

Ironically, because most Christians have not studied the history of the Jews after 70 A.D., they presume the people living in the State of Israel today have genetic continuity with the ancient Hebrews. This is just not so. The modern “Jew” has no Jewish blood in his veins. He may be a “Jew” by faith—a faith that rejects Christ as Savior and Lord⁴².

20.16 MYTH 16: ISRAEL WILL ONE DAY REPLACE THE CHURCH.

Advocates of dispensational theory assert that many or most of Israel’s eschatological promises are unfulfilled; that according to Daniel nine, Israel has seven more years to serve as God redemptive agent; that Israel is the center of God’s eschatological program; that the Church will be replaced by Israel at the rapture; that a part of the nation will be converted to Christ; that a 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be commissioned during a supposed seven year tribulation period to evangelize the world before Christ’s second coming.

Dwight Pentecost advocates a view that believing Gentiles are second class citizens among the people of God when he says, “Gentiles will be the servants of Israel during that age (millennium).” This too is a Jewish myth – a doctrine offensive to the gospel (Pentecost, Things to Come, 1958).

Books and more books are being written on this theme by honest men seeking truth. While modern day progressive dispensationalists appear to be moving away from all or at least part of this theory, the theory is deeply embedded in dispensational literature. While this theory has many presuppositions that must be analyzed, the following flaws should be noted:

First, the above theory is founded on the belief that there are two peoples of God, Israel and the Church.

⁴² This is not an anti-Semitic statement; Rather, it is an historical fact. In Christianity, there is just no room for “anti” any person.

Second, the belief that Israel has seven years left to serve as God’s people is grounded in an interpretation of Daniel nine that is admitted by most Bible students as the “swamp of OT criticism.” In other words, it is unwise to base a theory entirely upon a highly disputed passage. See Stockton (2015) E-book, “Towards Exegetical Theology,” Chapter 18, Daniel 9:24-27)

Third, this theory is based on a very literal interpretation of apocalyptic literature, Revelation chapter seven. It is unwise to employ the literal hermeneutic in apocalyptic passages. The symbol of a tree is not a bigger tree. Apocalyptic literature behaves more like a giant mythological “cartoon” than epistolary letters.

Fourth, the Dispensation Theory rests entirely upon one’s definition of the Church. John Walvoord, a DTS proponent of the Dispensational Theory, is correct when he says, “The premillennial system of interpretation has especially relied upon a proper understanding of the doctrine of the Church *as a body distinct from Israel* and from saints in general” (Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, 1957, p. 19).

In Walvoord’s classical dispensational view, the Church is an “intercalation” or a “parenthesis” in God’s redemptive program. There are many reasons this idea is incorrect⁴³.

Israel is the parenthesis in God’s redemptive program, not the church. The Church is His wise, permanent, enduring plan for redemption.

Figure 44: Israel a Parenthesis in History

⁴³ The dispensational view that the Church is parenthetical plan in God’s redemptive program for Israel rest on the presupposition that Christ offered the nation the kingdom, but they refused it—that is, the postponed kingdom theory. Pentecost (1995) still retains this view: “Jesus validated His offer of Himself as the Messiah by the miracles which He performed . . . Though Christ warned of judgment on that generation if they persisted in their rejection, the leaders did indeed reject Him; and thus He withdrew His offer of the Kingdom to that generation and announced judgment instead” (p. 214). The Davidic Kingdom was never postponed because it was never offered to Israel. Kaiser (1992) rightly states: “The postponed Kingdom theory has raised more problems than it has solved” (Blasing and Bock, p. 374). The position mocks God’s eternal plan, making Christ’s death a result of the postponement and unnecessary if the Jews had received the Davidic Kingdom. Second, there is little biblical evidence that Jesus ever offered Jews the earthly, Davidic Kingdom. If He had offered them the geo-political Kingdom (John 6:26), they would have gladly accepted it (Ladd, 1952). The Kingdom Jesus offered was the opportunity to accept His rule and reign in order to experience deliverance from the power of sin and dominion of Satan. The movement away from the postponed Kingdom theory is an improvement within dispensationalism (Arias, 1988-89; Beasley-Murray, 1991; 1992; Blasing & Bock, 1992; 1993; Brewer, 1990; Buzzard, 1992; Ferguson, 1978; House, 1992; Kaiser, 1992; Saucy, 1993; 1994 Towner, 1987; VanGemeren, 1992; Waltke, 1992; Wolfzorn, 1962).

... Abraham, a Gentile (Israel) A Gentile dominated Church ...



Paul says that the great mystery of the gospel is how “Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of his body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3:6-8). In Christ, believing Jews and believing Jews find permanent Citizenship in God’s kingdom as equals. The apostle goes on to say about the Church that the induction of Gentiles into the Citizenship of Israel (2:12) reveals “the manifold wisdom of God” (3:10). His redemptive wisdom is not revealed through “restored Israel in the Land of Canaan” but through the Church as his instrument to extend the good news to the entire world.

So marvelous was this grace that Paul burst into an accolade of praise singing, “For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from the whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name . . .” Notice that “this reason” is the inclusion of the Gentiles into the family of God by gospel proclamation. Second, notice that the word “family” is singular. While it is appropriate to recognize an historical distinction between OT Israel and the NT Church, we must recognize the organic unity of believing people throughout the ages. There is only one family of God.

Fifth, this view rests on the theory that there will be a conversion of 144,000 Jews during the tribulation period rest on (a) futuristic interpretation of Revelation, (b) a literal interpretation of apocalyptic literature, and (c) a dispensational presupposition that the Church is a parenthetical gap in God’s redemptive program for Israel.

However, many scholars do not accept this Jewish myth theory that 144,000 Jews will be saved during the supposed “tribulation” period including but not limited to Ray Summers , Edward McDowell, George Eldon Ladd, William Hendricksen, Simon Kistemacher, G.B. Caird, and Vern Poythress.

Even the great premillennialist G.E. Ladd combined the Preterist approach with the futuristic approach:

“We conclude that the correct method of interpreting the Revelation is a blending of the Preterist and the futuristic method.”⁴⁴

Ladd emphasized the interpreter must recognize the apocalyptic style when he said,

“We cannot too often emphasize that apocalyptic language does not convey its message in precise photographic style, but more with . . . fluidity and imagination” (Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John, 1973, p. 111).

⁴⁴Ladd, G.E. (1972). A Commentary on Revelation. Eerdsmans, p. 14.

When looking at the 144,000 as being a literal conversion of Jews in the end times Ladd said about this view that,

“it is faced with an acute difficulty,” and “there are good reasons to believe that by the 144,000 John means to identify spiritual Israel—the Church” (p. 114).

Ladd concluded, “these twelve tribes do not represent actual Israel” (p. 114-115).

Southern Baptist Professor, Ray Summers agrees,

*“Revelation is written in symbolic language . . .” (Summers, 1951, p. 146) and the 144,000 “represent not Jewish Christians only but **the whole body of believers**” (p. 150).*

Quoting Charles, Summers states about the 144,000,

*“It is not believers descended from the literal Israel . . . but from the **spiritual Israel** (the Church) that are here referred to . . .” (p. 148).*

Hendricksen, says about this group,

“They represent . . . the entire Church militant.” (Hendricksen, 1967, p. 111).

Vern Poythress, Reformed theologian, confirms this view when he says,

*“Some think that the 144,000 consist only of Jewish believers. But the expression ‘the servants of our God’ in 7:3 must **include the Gentiles saints as well. The equal status of Jews and Gentiles in the seven Churches** (see Ephesians 2:11-22 and the promises associated only with the 144,000 (Revelation 9:4; 14:1-5) **confirm it.**” (Poythress, 2000, p. 118).*

Perhaps McDowell, Southern Baptist Professor of NT Interpretation, expresses it most precisely,

*“The one hundred and forty-four thousand **represent . . . God’s elect upon the earth,**” and “Thus there is given in this vision encouragement and assurance **for Christians** in their impending struggle with Rome and the Caesars” (McDowell). E. A., 1951, p. 97).*

In summary, Revelation is presented to us in apocalyptic imagery. The job of the interpreter is to interpret the images presented using **the rules of apocalyptic interpretive principles**. The classical dispensational model held to a very flat, literal view and wrongly concluded the 144,000 were Jewish tribulation saints.

Using the twelve tribes and the ideal number of completeness (12 x 12) expresses the continuity of God’s redemptive program as well as the truth the Church is spiritual Israel, the true people of God. Using the tribes’ imagery is a direct contrast to those “which say they are Jews, and are not, but **are the synagogue of Satan**” (Revelation 2:9, 3:9).

By teaching the Church will be displaced and Jews (144,000) will be installed as God's people creates an ethnic division in the Church of Jesus Christ by giving primacy to people with a supposed genetic relationship to Abraham, when in fact, genetics count for nothing, while faith counts for everything (John 6:63; Galatians 3:11).

20.17 MYTH 17: MODERN ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED.

Robert Saucy's work, The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism (1993) has an excellent section representing a dispensational theory on Israel's restoration and future conversion. Saucy argues for a non-forfeiture of the promises: "*despite a strong element of judgment upon Israel, there is no indication of a forfeiture of the promises*" (p. 246).

Saucy reasons if the promises to Israel have failed then the future people of God have no basis of trust. How can the new community trust God's Word if it failed the Jews? asks Saucy. Saucy argues that Israel has a future based on the dispensational definitive verse, Romans 9:25: (a) The term "all Israel" refers to Jews as opposed to Gentiles; the Jews refers to the eschatological community; to Israel as a whole—a nation; (b) the time of Israel's salvation.

It is important to understand the importance of this verse to a dispensationalist. The NT **never discusses a future conversion of Jews**, a return to the land, or a Jewish hope in a millennium unless it is Romans 11:25, 26. In other words, *the entire dispensational scheme of a Jewish return to the land and their subsequent national conversion depends on the interpretation of Romans 11:25, 26*. It is this fact that caused Bruce Waltke, a former dispensationalist and now an amillennialist, to say in his criticism of progressive dispensationalism that if a dispensationalist could show him one verse in the NT that promised a future hope to Israel that he would be a dispensationalist (Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church (1992)).

The whole idea of a national conversion of Jews to Christ for a geo-political purpose not only runs counter to the New Testament (The NT is silent on the subject), it is contrary to the wonderful truth of Jewish / Gentile unity in Christ as sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:28, 29) and of Jewish / Gentile equality in the Church (Ephesians 2:12ff).

Hoekema is dogmatic on this point: "*The New Testament makes quite clear that God has no such separate purpose for Israel*" (Hoekema A. A., 1977., p. 199). The idea of a national conversion of the Jews into an elitist nation appears to deny the truth of one tree in Romans 11 of which believing Gentiles partake.

Reymond gives **six reasons to reject the futurist's interpretation of Romans 11** (A New Systematic Theology of the Reformed Faith, 1998, p. 1029). Paul's employment of a single olive tree: The idea that a separate future, salvation, or spiritual organism for saved Jews is excluded here. Jews obtain the blessings of redemption the same way Gentiles do, by faith! (Reymond, 1988)

The phrase “until” (axris ou, *achris hou*) in Romans 11:25 has the force of a *terminus ad quem* with no indication that a prevailing circumstance will then be reversed. The condition of partial blindness extends until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Nothing is said about a reversal after this time.

The term “then” (tote, *tote*): Paul does **not** say Israel has experienced a hardening in part until all the Gentiles come in and *then shall all Israel be saved*. The idea that Israel shall be saved after this period is missing in this section. ***Jews are saved by placing their faith in Christ now.***

The third “now” in verses 30-31: The three “nows” indicate that Israel is receiving mercy now, throughout this age. “**Now**” they are bound over to disobedience, but “**now**” they can come into the fold by repentance and faith.

Fourth, the binding of all men over to disobedience (11:32): This view strengthens the significance of the gospel for Jew as well as for Gentile. As Jews believe throughout this age, they experience the “riches” of 11:12 or “life out of the dead.”

Romans 11:26: This verse refers to Christ’s first coming, not his second. After God takes away Jacob’s sins, He will come and comfort them. He did this in at Calvary.

Consider an additional argument: First, “In part” should not be translated “for a while.” He does not mean, “all Israel is partially hardened for a while,” but, “that some in Israel are fully hardened now.”

Second, the Greek word “kai” can be translated “even.” “Even so, all Israel shall be saved.” “Israel” here refers to ***all believing Jews***, not the geo-political nation, but the believing remnant. In other words, the real, true, spiritual, believing Israelites will be saved. This is not to say that God cannot reap a great harvest of Jews in the last days. It is the desire of all Christians that God will bring more and more Jews into His kingdom. But, they will be saved the same way Gentiles are saved, by faith! They will come into the kingdom on the same ground as the Gentiles, the cross. And, they will be a part of that glorious family, the Church of Jesus Christ, which is composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles. Third, the emphasis is on the present situation, not a future conversion (vv. 1, 5, 13, 14, 30-31). Some Jews believed. Some were hardened. Some were being saved. Regardless, ***Jews are saved by grace, not race.***

The word “until” does not mean something is going to happen afterward. The phrase “until” refers to eschatological termination. The hardening will continue throughout the whole of the present age until the return of Christ. He is not suggesting the “hardening” will be reversed at some time in the future.

There are three usages of “ou(tws”): (a) temporal, (b) logical, and (c) modal. The word “ou(tws” in verse 26 never has a “temporal” usage; i.e., it is not a “but, then, after that” all Israel will be saved. If it were logical the verse would read, “and in consequence of this process (v. 25b) all Israel will be saved.” The best usage is modal, i.e., “in this manner all Israel will be saved.” The fact that it is the manner which is under consideration is supported by Paul’s argument in 11-24.

20.18 MYTH 18: THE JEWS KILLED CHRIST.

This over broad statement is not appropriate. It is true that Jews in ancient Israel demanded the death of their Messiah and were liable for the death of Christ. But, those Jews were judged by God in 70 A.D. It is irresponsible to hold present day “Jews” responsible for the death of Christ just as it would be to hold present day Russians responsible for the hideous acts of Stalin. Christ was put to death by Pilate and the Romans. They too have passed into eternity to meet their judgment. Furthermore, it would be appropriate for me to say that my sins put Christ on the cross because I needed a Savior. We must remember whether it was Jews or Gentiles that caused the death of Jesus, Christ was not a victim. He went to the cross voluntarily (Philippians 2:1-12). It was the will of God that Christ was crucified and it was the Father’s good pleasure to bruise him (Isaiah 53).

Consequently, it is totally inappropriate to blame modern day so called “Jews” for the death of the Savior. Everything we love and appreciate and value in life and came from Jews like Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul. There is absolutely no room in the Christian life to be antisemitic or anti-Jewish, or anti-Palestinian for that matter. But, it is appropriate to be against the crimes of the modern Jewish state.

20.19 MYTH 19: CHRISTIANS SHOULD ALWAYS SUPPORT ISRAEL.

It is the proposition of this paper that those who call themselves “Jews but are not” should be supported, not because of some land-grant promise in the OT or because of religious reasons, but because of virtuous acts of its government where one can find it. Israel today has a government that supports law and order. It is a democratic society that believes in freedom. The people are great stewards of the land, support human rights, and have a government that seeks to protect the life, liberty, and property of its citizens. However, blind support for this nation despite their behavior or political decisions would be malapropos. Modern day imperialistic Israel has committed horrific crimes against Palestinians. And, it is this unchecked, unconditional support of modern Israel by American Zionists that angers the Palestinian Christians⁴⁵. Should Christians support the modern State of Israel when they bomb and kill Palestinian Christians? Is it not a Jewish, Zionist myth that empowers blind allegiance to the modern State of Israel?

⁴⁵ Palestinian Christians have deep roots in the land. The great majority, estimated at 400,000 worldwide or roughly 6.5 percent of all Palestinians, are of indigenous stock, whose mother tongue is Arabic and whose history takes them back, or at least some of them, to the early Church. At present, the 50,000 Christians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip make up only 2.2 percent of the total population estimated in the mid-nineties at 2,238,0001. *Palestinian Arab Christians in Israel were estimated, for the same year, at 125,000 or 14 percent of all Arabs in Israel'. Christians in Palestine and Israel make up 175,000 or 2.3 percent of the entire Arab and Jewish population of the Holy Land* (<http://www.khsnsw.org/CITHL/who%20are%20cithl/palestinianchristians.html>:Retrieved March 9, 2004).

20.20 MYTH 20: WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.

Psalm 122:6 says, “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Shouldn’t we obey the Bible? Yes, we should obey the Bible but we should do it intelligently and with discernment.

But, at the time the Spirit inspired this verse, the temple was in Jerusalem, and God was in the temple. At this time, Jerusalem was the capital city of God’s people. The land was holy because God was in the land. But, is the land holy today? Is Jerusalem below the capital city of God’s people? Does God dwell in Jerusalem today?

OT Jerusalem is simply a shadow or type of the heavenly Jerusalem, the true capital city of God’s people.

Today, God dwells in the midst of His Church. The Church is the temple of God (Ephesians 2:21).

Today, it would be better for us to pray for God’s people, the Church, than it would be to pray for the city of Jerusalem.

Do not hear what I am not saying. I am not saying we should not pray for Jerusalem, I am saying that God no longer dwells there; that the Land is no longer holy. Today, God dwells in the midst of His people, and we are duty bound to pray for local Churches. Why should we pray for Jerusalem more than we pray for London, or Chicago, or New York? There are more Christians in Chicago than there is in all of Israel. Why not pray for the City of Chicago? There are less Christians in London than there are in Miami. Why not pray for souls to be saved in London? It is not wrong to pray for Jerusalem, but it is wrong not to pray for Christians in local Churches. When Christians prosper, the gospel spreads. Pray for the Church.

We should pray for unsaved “Jews” and unsaved “Gentiles” that they will come to Christ and experience covenant blessings obtained by Christ. If the Holy Spirit internalizes the law, and the basis of forgiveness is revealed through Christ, then the new covenant is in effect. If the new covenant is in effect then the Church needs to pray that both Jews and Gentiles will be able to repent and accept God’s covenant offer in Christ.

In summary, there are many Jewish myths that are being preached today about those who call themselves “Jews but are not” (Revelation 2:9; 3:9) and a supposed re-establishment of ancient Israel in the Holy Land. Zionism runs deep in dispensational theology. What is important for the believer to understand is that the manifold wisdom of God is being displayed by incorporating Gentiles into the Commonwealth of Israel; that is, true Israel. Only through Christ can people be saved. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). When believers hold out a future hope for those who call themselves “Jews but are not”, they hold a false hope – a fiction. Jews like all other men must enter the kingdom by embracing Christ by faith.

Furthermore, the amount of energy expended in proclaiming an eschatological hope not only waste valuable energy and resources, it leads people astray from the gospel and the centrality of the cross in

salvation. While we hold out a hope for those who call themselves “Jews but are not,” we do so on gospel ground, not on the ground of a restored Israel in Palestine.

20.21 MYTH 21: THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL SETTLED IN EUROPE

Matthew 3:9 "And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,'

Colossians 2:8 "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy (trends, intellectual movements), which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ."

There is no need to spend much time on the subject of British Israelism because it is an absurdity.

Nevertheless, any and all absurdities find a nest to roost in. Even some American Christians are buying-in to these presumptions.

What is British Israelism?

It is an intellectual movement within fundamental Christianity that combines Biblical thought and cultural studies with white Anglo-Saxon supremacy; that is, the belief that European peoples (all white), especial Britain and America are descendants of "the lost tribes of Israel." It is also called Anglo-Saxon Israelism and the Christian Identity Movement.

Further, it is associated with Christian Restorationism, Armstrongism, the KKK, and even American skin heads. Many British believers identify with the doctrine, and in some way, these beliefs impacted the Nazis during the early twentieth century. Mary Baker Eddy spoke of “Anglo-Israel”. The newest group to propagate the nonsense is Brit-Am.

The movement now has its headquarters in New Zealand. They teach that the Celtic, Scandinavian, Germanic races are descendants from the lost tribes of Israel. But such outlandish claims are contradictory to modern genetic, linguistic, archaeological, and historical knowledge.

WE BELIEVE the White, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and kindred people to be God's true, literal Children of Israel. Only this race fulfills every detail of Biblical Prophecy and World History concerning Israel and continues in these latter days to be heirs and possessors of the Covenants . . . This chosen seedline making up the "Christian Nations" (Gen. 35:11; Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26) of the earth stands far superior to all other peoples in their call as God's servant race (Isa. 41:8, 44:21; Luke 1:54). Only these descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel scattered abroad (James 1:1; Deut. 4:27; Jer. 31:10; John 11:52) have carried God's Word, the Bible, throughout the world (Gen. 28:14; Isa. 43:10-12, 59:21), have used His Laws in the establishment of their civil

governments and are the "Christians" opposed by the Satanic Anti-Christ forces of this world who do not recognize the true and living God (John 5:23, 8:19, 16:2-3) (Source: kingidentity.com).

Why Do People Believe in British Israelism?

The reasons are many: racial pride, the immigration madness of the UN, the assault on the white race by multiculturalists, the control of America by Zionists, the false presumption that modern day Jews are Semitic, Black racial pride and its grasp for power (BLM), heresy within the church that believes Jews are the chosen people of God (Christian Zionism), the failure within the church to see itself as the True Israel of God, and Scriptural condemnations of Judaizers to mention a few.

If there is strength to the Christian Identity Movement, it is that these people see the error of calling modern-day, Ashkenazi, Kazarian-Jews Semites the chosen people of God, and the racial agenda to eliminate the white race. No white person should be ashamed of their race. American Christians are notorious for buying into Jewish, anti-defamation propaganda and modern Zionism.

Is it possible some of the ten tribes moved to Europe?

Yes, anything is possible. Is it probable? No!

What is the Objective of British Israelism?

The people use the Bible to claim that the establishment of Britain and America are the result of land grant promises in the Bible; that these nations are blessed by God because of promises given to Jews.

While these countries are blessed by God in many ways, it is not because of promises given to the Hebrews. It is because the gospel was proclaimed, believed, and rooted among people in these countries. But, that root going down into the gospel of Christ has been under a fierce attack by the pics and shovels of atheistic humanism. These European nations are not only under a blitzkrieg of Zionist's disinformation about the Christian religion, but are a victim of a Zionist plan to eliminate the white race by immigrating blacks from Africa into Europe.

Errors regarding British Israelism

Many scholars have pointed out that their historical studies are amateurish and presumptive lacking solid, primary source verification, and in many instances lacking in secondary and tertiary verification.

The ten tribes were assimilated in the Assyrian Empire after the ten tribes were carried into exile by Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria (722 B.C.). The Israelite survivors quickly integrated with other tribes in the Levant which caused them to lose their genetic distinctiveness. Every attempt

to trace the migration of these tribes into Europe is met with frustration because of the co-mingling of races.

Moreover, to assign favoritism to the rebellious, LORD-rejecting lost tribes creates a theological conundrum impossible to justify.

It is true that modern day Jews are not the chosen people of God. The chosen people of God are those souls who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:1-3).

When Jesus refers to the lost sheep of Israel, He is not talking about the lost ten tribes of the exiles. He is referencing the unbelieving, unsaved, unrepentant Jews in Israel at the time of His ministry. All who do not know Christ are lost and their souls are in need of rescue (Luke 15:1-7). Jesus came to save sinners in Israel. After His resurrection, our Lord ordered His disciples to preach the gospel to sinners among the Gentiles that His elect among the nations might come into His fold.

Those who believe become children of God (John 1:1-13), not because they are white, or Anglo-Saxon, or British, or German, or descendants of Abraham, but because they have the faith of Abraham (a Hebrew) and have come to trust in the doing and dying of the Savior (Galatians 3:1-14).

If the Jews during the first century committed a grave error for thinking they were favored of God because of a genetic relationship to Abraham (Matthew 3:1-13), how much more are those who think their race or the color of their skin commends them to God today? God does not favor races; He favors those who have faith in His Son.

Reformed theology teaches that all who believe become sons of God and members of a new Israel, or the true Israel, the "called out ones" known as the church; that is, it is faith in Jesus that God honors. In Christ there is neither male or female, slave or free, Greek or Jew, rich or poor, white or black (Galatians 3:28).

If there is a strength to the white, European, Germanic, Scandinavian, white-British race, it is because these people received the gospel of Christ which birthed the values of Western Civilization and the Americas (35 to 1900 AD). But, this is no longer the case. The doctrines of evolution, psychology, free sex, and the push to establish a universal spiritual religion by the NWO conquered many European minds.

America was **not** built on the "Judeo-Christian ethic!" It was built on the Puritan ethic, period! For this reason, God favored this country. Americans inherit Biblical blessings because of faith in Christ, not because of some supposed "genetic" relationship to the Lost Tribes of Israel.

Europe has now rejected the gospel. Great cathedrals are empty. Europeans adopted humanistic Zionism as its faith of choice. The gospel is all but dead in Europe and the belief that all religions are paths to God is now conquering the Anglo-Saxons without firing a shot.

Likewise, America's sins reach to heaven. The Americas have been demoralized to the point of accepting abortion and Sodomy as a human right. How can "God bless America" when its government is building a new foundation on the humanist-utopian ethic which includes fornication, murder of the unborn, lesbianism, transvestitism, gay-marriage, racism, and Judaism which we call communism?

Conclusion

There are only two races on the earth -- those in Adam and those in Christ (Romans 5:23ff). Either men have God as their Father or they follow the Devil as their father. An informed Christian will thank God that He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world and not just the white race.

It is our hope that heaven will be filled with believers from all nations and races.

Racism has no place in Christianity, but neither does multiculturalism, pan-theism, agnosticism, anthropocentrism, anarchism, communism, egoism, fideism, globalism, hedonism, atheistic liberalism, relativism, nihilism, pantheism, pluralism, regalism, sexism, solipsism, Unitarianism, Zionism, Judaism, zootheism, or Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

The gospel commands all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel . . . not just white people! (Acts 17:30).

If a man wants to boast, let him boast that he understands and knows the LORD "Who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth . . ." (Jeremiah 9:24).

21 KINGDOM ETHICS

Joshua 8:32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

*The followers of Jesus are to be different-different from both the nominal church and the secular world, different from both the religious and the irreligious. The Sermon on the Mount is the most complete delineation anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian value-system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, life-style and network of relationships-all of which are totally at variance with those of the non-Christian world. And this Christian Counterculture is the life of the kingdom of God, a fully human life indeed but lived out under the divine rule (John Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1985).*

Dispensationalism with its theory of a postponed Davidic Kingdom interprets the Sermon on the Mount as a new form of legalism inapplicable to the Christians life and wholly connected to the Jewish millennium.

“The Sermon on the Mount is legal in its character; it is the law of Moses raised to its highest power” (Feinberg C. L., 1954).

*I do teach that the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is ideally the Constitution of the Kingdom. It shows us the ethical standard for the time of the (Davidic) kingdom (David Reagan, *Learn the Bible, Millennium and the Sermon on the Mount*).*

Dispensationalism pits law against grace instead of pitting law against lawlessness. The sermon has been rejected by Dispensationalist who claim it only has application for the alleged millennial Kingdom. But, any doctrine that nullifies the Sermon on the Mount for the Christian life and relegates it to a future age must be seriously scrutinized.

The Kingdom of God must not be allowed to be postponed or reduced to “an idea” or “an existential experience” or a dream of “blessed immortality.” Fact: the Kingdom of God entered history in the person of Christ to deliver men out from under the power of evil and to bring them under the blessings of the reign of Christ now in a first-fruits way. History is moving toward its divinely directed goal. It is not the job of Christians “to bring in the Kingdom” or “to build the Kingdom,” but it is the duty of Christians to surrender to its law and to proclaim its existence. The Kingdom of God is wholly a supernatural act.

Christians can surrender to the rule of Kingdom, proclaim the Kingdom, obey the laws of the Kingdom, and persuade men to enter the Kingdom, but they cannot bring in the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God has enemies. The anti-God forces (deep state) seek to frustrate Christ's rule among men. There are demonic forces at work in persons which move against the Kingdom of God. Evil is not merely the absence of good, or a stage adverse to modern societal development, but a force warring against the good of mankind. This evil cannot be overcome by "choices" or "character curriculums" or "societal development" or "education" or by "legislative decrees" of Congress. Law has a limited function. It cannot regenerate society. Evil can only be overcome by the direct intervention of God into a human life or the life of society; i.e., the grace of God. Evil is in man and greater than man.

Evil is not merely a force in man or a physical phenomenon in the material world, evil has a societal character. Evil also leavens man's institutions and will be at work until the consummation of history. Consequently, Christians are called upon to surrender to the Kingdom and proclaim its existence, but at the same time will suffer for it: "Yet for you sake we are killed every day, we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered" (Psalm 44:22). Every Kingdom ethic is opposed by humanistic politicians—men and women with a utopian "equality" vision for this world—a world of their own creation.

The Kingdom of God offers as a gift the righteousness it proclaims. The Sermon on the Mount is not a righteousness to be achieved, but a gift to be received.

The Sermon on the Mount is true law — case law extended from the Ten Commandments. For those who accept Christ as King, Kingdom righteousness is given as a gift of grace to those who acknowledge their spiritual poverty.

Righteousness is a Messianic gift—a gift of the Eschaton. For the publican who beat his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," received the gift of Kingdom righteousness: "I tell you," said the King, "this man went down to his house justified"—an eschatological judgment invading present time (Luke 18:13-14).

Sinners, without compromising the law of the Kingdom, gain a right standing by with God by faith in the King. It may take a radical decision like severance from friends to enter the Kingdom (Luke 9:60), but it yields peace with God (Romans 5:1). Justified and regenerated, Kingdom applicants receive new power to keep the law, not to be saved, but because they are saved; not to achieve a right standing with God, but because they have a right standing with God; not out of fear, but out of a thankful and grateful heart (Romans 8:4). The glorious marvel about the Kingdom is that the King offers the righteousness He demands as a gift to the repentant.

The Kingdom of God announces a negative truth: Since the Kingdom of God belongs to "the Age to Come" we should not expect the full realization of the Kingdom of God in this age. The wheat and tares grow together until the end of the age. Perfection awaits the "Age to Come." Christians must oppose all human utopias and Marxist ideals. The ideal social order awaits the consummation of history. But, such a

perspective must not be allowed to degenerate into futuristic pessimism. Christ entered history to demonstrate the powers of the coming age. He has not abandoned this age to evil. Men can experience and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom now in a first-fruits way. Men can, in some measure, acknowledge the King and incorporate Kingdom values in this life now. Christ has not surrendered “this age” to evil; rather, He entered “this age” to defeat Satan, sin, and death. The Kingdom manifests its power and character in and through the church. As “salt” and “light” society can in some way feel the impact of the Kingdom. As Christians proclaim God’s law, government feels the power to protect the rights of man and purge evil from society. When politician feel the heat, they see the light.

Kingdom citizens announce a positive truth: “The Kingdom of God is . . .” (Romans 14:17) and men can experience a down payment of its blessings now . . . surrender to its rule now . . . and apply its values during this age without the total purging that awaits the consummation of this age. The Kingdom of God has invaded history, and men are not only placed under its ethical demand, those yielding to its authority are enabled by Kingdom power to realize a new measure of its righteousness.

Power is available to the person who believes. Evil cannot be totally purged from society because all men are evil, but evil is being overcome by sons of the Kingdom. Enjoying a new status, sins are forgiven. Cleansing occurs. Purity begins, but completion awaits the resurrection. Good and evil, and the false and true grow together in the same field until the judgment (Matthew 13:25). Evil is present, but Christians are not permitted to acquiesce to evil. They are not given God’s permission to surrender their human institutions to sinister, maniacal rulers. Christians must resist bad government and bad policies. The presence of the Kingdom means a war against evil within and without. A new Lawman is in town and rebels are put on notice.

Kingdom ethics is inextricably connected to God’s law (Matthew 5-7). Christ did not come to abolish law, but to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17-20). The law of the Kingdom has its roots in the Ten Commandment and the pursuit of justice, mercy, and faithfulness to God. The law is good for me because it is good for all men. Thus, the Christian calls men to acknowledge Jesus as King and surrender to His law-order; that is, to harm no man or his property (common law) (Micah 6:8; Matthew 23:23; Matthew 11:28-29).

The ethics of Jesus are Kingdom ethics, the ethics of the reign of God. The ethics of the Kingdom place a new emphasis upon personal ethics—matters of the heart as opposed to the external practices of the Pharisees. The law condemned murder, but Kingdom citizens must judge personal anger. Kingdom grace enables Kingdom citizens to keep Kingdom law. It kindles a willingness to obey Christ’s law and provides the power to do so—not for salvation, but as part of sanctification.

The opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness (antinomianism). Where men do not acknowledge God there is lawlessness: “Depart from me you that work iniquity (anomia)” (Matthew 7:23).

The gospel of the kingdom contains law, but it does not offer salvation by law.

Christ is King. Every command in the NT is law. The failure to NT commands as law is the product of more than a little evil. The law is not only good all men, it is good for all of man's institutions. Just as each man has a duty to cooperate with a good government, government has a duty to obey God and His law-order. No Christian is under compulsion to comply with Godless policies of Governments operating in rebellion against the law of the LORD God.

Law is good, but it has a limited purpose. Law cannot regenerate society, but properly applied it can purge evil from society. Law restrains evil, but it cannot remove evil within men. We believe in the **rule of law**, but we do not believe in **rule by law**; i.e., the rule of the powerful over the powerless whereby rulers exempt themselves and extract obligations from the ruled. In America, men are not subjects of a king, but sovereigns without subjects. Statutory law has its source in We the People but even this must be consistent with the "laws of nature and nature's God."

The law of the Kingdom is the Ten Commandments. Those who teach others to adopt the law and advocate submission to it are great in the kingdom; those that nullify the commandments advocating forms of antinomianism are least in the kingdom (Matthew 5:19). Failure to advocate God's law is to proclaim the death of God among men and to surrender society to the cults of chaos.

The Ten Commandments can be reduced down to the three rules: the love of justice, acts of mercy, and faithfulness to God (Micah 6:8); or, simpler yet: do your neighbor no harm! The essence of law is do not injure people or damage their property; and, this was the foundation of common law upon which our nation was built (Amendment VII)

Common law is opposed to statutory law. One is for men, the other for government employees. One is lawful, the other is legal . . . and "legal" is the undoing of God's law, to wit:

The definition of the term LEGAL. "the undoing of God's Law."

1893 Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Encyclopedia Britannica; a dictionary of arts, sciences and general literature/ The R. S. Peale 9th 1893

If there is no injury to person or property, there is no crime. Thus, because the Christian is in the Kingdom and under the law of Christ, he must resist all attempts by jural "persons" to entrap him under man's codes, rules, regulations, and statutes. He is in-lawed to Christ, not a government of men.

Love is a fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8). A life of love means living consistent with the Ten Commandments, internally and externally. To fear God is to obey His commands; and, to say one fears God but lacks obedience is like a well without water (Deuteronomy 5:29).

The Kingdom announces the rule of God. Where God rules, there is law. There is no such thing as a kingdom without law. One absolute God means one absolute unchanging law. In the Bible there is one source of law—the God of Israel.

The First Commandment, if it means anything, is that all other competing law sources must be serious scrutinized and in most cases rejected.

God's law has a limited function. It can identify evil, but it cannot eradicate evil. It can educate a man on what is good, but it does not supply the power to do good. Law in and of itself cannot give life. It cannot transform the heart. But, when the sinner surrenders to the rule of God, he receives the life of the Kingdom as a free gift. Regeneration awaits the Age to Come. When a man accepts the rule of God in his life, the eschatological powers belonging to the Messianic era regenerate the man now to supply the power to keep His law now (Romans 8:4; 13:8).

In the Kingdom there is one God and once source of law. Kingdom law challenges man-made legal systems. In the Kingdom, Christ is the one Source of law. He is the "end" of the law or the completion of law. The Ten Commandments are the perfect objective reflection of the character of God; Christ is the perfect subjective reflection of the character of God. One Lawgiver and one law mean man's first duty is to question authority to see if it is of God or man. When laws are bad or misapplied, the Christian is duty bound to resist legal tyranny – any administration that rejects God's law.

Christian Resistance: "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." -- Romans Chapter 13 Revisited

He owes no duty to the state or to his neighbors to divulge his business, or to open his doors to an investigation, so far as it may tend to criminate him. He owes no such duty to the state, since he receives nothing therefrom, beyond the protection of his life and property. His rights are such as existed by the law of the land long antecedent to the organization of the state, and can only be taken from him by due process of law, and in accordance with the Constitution. (Hale v. Henkel, 201 U.S. 43 (1906))

"Statutes that violate the plain and obvious principles of common right and common reason are null and void." Bennett v. Boggs, 1 Baldw 60

The opposite of courage is not cowardice, but compliance.

An enemy of the Kingdom is the modern state with its polytheistic and multicultural adoption of alien law forms. In a society where every man is his own universe, humanity is governed by the utopian whims of men. The modern state tolerates evil and even charges the non-compliant with hate crimes if they do not tolerate abortion or sodomy or idolatry.

The enemy of the modern Marxist state is Kingdom proclamation that teaches there is "another king, Jesus." Proclamation of the Kingdom announces a new king, a new law, with new demands on men. Kingdom preaching announces there is one God and one law and one way into the Kingdom (John 3:3; 14:6). To have "no gods before me" means to have no law and no sources of law other than the law of the holy, transcendent God. Congress is not a source of law. There is one Lawgiver in the universe, not two

(James 4:12). If the Kingdom means anything, it means that all other sources of law must be resisted. So powerful is this truth, the NT preachers were accused of turning the world upside down and teaching laws contrary to Caesar (Acts 17:6, 7).

The commandment, “Thou shall have no other gods before me” condemns humanism where every man is his own solar system. Many “gods” in America means “many people” practicing their own values. Anarchy is every man doing what is right in his own eyes with his own creed seeking to coerce society to adopt his values.

Legislators commit anarchy when they provide equal protection to all religions. Legal pluralism is anarchy. Political correctness is a sin. Multiculturalism is its birth child, and tolerance is the doctrine preached when the minority seeks to gain control over the majority.

A society that is open to every new idea, new religion, and new morality commits social suicide. America comes to mind. To have no defense, is to invite enemies of the cross to rule a nation.

Under humanism’s pragmatic law, every man is free to create his own law system. Each man must choose his own values, his own law, and his own morals because humanists deny the One true God and His absolute law. It is possible in this multi-legal system to hold that murder is a valid value and that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle. Kingdom law demands that Christians “stand fast, and hold to the traditions (Kingdom ethics)” and to resist anarchy—total acceptance of all religious values—an forms of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:25).

Once the absolute God and His absolute law is denied, the only universal law possible is tyrannical, imperialistic law backed by intimidation, force, and coercion. In America, those who resist the omnipotent state and its man-made codes and statutes face years of imprisonment. This is tyranny backed by imperialistic law.

This means that one must carefully consider pledging allegiance, taking an oath, or entering into a contract--especially one that would place duty to the state above duty to God. Fortunately, the modern State makes some allowances for matters of conscience. But, the list gets shorter.

Kingdom law is good for all men. The King taught his laws to all the people—openly and publically. But, the secrets of the Kingdom were reserved for His disciples. His commandments are good for me because they are good for all men. They are meant to be applied not only to Kingdom citizens, but to all men, and all man’s institutions. Societies and economies are healthy when families, businesses, and corporations arrange themselves under God’s law.

Kingdom law means tension – a tension between “this age” and “the Age to Come”; between the Ruler of this age, and the Ruler of the coming age; between Christ and Satan; between God’s law and man’s law; between political saviors (politicians) and the precious Savior. There is resistance to God’s law. Christians live “between the times.” It preaches the perfect law of liberty (the Ten Commandments)

among men who seek their own gods and own law (James 1:25). This is not a gospel without law⁴⁶, but a proper application of the Ten Commandments by men who have received “the engrafted word” (1:21). When men obey God’s law, people are free from fraud, theft, and bodily injury. When men believe the gospel, they receive power to keep God’s law – a law that leads to freedom in society.

Kingdom law means Kingdom education. The Shema provides a principle of a Christ-centered education. Anything other than a Biblical education is apostasy for the believer. The Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come” is a mandate for Christian education. True devotion to Christ requires parents provide children with a Biblical foundation of knowledge. An early president of Princeton, Revelation John Witherspoon, said, “Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.”

To surrender children to the State is to turn them over to the enemy. To have others laws, other values, other schools, other teachers, and other hopes is to incite the jealousy of God for “having other gods before Me.”

Modern education is humanistic: “Be all you can be” and “Live life to the fullest” are products of humanist ideologies that offer no consideration of “Hallowed be Thy Name.” The modern state is secularistic, and like Rome, seeks to unite men around its government. And, like Rome, the modern state seeks to be “neutral.” It lacks power to unite people of different religions and persuasions. Christian law and Sharia law, transvestites and Israelites, Marxists and capitalists can never make peace anymore than sheep and wolves can roam together in the same pasture.

Kingdom law challenges the imperialistic state which sees itself as a lawmaker for the people. “To have no gods before me,” means Christians in American cannot treat government as a god or consider themselves “subjects” of a monarchy. To do so is not only unbiblical, but unconstitutional.

***"Sovereignty itself is, of course not subject to law,** for it is the author and source of law; but in our system, while sovereign powers are delegated to the agencies of government, **sovereignty itself remains with the people,** by whom and for whom all government exists and acts." Yick Wo vs Hopkins and Woo Lee vs Hopkins (118 U.S. S.Ct. 356, 1886).*

"The people of this State, as the successors of its former sovereign, are entitled to all the rights which formerly belonged to the King by his prerogative." Lansing v. Smith, 21 D. 89., 4 Wendel 9 (1829) (New York).

⁴⁶ “The law of liberty” is used twice in James (1:25; 2:12) because obedience to law sets men free from fear; the term “gospel” is not used in James, but the term “law” is used eight times. There is no gospel without law! The opposite of gospel is not law, but anarchy. There is all the difference between being saved by law, and being saved to keep the law. James urges born again believers to obey God’s law (1:25). James thoroughly rejects antinomianism.

"...Our government is founded upon compact. **Sovereignty was, and is, in the people**"
(*Glassv.SloopBetsey,3Dall.(U.S.)6(1794)*).

"Acts of Congress" are not applicable to "sovereigns" in the 50 states. 18 USC, Rule 54
C Positive Law enacted -Titles of United States Code.

Furthermore, the First Commandment means the LORD God calls the state to arrange itself under the authority of Christ. "Thy kingdom come" means governments must seek the will of God and employ its power to ensure "They will is done on Earth as it is in heaven." Kingdom truth limits the state as well as empowers the state. A secular, neutral, passive state in regards to religion and Biblical ethics is actually hostile to the Kingdom law.

The law, and the First Commandment, was not only for Israel, but for all men and all of man's institutions. Just as individual men have a duty to become thoroughly Christian, the State has a duty to be Christian. "Thy kingdom come" means the State is required to reject alien law and surrender itself to God's law. The Great Commission, if it means anything, places a duty on Christians to Christianize nations . . . and to call government to serve the people and limit its power to its charters.

But, modern governments are in rebellion to God's rule (Psalm 2) and therefore must be resisted. Because the modern State sees itself as a god, it requires total allegiance, total sacrifice, and total commitment to the State. In requiring a 30% tithe (tax) of a man's income, the modern state not only considers itself more important than God by demanding it be paid first before the citizen can tithe to the church, but it also considers itself more worthy than God because it demands a 30% tithe to itself!

Over optimistic politicians believe that sheep and coyotes can live together in peace when governed by a secular wolf government. Secular regimes are not the savior of deeply divided nations. The title "United Nations" is an oxymoron just like the term "jumbo shrimp." Secularism strips society of meaning. It can only be overcome by Kingdom proclamation. The belief that everyman is his own law leads to anarchy. Anarchy leads to totalitarianism wherein the state postures itself as a coercive military peace keeper.

State worship is strictly forbidden in the Bible. Statism, however, is alive and well in the United States, and Christians actively promote it by their failure to protect their source of law. Christians that will not advance Kingdom law publically contribute to the death of society where paramilitary police squads dressed and armed with a phalanx of lethal weapons and trained in military tactics are assigned to carry out routine law enforcement tasks, such as serving a search warrant to senior citizens or conducting a routine traffic stop on non-violent American citizens.

Kingdom truth challenges priorities. Since the goal of history is the Kingdom of God, we should make the Kingdom our first priority (Matthew 6:33). The man of God seeks to live under the authority of God's rule. Abandoning his own autonomy, he bows the knee to the will of Another.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

We are called to “seek first the Kingdom of God,” that is, to surrender to its authority and priorities (Matthew 6:33). There is power and authority in serving the risen Christ (Ephesians 1:1-22), but serving Christ does not mean we must be passive, compliant bootlickers to those who behave like a tyrant.

Paul prays that the Ephesians might understand “the greatness of His power toward us who believe” because Christ is at the right hand of God. Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (1 Corinthians 4:20). To the Romans, Paul says “the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. We have been “delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son” taught the apostle (Colossians 1:13). He called us to be soldiers of the cross, athletes in a race, and farmers sowing the good seed (1 Timothy 2:1-13).

The Kingdom of God challenges morals (Ephesians 4:1). Sin is lawlessness (anomia); i.e., every man doing what is right in his own eyes. Since sin will be judged when the Kingdom comes, we should judge sin now (Colossians 3:3ff ; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). If habitual sinners will not inherit the Kingdom, it behooves all Christians to reject ungodly behavior now (Ephesians 4:22).

Colossians 3:3 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry

1 Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his Kingdom and glory.

The tendency of nature is to exempt one’s self from the moral standards of the Kingdom; that is, it requires a diligent heart to seek the power the cross offers to keep God’s law.

The Kingdom of God challenges relationships because we co-share the blessings of the Kingdom with others (Ephesians 2:11ff). No man owns Christ alone. Paul encouraged disputing brothers to rearrange their priorities based on Kingdom values (Romans 4:17).

Romans 4:17 For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Kingdom of God is not just a sphere, but a rule; a reign; a law. Therefore, we seek to apply Kingdom values to our human relationships which demand the exercise of integrity and grace. We seek integrity because the King has integrity; we offer grace to the weak because we have received grace. We love

because the law of the Kingdom is love—a fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8). A proper application of law does no harm to a neighbor; but the law of love seeks his good.

The Kingdom of God enables us to cope with suffering. The man surrendered to God’s law will find himself the target of the anti-God forces. When John the Baptist confronted King Herod for violating God’s absolute law on marriage, Herod decapitated God’s prophet. When a Kingdom citizen challenges the autocracy of the state, he may find himself without a job, without a bank account, without a home, and without a country. The more Kingdom authority infuses a man with steel, the more sparks are going to fly on the grind stone between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of men.

Because Christians acknowledge a higher authority than man, Christians endure suffering for the cause of the Kingdom (2 Thessalonians 1:5).

2 Thessalonians 1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

The Kingdom of God motivates our witness and empowers our service (1 Timothy 4:1-3; Hebrews 12:28).

Hebrews 12: 28 Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

The kingdoms (governments) of this world are transitory and temporal. The Kingdom of God is permanent and eternal. CT Studd said it well, “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” Life is not about getting all we can out of our experience, but serving God—and that service must be with admissible behavior to the honor of God while being alert to things that might compromise the integrity of our Kingdom mission.

The Kingdom of God gives hope. We have hope since history has a destiny. History is linear and will consummate in the dynamic appearing of the Kingdom of God (2 Peter 1:11).

2 Peter 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom of God increases allegiance to Christ and empowers us to resist evil in society even though we may have to suffer for it (Revelation 14:1-4). Human governments compete with religion for the affection of people by demanding tithes (taxes) and devotion (pledges of allegiance). It honors its military heroes and those who “sacrifice” by doing public service. The modern state is a religion with its own priests and deacons.

According to the German historian, Ethelbert Stauffer, the religious principle of the Roman Empire, from the days of Augustus on, was **salvation by Caesar**: “Salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved.”

This helps us to understand the boldness of St. Peter, and the total power he declared rested in Christ, when he presented Jesus Christ to the nation, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

When Peter preached that Jesus was Lord, he declared war on Rome. St. Peter faced a hostile nation whose hope of salvation was in freedom from Rome. Thus the Zealots, or revolutionists, had a large popular following. Salvation for them meant the assertion of their own political order. For the Roman overlords and their followers, salvation meant implementation of Caesar’s rule and plan. Peter, however, challenged the political order with “Neither is there salvation in any other.” There are no other alternatives. Christ or man. War between Christ and Caesar, the Christians and Rome, was thus inevitable. The state and its emperors claimed to offer salvation. The early church declared Christ is the true Savior. The contest began.

Modern Christians, by their devotion to the State, have fallen into the pre-Christian error that the State is god . . . believing that only the state can save us politically, economically, and socially. If men are not true Kingdom citizens, their loyalty will be to the State. Gullible Americans are trained to be sweet and compliant. To inform Christians they have a right to resist tyranny or that they have no duty to comply with the policies of the federal government is like stepping into a pool of piranhas.

If government is god in the mind of men, one cannot expect other Christians not to betray Kingdom citizens who are devoted to the true King—King Jesus.

We are again in the age of Caesars, of political saviors. All over the world, politicians announce their plans of salvation. **Vote for Me** and be saved. As we are confronted by political saviors, we must stand with St. Peter and declare: There is no other name under heaven whereby men must be saved! For Kingdom citizens, allegiance must be to Another--King Jesus.

22 VIVA CHRISTO REY!

"Viva Christo Rey!" means "Long Live Christ the King."

Acts 17: 6-7 " . . . these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also . . . and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, (King) Jesus."

Faithful Christians examine their message to see if it conforms to the gospel that "turned the world upside down" in the first century.

When Jesus burst out of the chains of death to escape the winding grave clothes, believing men confessed He is Lord of all.

"From the mount of Olives, the place where in dread conflict His garments were rolled in blood, He has mounted in triumph to His throne." (Charles Spurgeon)

Christians have the hope of a resurrection morning because there was a rising again for Him.

In the Book of Acts Jesus emerged as the hope of sinners where He is referred to as "Savior" twice and "Lord" ninety-two times.

Titles like "King" and "Lord" and "Master" invoke images of His authority.

Because He possesses all authority in heaven and earth, Christians have de jure power to conduct kingdom business here on earth (Matthew 28:18-20).

The New Testament assigned the title "Lord" to Jesus 747 times. Clearly, the riveting apostles preached Jesus as the ascended Sovereign.

In the Old Testament, the name YHWH in Hebrew and LORD in English appears 6,832 times. Sovereignty and authority thunder through the centuries because of His powerful name. Under the title LORD, He created heaven and earth; as the loving King, He gave the law to Israel, and the prophets obeyed Him. Clearly, the core of the OT gospel centered on the hub, "The LORD reigneth" (Psalm 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1).

The Apostle John closed out the canon of Scripture with the trumpet, thundering announcement, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" (Revelation 19:6).

Can you hear the roaring, rumbling, crushing thunder of the LORD's reign?

Will you surrender to it?

Charles Spurgeon, in speaking about our Lord's ascension, reminded the Brits that when generals and kings returned from war, they celebrated their victory with a triumphal march through Rome. Riding on the stallions through the streets of the capital, they paraded their naked captives as trophies of war. The inhabitants crowded to the windows, filled the streets, thronged the housetops, and showered acclamations and garlands of flowers upon the conquering hero as he rode along.

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive: you have received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them."

Psalms 47:5, "God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet."

The modern gospel, however, does not proclaim Jesus' thundering authority to split the sprawling cedars of man's pride, but offers "fire insurance" against the terrors of hell and how you can prosper financially by faith.

The gospel that "turned the world upside down" did not proclaim health and wealth but a chariot riding king blood on His robe and sword in hand, King Jesus (Acts 17:6-17).

The gospel of the kingdom announced the King had entered history to crush man's enemies Satan, sin, and death with the hammer of His holiness.

Spurgeon put it this way,

"Angels and glorified spirits saluted our returning Champion, and leading captivity captive, He assumed the mediatorial throne amidst universal acclamations: 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'"

This Victor-King defeated death through the cross and was seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:30-32).

While men called Jesus the "the Savior" and the "Christ," the gospel that shook the Mediterranean world proclaimed Jesus as "the Prince of the kings of earth" (Revelation 1:5) greater than Herod and greater than Caesar.

Jesus claimed authority "over all flesh" at the most in opportune time, hours before His death, and then proved it by His resurrection from the fetters of death (John 17:2).

He commissioned his disciples to go into the nations proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom . . . but not before He assured them that all authority in heaven and earth had been given to Him (Matthew 28:18-20).

Paul taught that to enter the kingdom of God one had to embrace Jesus as Lord (Roman 10:9); that the whole purpose of His death, burial, and resurrection was that He might be Lord both of the living and the dead (Romans 14:9).

Because He has authority over all men, He calls all men everywhere to repent and bow the knee to His authority (Acts 17:30-31).

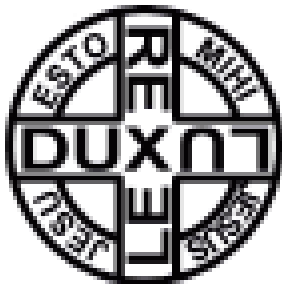
If the winds and sea obey Him (Matthew 8:27), all men are charged with obedience.

Throughout history human governments have demanded the total allegiance of their 'subjects' at the expense of individual God-given rights, personal liberties, and religious truth.

In the 17th Century, the State taught citizens to believe in the "crown right of kings." The 18th-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) argued that all societies need a religion to hold men together. Because Christianity tended to pull men away from earthly matters, Rousseau advocated a "civil religion" that would create the links necessary for political unity around the state. In modern times, democratic societies returned to pagan forms of Statism as described by Robert N. Bellah in 1967. All seek a universal religions which can unite all nations.

The State media apparatus religiously promotes government as the one holding the golden scepter to rule the world. Political religions compete with religion for the affection of men and seek to occupy the same ethical, psychological and sociological space as a traditional religion. Consequently, government seeks to co-opt existing religious organizations and beliefs -- an example being the modern trend to incorporate churches under IRS 501(c) 3 control of the State. Citizens are encouraged to kiss the ring of politicians in order to achieve the socialist's utopia of equality, prosperity, and democracy.

But, there is no peace without the Prince of Peace.



The gospel that turned the world upside down and conquered Western Civilization did not proclaim government as god, or Caesar as king, or the Roman City State as the hope of the world.

There is no law without a king, and King Jesus has His law. The West seeks to practice the *rule of law v. the king is law*; however, **there is no law without a rex** (See Exodus 20:1-3). Because there's only one King and one the law, we must work toward the law that comes from King Jesus. In this sense, Christians believe in THE KING IS LAW or Rex Lex!! Once man recognizes One King, then we can work toward Lex Rex. Selah.



DUX LUX REX LEX Cross. The rough English translation is "my Leader (Commander), my Light, my King, and my Law" -- a reference, of course, to Jesus Christ. Word order makes little difference in Latin.

Rex, Lex, Lux, Dux is Latin Christian meaning "My King, My Law, My Light, and my Commander: Jesus is Rex (King), Lex (Law) Lux (light), Dux (Leader or Commander).

The gospel that turned the world upside down taught "another Rex, King Jesus."

The Apostolic Declaration that launched the gospel from Jerusalem into the Mediterranean world acted on a commission sealed by Lord's signet ring procured by His ascension to heaven's throne:

"We ought to obey God rather than men" - Acts 5:29

The Historic Battle-Cry of the Christian Church became:

"AND HE HATH ON HIS VESTURE AND ON HIS THIGH, A NAME WRITTEN, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." - Revelation 19:16

Notice how the consciousness of Augustine, Bishop of HippoI (354-430), refers to Christ as King:

*"Let these and similar answers (if any fuller and fitter answers can be found) be given to their enemies by the redeemed family of the Lord Christ, and by **the pilgrim city of King Christ**" ((Augustine, "City of God").*

Consider the following four testimonies of men who lost their lives confessing Christ as king:

(1) 'I leave my testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism; against all profanity and everything contrary to sound doctrine; particularly against all usurpations made upon Christ's right, who is the Prince of the Kings of the earth, who alone must bear the glory of ruling His own kingdom, the Church.' (James Renwick)

(2) 'I am come here this day to lay down my life for owning Jesus Christ's despised interest, and for asserting that He is King, and for averring that He is Head of His own Church.' (James Skene)

(3) 'I suffer for maintaining that Christ is a free King in His own house.' (Isabel Alison)

(4) 'I leave my testimony as a dying man against the horrid usurpation of our Lord's prerogative and crown right.' (Captain John Paton)" (For Christ's Crown and Covenant)

Do you want to turn the world right side up? Then kiss the signet ring of King Jesus and claim your rights as a citizen of the kingdom of God.

The gospel gladiators that "turned the world upside down" did not shout "Hail Caesar, we who are about to die salute thee," but that there is another king, King Jesus enthroned in the celestial city.

In 1618 the King James VI attempted to force the pattern of worship of the Anglican Church upon the Scottish churches. His son Charles I also pursued this policy in 1625. In 1638, the Scottish Presbyterians rejected this royal usurpation by signing *the National Covenant* which declared religious independence from the State church. In 1643, they signed *the Solemn League and Covenant* which pledged their allegiance only to the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ. Thus, they became known as the **Scottish Covenanters**. Because they believed in unlimited sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead, they opposed the theory of the Divine Right of Kings.

In 1662, these dissenting views brought strong opposition from King Charles II. He outlawed Presbyterianism and declared the Covenants as illegal. The belief that men as British "subjects" ought to bow to the authority of Jesus as King made the Covenanters 'rebels' and traitors to the State in the eyes of the government. Driven from their pulpits, many resorted to field preaching. Using the force and power of the government, kings sent their sheriffs to hunt the down, arrest, jail, and brutally torture and kill the Scottish protestors. In spite of severe persecution and deprivations, many of these despised so called "rebels" faced the police powers of the State proudly waving their banners which read: "FOR THE WORD OF GOD AND THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS" and "FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT."

In May 1685, a bleeding remnant of 200 Scottish Covenanters at Blackgannoch Moss faced the king's brutal police force loudly proclaiming their fervent declaration of faith: "LET KING JESUS REIGN, AND ALL HIS ENEMIES BE SCATTERED!"

The belief in the sovereignty of the Lord hummed in the hearts of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists prior to the Revolutionary War.

The last time men seized the truth that there is "no king, but King Jesus" a nation was born (1776)! (A Theological Interpretation of American History" by C. Gregg Singer; "The Light and the Glory" by Peter Marshall and David Manuel)

From the pulpit and town hall came the cries for liberty, but the average colonist blended his cry for liberty with a common loyalty to King George. Though most Crown-appointed governors remained loyal to their king, one wrote to the Board of Trade in England saying: "If you ask an American, who is his master? He will tell you he has none, nor any governor but Jesus Christ." ("The Myth of Separation" by David Barton).

In 1775, John Adams and John Hancock were at the home of Rev. Jonas Clarke, a Lexington pastor and militia leader. On the night of April 18th, Paul Revere made his famous ride to warn these patriots of the approaching Redcoats. The next morning the British were met with by a Christian militia at the Concord Bridge. British Major Pitcairn shouted to the regiment of Minutemen; "Disperse, ye villains, lay down your arms in the name of George the Sovereign King of England." The immediate response of Rev. Jonas Clarke or one of his company was:

"We recognize no Sovereign but God and no King but Jesus."

And, then, there was the shot that was heard around the world.

Later, Patrick Henry penned these words for our instruction:

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!" -- a gospel that emphasized the sovereignty and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, things have changed.

Americans no longer believe in "no king but King Jesus." Rather, their hope has shifted to a government of the people, by the people, and for the politicians . . . a world government of Zionists, feminists, homosexuals, and globalists.

With the statist mindset of modern Americans and their hope in the powers of government, we would be hard pressed to find Christians today that profess and practice there is "no king but King Jesus."

Christians used to stand at attention when they heard the words of the Hallelujah Chorus, "King of kings and Lord of lords." Today, millennials sit on their hind quarters sipping on Starbucks coffee discussing the Green Gospel and how to save the planet from global warming.

Until Christians grasp that King Jesus is on the throne, they will fiddle with politics in order to advance the utopian One World Government -- the key to happiness by internationalists.

Isn't it time for believers to reflect on the authority of Christ and the practical application of what the Scripture means when it announces our Lord as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS?"

Christian would do well to reclaim their authority and stop applying to the government for 501 c (3) privileges and benefits.

Modern America cannot be reborn until hope shifts away from the City of Man to the City of God, from "Hail Caesar" to "Praise Jesus," from trust in government to trust in God.

*"I set **my king** upon my holy hill of Zion . . . Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. **Serve the LORD** with fear, and rejoice with trembling. **Kiss the Son**, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psalm 2:6, 10-12).*

*Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth **the Lord Jesus** (acknowledge His authority), and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

When totalitarian Marxist President Calles of Mexico (1920s) rebelled against God's law-order and labeled the Catholic Church insurgents, he demolished statues of Christ and Mary, burned Catholic churches, executed priests, closed Catholic hospitals and seminaries, banned the wearing of religious clothing, forced vaccination of church people using the same needle, outlawed the Eucharist, and banned worship services. The Catholic peasants had a choice (1) to give up their faith or (2) to take up arms and fight against the communist dictator and his antichrist policies. Led by the Knights of Columbus, Catholics resisted the fascist federales with fire and thunder. It was called the **Cristero War** and their battle cry was "Viva Christo Rey" or "Long live Christ the King!" This phrase was cited by the martyrs as they were mercilessly

executed. To the Catholics, it was there final confession; to the Marxist government, it was an act of treason worthy of death.

Viva Christo Rey!

23 CHRIST REIGNS NOW!

Question: Is Christ reigning in heaven over the affairs of men or has his reign been postponed to an alleged millennium?

Dispensationalism tends to deny that Jesus is reigning now from His position in heaven.

"David's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, must return to the earth, bodily and literally, in order to reign over David's covenanted kingdom. The allegation that Christ is seated on the Father's throne reigning over a spiritual kingdom, the church, simply does not fulfill the promises of the covenant ... A literal earthly kingdom must be constituted over which the returned Messiah reigns" - Pentecost, "Things to Come," pp. 114,115

"Had the people received Him, He would have fulfilled the kingly prophecies in their day in addition to the ones regarding the suffering Messiah. But when the Jewish nation as a whole rejected Christ, the fulfillment of His kingship was postponed until the final culmination of world history" - Hal Lindsey, "There's a New World Coming", p. 30.

"...even though Christ has the right to rule the earth, He isn't exercising this authority over kings and kingdoms at this time" - Hal Lindsey, "There's a New World Coming," p. 206.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore **the meaning of Christ's session at the right hand of God.**

Christ is risen from the dead, and He ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. We call this His Present Risen Life (PRL) or His Highly Exalted Life or His Present Exalted Life (PEL).

What is the meaning of His PRL? Christians do not deny Christ ascended into heaven. Rather, it is the meaning of His PRL that is in dispute. Is Christ reigning now as the Messianic King or is merely sitting on a throne as generic man? Is Christ enthroned and actively reigning now from His position in heaven or is He passively sitting there waiting for something more glorious like sitting on David's throne in the alleged millennium? Is Christ's reign now the millennium mentioned in Revelation 20 or is the 1000 year reign of Christ yet to come?

Christ knew He would ascend to the Father (John 13:1). Jesus predicted His ascension (John 6:62). The ascension took place at Bethany (not Bethlehem or Jerusalem). It was as historically real as his birth or his resurrection. It is the position of this author that our Lord is reigning now as King of kings and Lord of lords from His highly exalted position at the right hand of the father; that the Christian age is the millennium referred to by John where Satan is bound from blinding all men for all time (Revelation 20).

The O.T. predicted that Messiah would sit on David's throne ruling Israel (Psalm 110). Little did the nation know that their Messiah's station would be greater and higher than David's throne --- that this Messianic Figure would rule the world from His highly exalted position on Gods' throne. The fulfillment of the enthronement passages was greater than the promises, which is always true in God's economy!!

This is called the amillennial position . . . but it is misnamed. It should be called **promillennialism** because adherents believe the millennium mentioned in Revelation 20 figuratively refers to the Christian age,. This position asserts Christ is reigning now from His exalted position at the right hand of the Father.

Dispensationalists, however, deny that Christ reigns now. Most insist that His reign has been delayed till an alleged 1000 year age in the future. This position is so misconstrued **it should really be called the a-millennial position** because dispensationalists deny that Christ is reigning now in the Christian age.

In dispensational circles, the kingship of Christ is deemphasized. Dispensationalists resist any application of Biblical law to this age, and thus, tend to be antinomian,⁴⁷ i.e. denying any application of God's law to the church or to society. In the name of grace, permissiveness swaggers over principle.

"David's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, must return to the earth, bodily and literally, in order to reign over David's covenanted kingdom. The allegation that Christ is seated on the Father's throne reigning over a spiritual kingdom, the church, simply does not fulfill the promises of the covenant ... A literal earthly kingdom must be constituted over which the returned Messiah reigns" (Pentecost, "Things to Come," 1958 ,pp. 114,115).

⁴⁷ Antinomianism: a theological position which rejects the application of the Ten Commandments and certain case law to the Christian life.

Because dispensational Christians do not believe Christ is reigning now they tend to depreciate calling men to serve in the ministry of government or call politicians to surrender to Christ's rule now and to obey His law-order. Dispensationalism is so skewed that in some circles they won't even encourage their children to memorize the Ten Commandments nor will they defend the erection of a monument to the Ten Commandments in the public square.

The Ten Commandments are for the safety of men . . . and, we are only as safe as our neighbor's commitment to the commands "Thou shall not steal," and "Thou shall not kill." How would you like to live next door to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi who believes he has a right to steal from you and even kill you in the name of Allah? Thus, when dispensationalists pit grace against law, they underrate the law of the Lord God, and inadvertently surrender government to antichrists to rule society—which is our present state of affairs. When tyrants⁴⁸ rule, they use the apparatus of government to control what you eat, what you drink, what you wear, what you drive, where you go, what you can say, and what you can think.

23.1 The Meaning of Acts 2

Classical dispensationalists (CDs) assert that Christ offered Jews the Davidic Kingdom (2 Samuel 7), but postponed it because they rejected their king. CDs believe Israel will be restored and that Jesus will rule in Jerusalem over his earthly people. Covenant theologians (CTs) believe that Christ is reigning now in fulfillment of OT promises, that his PRL is Messianic, and that the "millennium" of Revelation 20 is a present reality. PD's believe that Joel's promise is partially fulfilled, but CDs believe that Peter was not claiming fulfillment, but something analogous to Joel's prophecy.

What is the meaning of His reign? What is the meaning of this present kingdom? Is it a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant? Is His reign now the millennial reign mentioned in Revelation 20? Was Joel 2 partially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, or was the Pentecost something similar to Joel 2?

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

⁴⁸ A tyrant is any ruler that rejects the authority of Christ and asserts the State is the ultimate authority on earth.

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Acts 3:33-36 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Jesus is the Son of David. God has fulfilled the promise to Israel in that Jesus is the promised son of David. But, is He sitting on David's throne now or will that be something to come?

The key to solving this dispute relies upon **linking** certain Biblical concepts.

The first linkage is the term "sit" (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:34; 2:36). Being seated on David's throne is linked to being seated at God's right hand.

The second link is the term "throne." David was promised a throne (2 Samuel 7:12). The throne of David is linked to the throne of God in Acts 2:30ff. It appears from the text, that Peter is arguing for a fulfillment of David's throne promises and that David's throne is identified as Christ's throne in heaven. If this be the case, the fulfillment is greater than the promise!! Christians who truly believe this, behave differently than those whose hope has been postponed to some alleged future kingdom program.

The third link is the word "pour" (evkcew/, ekcheo) in Acts 2:17 and the word "poured" (evxe,ceen, ekcheo) in Acts 2:33. The fact that Peter uses the same word appears to indicate that the prophecy of Joel was partially or completely fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The eschatological hope that God would pour out His spirit on His people occurred in the middle of history instead of at the end of history leading us to conclude that the Eschaton has begun and that the gifts belonging to the Kingdom of God entered history by virtue of Christ's resurrection and glorification.

The fourth link is the use of the terms "Christ" and "Lord." The fact that Jesus is Lord and Christ indicates a messianic unity between David's promise and Christ's ascension at the right hand of God. He reigns as Lord and Christ, and not as generic humanity as CDs claim. It appears from the text that Christ was inaugurated as Messiah and that His reign is Messianic. His inauguration has already happened; the consummation of his reign is yet to come. Thus, we have another *now and not-yet*.

The fifth link is the O.T. references themselves. Peter links Joel 2, Psalm 16, and Psalm 110 to provide evidence that Jesus' position at the right hand of God is a fulfillment of O.T. Scripture. The fact that Jesus, a man, is at the right hand of God is no small matter! One who lived among us occupies the high throne and is in control of history. Our response to Him emerges as a matter of utmost importance.

Zane Hodges disputes this and argues that Peter's use of "this is that" (τὸ αὐτὸ ἐστίν) is not intended to announce fulfillment of Joel chapter 2, but signifies something that is analogous to the phenomenon described by Joel. Joel 2 is a "last days" promise and Hodges wants to reserve fulfillment for the supposed millennial period of future history (the alleged millennium). Hodges has a major point. Certainly, the "sign" portion of Joel's prophecy was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. But, Hodges does not see that Jesus' position at the right hand as a messianic manifestation. To him, Christ is simply ascended as generic humanity. There is nothing Messianic about sitting at the right hand of the Father. (Hodges, "A Dispensational Understanding of Acts 2," 1994)

Dispensationalist Darrel Bock argues that part of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled on Pentecost. He says that, "this is that" is not "this is all of that" or "this is like that," but means something like "this is the beginning of that" (Bock, 1992).

But, much of this is theological sheep butting.

It appears from the text that Peter announces some kind of fulfillment . . . but not total fulfillment. The Spirit has entered this present evil age in fulfillment of Joel 2 to gift men and women without accompanying judgment as iterated in Joel 2. Again, it is *now, but not-yet*. The Eschaton was inaugurated with the ascended Christ, but has not yet been consummated. We have realized eschatology but not perfected eschatology. Perfected spirituality awaits the Eschaton.

In the resurrection event and the visitation of the Holy Spirit, Peter sees an inaugurated Christ bestowing the gifts of the Eschaton upon a New Israel. Certainly, we have to lean toward the view that Jesus is the Christ and that ascending to the right hand of the Father is indeed a fulfillment of the Davidic promise . . . and, that **the fulfillment is ALWAYS greater than the promise!!** Who would have dreamed that Israel's Messiah descended from David would sit on the throne of God and rule the universe?

23.2 The Meaning of Christ's Ascension to the Right Hand of God

23.2.1 Christ is King

Matthew ends his gospel on an extremely positive note with Christ in authority over the nations: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go . . ." No nation, king, president, prime minister, monarch or parliament has authority to regulate the preaching of the gospel." No governor has the authority to shut down church services.

The Book of Matthew presents Christ as the King. The magi asked, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" We see the King's lineage (1); the King's birth (2); the King's forerunner (3); the King's coronation (3); the King's testing (4); the King's legislative decrees (5-7); the King's powers (8-9); the King's Mission (10); The Reactions of the People to the King (11-20); Parables of the King (13); The Climax in Jerusalem and the Triumph of the King (21-28).

Jesus precociously alluded to His Kingly judgment (Matthew 25:33) and when asked directly if he was King of the Jews, He not only did not deny it, He affirmed it (27:11). During his trial, his enemies mocked him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews" (27:29). His death warrant read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (27:37).

At the cross, the King single handedly faced man's trinity of evil: Satan, sin, and death. He emerged from the battlefield through the smoke and haze the Victor over man's enemies. Death could not hold Him; Satan could not slay Him; sin had no hold on Him; the grave could not keep Him; Israel could not hide Him; and Rome could not restrain Him. He is King of the Jews; King of death; King over Satan; King over sin; and King of the nations. The only question is, "Is he your King?"

23.2.2 Christ is Highly Exalted

*Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, **both Lord and Christ.** (end of the sermon).*

Peter's first sermon ends on an extremely positive, powerful note.

The conclusion of Peter's first sermon ends with a resurrected Jesus enthroned as Lord and Christ at the right hand of the Father. His ascension brought closure to the disciples' earthly experience with Christ and gave them the dexterity to reasonably explain Christ's disappearance from this earth.

His exaltation to the right hand of God implies the possession of divine honor -- honor belonging to deity (John 17:1-3 Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:5-12). Jesus was declared to be both Lord and Christ (Acts 2: 34-37). No longer is He Messiah **designatus**. He is the **inaugurated** Christ with de jure authority and power. Not only was the Lord installed as the promised Messianic King, He was installed in remarkable, stunning, majestic grandeur. He was promised the Davidic throne on earth in the O.T., but He received the throne of God in heaven in the N.T. In a resurrected body, His departure from this earth was not by dissolution, but by glorification—a return to a state of glory which he had with the Father before the world was created (John 17:1-3).

It appears the coming of the Holy Spirit was dependent on His glorification (John 7:37-39).

While on earth, our Lord was divine, but divested of glory. In his ascension, His divine glory was wonderfully restored with regal splendor. He is now stationed at the right hand of God in royal brilliance and rules heaven and earth from His highly exalted position as the Lord Christ. Who would have dreamed? The fulfillment was gloriously greater than the dazzling promise!!!

23.2.3 Christ is Reigning Now!

1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Paul ends his letter to the Corinthians on an extremely powerful, positive note.

“For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” (15:25).

In the midst of all the messy problems of the believers in the red light district of Corinth, Paul taught them about the reigning Christ and his ultimate triumph in history over the enemies of mankind.

He “must reign” (dei) is a present, active indicative verb asserting He reigns now! There is a day coming when ALL his enemies will be under his feet. The total victory is future to the time of the apostles (“hath put” is an aorist subjunctive).

The term “reign” in 1 Corinthians 15:25 is a present, active infinitive. The context implies that Christ is reigning now from his position in heaven. The preposition “till” introduces a relationship. The subjunctive aorist “put” holds out the certainty of Christ putting all his enemies under his feet; that is, His reign is for the purpose of subduing His enemies.

His PEL marked the beginning of his inauguration and reign where He intends to defeat His enemies and deliver the kingdom to His Father (1 Corinthians 15:24ff). He has been exalted as “Lord” and to Him every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:12; 1 Timothy 6:15).

Presently, the nations are in rebellion against the Son (Psalm 2). Government regimes resist the rule of God and despise His law. Christ reigns, but when will the end come? The end of this age has a *terminus ad quem* at the *Parousia* which will complete the destruction of the anti-god forces. The decree of His administration is the defeat of all enemies and the nullification of all enemies that oppose the rule of God. When all the elect are safely in the Kingdom (1 Thessalonians 5:9), He will complete the destruction of God's enemies, and transfer the Kingdom to the Father. Life is messy and death has an iron grip on humanity, but God's Kingdom program will prevail.

23.2.4 Christ is Reigning Now as King

His PEL means He reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Towards the nations, Christ is portrayed as King of Kings⁴⁹ (1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 1:5; 19:17) and the Judge of all mankind (2 Timothy 4:1). He is the Great Lawgiver, the Great Judge, and the Great Executor. The disciples expected an earthly, Davidic king who would rule in the land of Palestine over Israel. What they received was a heavenly, glorified King of kings who sits on God's throne Who rules over all the nations. He is the "King of the Nations" (Jeremiah 10:7).

The word "sitting" at the right hand of God in Acts 2 does not imply resting, but reigning. He is not just Messiah-elect, but the duly appointed, de jure installed Lord Christ. Sitting at the right hand of God is metaphorical language for divine omnipotence, authority, and sovereignty.

*Acts 17:6-7 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that **there is another king, one Jesus.***

Paul's missionary team was accused of "turning the world upside down." Actually, they turned the world "right side up" by preaching another king besides Caesar – King Jesus.

The Roman Theater was dominated by the imperial cult of Caesar worship. The drama intensified when Paul preached the Kingdom of God and asserted there was Another King, King Jesus. Believing men became Christocentric rather than Caesar-centric or anthropocentric. A new Lawman was in town. Proclaiming Christ as King challenged the authority of Caesar and

⁴⁹ Revelation 15: 3 has a textual variation (saints or nations). The use of "nations" rather than "saints" is preferred because of the context. See 15:6.

the validity of His laws, statutes, and codes. As the gospel spread around the Mediterranean affections and devotion quietly shifted to King Jesus. A new King meant new laws—a new world order in a Christocentric universe.

1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:13-16 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

When Paul considered how Christ had saved him and put him into the ministry (1 Timothy 1:12), the apostle burst into praise to God. God has a throne and Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Both are declared to be King, and Christ is declared to be the King of kings, and Lord of Lords. It is difficult to separate God and Christ in this passage. Gill explains:

'Now unto the King eternal . . .' This doxology, or ascription of glory to God, on account of the grace bestowed upon the apostle, may be considered, either as referring to all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one and only God; and to whom all the attributes of wisdom, power, eternity, immortality, or incorruptibleness, and invisibility, belong; and who are jointly concerned in the grace bestowed upon any of the sons of men. Or else to God the Father, in agreement with a parallel place in Romans 16:27 who is the only true God, in opposition to nominal and fictitious deities, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and to whom the several epithets here used may be unquestionably given: he has shown his wisdom in the works of creation, providence, and grace; he is the everlasting King, or the King of ages, or of worlds; he is Maker of the worlds, and the Governor of them throughout all ages and generations; he only has immortality, and is the incorruptible God, and who is invisible, whose shape has never been seen, nor his voice heard; or else this may be thought to belong to Jesus Christ, since it is to him the apostle gives thanks for putting him into the ministry; and from him he obtained mercy, and received abundant grace; and he it was who came into the world to save sinners, and who showed forth all longsuffering in him, see 1 Timothy 1:12, upon which the apostle breaks out into this attribution of glory and honour, and which agrees with Jude 1:25." (Gill, *Exposition of the Bible*).

23.2.5 Christ is Reigning now as King of the Church

The term “King of the Church” is not used in the N.T., but the concept is there. John uses the term “King of the saints” (KJV), but the ESV accurately translates it as “O King of the nations!” -- a reference to Christ claiming jurisdiction over the nations (Revelation 15:3). More correctly, Christ is "Head of the church" (religious jurisdiction), and "King of the nations" (political jurisdiction).

Amendment I

*Congress shall make **no law** respecting an establishment of religion (Christ’s jurisdiction), or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*

In Colossians, Paul informs believers that that the Father has “rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His Beloved Son” (Colossians 1:14).

The picture is that of prisoners being rescued from Prison Island by the King and transferred by boat to the Land of Freedom—the Kingdom of His Beloved Son. Paul wants the Colossians to know that their Deliverer is none other than the King of Creation and the King of the New Creation—the church (Colossians 1:15-18).

His PEL means he has been installed as Head of the church, the Head of God’s new creation. Since Christ rose from the grave, He is sat down at the right hand of God. This implies sovereignty and power. All authority has been given unto Him (Matthew 28:18-20). All things are under his feet (Ephesians 1:22). He is the great Director, Leader, Guide, Head, and Supervisor of the new creation (Colossians 1:18).

So powerful is Christ, the Scripture informs us that Jesus is the Head over all rule and authority (Colossians 2:10). The term means “leader,” “Commander,” “Command and Control Center,” “foremost” or “supremacy.” The lurking danger among the Colossians was that they might not treat Christ as He rightly deserves (2:8) or give Him His proper place in the church (2:19). Thus, the problem with the Colossians is the same as Americans who suffer from too much self-esteem and not enough Christ-esteem, too much esteem for government, and not enough esteem for the LORD God. Selah.

23.2.6 Christ is the Victor King

His PEL means He is a Victor. Jesus' resurrection was a glorious victory over the enemies of sin, Satan, and death. His ascension is the coronation, the crown procession and the splendid presentation of spoils to heavenly hosts. Unlike earthly kings who stripped their captives and paraded them naked through the streets of jeering Rome, our Lord cleansed, clothed, and crowned his captives with honor (Ephesians 4:7ff).

Ephesians 4:8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

23.2.7 Christ is King of the Nations

*Jeremiah 10:7 Who would not fear thee, O **King of nations**? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the **nations**, and in all **their kingdoms**, there is none like unto thee.*

*Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and **an everlasting king**: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.*

*Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou **King of Nations** (ethnon).⁵⁰*

*Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and **the Lamb shall overcome them**: for he is Lord of lords, and **King of kings**: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

"Born as a baby, preached as a child, killed as a man, raised as a victor, reigning as a King."

"No matter who is president, Jesus is King!"

"The Bible is all about God being a king, but the Creeds are about Jesus being God."

The hymn "Song of the Lamb" in Revelation 15 is also called the "Song of Moses" which says, "**The LORD shall reign** for ever and ever."

⁵⁰ The KJV translates this as "King of the saints," but the proper translation is "King of the Nations" (ethnos).

John uses the term “King of the nations” -- a reference to Christ claiming jurisdiction over the nations (Revelation 15:3). It is a title referring to YAH in the O.T. All authority is given unto Christ, and He gave His marching orders to the disciples to Christianize the world and to call the nations to surrender to the authority of the Lord Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).

In chapter Revelation 15, we see our Lord taking possession of the nations by His judgments in history. Christ is not a local deity. He is not just King of the Jews nor is He merely a King over the church. He is not one among many. He is the “King of the Nations.” Revelation presents a positive view of Christ’s reign. As Christians recognize His reign NOW, they acknowledge Kingdom’s activity now. Saints sing, “Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?” (Revelation 15:4). To John, resistance seems like folly. The evidence for the risen, victorious Christ is overwhelming and only a weak mind can deny its infallible proofs. War is declared, nations pout, but victory goes to the “Lamb” for “He is Lord of lords, and King of kings” (Revelation 10:16).

23.2.8 Christ is the King Priest

His PEL means he has entered into a new ministry as Great High Priest. Towards the church, Christ is viewed as Head of the church, High Priest, Shepherd, Sustainer, Gift Giver, and Cleanser of His people (Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 5; Ephesians 1; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Corinthians 12). He is not only the Sacrifice for their sins, but acting High Priest whose very life intercedes for the believer (Romans 5:10; Hebrews 7:25). After the order of Melchizedek, Jesus is the King Priest. No King was able to be both king and priest in Israel, but because of the power of His endless life, He is both.

His PEL means Jesus is in a position to help all God’s children. He comes to the aide of His people and wages war on their behalf by using His sword, the Word of God (Revelation 19:13). Through Him we can draw near to God (Hebrews 7:19). He is on the Throne of Grace. Because He is sovereign, He has authority and power and riches to comfort His people. Because His throne is one of grace, He can over look the faults of petitioners and the weaknesses of their prayers (Hebrews 4:16).

23.2.9 Christ is the Warring King

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

In Revelation 19, John has a vision of Christ entering history to defeat the anti-god forces. The vision before us is personified by the Rider on a white horse showing us how Christ wages war from His position in heaven. The Rider on the White horse is Christ. The imagery represents His activity in His PEL now -- not what He will accomplish at the Parousia. The vision shows us that it is through the gospel and the proclamation of the Word of God that He penetrates society to win souls and to root out evil. Christ will indeed come again, but this is not a picture of the Second Advent. It is an image of Christ coming in history to defeat our adversaries in now time. We have seen in previous chapters the defeat of the beast and the destruction of the great harlot. Now we see the means of that defeat and the sure and ultimate destiny of the unholy trio of evil.

Christians are more aware of Christ's accomplishments on earth and many look with hope for the Parousia, but few seem to understand Christ's administration of the Kingdom during His PEL. Perhaps, this is why Paul prayed the following prayer:

Ephesians 1:18-23 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

As we look at the world and all its conflicts, our government and all its fallacies, we tend to become negative about the future. But, every statement about the risen Christ is positive. He is a King. He reigns now. All hope need not be deferred to the Parousia. He acts in now-time. He is waging war against the anti-god forces today. He is winning! Politicians and media stars fall from power.

In and through gospel proclamation, souls are entering the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. Our task is to believe and obey — to claim our authority as ambassadors of the King of kings! Only the proclamation of a Victorious King can produce a victorious church!

24 CHRIST'S KINGDOM AUTHORITY

Revelation 12:10-11 The Kingdom of our God and the authority of Christ have come . . . and they overcame him (Satan) . . .

*Matthew 28:19-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power** (authority) is given unto Me in **heaven and in earth**. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

The Holy Scripture informs us that the Kingdom of God arrived in history in and through the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter announced Jesus' saving work during this age and His session at the right hand of God as Lord and Christ.

Consequently, the saints through the centuries are able to obtain a new victory over evil in the progress of redemption. Much of that victory was due to the faith-insights those believers had into the authority of Christ.

While the Savior was on earth, the Centurion obtained a great healing for his servant because of his great faith regarding the authority of our Lord. Jesus marveled! The soldier's insight was rare and extraordinary . . . something frightfully unknown in Israel . . . something missing in the coffee-cup church.

Matthew 8:8-9 “. . . just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

Does anyone doubt our view of God is too small? Because of the corruption of our age, we Christians are way too shallow about Kingdom possibilities! Our understanding of Christ's authority is often blurred, foggy, cloudy, and cramped. Nothing is more needed among Christians today than a fresh, unclogged, unblocked, enlarged view of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are galaxies of truth yet to be discovered in the universe of God's Word about the King of kings.

The Great Commission should kindle a blazing fire within the furnace of our hearts. Our eyes should see new vistas of hope, of dominion, of conquest not yet achieved. Can we see a new world made wholly Christian—a world acknowledging Christ as the “King of the Nations” surrendered to His law-order (Jeremiah 10:7)? With God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

Under the countenance of Jesus' charter we can move out of death into life; out of fear into fearlessness; out of private, flickering spirituality into bold public proclamation that Jesus is Lord. If we see His authority accurately, we can move from the mundane to a mighty influence over nations of the earth for Christ.

*Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great **among the Gentiles**; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name **shall be great among the nations**, says the LORD of hosts.*

*Revelation 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will **I give power over the nations**:*

Before we serve, we must SEE -- see His authority. Before the commission comes the charter, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." The word "power" is the Greek word "exousia" which means "authority." Authority denotes power, permission, privilege, rule, control, influence.

*"The power, and the Kingdom of our God and the **exousia** of His Christ has come . . . and they were victorious because of the blood of the Lamb . . ." (Revelation 12:10).*

Blood being the ONLY currency of the spirit world, we have been purchased by Another; that is, we are under His care, His jurisdiction, His power, and His authority. And, the one who messes with Kingdom citizens messes with the King of kings.

To understand His authority is to stand under His authority; and, to stand under His authority is to stand up to governors, rulers, officials, judges, lawyers, and government employees.

We are familiar with little dominions of power—authority over a possession; authority in a job or over a department—even authority over a nation.

But His charter is the most vast, sweeping, universal claim ever made by a man. He claims authority over heaven and earth; over the seas and continents; over plants and animals, men and spirits, over the seen and the unseen; over the known and the unknown; over the tangible and the intangible.

Any church that exchanges the authority of Christ for the authority of the state commits **spiritual fornication** and **abandons** the authority of our Lord (Revelation 2:20). We cannot claim the authority of Christ when we are operating under a state that exercises contract sovereignty over the church. Authority over the nations demands free pastors in free churches—free from congressional legislation and IRS regulation.

Before we serve, we must see that He claims jurisdiction over the entire universe. The word "all" challenges our feeble view of Christ. Our understanding of Christ is more like trekking through a puddle on a side walk than sailing on the seven seas. The text says that He possesses

leverage over the earth with its waters and continents, its weather and storms, its people and its governments. He claims dominion over heaven, stars, and asteroids; over the unseen burning fires of hell with all its demons and tormented dead; over the unseen celestial city with all its angels and saints in all their comfort, peace, and joy. There is no atom, no microbe, no virus, no animal, no man, no king and no nation over which He does not ledger absolute claims.

Running through His fingers are the lives of men and women, the countless movements of history, the uncharted risks of business, the crushing ambitions of tyrants, and the innocent desires of unknown saints.

John 17:2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

This was not the first time Christ claimed to have superior authority. Prior to His triumphant resurrection, His miracles demonstrated his assignment over nature, disease, and death. He even claimed to have power to forgive sins and to heal paralyzing diseases in evidentiary support of His assertion (Matthew 8, 9).

Think of it! Jesus was an uncredentialed Jewish Rabbi-- a speck floating for a moment on the sea of ages declaring in a prayer that He has authority over all flesh for all of time (John 17:2). From the struggling, warm embryo in the womb to the cold corpse in a tomb, Jesus announces his jurisdiction. All flesh is His! Mankind with all its weakness and mystery; mankind with all their moral defects and scientific accomplishments, the generations are His! The generations past and the generations to come; the Roman and the Greek; the black and the white; the Russian and the Columbian—all have been received by Christ from the Father—some destined for eternal life and others destined for eternal judgment (Proverbs 16:4; John 3:36).

Jesus announced his authority over all flesh at the most inopportune moment — just before His ordeal of crucifixion. Civil authorities marked Him as a threat to national security. Religious leaders painted him as some kind of tax protestor discouraging men to pay their “fair share” to Caesar (Luke 23:1ff). Within a few hours, He was arrested and the fickle crowd demanded His execution—“Crucify him!” His little band of followers and the thin cord that bound them to Him was about to snap. One of his disciples committed treason and exposed His true condition. His sheep scattered. His movement collapsed. His reputation crumbled like a sand castle facing an Indian tsunami. *And, this is the hour he chose to reveal His universal authority over mankind—the night before his trial!*

Emerging from the terrors of the cross and the hopelessness of a dark, damp tomb, Jesus reappears to announce to His disciples and enlarged claim—a claim so gigantic it encompasses heaven and earth, the visible and invisible, physical and spiritual: “All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me.”

From the hydrogen atom to the M1 Galaxy, from sunset to sundown, from east to west, from Silver Dragon Wave in Qiantang River to the Banzai Pipeline in Oahu, Jesus affirms His

comprehensive authority. Jesus claims to be the ultimate Power in life and in death; in heaven and in hell; in science and religion; in politics and law; over business and family:

“For of him and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36).

24.1.1 The Crisis

But, this is not how the average Christian perceives our Lord. His authority today is relegated to a little sphere we call “spiritual” -- whatever that is.

Americans are propagandized to believe there is separation of church and state; a necessary segregation of the secular from the spiritual; an official disjunction of man’s God’s government from man’s government. The church has lost its ground and been swept out to sea by torrents of humanism. Consequently, *Christianity has been nationalized instead of the state being Christianized.*

A few might claim Christ has jurisdiction over the church. Seldom will one come across a Christian that asserts Christ has jurisdiction over the state. Pastors pound the pulpit demanding Christians submit to government, but those same pastors never demand the government submit to Christ! Never! Can you say “apostasy?” The modern American has limited Jesus’ jurisdiction to the human heart, to the piestic struggles of the inner man, to spiritual activities within the prayer closet and the walls of the church. No longer is He proclaimed King of kings and Lord over presidents, parliaments, and judges.

*The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: that it connected in one indissoluble bond civil government with the principles of Christianity. **John Quincy Adams***

*The Bible is the rock on which our Republic rests. **Andrew Jackson***

In the mind of a propagandized Americans, religion is irrelevant to the political issues of our time. In some countries, the church is little more than a vassal of the state. Instead of rescuing the state from the chains of paganism, the church has been converted to secularism. The church is in the world, and the world is in the church.

It has been said that when the gospel began in Jerusalem, the church became a fellowship; when it moved to Greece, it became a philosophy; when it went to Rome, it became an organization; when it came to America, it became a business!

Instead of the church becoming a prophet, it has become a “non-prophet” 501-c-3 organization under the thumb of the Internal Revenue Service. How can a pastor claim to represent Christ, when he is under the authority of a government agency? No man can serve two masters. No man! No pastor; and, no Christian.

But, it is worse than this. Our national motto is, “In God we trust.” But, humanists have taken control of the state and advance the theory that to be an effective government, the government must be secular and free of Biblical influence. The modern state retains its claim to sovereignty. Liberal politicians believe the state must remain neutral. . . and that somehow the secular, American system of government can unite Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and humanists around the principles of a secular state—that to remain secular is not only a duty but a priori of political leadership.

Without a single reference to Christ, even the U.S. Constitution is totally a secular document. In other words, there is tremendous resistance to the prayer “Thy Kingdom come” in American institutions and political parties. American corporations and the minds who control them are mission fields for the Christian gospel.

24.1.2 The Cure

Thus, the first duty of a Christian is to acknowledge the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over all things: over the earth (Psalm 24:1), over men (John 17:2), over politics, and over kings (Revelation 1:5) and governments (Ephesians 1:19ff: Colossians 2:8-10). “The kingdom of God is . . .” He is the “King of the Nations” (Revelation 15:3). All have a duty to honor Him and to surrender to His law-order (Jeremiah 10:7: Psalm 2).

In accepting His authority we receive rights for the value we attach to His words — -the right to conduct His business on Earth as His ambassador. Without rights, how could Christ drive out money changers and cleanse the temple?

- Without rights a lover is a fornicator;
- Without rights a possessor of a thing is considered a thief;
- Without a contract a tenant is considered a trespasser.
- Without rights Christians have no authority to preach the gospel.

Because Christ is in authority, we have obtained rights to do His business in our town and our state.

Not only does God call men to confess Christ as Lord, but for governments to be wholly Christian. Both church and state are called to advance the kingdom of God and to support God’s order—one institution as the ministry of mercy and the other as the ministry of justice.

But, if a state does not accept His authority, it does not possess de jure authority. It becomes a de facto government using force to advance its will upon the people. It's officers become tyrants.

When legislators replace Christ’s law with man’s law-order, then civil Pentecost gives way to Babel and the confusion of tongues (Numbers 11:25; Genesis 11). Thus, the first and basic duty

of the state is to recognize the sovereignty of God and to surrender to the authority Christ and His law-order. The only de jure government is one that acknowledges the authority of the King. All others are actors and imposters. While a Christian has a duty to cautiously support a good government, he has no obligation to support a government in rebellion against authority of Christ and His law-order.

The second duty of a Christian is to surrender to the divine mandate to make disciples; i.e., to Christianize the nations, to renew the dominion mandate of Genesis 1:26.

In giving value to our Lord's command, we obtain the right to conduct His business on the land. In giving value to our Lord's command, we obtain the right to set up churches and schools and hospitals. No government can legitimately deny our right to educate men. The gospel is not a private matter; it is not for the Christian to obey while leaving other men to do as they please. Discipleship means arranging the man, his family, his business, and his state under the authority of Christ. The gospel and the law upon which it is based is not only cogent for Christians but for all men and all of man's institutions. *The law is valid for Christians because it is valid for all men.*

Thus, the Great Commission is a renewal of the creation mandate to take dominion over the earth by winning lost souls to Christ and challenging men and nations to arrange themselves under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third duty of a Christian is to be an ambassador for Christ — a minister of the gospel to friends, neighbors, and states – a representative of the King.

He cannot be anything less than Christ's representative on earth calling men and nations to surrender to the authority of the King. It is neither boastful nor presumptuous to insist on the broadest application of the gospel for men. The thoughtful Christian will not limit his ministry to the sphere of the spiritual, but consciously accept his mandate to apply the gospel to all of life, to all men, and to all of man's institutions. Service for the church will include the call for government to surrender to God's law-order and for all to confess the sovereignty of Christ. Anything less is to proclaim the death of God in politics.

This brings up the *doctrine of interposition* wherein de jure Christian leaders have the duty to confront civil rulers when they violate God's law. **Samuel** the prophet confronted Saul the King for his dereliction of duty and even picked up the sword to carry out an ordered execution (1 Sam. 15). **David** confronted Saul for his unsanctioned death hunt (1 Samuel 24); **Nathan** the prophet confronted David the King for his adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11-12). **Elijah** intervened in King Ahab's dirty business and rebuked him for murdering innocent Naboth (1 Samuel 21).

While most believers will never gain an audience before a president or congressman, those that have access into their presence have the duty to represent God's Kingdom.

The fourth duty of a Christian is to claim His power: "Lo, I am with you always."

When we give value to His Word, we obtain the right to conduct His business on earth. When we give value to His word, we obtain resources for our kingdom mission. It is like obtaining power of attorney to write checks upon an account. We conduct our business under His authority expecting His supply of grace for the task. The right to represent Him is one matter, power to do His business is another. His presence in gospel ministry is the power we need to call men into the kingdom and to conduct kingdom business among men.

The fifth duty of the Christian is obtain authority—a ministry for Christ.

*2 Corinthians 10:8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our **authority, which the Lord hath given us** for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:*

We need power, but more importantly, we need authority—the right to serve and represent Him. Just as mayors and senators receive a commission before they perform the duties of their office, the Christian must have a clear commission from Christ; that is, the minister must come to understand his authority for Christian service. When we give value to His Word, we receive authority to act. Authority means we have a right to speak and to conduct the king's business.

Furthermore, the servant of the Lord should know the limitations of his office. He does not seek to control men. Christian service has one purpose—the building up of disciples and the edification of the church.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Conclusion: There are those who would question the authority of Christ over politics, industry, and economics. The blame, however, rests with churchmen who possess a shriveled view of the authority of Christ – a view which causes churchmen to timidly surrender jurisdiction of the earth to godless men. Because we do not give value to His Kingdom-word, Christian men become powerless in politics.

The duty of the church is not to interfere with the proper function of state, of business, of economics, but to assert that final jurisdiction over morals and ethics belongs to Him who has authority over heaven and earth by virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection (John Rushdoony, 1973).

25 THE KINGDOM AND POLITICS

Part I

“Thy will be done on earth”

25.1 The Modern Dilemma

Is the world a better place when Christians turn over God’s ordained civil institutions to pagans while believers associate only in ecclesiastical church buildings? Many pastors believe Christians should distance themselves from politics.

In fact, some denominations have made a decision to be silent on the issues of the day and are quite content to let pagans take control of God’s institutions in government. This view only strengthens misapplications of verses like, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life” (2 Timothy 2:4).

Politics is touted as a nasty, dirty affair and many Christians shy away from the dirt, sweat, and grit on the gridiron of political debate.

Many evangelical Christians believe that politics is so corrupt the only solution to the wormy occupation is the second coming of Christ. In fact, many derive hope from corrosion in politics because they believe the more dandruff the government has, the closer they are to a universal shampoo known as the *Last Judgment*. These Christians avoid engaging the political process, except for voting. Moreover, in some circles, the “rapture” becomes the only antidote for corruption in society. Consequently, any have surrendered the political arena to be governed by pagans.

Since Christ claims authority over all men, and all governments, Christians deny the gospel when they fail to advance His claims over the institutions of men (John 17:2; Colossians 2:8-10; Revelation 1:5)

Furthermore, the doctrine of separation of church and state is pounded into the Christian mind from childhood to neuter their thinking. Think about how narrow this statement really is. Why doesn’t the doctrine mention . . .

- Separation of religion from politics; or,

- Separation of philosophy from politics; or
- Separation of morals from politics?

Stalin, the communist dictator, said “Ideas are more powerful than guns. We would not let our enemies have guns, why should we let them have ideas.” And, the pagans in this country have waged such a relentless war against Christianity; the average Christian is quite content to prefer pagan rulers over Christian rulers.

The secular doctrine of separation of church and state has been hammered into the American mind by humanists to frustrate attempts by Christians to advocate their beliefs in the public debate. The strategy of modern humanists is “eliminate the competition” so the ideas of secularism monopolize the podium. Further, Christians are often in a defensive mode trying to avoid the criticism of “forcing their belief down people’s throats . . .” as if humanists aren’t trying to cram paganism down the throats of Joe Public.

Religion is about “ultimate values” . . . And, all men have them; that is, all men are religious. Even atheists have ultimate values. And, in the arena of public debate, it is a matter of whose values are going to prevail—the values of abortionists, or pro-lifers; the values of sodomites or the values of the family; the values of Muslims or the values of Christians; the values of atheists or the values of theists?

25.2 The Premise

It is the premise of this section of this work that the doctrine of the Kingdom of God calls Christians to not only preach repentance and faith, but to call nations and states to surrender to the authority of Christ; that is, the kingdom of God intersects the kingdoms of men challenging them to give up their idols and to surrender themselves to His law-order.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:

25.3 The Kingdom Demands Political Involvement

25.3.1 Reason One: The Authority of Christ

Prior to His death and resurrection, at His weakest moment, Jesus claimed jurisdiction over “all flesh” (John 17:2); that is, he claimed all men were His property: children, teenagers, men and women, citizens and kings. All men have a duty to arrange themselves under His reign as King of kings. ***The question is not whether men should acknowledge His authority but will pastors call civil authorities to recognize His authority?***

After his death and resurrection, our Lord announced, “All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me” (Matthew 28:19, 20). If Jesus conquered death and rose the third day, then He is Lord!

Theologically, there are only two spheres: heaven and earth; the seen and the unseen; the material and the non-material. Jesus claimed authority over both. The term “all” is comprehensive and excludes nothing. The ages with its generations, its histories, and its states and governments, have a duty to surrender to Him. He claims jurisdiction over all men and all of man’s institutions. He is the Son and the earth must rotate around him. Thus, He ordered His early disciples to go into all the nations and claim them for Christ; that is, they were to Christianize the nations. This mandate includes but is not limited to individual hearts and the soul of nations. To surrender politics to pagans “falls short” of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). It is like turning over the electrical grid in America to the communist Chinese. If we fail to claim human institutions for Christ, we abandon them to be ruled by the cults of chaos.

Some may rebut this statement by referencing Christ’s statement, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36); that is, His kingdom is not of this cosmos. But, what does this mean? Does it infer that Christ has no claim on men or nations? Or, that Christians should worry about getting men to heaven and not worry about getting heaven to earth?

Our Lord taught us to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” That is, our daily prayer is not about getting men’s will done in heaven, but getting heaven’s will done on earth; not about getting men’s hearts to heaven, but getting heaven into the hearts of men.

When our Lord said His kingdom is not of this world, He was giving a tactful, but truthful answer to Pilate. He was not empowering passivity or advocating non-involvement in politics. Rather, Jesus was telling Pilate that His jurisdiction was not germane to men, but *ad rem* to heaven.

Previously, religious leaders queried Christ about His source of authority; i.e., whether it was from God or from men. Here Christ unequivocally answers the question. His authority is ordained of God! It is not derived from men. In Greek the preposition “ek” designates “origin”; that is, Jesus was adamant that His authority did not originate with men on this earth, but it did include authority over the nations of the Earth. Though Pilate did not understand the implications of what Christ stated, His statement did not exclude His authority on earth as affirmed by Christ in his charter we call “the Great Commission.”

25.3.2 Reason Two: The Titles Christ

The ascension of Jesus means nothing less than the reign of the Lord Christ:

*Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both **Lord and Christ**.*

Peter sees Pentecost as the result of the ascension of his risen Lord to the right hand of God. Jesus was the son of David sitting upon God's throne . . . but Peter sees the fulfillment as greater than the promise and calls us to recognize that Jesus' ascension to the right hand of God is the dynamic fulfillment of the Davidic promise – that a man, the son of David, the Son of God, rules history.

Paul called Jesus “the blessed and **only Potentate**, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15). The word “potentate” means “ruler” or “sovereign.” The adjective “only” limits the title “sovereign” to Christ. Congress is not sovereign. The United States is not sovereign. Not only is our Lord the supreme, paramount, absolute Sovereign in the universe, He is the only Sovereign! For a nation to claim sovereignty and independence from Christ is an act of treason, a joining of the rebellion mentioned in Psalm 2!!

Nations insist on the death penalty for treason to the state, because the state means everything to secular men; but, rulers do not insist on the death penalty for treason to Christ, because loyalty to Christ means nothing to secular men.

Jesus is also called “**the King of kings**” and in so doing, the apostle indicates that Christ is head over all kings, the Supreme authority over all officials and governments – over all parliaments, legislators, and prime ministers. Again, the issue is not whether Christ is in authority, **but will rulers acknowledge His sovereignty?**

There is only one Lawgiver, Judge, and King (Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12). Congress is not a lawgiver. It only passes statutory codes that apply to corporations and corporate officers.

STATUTE. Black's Law Dictionary, 4th Edition. The written will of the legislature, solemnly expressed according to the forms prescribed in the constitution; an act of the legislature.

A “STATUTE” is NOT a law! Flounoy v. First National Bank of Shreveport, 197 LA 1057. 3 So.2d 244, 248.

A “CODE” is NOT a law! In Re Self v. Rhay, Wn 2d 261, in point of fact in law.

U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION – ALL codes, rules, and regulations are for government authorities ONLY, not human/Creators in accordance with God's Laws. All codes, rules and regulations are unconstitutional and lacking due process...” Rodriques v. Ray Donavan, U.S. Department of Labor, 769 F.2d, 1344, 1348 (1985).

United States Supreme Court Decision from 1796- (Cruden v. Neale, 2 N.C. 338 (1796) 2 S.E.) "There, every man is independent of all laws, except those prescribed by nature. He is not bound by any institutions formed by his fellowman without his consent."

A concurrent or “joint resolution of legislature is NOT “Law”. Koenig v. Flynn, 258 N.Y. 292, 179 N.E. 705, 707; Ward v. State, 176 OKL. 368, 56 P.2d 136, 137; State ex rel. Todd v. Yelle, 7 Wash. 2d 43, 110, P.2d 162, 165).

.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION – The common law (Biblical Law) is the real law, the Supreme Law of the land, the codes, rules, regulations, policy and statutes are “not the law”. Self v. Rhay, 61 Wn (2d) 261.(parenthesis mine).

John calls Christ “**the Ruler of the kings of the earth**” (Revelation 1:5). John lets his readers know in no uncertain terms that the Christ in Whom they have believed is the Supreme Authority in the Universe. His claim on nations is binding, absolute, and unapologetic.

And, since Christ is Ruler of the kings of the earth, it is imperative that pastors announce His Reign and call judges and magistrates to surrender to His law-order. Christians must not buy into the political philosophy that there is a separation of church from state, of religion from politics, of the Bible from law. Because Christ claims jurisdiction over all governments, Christians must inject Biblical authority into political debates.

In Revelation 15, John calls our Lord, “King of the nations” (ESV) for “thy judgments are made manifest;” that is, His court is active now in history judging the rebellious nations.

In Jeremiah 10:7, the LORD is called the “**King of the nations.**” Israel’s God claimed authority not only over Israel, but over the Philistines, Babylonians, and Assyrians. Likewise, ***we must advance a pure gospel that proclaims the authority of Christ over all islands.*** We have no right to bifurcate the gospel, to truncate its claims, or to stomp its message to something applicable only within the walls of a church. He must “have first place in everything” including family, politics, and government (Colossians 1:18)!

In Colossians 2:10, the apostle states Christ is “**the Head** of all Principality and Power.” By “head” Paul means that Christ is the seat of government, the leader, chief, and director of human affairs. All earthly rulers and authorities are accountable to Him. In the apostle’s mind, **the great sin** is “not holding the head” (Colossians 2:19); that is, not recognizing and honoring Him for Who He is. When Christians do not proclaim the risen, resurrected Christ of history, they compromise the gospel.

25.3.3 Reason Three: the Arrival of the Kingdom of God

When John the Baptist began his ministry, he ordered the following:

Matthew 3:2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The Kingdom of God entered history to deliver men from the evil of this age before the consummation of history at the end of the age. The presence of the Kingdom demanded a response from **ordinary men** (Luke 3:10, 11), **from tax collectors working for the Roman government** (Luke 3:12), **and from**

soldiers under the command of Caesar (Luke 3:14). And, if Caesar had been present in the crowd, John would have called him “to give unto God what belongs to God.”

Jesus laid down the Divine mandate: “Seek first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33). Not only are Christians to seek first the Kingdom of God but government bureaucrats are required to arrange themselves under the authority of His Son! Governments have a duty to seek the kingdom. The gospel makes a claim on all men and all of man’s institutions; that all men everywhere should repent and acknowledge rule of God (Acts 17:30). Believest thou this?

The first duty of the state is to surrender itself to the rule of God; i.e., to seek first the kingdom of God and arrange itself under God’s law-order. This means the state has a duty to recognize Christ as the King of the Nations (Jeremiah 10:7) and hold itself accountable to His Law-word. The duty of the State is to organize its legal system under the precepts of the Ten Commandments and see itself as the enforcer of God’s laws. Its goal is to glorify God and to honor His holy Name.

The state has a duty to be Christian even as the man, the family, and the church has a duty to be Christian. **Any other position is to advance the death of God among men!**

William Bradford who helped compose the Mayflower Compact, stated the purpose of why the Pilgrims had come to the New World:

*“ . . . a great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating **and advancing the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ** in those remote parts of the world.”*

Consider the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster, on Tuesday, the second day of June, 1953:

Archbishop: Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the [Gospel](#)? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the [Protestant Reformed Religion established by law](#)? Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them

Queen: All this I promise to do.

When the Queen is again seated, the Archbishop shall go to her Chair; and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, receiving the Bible from

the Dean of Westminster, shall bring it to the Queen and present it to her, the Archbishop saying these words:

Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.

Then the Lord who carries the Sword of State, delivering to the Lord Chamberlain the said Sword (which is thereupon deposited in Saint Edward's Chapel) shall receive from the Lord Chamberlain, in lieu thereof, another Sword in a scabbard which he shall deliver to the Archbishop: and the Archbishop shall lay it on the Altar and say:

Hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech thee, and so direct and support thy servant Queen ELIZABETH, that she may not bear the Sword in vain; but may use it as the minister of God for the terror and punishment of evildoers, and for the protection and encouragement of those that do well, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the Archbishop take the Sword from off the Altar, and (the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Winchester assisting and going along with him) shall deliver it into the Queen's hands; and, the Queen holding it, the Archbishop shall say:

Receive this kingly Sword, brought now from the Altar of God, and delivered to you by the hands of us the Bishops and servants of God, though unworthy.

With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, help and defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order: that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue; and so faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ in this life, that you may reign for ever with him in the life which is to come. Amen.

This rite echoes the precept that the civil order is directly under God and established to execute justice under the law of God as part of His kingdom. For the state to renounce its position under Christ is to renounce its office and surrender to apostasy. We hold the Queen to her oath.

Consider the following historical text which declares the duty of state governments.

The 1629 Charter of Massachusetts states:

“Our said people be so religiously, peaceably, and civilly governed that their good life and orderly conversation may win and incite the natives of that country to the knowledge

and obedience of the one true God and savior of mankind, and the Christian faith, which is the principle end of this colony.

The 1662 Charter for North Carolina stated that they were:

“Excited with a laudable and pious zeal for the propagation of the Christian faith in the parts of America not yet cultivated or planted and only inhabited by people who have no knowledge of Almighty God.” This, again, is not the policy of a secular nation.

In 1663 the Charter for Rhode Island explained the colonists intent:

“Pursuing with Peace and loyal minds, their sober, serious and religious intentions of Godly edifying themselves and one another in the holy Christian faith, a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained with a full liberty in religious concernments.” Does this sound like the policy of a secular nation?

William Penn wrote the charter for Pennsylvania affirming:

“Out of a commendable desire to convert the savage natives by gentle and just manners to the love of civil society and Christian religion, hath humbly besought leave of us to transport an ample colony unto a certain country in the parts of America not yet cultivated or planted. ”

The Charter of Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey and others were a virtual restatement of the Christian goals stated by these states.

Connecticut had the first constitution and in 1639 and it stated:

“Well knowing when a people are gathered together, the Word of God requires that to maintain the peace and union of such people there should be an orderly and decent government established according to God.” Secular people do NOT establish government according to God. Their constitution went on to declare the colonists desire to: “Enter into combination and confederation together to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess which, according to the truth of the said Gospel, is now practiced amongst us.”(Constitution of Connecticut, 1639)

Consider the Charter of New Haven:

*In June of 1639 the leading men of New Haven held a convention in a barn, and **formally adopted the Bible as the constitution of the State.** Everything was strictly conformed to the religious standard. The government was called the House of Wisdom, of which Eaton, Davenport, and five others were the seven Pillars. None but church members were*

admitted to the rights of citizenship. All offices were to be filled by the votes of the freemen at an annual election. For twenty years consecutively, Mr. Eaton--first and greatest of the pillars--was chosen governor of the colony. Other settlers came, and pleasant villages sprang up on both shores of Long Island Sound.(Ridpath's History of the United States Volume I).

In 1669, John Locke assisted in the drafting of the Carolina constitution under which no man could be a citizen unless he acknowledged God, was a member of a church, and used no reproachful, reviling, or abusive language against any religion (Christian denomination). Can you imagine if that was still a requirement in state constitutions today? If they were not Christians, why would they put in writing that they were (Anghis, 2010)?

By denying the law of God and its application to all men and all of man's institutions, the church proclaims the death of God to men outside the walls of the church.

Question: Is not decadence, decay, and death in society due to the presumption that the law of God is a private matter and not a public matter? That Christians have no duty to hold the state accountable to kingdom law is social suicide?

The average Christian mind cringes like a dove at the thought they have a duty to advance God's law order in a society hostile to religious instruction. Humanists preach "separation of church doctrine" from politics, and modern Christians sheepishly fawn to the presumption.

Christians are being programmed by the secular media to exercise cream-of-wheat tolerance with the radical, bone-crushing, socialistic legislative agenda of communists.

Why don't modern Christians have steel-convictions in their soul that God's law-order applies to humanists and communists in the field of politics? Because the church fails to require the state be Christian, it has surrendered the state to apostate reason and their sacred offices to the Philistines. Because the church has denied the reign of Christ and kingdom law, God is irrelevant in politics.

Justification of the modern state is not founded on the Word of God but in the natural reason of Abelard. That God is dead outside the walls of the church is a great consolation to humanists, but it should be an embarrassment to the church. Have we "lost our first love?" (Revelation 2:4).

25.3.4 Reason Four: Christ Requires the Obedience of the State

"Kiss the Son" says the Spirit to the nations (Psalm 2).

Much is made of a Christian's duty to obey government, but seldom will one hear preachers espousing the duty of governments to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. How can a Christian obey a government unless that government obeys God's law? Isn't the very definition of tyranny as system of government that fails

to acknowledge Christ as Lord? Didn't tyrant Pharaoh ask, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey Him . . ." (Exodus 5:2)?

Christians are called to obey common law and to generally obey public policy except where it conflicts with a conviction germane to God's Word.

Romans 13:1 appears to issue an order for Christians to render obedience to the state . . . but does this include every system of governance? Surely, Paul's admonition to be "in subjection to governing authorities" does not include the "Nazi solution" or Stalin's "reign of terror" or the tyranny of a homicidal maniac such as a Pol Pot.

The Greek word "except" (eiv mh.) automatically **limits the command**. The state to which the Christian is called to subject himself is one "established by God" (NASB); that is, one that earnestly acknowledges the authority of Christ and one that accepts the limited purpose of government—to protect human rights and to minister justice to wrongdoers. Thus, the Scripture anticipates that out of the sea of politics, Christian governments would arise that acknowledge the veracity of the Bible, the Ten Commandments, and the authority of Christ. It is to these states that Christians owe their allegiance and cautious obedience.

To teach that Christians have a duty to obey every kind of ruler is to take a position that Christians should surrender to political bullies and madmen. A confession that tyrants must be obeyed is a position that denies the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the law of His kingdom. Rulers fail. Governments go awry. And when governments rebel against God's law-order, **resistance becomes duty!**

Any obedience rendered to the state must be limited and cautious. *If Jesus is Lord, it is not desirable or possible to always obey the state.* The obedience of Christ requires believers to disobey misguided ultra vires legislation by civil rulers. It is political and cultural suicide for Christians to retreat into a piestic cubby-hole and abdicate their responsibility to confront errant government officials.

Surely, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson was correct when they stated, "'Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God . . .'"

In conclusion, the Christian has dual citizenship, in heaven and on earth. Our prayers must always be, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Not only do Christians have a duty to seek first the kingdom of God, states have a duty to seek first the kingdom of God. Our Kingdom responsibilities require us to Christianize nations, to acknowledge the authority of Christ, and to surrender to His law-order.

Failure to acknowledge His authority over individuals, families, and states is to truncate the gospel of the Kingdom of God and abort the mission of the church.

Part II

“Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done.”

Is there a day in our lives that we do not feel like madmen are running our government? From sunrise to sunset, politics plays a big part in our lives. The electrical zaps that jolt our lives from the legislative lightning storms in Washington D.C. are nothing short of stunning. We are inundated by laws to obey, forms to fill out, and taxes to pay. We are a society of rules, rules, and more rules . . . and it is exhausting to keep up with the demands the state places on us.

Generally speaking, Christians seem to be in a daze about it all: “Watch therefore, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep” (Mark 13:35-36). Christians must wake up and not sheepish submit to the wolverine state including the surrender of church sovereignty to the government. But, it is worse than this. Lawyers create contracts that actually make the IRS the legal head of these 501 c 3 church/organizations.

During the revolutionary period of our nation’s history, a maxim “No king, but King Jesus” thundered from the lips of patriots as canons boomed on the battlefield. Yet, this thinking soon dissipated like a mist on sunny day. With government controlling our movements, licensing everything from driving a car to marriage, it’s time to revisit the theology of politics from the Holy Scriptures. Thus, this brief work is one attempt to create a theology of politics.

25.4 OT Politics Centered Around Israel’s True King and their Duty to Obey Him.

The LORD God was Israel’s king and they were expected to have no kings (no gods) before Him (Exodus 20:1).

Psalm 10:16 The LORD is King forever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

Psalm 24:8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Psalm 47:2 For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

Psalm 89:18 For the LORD is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.

Isaiah 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

Israel called called the LORD their “Lawgiver” and “the King of the Nations” (Jeremiah10:7; 33:22).

The OT predicted that a special personage would appear in history who would be called “Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” who carries the government on his shoulders and whose reign has no end. This is in line with Moses who predicted the rise of “greater prophet” unto whom all men and rulers would be accountable. In anticipation of this divine personage, the psalmist predicted resistance to His rule and encouraged the nations to “Kiss the Son” (Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 2).

When Israel demanded God give them a physical, visible earthly king, God disputed with His people warning them of abuses of human governments. A virtuous, authentic omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent transcendent heavenly King was far superior to sinful, defective, ignorant, flawed weak, finite potentates (1 Samuel 8).

Israel had kings, but they were really “servant-leaders” subordinate to the Law of God, and men standing under the Rule of YHWH. The OT is replete with abuses and sins of these kings — the prophets being the political critics of their age

The OT acknowledged a limited purpose for civil authority and warned against presumptuous and overreaching regimes: drafting men into military service, oppressive taxation, expropriation of property by the state and debasing coinage for the enrichment of the state to the detriment of families (1 Samuel 8, 2 Chronicles 26:8-21; 1 Kings 21; Isaiah 1:22).



The State was not the origin of law; Israel’s God was the source of law.

The people did not create law. The LORD God was Israel’s ONLY source of law (Exodus 20:1-2), and the nation was to rigorously protect its Source of law by having “no kings before Me!” But, a curse landed on Israel because they were as dumb as a rock when it came to perceiving the role of their transcendent King.

Isaiah 1:3, 4 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

25.5 The King’s Appearance and Triumph in History

Christ was born from a long line of kings, and He was called “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us.” The angel announced Him as the One who “would save His people from their sins.” The Magi from Babylon called him the “King of the Jews.” But Jerusalem was troubled by this announcement. Entering His ministry, King Jesus’ main message was “the kingdom of God.” He encouraged men to adopt His law and to arrange themselves under the rule of God. Like a great legislator, He spoke with authority and



expounded law, rebuked lawyers for their statutory nullification of God's law, indicted and condemned them for their presumptions, abuse of authority, circumvention of God's statutes and legal tricks. Unable to find a defect in Christ, they charged in him with "not paying taxes to Caesar," tried him, and crucified him. But, our Lord's claim of kingship came with proof of claim by virtue of His resurrection (Matthew 1:21-23; 2:2-3; 4:17; 5-7: 6:33; 15:1-10; 23:1ff).

When Christ was entering Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday an OT prophecy was applied to Him: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass" (Matthew 21:5).

Crafty lawyers asked Him a trick question about whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus answered, "Give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." What actually belongs to Caesar is an unanswered question. But, every Bible student knows that since "the earth is the Lord's and the people thereof" the answer is closer to nothing than something. Even Caesar must give to God what is God's (Psalm 24:1; Matthew 22:21)

When examined before Herod who was sitting as the civil judge, Jesus answered Him not a word; that is, our Lord did not acknowledge Herod's authority, contract with him, or submit to Herod's jurisdiction. A superior has no duty to answer an inferior (Luke 23:11).

When before Pilate, Jesus was asked, "Are you king of the Jews." Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." In so doing Jesus confirmed that He was a king, but that His authority was not of man (of this world). When Pilate asked, "Are thou a king?" Jesus answered, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world . . ." The final conflict during Christ's interrogation surrounded his authority as a king . The Jews responded, "We have no king but Caesar. We conclude, therefore, what a great evil it must be to confess no authority higher than the State (John 18:33, 37, 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21).

25.6 Peter's Bold Statement in Acts 4:12

There is an historical context to Peter's statement:

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The Roman Empire was blindly devoted to emperor worship. To the Romans, the greatest sacrifice a man could make was to Caesar. Gladiators destined to be chewed to death saluted Caesar saying, "Hail Caesar, we who are about to die salute thee." The same phraseology is found in the angel's announcement of the birth of Christ to Mary. What a contrast! "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." What a conflict: Hail Caesar or Hail Christ . . . worship Augustus who was

called the son of God or worship Jesus who was the true Son of God . . . pledge allegiance to the Savior or pledge allegiance to the state! (*Luke 1: 28*); (Grimal, 1963, p. 332, 456).

The first century burgeoned with the expectation of a world savior. The Roman poet Virgil used the word *adventus*. Christians use the term “advent.” When Augustus came to power, Virgil hailed him thus: “This is the man, the one who has been promised again and again. . . The turning point of the ages has come.”

In the year 17 B.C., at the appearance of a strange star, Augustus inaugurated a twelve-day Advent celebration, and sent messengers through Italy to announce the celebration of his *appointment by the gods*. The Roman college of priests, headed by Augustus, gave the masses absolution from past sins. The coinage hailed Augustus as “Son of God.”

But, the true king was born circa 2 B.C. and the Scripture declared, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:32).

An Augustine coin was created for the special occasion: Two related coins from Spain expose the spiritual climate at this time in world history. One is like a summary of the scenery on the armor of Augustus: the sun-god is soaring up with his crown of sun-rays and his outspread heavenly mantle, with the Capricorn below, and between them the single word AUGUSTUS. The other shows the Capricorn again, this time with the emblems of world dominion, the helm and the globe, and above them the emblem of the king of paradise, the cornucopia with the diadem, and again the single word AUGUSTUS. The symbolic meaning is clear: a new day is dawning for the world. The divine savior-king, born in the historical hour ordained by the stars, has come to power on land and sea, and inaugurates the cosmic era of salvation. *Salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved.* This is the climax of the Advent proclamation of the Roman empire. (Ibid., Stauffer, p. 88).

Around the year 30 AD, Augustus Caesar issued a proclamation throughout the whole of the Roman Empire. The proclamation stated:

“There is no other name on heaven and earth by which men might be saved other than the name Augustus Caesar.”

When Peter announced that there was no other name given among men whereby men must be saved except King Jesus, **Peter declared war on Rome**. Conflict between heaven and earth, the god state and the Eternal God; Caesar and the Lord Jesus Christ; the false son and the true Son was inevitable. Warfare between these two kings and their jurisdictions erupted into a continuing struggle between the church and the state, between the kingdom of man and the kingdom of God; between the Law of God and the laws of men; between the savior state and the Savior God; between tithes to Caesar or tithes to the Church (Acts 4:12).

Rome in its building of bridges, roads and ports; in its erecting of coliseums and schools; saw itself as a god providing order and salvation to men. Hence, Rome concluded that men owed their ultimate allegiance to the god-state who nurtured the interest of society from cradle to grave. Against this presumption is that the source of ultimate order is God, not the state; that order is transcendent rather than immanent; that devotion should be to Christ the King rather than the god city-state.

25.7 The Message that Turned the World Upside Down

When Paul the missionary, ex prisoner, fugitive, preacher, and herald of the gospel arrived in Thessalonica, his opponents accused his gospel team of “turning the world upside down:” Actually, with Caesar worship so prevalent in the empire, Paul turned it “right side up” by proclaiming that Jesus was the King of the nations. So powerful was his message his adversaries accused him of assaulting the “decrees of Caesar” and advocating people surrender to Another King and his laws, King Jesus (Acts 17:6,7).

A third of the Book of Acts is about the state’s confrontation with Paul, his arrests, defenses, and imprisonments on behalf of the gospel. Luke summarized Paul’s message as

*Acts 28:31 Preaching the **kingdom** of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*

Paul’s message did not advocate anarchy nor did it promote the overthrow of Caesar. Rather, his message proclaimed “King Jesus” and the need for all to repent and to arrange themselves under His Lordship (Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:10-12).

Paul wanted the church, the New Israel of God, to know that this risen, transcendent King sitting at the right hand of God is King in authority over “all rulers and powers” and that it was a serious matter to deprecate the authority and headship of Christ (Colossians 1:15-18; Colossians 2:9, 19).

25.8 The Prince of the Kings of the Earth

On the Isle of Patmos, John introduces us to “Jesus Christ” “the Prince (arche) of the kings of the earth” who has the scroll, the Last Will and Testament of the Eternal God, in his hand. From his position in heaven, He protects and disciplines the churches, wages war against the anti-god forces, Satan, the beast, Rome, and Mystery Babylon. From his transcendent position in heaven, he is seen as a Rider on a white horse, splattered with blood, waging war on behalf of truth by the Word of His mouth against the monsters of government and their subsidiary agencies (Revelation 1, 5, 13, 14, 19).

The imagery of the seven headed monster known as the beast is interesting as it depicts government, particularly the Roman government, as an undefeatable, grotesque centaur waging war against the saints

who are devoted to another King. The King's followers are viewed as pure, chaste virgins devoted to their King and His laws (Revelation 13-14:1-5).

The imagery of Christ in Revelation 19:16 reveals that He has a name inscribed on His thigh as "King of kings and Lord of lords." The true King is waging war against false kings. False kings are those who have reject the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and who promote a program of conquest over men by their coercive regimes.

25.9 The Lord's Prayer

Christians are called to pray,

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven."

Christians are urged to pray that God's name will be honored on Earth now as it is in heaven; that His will be constructed in time as its blue print in eternity; that His kingdom rule would be recognized now on Earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus did not say, "Pray this prayer but do not expect any of this until after 2000 years in a Zionist millennium." It is sheer nonsense to think that Jesus proposed his disciples to pray this prayer for two-thousand years but not expect Kingdom development until after the Christian dispensation as dispensationalists teach.

The first century missionary team went forth on a mission to proclaim the sovereignty of Christ promising that all who trust him will be transferred to His kingdom. Believing that "All authority in heaven and earth was in His hands," the disciples plunged into the market place with their gospel and saw Christian communities develop all over the Roman Empire. Hebrews, Romans, and Greeks confessed Christ as Lord unifying around Him.

Surrendering to the King and His Law-word, they "turned the world right side up." All this was done within 30 years after our Lord stripped "principalities and powers" and "disgraced them publically" triumphing over them by virtue of His resurrection from the dead (Colossians 2:15).

The early Christians started with ambers in Jerusalem and grew into a blazing fire around the Mediterranean. The triumphant, transcendent Christ proved more powerful than an imminent Caesars, the Roman Senate, and their world-wide police force (Matthew 28:19, 20; Colossians 1:9-14).

By 350 BC, Emperor Constantine begged church Presbyters to hear civil cases in Ecclesiastical courts because government courts became sluggish and corrupt. Ecclesiastical judges had a reputation for being fair and efficient. Rome saw the state as the source of law, while the ecclesiastics saw Christ as the

Source of Law and themselves as the administrators of justice and grace. When the State is viewed as absolute law, then government is deified.

The ecclesiastics saw God as the Source of all good. Made in His image, man had value. Because the gospel taught that Christ died for all men, the gospel magnified the importance of human life. This gospel went forth into a world where meaning was not attached to the individual, but to the collective, to the city, to the state. In Rome, all citizens belonged to the state. Children belonged to the state. Men belonged to the military. Meaning was derived from the state because the state was god.

It was in this context, the disciples prayed: “Lord, may thy will, thy law, thy values, thy name, thy rule, and thy authority be recognized now!!”

25.10 The Modern State

The modern state follows the Roman model rather than the Biblical exemplar. Law is in WE THE PEOPLE, not the Lord God; law is defined legislatively, not ministerially. States rule by law instead of surrendering to the rule of law. Law is what the state says it is rather than how God defines it. The poor sap citizen is fined for not obeying the state (masks, seat belts), but state workers have immunity from prosecution. Good is defined by the majority opinion, rather than the character of Almighty God.

Individuals are viewed as having a duty to the state, rather than the state having a duty to the Almighty. Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” What he was really calling citizens to do was to pledge allegiance to the Goliath STATE!

Individuals are encouraged to yield individual rights in order to increase the power of the state. Seldom do states yield power to strengthen the family unit. Property is transferred to the state for its growth and success rather than resources being spared to protect the family. Education is no longer the duty of a father, but the duty of the government. Virtue is no longer defined as a man walking in good conscience toward God, but a man sacrificing himself for public service . . . and then receiving a multi-million dollar retirement plan for it at taxpayers’ expense.

To the modern state, right is not defined by the Ten Commandments. Right is what the state does. When liberals attack the gospel of Christianity and its source of law in the Ten Commandments, it empowers the state to be its own god. Where there is no absolute standard of morality, right and wrong are what the state says it is. Truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, lawful and legal are determined by the all-wise, all-knowing, all-caring, all-benevolent state.

Paul said that in God “we live and move and have our being” i.e., that man is dependent on the Creator for his life and sustenance (Acts 17:28). But, modern man believes that “in the state we live and move and have our being;” i.e., that life and meaning is defined by the government: “Head Start”, public education, loans for business, health care, social security, and Medicare state benefits. The government is my

shepherd, I shall not want. In Marxist countries like the United States, no dissent is allowed. People live a lie. In private, they complain about the defectiveness of the government; but, in public they must maintain the façade that the socialist state is virtuous. When the state is the ultimate law order, it recognizes no authority other than itself. When the application of God’s law to the state is denied, no criticism is allowed. The state is unable to correct itself. Multiplying misery among the population, the state must enlarge controls to keep the order and the peace. If in this system, Christians practice silence and the exclusion of God’s law from public debate, they proclaim the death of God in the arena of politics (Acts 17:28).

Two days after Hitler was elected, Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke these words, “The individual (leader) is responsible before God. And this solitude of man’s position before God, this subjection to an ultimate authority, is destroyed when the authority of the Leader or of the office is seen as ultimate authority . . .” ((Metaxas, 2010, p. 142).

Modern man is no longer interested in “right and wrong” or “philosophical principles” that promote social order, but “what works.” Pragmatism is the new god in the flea market of borrowed gods. “How can we manage a stalled economy” is a query more important than the question, “What are the sound, proven fiscal and monetary principles that promote growth and opportunity?”

Though modern man will not admit it, every government is a religious organization. Every government operates on the basis of some value system. Even atheists have ultimate values. Every law represents somebody’s morality. It is only a matter of who’s values are ultimately going to rule society—the values of secular humanists or Muslims or bankers or the NWO or the King of kings?

Ancient Roman gladiators paraded into the Coliseum and shouted, “Hail, Caesar, we who are about to die salute you.” Today, the state trains our impressionable youth to be statist by making daily oaths, “I, pledge allegiance to the United States (government), one nation, under God (undefined) . . .”

25.11 A Remedy

Promote Kingdom values. *The major message* of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2), the major message of Jesus (Matthew 4:17), the major message of the disciples (Matthew 10:7), the major message of Peter (Acts 4:12; 2 Peter 1:11), the major message of Philip (Acts 8:12), and the major message of Paul (Acts 28: 23, 28), and the major message of John (Revelation 1:9; 12:10) *was the Kingdom of God.*

But, who among us can be accused of promoting the Kingdom of God today? We simply must return to the message that Christ is King of the nations to whom we owe our allegiance (Acts 2:30-32). All men are ordered to repent and surrender to His authority. Thus, we pray, “Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on Earth Now, in My Life Time;” “May I be subject to your rule now.” “May my neighbors be subject to your law now.” “May my countrymen acknowledge the authority of Christ and surrender to His will today.” This is the essence of the Lord’s Prayer.

Stop worshipping the state. Obey one Master . . . for no man can serve two masters. The overreaching state is a problem. The state is seen as the solution to all our woes. We must avoid idolatry by refusing to treat the state as some kind of god -- by confronting the ultra vires acts of the state and refusing to submit to every statute created by man's legislative bodies; i.e., we must resist an overreaching government that seeks the total subjugation of the total man to total government.

Radically surrender to the Lordship of Christ and common law; i.e., do no harm! Practice justice and practice love—for love is a fulfilling of the law. If we are committed to Christ, we are a threat to no man.

Engage the political process! Beat the war drums. Let out a war whoop. Be like a warrior monk during crusades. Let the praise of God be in your mouth and a double edged sword in your right hand (Psalm 149:6). Vote! Write! Call! Demonstrate! Run for political office. Support good causes. Never let a crisis go to waste. Speak out for Christ and participate in solutions.

Grow into an Ambassador of Christ. Light a candle in the darkness. Jesus went about “doing good” (Acts 10:38). Be a pure, clean, holy follower of the Lamb in the midst of a decadent society. Act like a citizen of heaven. Be free. Claim your rights on earth. Minister in the authority of the Son. Harm no man. Practice the golden rule (Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Philippians 3:14-20; Revelation 14:1-4).

Suffer patiently! Radical allegiance to Christ will bring us into conflict with madmen that believe in radical allegiance to the government. The Kingdom will not be perfected in this age. Wheat and tares grow together. There is resistance to God's law, to Christ, and to Kingdom rule. The beast of government will rear its ugly head and spit fire at Christians who insist on limited government and the state's accountability to Christ. “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” (Revelation 13:10). But, we are not discouraged because Christ knows our “works, and our labor, and our patience, and how we cannot bear them which are evil” (Revelation 2:2). His Kingdom program will not fail. “All the nations will come and worship” the King of the nations (Revelation 15:3-4). “Nike” (victory) is the banner that saints wear.

26 PSALM 2: KISS THE SON ALL YE NATIONS

We live in times of political chaos where madmen grip the helm of government.

Against the backdrop of the surf and foam of political strife is the source of peace and prosperity.

Before us is the reason for all political conflict in the world today (Rebellion Against God's Law-order), and the solution to every political problem in seed form (Surrender to Christ as the King of kings by State officials).

The Psalmists Speaks

KJV Psalm 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The word "why" is an interrogatory that can be translated "how" or "what" or "how much." It is a question asked for our benefit.

The word "heathen" should be translated "nations." The word "go'em" is translated "people" and "nations" in Genesis 10:5. In Jewry, the term goy is a derogatory term for non-Jews, but that is not the case here. Jews are part of the rebellion.

The verb "rage" ("raqash") is only used here, and it means to be in "tumult" or "commotion." The psalmist is asking, "Why are the nations always in a furor, a frenzy, a constant state of irritation, full of madness and hostility?"

The word "imagine" is the imperfect Hebrew verb "hagah." It is translated "roar" or "moan" or "growl" in Isaiah 31:4 of a lion roaring over its prey. It is translated "plot" in the ESV and "meditate" in Psalm 1:2.

The word "vain" is the Hebrew verb "reek," used adverbially. It is translated "armed" in the KJV and "led forth" in the ESV in Genesis 14:14. It is translated "the seven empty ears" blasted with east wind which is a reference to the seven years of famine in Genesis 41:27; and, "emptied their sack" in Genesis 42:35. The idea here is of kings "emptying their nets" of destruction and mercilessly killing people. We need only look at the madness of the Bolsheviks, Lenin, Stalin and others to grasp the harvest of this rage against God.

Before us is the question of the ages. Why can't nations live in peace? Why are they always at war, always in an uproar, always existing in the surf and foam of the sea of conflict. As we listen to the news, it seems that there is always a regional dispute, a political debate, an infringement, a group of rebels protesting some perceived inequity, a nation in political chaos ravaged by civil war. Some nation

somewhere is "emptying his net" aggressively shelling another country for power and wealth and revenge, or defending itself against rocket fire with weapons of mass destruction.

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

The kings have set themselves against the LORD. The name "LORD" is the tetragrammaton and clearly refers to God's sovereignty and authority.

The title "anointed" is the Hebrew name for Messiah, *mashiyach*, meaning "anointed"--a reference to Christ, the Son of God.

Several facts about the verb "set" needs to be noticed. First, the verb "set" (*tithyetsebu*) is a Hebrew Hithpael, reflexive verb; that is, the kings of the earth are stirring themselves up. The hostility clearly resides in the kings who are constantly declaring war against the LORD God; that is, they want to be gods among men and the only sovereigns on earth.

Secondly, the verb "set" is in the emphatic position in the sentence and clearly emphasizes the intense, independent, rebellious nature of kings.

The preposition "against" is properly translated, but could also be worded "upon" or "over" the LORD; that is, the kings of the earth have stationed themselves as masters over men, and they claim sovereignty over matters pertaining to the LORD God. The rulers of the earth do not recognize the authority of God and His Law-word over them. They see themselves as the only sovereign.

When Chief Justice Roy Moore placed the Ten Commandments in the corridor of the Alabama courthouse and explained that it represented the need of all Judges to surrender to the authority of the LORD God and His Law-word, the federal judge would have nothing to do with it. The Federal Court declared that, "the state may not acknowledge the sovereignty of the Judeo-Christian God" (morallaw.org).

Before us is a continuation of the question: "Why have the kings of the earth set themselves up as lords and masters in opposition to the sovereignty of God and His anointed King, the Lord Jesus Christ?"

The Rulers of the Earth Speak

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Now the kings speak to one another.

The Hebrew Piel, plural verb "let us break" is cohortive in form and meaning . . . and it is in the emphatic position. The Piel verb communicates intense determination to break from Puritan Christianity. Being in the emphatic position this verb clearly communicates the excessive vigor and profound madness of

political leaders united in a new world order that incites rebellion against the Triune God and His law-order.

The term "their bands" is a feminine plural, a reference to the Trinity. "Their" would be a reference to the "us" of Genesis 1:26-28. The words "bands" and "cords" refer to chains or ropes that tether animals. These terms designate the Claim the Creator-God has on all the people of the earth. They are used metaphorically of the sovereignty of the LORD God and the absolute binding authority of His law over mankind.

The new world order encourages rebellion against the authority of Christ and His Law-word, and is hell-bent on bringing in a new world order to build the utopia of kings--wealth, power, and control of man's destiny.

Today, there are no kings who have taken an oath to the LORD God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to uphold His law and to honor Christ save one -- the Queen of England. But, she has committed treason against God and the British people. At best, kings take oaths to uphold the laws of man -- which by the way, are almost always hostile to God's law-order.

Heaven's Reaction to the Rebellion

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

To an informed Christian the hostility of congressmen and our nation's leaders is like a burr under our saddle. Righteous people are irritated and agitated by the insanity of these politicians. Rightly so. Thus, we pray, "Hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom come."

How does God respond to the psychotic, sociopathic madness of kings? Well, He certainly isn't threatened by any . . . or all of them! "He laughs!"

The term "laugh" (shachaq) is translated "to make sport of" in Judges 16:25. It is a term of contempt.

The word "derision" (la-ag) means "to mock" and is translated "laughed thee to scorn" in 2 Kings 19:21. The temporal power of weak, proud officials are no threat to the atom smashing power of the eternal God.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

What is the future of the rebel kings? The LORD has a message for them.

The verbs "speak" (Piel) and "vex" (Piel) in Hebrew poetry are complementary terms. Both announce intense energetic action.

The word "vex" is translated "troubled" (Genesis 45:3), "dismayed" (Exodus 15:15) and "terrified" (ESV 1 Samuel 28:21). God is not some sweet, indulgent passive grandfather type figure. Before us in the image of intense action of an angry God.

The word "wrath" and "sore displeasure" are also complementary terms. The Hebrew word for "wrath" is "nostril" (aph); that is, when a man feels wronged, his nostrils flare. The Hebrew word for "sore displeasure" means "heat" or "burning anger." This imagery is that of an angry dragon with flared nostrils blasting balls of fire to char His adversaries. The sudden stroke and death of Lenin (1924) after his order (1922) to starve five million Russian peasants comes to mind.

To put it bluntly, God is not happy with the secular nations. Today, there is no government committed to His law-order. Consequently, He is opposed to the proud, humanistic states. It is not his will that any of them succeed. All will fail. He will vex them in His wrath.

The Father Speaks

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

The Father speaks. "I have set" is the Hebrew Qal perfect verb *nacak* which means "to pour out." The imagery before us is that of a metallurgist heating iron ore in a blast furnace at a smelting plant to pour hot iron into a mold to make steel. The Father emphatically states that He has His king, and He has installed him permanently on His holy hill.

The "holy hill" is a reference to the Heavenly Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the assembly of the saints, the heavenly Jerusalem of which carnal Jerusalem was a type.

This is a decree "written in stone" sort of speak! It is an iron-clad, indisputable fact. In contrast to antlers that fall off every season among deer and elk, are permanent horns of power like that of a ram. In contrast to the changing winds and the sands of time are the eternal shores; in contrast to the fading grass on the prairie are the mighty rocks and boulders of the earth; in contrast to the fragile tents of man are the pyramids of Almighty God. In contrast to fragile, weak, temporal rulers is God's eternal, immutable, anointed King. In contrast to the weak, flawed egotists that arise to power out of the sea of politics to ride the wave of temporal power to the sand castles of nations is God's chosen King, the Lord Jesus Christ, established forever on God's holy mountain. God rules, not man!

Before us is the SOLUTION to all political disputes--recognition of and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ as Head of the Nations. Oh, that the kings of the earth would humbly submit to the authority of Christ and place themselves under oath to obey His Law-word. How different the evening news!

The Son Speaks

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

The Son speaks. A public notice is given. The term "decree" refers to a resolve, order, or command. The first usage of the word "decree" (*choq*) is in reference to land given to the priests by Pharaoh which Joseph, Vice-regent of Egypt, was not permitted to seize or sell (Genesis 47:22); that is, Pharaoh's decree

was set in stone. His decree was absolute and permanent. It is like an executive order, but more firm. Thus, God's decree to the Son is absolute, resolute, permanent, forever, immutable, invariable, and unchangeable.

The decree is one of relationship. The Son is very God of God -- eternal, omnipotent, omniscient. But, at a point in time, if we dare use the term "time," the Father declared His relationship to the Second Person of the Triune God as that of a father to a son. He is now "The Son."

The term "begotten" does not refer to an actual birth, but the genesis of a legal relationship. In the movie "Ben Hur," Ben Hur wins the affection of a Roman Senator, receives his freedom, and is declared a son. He existed before the declaration. The decree did not initiate his existence; only a new status. Likewise, between the Father and the Son! The Second Person of the Triune God is declared a Son.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Favored by the Father, the Son is granted special favors. All He has to do is ask, and the nations are His.

This is the Spirit's way of informing us that Christ claims jurisdiction over all men and their institutions. Both the right and power to rule the nations belong to Christ, "Who is the head of all rule and authority" (Colossians 2:10).

But, Christ has done more than asked. He purchased the nations with His own blood, the currency of the spirit world. In providing a blood bond, He claims jurisdiction over all men!

The iron scepter is in nail pierced hands. The nations are as fragile as pottery. The One who made a whip and cleansed the temple will use His rod of iron to smash the nations. Rebels who will not bow the knee will be broken into a thousand pieces.

The Spirit Speaks

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

The Spirit of God gives sweet counsel to the rulers of the earth. The subjects of instruction are kings, presidents, parliaments, public officials in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The Spirit exhorts them to be wise and receive the following instruction.

Unfortunately, however, the nations seems to be in the hands of fools and madmen.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

The word "serve" means "to work" or "to labor" or "to obey." The kings of the earth are exhorted to serve the LORD; that is, to obey His Law-word.

The command "rejoice" refers to voluntary service. Holy fear must mix with joy and the privilege of serving the LORD God. Governments are in place to serve the interest of Heaven and the law of the LORD God; to protect human rights and freedom; and, to punish those who infringe on the rights of others.

The phrases "with fear" and "with trembling" is a call to careful and precise obedience to His commands and purpose (Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:4; 17:19; 19:20).

The Spirit calls for allegiance to the Word of God, not allegiance to a political party or the new world order or to the U.S. Constitution. Oh, what a different place the world would be if we had Christian leaders committed to the will of God and served His purposes to the best of their knowledge and ability.

Today, however, it seems we have madmen ruling nations who are hell bent on serving their own lust or Marxist program or the agenda of the new Zionist world order to mention a few.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

"Kiss" refers to the ancient tradition of subjects kissing the ring or sceptre of a king; that is, of demonstrating devotion and loyalty to the crown. Kings take no pleasure in rebels. To arouse the wrath of a king is to perish like Haman before Xerxes. After the Earl of Essex "half" drew his sword against Queen Elizabeth, she had him executed.

All the kings of the earth all called to "kiss the Son:"

- Kiss Him as the Son of God, the historical Christ who appeared in Bethlehem.
- Kiss Him as the Creator for "by Him all things are Created."
- Kiss Him as the King of the rulers of the earth.
- Kiss Him as the only Lawgiver, King, Priest, and Prophet.
- Kiss Him as the Savior King Who gave His life to save His people from their sins.
- Kiss Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- Kiss Him as the Gateway to God.
- Kiss Him as the Mediator between Heaven and Earth.
- Kiss Him as the Lamb of God, the Sin-bearer.

- Kiss Him as the Way of Salvation.
- Kiss Him as the True Israel of God, the fulfillment of all OT promises.
- Kiss Him as the Head of the Church.
- Kiss Him as the risen, ascended Savior and Lord sitting at the Right hand of God.
- Kiss the Son lest He be angry you perish in the way.
- Kiss the Son that you may be truly blessed of God with eternal life and enter His kingdom.

Kiss the Son is equivalent to invitation terms like "receive Christ as Lord and Savior," "believe," "repent," "bow the knee to Christ," and "Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raise him from the dead" (Romans 10:9). The psalmist is telling nations to "look to Christ" and be saved. To reject Christ is to perish, for "whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:18).

The term "blessing" refers to salvation. To "kiss the Son" is to be reconciled to God and to possess eternal life and the blessings of the age to come.

A blessing is promised to rulers and all those who put their trust in him. Trust here is more than an occasional glance toward heaven, but a genuine commitment to trust and obey. "In God we Trust," is our nation's motto. Oh, that it would be more than mere words. Oh, that we might acknowledge there is only one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

The schism between the United States and Russia or between Hamas and Israel are the result of the nations rejecting God's Law-order. The solution between the United States and Russia and between Gaza and Israel is for all parties to "kiss the Son." There is peace at the cross. If Jews and Gentiles can find peace at the cross, so can Arabs and Jews, Americans and Russians.

Before us is the reason for all political conflict in the world today, and the solution to every political problem known to man in seed form. The problems are not political, but spiritual; likewise, the solution is not political diplomacy or war, but confession of the Son and surrender to the Son.

Kiss the Son and be reconciled to God.

27 PSALM 101: THE POLITICIAN’S PSALM

Shortly after David became king of Israel, he penned the policies that would guide his administration as king of Israel. Thus, we call this, “the Politician’s Psalm.”

Oh, that modern officials would be as contemplative, and adopt the principles that David scribed for his public life. All men would do well to acquire virtues that will guide them during their pilgrimage on earth. King Alfred the Great did, Stonewall Jackson did it; Robert E. Lee did it. Successful politicians must also do it.

Government officials are required to take an oath to uphold and support the constitution of the united States of America before assuming the duties of office. Oaths sanction performance. In exchange for an oath, We the People grant politicians privileges and power. Without an oath, there is no power and no duty to perform acts of office. Without an oath, the acts of pretenders are null and void. Look at this psalm as David’s oath—his pledge of performance as Israel’s senior administrator.

Further, the oath was to the LORD (Deuteronomy 6:13). The whole problem with American politics is that we do not have one man in office anywhere that has sworn an oath to obey the law of the LORD God.

Psalm 101:1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

David’s first pledge was to conduct his administration conscious of the LORD (YHWH). Most politicians are men-pleasers instead of God-pleasers. Amidst the cacophony of officials feverously scratching their nails on government blackboards, David pledged to compose melodies and to make music; to light a candle amidst the darkness; to promote good over evil. And what was his grand theme? —the virtues of mercy and justice; velvet and steel; the sweets and the bitters; the cream and the vinegar; the soft and the rough; the tender and the tough; forgiveness and vengeance; grace and truth — and, the choices that must be made between good and evil.

Few politicians today know the difference between right and wrong much less have the skills to compose songs with such grand themes. Training in righteousness is, therefore, necessary for success in politics. It takes great skill to blend justice and mercy into a harmony that binds the wicked and frees the righteous; that refreshes the weak and reforms the wretched; that invigorates industry and stifles corruption. David made a choice to please God and not the bankers. Thus every politician must choose whom he will serve, God or man. “No man can serve two masters,” said Jesus. Hopefully, the choices of a political leader will please his constituents. But, if a choice must be made to do what’s right and follow God’s will or to do

what's wrong and to follow man's will, hopefully that politician will have the moral character to do what is right regardless of the consequences. Such character, however, is as rare as pretty on an ape.

2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

David pledged to conduct himself with integrity; i.e., to be holy in his conduct. Holiness among government officials is a scarce commodity. Excellence in ethics, manners, temperament, and political skills must be studied. Few graduate from such a difficult course of study. Corruption is easy; perfection is hard. Precision is tedious; pettiness is effortless. David did not achieve his ambition, but it was good that it was in his heart.

Thus, all politicians must beware of eating fruits from the poisonous tree that compromises one's integrity. No wonder David prayed to God asking Him "to come near unto me!" Holy ambition without His Holy presence leads to unholy action. Politicians are sinners and sin's sweet fragrances are a constant attraction. Power has its own temptations. In the hands of a good man power can be used for the benefit of the people, but in the hands of a weak man power corrupts. It is not natural to be pure and holy. Holiness must be studied and supported by His divine Presence. Oh, that more politicians would hunger for the Divine presence in their administration.

David made a commitment to be holy at home as well as at work. It is too easy to be an angel in public and a devil in private; to sing in the choir and to sin in the corners; to be sweet away and sour at home; to be civilized to colleagues and uncivilized to the commoner; to be gentlemanly to the media and barbarous to the masses. Like a lion following a herd of African antelope, duplicity stalks the life of every politician. There is no harmony so delightful as a gracious, consistent, and principled life among public officials.

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

David pledged to resist the temptations that confront men of wealth and power. Like a burlesque, the charms of money and pleasure dance their way into the lives of politicians. Politicians would do well to remember the pundit: "sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit reap a character; sow character and reap a destiny." David determined to grow flowers, not weeds; to nurture holy ambitions and to starve unholy passions. He failed, but his ambition was correct. Oh, that modern men would seek to do better than David. Technology channels temptations to us that men of antiquity never dreamed. Where are the politicians today that have made a covenant to "set no wicked thing" before their eyes? Little wonder, Christianity has no impact on the culture. Political leaders are laden with sins of pride, of wealth, and lust . . . and so are the people.

David says he hated the work of evildoers. On another occasion, he declared, "Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? (Psalm 139:21). He not only hated the deeds of the wicked, he hated them—the source of evil infecting other men!! David is not

saying that he hated weak and flawed sinners, but a special class of men — those who made a pact with the Devil. He called these men, “the wicked”, “the bloody,” and “thine enemies” (Psalm 139-18-21).

These men and their willingness to take bribes (donations) seem to find their way into niches of government. Evildoers are not just vermin on the street, but government officials dressed in blue suits.

It is posh today to disparage the necessity of hate. Our government is ready to indict men for hate speech, hate crimes, and hateful thoughts. Balderdash! It is impossible to be a godly man who does not hate wicked politicians. Where in the Bible does it say we are “to hate the sin, but love the sinner?” Wicked deeds come from wicked men, and we are called to hate both. Politicians today have more sweets than a candy store. Christians are called to be salt, not sugar. Life is not about being nice, but about being holy . . . and holy men hate tomcats in the fish market; i.e., chubby politicians gorging themselves from public trough. It must be so!

4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.

David pledged to clean up the deep state—to “drain the swamp” of political alligators and water moccasins. To not “know a wicked person” means that David was not going to employ crooks in his cabinet. It has been said that 98% of lawyers make the other 2% look bad. The problem with presidents is that they are surrounded by crafty bureaucrats and canny cabinet members that have perfected the art of deception. “When the wicked rule, the people mourn” (Proverbs 29:2). It was said of “Honest Abe” that he was one of the most cunning men to ever hold office, and that he often cloaked his real ambitions behind noble suggestions. Such cleverness is not to be admired.

David, therefore, determined to surround himself with godly men and to cleanse his staff of two-faced, double-minded, double-tongued, double-hearted shysters. David was flawed, but not corrupt. He did not promote professional crooks to cabinet posts.

As important as personal integrity is, the decision one’s political counselors is just as critical. Many a president has been ruined by his own advisers. President Woodrow Wilson, following the advice of a close cabinet member said to his friends, just before he died, that he had been “deceived” and that “I have betrayed my Country”. No doubt he did! (The Zionists were all over him).

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

David pledged to cleanse his cabinet of mudslingers. All politicians instinctively understand the politics of personal destruction. Legislators know that the way to destroy an adversary is to slander him; that is, invent a despicable accusation and leak it to the media. Politicians are masters of the attack ad. They know how to ruin their opponents through backbiting and character assassination. David had no room in his pool of friends for camouflaged cobras and snipers. He was committed to rid his administration of proud and cunning counselors. David suffered greatly from Saul’s slanderous accusations against him,

and he purposed that even his political foes should not suffer the same fate. Truth “Yes, but slander “No.” David zealously promoted his political agenda, but he did not employ propagandists skilled in the art of smear campaigns. Mudslingers need not apply.

6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

David pledged to employ men of integrity. A good master chooses good servants. Emily Dickenson said, “Her friends were her estate”; that is, all her wealth and hope and success centered around the friends she possessed. “A faithful man who can find?” Godly friends give good advice, but pretenders poison the soup. Friends rush in when foes rush out. A man is rich indeed who has men around him that are committed to integrity and to his success. David made it his ambition to find them, employ them, and to take care of them. Take care of your friends and they will take care of you. Superficial men walk out when you are weak and failing, but your true friends will draw near to protect you.

7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

David pledged to cleanse his staff of schemers; i.e., men skilled in the art of defrauding people of their wealth and property. Working deceit is not simple theft, but grand plots by clever politicians to plunder the assets of the people for their own political ends. It is called “covetousness”—a violation of the 10th Commandment.

David is not judging the hearts of men, but the actions of duplicitous government officers maximizing their positions of power to exploit the weak. International bankers and government officials throughout history have conspired against the people so that the profits of industry flow into their hands. This was true during the middle ages in serfdom where lords enslaved the masses, and it is true in our day wherein government officials promote the modern “income tax” scheme to skim the milk off every man’s paycheck before the worker tastes the fruit of his labor. Jesus had no tolerance for these workers of deceit. His first confrontation was with the moneychangers in the temple, and eventually they had him arrested and crucified for exposing their fraud.

Behind all schemes to enslave men and deprive mankind of their property is the art of the lie. The wretched thing about lies and deceit is that that the deceived do not know they are being fooled. Such economic schemes of socialism, communism, democracies, and fascism are clever plots to shift power from the masses to the elite. David sought to cleanse his court of these dirty, double-minded, double-crossing, double-dealing, double agents . . . and righteous politicians would do well to do the same.

8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

David pledged to faithfully perform his duties as Israel's chief law enforcement officer. The first duty of the State is to surrender itself to the rule of God; i.e., to seek first the kingdom of God and arrange itself under God's law order (Psalm 2; Matthew 6:33).

God's law is not a private matter demanding something from the Christian but leaving other men to do as they please. The law is valid for the Christian because it is valid for all. God's law is not only right for me, but for all men, and all of man's institutions. As Israel's commander and chief, the king had two duties: (1) to punish those who violate the right of men (the "wicked"), and (2) secondarily to protect the people from those who abuse the liberties of a free people. So, when David says "he will cut off all the wicked," he is saying he will faithfully perform the duties of the executive branch of government.

If you are a politician, you serve in one of the three branches of government. And, whatever your duties, God calls you to know your duty, to do it, and to limit your authority to its proper jurisdiction.

Two great evils among politicians must be avoided: (1) dereliction of duty; that is, a slack hand in the performance of official responsibilities; and, (2) ultra vires acts; that is, assuming powers and authority beyond the scope of your office — the latter being the sin of most politicians — the sin of not limiting government to its constitutional restrictions.

In conclusion, this is called the "politicians psalm" because it outlines the principles upon which king David sought to govern his administration. He turned the psalm into an oath to faithfully perform his duty. Modern government employees know little of this psalm or its lofty ideals . . . thus, the reason so few people have confidence in government. It has been said, "If you aim at nothing, you shall surely hit it." Likewise, every politician would do well to sit down and write out the principles upon which he is going to conduct his public service . . . and a man would do better by adopting the pledge that David penned.

28 OBJECTIONS TO POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

A thesis of this work is that the Kingdom of God has entered history in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; and, therefore Kingdom truth seeks application in the political theaters of our time.

As a Kingdom citizen, the believer has a duty to advance the “will of God” on this earth. In part, by engaging the political process, and in part by confronting opposing political agendas.

The Kingdom challenges all men and all of man’s institutions to arrange their affairs under Kingdom authority. But, many resist this truth. Objections are raised, but the good Berean will search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11).

28.1 Christ did not challenge the authority structures of His day.

Proposition: Christ’s kingdom is spiritual. He did not confront Rome, or Herod, or the Sanhedrin. He did not attempt to change the political structures of His day.

Answer: This is only partially true. It is true that Christ did not interject himself directly into politics or seek to subvert Roman rule. But, it is not true he did not confront political issues. He cleansed the temple, the seat of civil authority (John 2). He confronted the lawyer-politicians who supplanted God’s laws with man’s statutes (Matthew 15:1f). He condemned Israel’s corrupt political order in Matthew 23 pronouncing “woes” on nation’s leaders. He announced the total destruction of the system in Matthew 24. He sent the former demoniac back to the district of the Gadarenes to serve that community. Christ did all these things even though his primary ministry was redemptive and his mission was to defeat Satan, sin, and death. The gospel seed had to be planted before it could be proclaimed to the nations.

28.2 Kingdom saints should not be involved in politics.

Proposition: Politics is a worldly, carnal concern. Christians are not to concern themselves with the affairs of this life. Spiritual men do not entangle themselves with politics.

Answer: “Let your light shine among men.” The spiritual man is not a recluse living in a cave or on some mountain top in Tibet. His Christian life is not limited to a prayer closet. The spiritual man obeys his Commander and Chief. He visits the market place and gets involved in the nitty-gritty, nasty affairs of

commerce, law, and messy squabbles among men. Like Jesus, he leaves the ninety and nine and the comforts of flock life to pursue the lost in their discomforts. He realizes the gospel is redemptive; that God is at work reconciling men to himself; that He redeems men, families, traditions, customs, and nations. Government is a God-ordained institution and the Christian brings God's perspective to the table of concerns. Barnes adds his perspective:

Neither the minister nor the soldier is to be encumbered with the affairs of this life, and the one should not be more than the other. This is always a condition in becoming a soldier. He gives up his own business during the time for which he is enlisted, and devotes himself to the service of his country. The farmer leaves his plow, and the mechanic his shop, and the merchant his store, and the student his books, and the lawyer his brief; and neither of them expect to pursue these things while engaged in the service of their country. (Barnes, 1975 (Reprinted))

28.3 My kingdom is not of this world.

Proposition: Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). The Kingdom of God does not compete with modern political structures. It is an inner or spiritual reality and not a political force confronting the rulers of this age. The kingdom does not touch earthly things. It is out of this world. Jesus authority is in heaven, not earth.

Answer: Jesus is not saying his authority is ethereal and unrelated to earthly realities. He is not saying his authority extends to heaven, and not earth. The Greek preposition “of” (ek) refers to Jesus source of authority rather than to a realm. The Kingdom is derived from God, not man. His claims earth as well as heaven. Likewise, the true disciple prays, “Thy will be done **on earth** as it is in heaven.”

The early Puritans saw America as the soil upon on which Kingdom seeds could be planted – a “city on a hill.” They sought to build a nation under God. Even Benjamin Franklyn recognized, “God governs in the affairs of men.”

When Christ said, “My Kingdom is not of this world,” He was speaking of the origin of His Kingdom, not its location; the source of His authority, not its earthly seat of government. His Kingdom is sanctioned by God, not man. Thus, Pilate did not feel threatened. Jesus even informed Pilate that the only reason he had authority over Him on the day of His crucifixion was because God ordained it from above (John 19:11).

Jesus was clear that His Kingdom is not expanded by politics, or legislation, or revolution. Earth is not transformed by legislation, but by regeneration; not by information, but by Biblical instruction. We do not coerce men to accept Kingdom benefits, we persuade them.

First, men need a Savior. Second, they need leadership. Jesus is both Savior and Lord . . . and as Lord, Jesus commanded his disciples to Christianize the nations.

28.4 There is a separation of church and state.

Proposition: Religion and politics do not mix. Church affairs are separate from politics. The church should not tell the government what to do.

Answer: Organizationally, this is true. The church should not be under government control, neither should the government legislate how the church should conduct its kingdom business on earth.

But, the truth of the matter is that church leaders have not separated the church from the state. Churches in America have given up their independence in Christ, and surrendered their churches to the State as 501 (c) 3 organizations; and, forsaken the headship of Christ for the headship of the Internal Revenue Services.

Churches are no longer the living body of Christ, but dead, fictional corporations created by the State. Because the church fornicates with the government, the American church has produced two-headed offspring: Christianettes serving Bayonets. Christians have become good little statistes, and this hinders Kingdom business: "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

But, it is not true Christians should separate Kingdom truth from politics. Believers must proclaim Kingdom values. When Christians are absent from political debates, they create a vacuum. Humanists rush in with a new god and proclaim liberty from the laws of God. Kingdom truth is about the redemption of man and his corrupt institutions. It behooves Christians to redeem social life from the agenda of atheists and to encourage civil rulers to "seek first the Kingdom of God." Both priests and kings have a duty to arrange their separate duties under God's order (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

*Censoring Symbols from Public Creates Less Freedom & Official Atheism. While the text of the Constitution does not prohibit religious symbolism in public places, it does not require it. Public officials have the freedom . . . those who oppose religious symbolism in public places, and file lawsuits to enforce their preference of a censored public square, are **actually instituting an irreversible orthodoxy of secularism usually imposed by unelected federal judges**. Only in this latter scenario is there any real "coercion" regarding religion. **Freedom is curtailed when religious symbolism is banned from public places** because neither elected officials nor their constituents are permitted to express or recognize through that symbol a belief in God . . . A court order demanding removal of religious symbols sends a message of censorship of and hostility toward public acknowledgments of religion and, simultaneously, takes the issue out of the voters' hands. (2009, *Opposing View*).*

28.5 The kingdom is about the gospel not politics

Proposition: We should preach the gospel and salvation and not political ideals.

Answer: While it is true the church should preach the gospel, part of that duty is proclaiming Christ's reign and the duty of nations to surrender to His law-order. While it is true church and state as institutions should be separate, it is **not** true that Biblical teaching has no claim over government.

Government is an institution of God, and as an institution of God **the Bible has much to say about government.** Kingdom truth makes a claim upon all men and upon all of man's institutions. Civil Rulers have a duty to know God's law and to arrange the affairs of the State under Kingdom authority. *Not only must individuals "seek first the Kingdom of God" so must the State!* The gospel is not only about salvation, but the redemption of man and his institutions. *The Christian who is not engaged in politics has surrendered the institution of the State to Satan and proclaims the death of God among men.*

28.6 You can't legislate morality.

Proposition: You can't make civil rulers obey the gospel or force kingdom truth down the throats of non-Christian men.

Answer: Agreed in part. We are living in a day when timid Christians have yielded the chair to aggressive humanists. The result has been the passage of laws that tolerate infanticide, Sodomy, adultery, lesbo-hypo, tranny insanity, gender-bender confusion, and a redistribution of wealth by government. Humanists use this doctrine to keep Christians from advocating kingdom truth on political issues to insure their atheistic, socialistic agenda dominate America's legislative mills.

All law is a reflection of someone's moral point of view, and somebody's moral code is going to prevail.

Religion is about "ultimate values;" and, therefore, all men are religious, even atheists. Because atheists have ultimate values, they aggressively seek to thrust their "ultimate concerns" down the throats of all humanity. Christians reject Philistine rule over the people of God. In law, somebody's ultimate values are going to be legislated into law. It behooves, Christians, therefore, to advance the gospel of the Kingdom and persuade men to legislate laws consistent with Kingdom concerns. We do not "force" the Kingdom on anyone; we use the art of persuasion to convince men of Kingdom truth. Force is reserved for government upon rebels.

28.7 Secular governments are preferred over religious governments

Proposition: With so many religions, aren't secular rulers more competent to mediate disputes in America's cultural wars. Shouldn't we keep religion out of politics?

Answer: It is impossible to keep religion out of government. Secularism is not a savior, but a Satan to be resisted. As long as governments promote multiculturalism and grant equal protection to all religions, secularists will see government as the unbiased referee. But, secularism is not neutral. Secular people are as religious as any man. It is a matter of who's religious values are going to prevail, the values of Christianity, or the values of atheists?

But, secular governments are not unbiased. They are very much committed to a path of humanistic secularism which demands the death of Christianity. Christianity is the target. To win, humanists have to take down church.

The entire presumption that the state can make "fair and balanced" decisions sounds like a wolf volunteering to shepherd the sheep.

"Fair" usually means supporting the atheistic agenda! Thus, secular governments end up institutionalizing atheistic policies. And, atheism is a religious belief with severe consequences. Atheism is a religion, and in the twentieth century atheistic governments slaughtered over 150 – 180 million people.

Not all religions deserve the same protection. Like the Israelites, governments must make a choice: WHY HALT YE BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? "if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal (the state as god), then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). And, "if Christianity be true, then serve Christ the King; if atheism be true, then serve its god, which is Time plus Chance."

But, stop all this nonsense pretending that a secular court can be neutral. Christianity offers limited tolerance to other religions, but it makes no claim of neutrality. The Kingdom of God appeared in and through the ministry of Christ and the Father orders all men and their governments to repent and serve Christ (Acts 17:30).

What must be unmasked is the media's pretense that news is "fair and balanced;" that governments can remain neutral when clear choices must be made. Christianity's wonderful contribution to this country must be recognized without apology. Christ is the King of the nations, and the sooner our elected officials recognize this, the better (Revelation 15:3-4)!

28.8 The Bible is only about salvation, not politics.

Proposition: The main message of the Bible is about the gospel, being saved, and going to heaven – not about changing politics.

Answer: It is true the main message of the Bible is about the gospel, but the gospel is about the Kingdom . . . and the prayer of the Christian is "Thy Kingdom come, Thy rule come to earth NOW."

The gospel is about saving the man, saving the family, and saving the nations. Christ is Lord . . . and He is to be proclaimed as Lord of all men and all kings. John the Baptist had a message for soldiers (Luke

3:12-14). Jesus had a message for Herod (Luke 13:32). Paul preached Kingdom principles to Felix the governor (Acts 23:24) and wished an audience with Caesar (Acts 25:12). Though the gospel was planted in individual human hearts, its seed can be planted on government soil as one has opportunity to do so.

28.9 Religion and politics don't mix

Proposition: Religion and politics are like oil and water, they don't like each other and any attempt to mix the two divides people.

Answer: Hogwash! Where ever you have two people, you have politics. The problem in this country is not the mixing of religion and politics, but the flawed presumption that politics can prosper apart from religion.

The charge of "religion and politics don't mix" is simply an attempt to eliminate competition by the secularists. Secularists believe atheistic man is more capable of running the government than Christian men. How is a country made better with a Sodomite abortionist at the helm?

Politics is nothing more than the interjection of religious values into human problems. The truth is everyman is religious. Everyone who conducts business holds some ultimate value system. Secularists want their values "free love" and "free everything" to rule society. The Christian prays that Kingdom values will prevail. The great issue of our time is whether Kingdom values or secular values are going to rule our society? Both are religious. A decision must be made and the pretense that a secular government is neutral must be exposed!

28.10 Christians should not resist authority!

Proposition: Christians are called to obey authority, not resist it.

Answer: This is a false premise. Obedience to authority and disobedience to authority are both callings of God. Christians are called to obey de jure authority and good laws, and they are called to resist presumptuous de facto authority and bad laws. No man has a duty to obey tyrants.

The midwives pleased God by disobeying Pharaoh's order to abort the birth of Jewish babies; the three Hebrews refused to bow the knee to King Nebuchadnezzar's proud, arrogant order to worship his image.

The premise that Christians are to obey all regimes regardless of their character is nothing short of religious claptrap.

If Jesus Christ is Lord, it is neither possible or desirable to obey all regimes. Sheepish compliance to governments in rebellion against God (Psalm 2) and meticulous attention to man-made statutes does not advance the Kingdom of God. The passage of millions of bills cannot create a utopia. Over-regulation

creates slavery. Kingdom law has a purpose, but a limited one – to advance the rule of law among men. The purpose of man-made statutes is to advance the will of the legislature among men; which, more likely than not is opposed to the rule of God.

29 THE KINGDOM AND ROMANS 13

The prayer, “Thy Kingdom come” is a rebel’s prayer. To pray this prayer is to reject man’s will and man’s legislation. Millions of laws and UN agendas cannot regenerate society or create free men. Because some equate Kingdom life to obeying the laws of men, we must address the false premise that obedience to the state is obedience to God—a position that often develops out of an unbalanced application of Romans 13.

29.1 The Issue:

This section explores the limitations of compliance to government authority.

All agree that God calls citizens to be law-abiding citizens, but it would be a great error to think that God is calling men to total subjugation of the total man to total government. Since tyrants demand total obedience, it is important for Christians to recognize tyranny and learn how to resist totalitarian regimes.

Let us never forget that our Lord was crucified by an unlimited, totalitarian government; that John the Baptist, James, Peter, Paul and all the apostles were killed by governments that demanded the total subjugation of the total man to total government. Therefore, Christians must not think that obedience to the State is obedience to God – but, they do and they use Romans 13 as Benzpdoazpine for those anxious about dysfunctional governments.

Disclaimer: This expression of faith should not be interpreted as promotion of anarchy or disobedience to an imperfect but good government, but it does challenge the presumption that it always the duty of Christians to obey bad government and bad laws.

29.2 The Text

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (exousia). For there is no *legitimate* power (exousia) but of God: the *legitimate* powers that be are ordained of God. (*Italics* inserted for clarity)

*J.B. Phillips: “Everyone ought to obey civil authorities, for all **legitimate** authority is derived from God’s authority.”*

Pulpit Commentary: St. Paul, therefore, lays down the rule that the civil government, in whatsoever hands it might be, was, no less than the Church, a Divine institution for the

maintenance of order in the world, to be submitted to and obeyed by Christians within the whole sphere of its legitimate authority.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the *legitimate* power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist *legitimate authority* shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For (*good*) rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of *legitimate* power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For he (*God's magistrate*) is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil (*criminal acts of breaking the Ten Commandments*), be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject (*to legitimate officers*), not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute (*levies to the conquerors*) also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Because Romans 13 has been misinterpreted and misapplied, this writ challenges the presumption that it always the duty of Christians to obey secular rulers and bad laws.

Therefore, what follows is an argument against the view that Romans 13 requires the total subjugation of the total church to total government.

Disobedience to the whims of men is the foundation of liberty, and obedience to oppression the mark of slavery.

29.3 Getting to the Truth of Romans 13

To think that good Christians must always obey the government is the product of more than a little evil.

In obeying the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians place themselves in an adversarial position to the autonomous, rebellious State – that sees itself as a sovereign over subjects. A Christian who thinks he must always obey tyrants⁵¹ places himself in an adversarial relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵¹ Tyrants: Rulers who do not acknowledge the authority of Christ or the limitations of government.

Our Lord was crucified by a corrupt, totalitarian government. John the Baptist, James, Peter, Paul and all the apostles were killed by tyrannical regimes.

Ancient Israel was exiled to Assyria (722 BC) / Babylon (586 BC), not because they disobeyed their kings, but because they sheepishly complied with their kings' heterogeneous law-making which nullified the law of the LORD God (2 Kings 17:7-8).

*“For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, **And walked in the statutes of the heathen**, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, **and of the kings of Israel**, which they had made.”*

Christians err when they think that all governments are worthy of respect and obedience.

29.4 The Push for Big Government

Government plays a big part in our lives—in fact, governments and the sycophant media seek to rent a place in our minds whether we want them to or not.

Marxists believe that every problem can be resolved by Big Government. Legislatures are vomiting out government solutions ad nauseam. Nightly news fills minds with speeches by politicians, pep rallies by candidates running for office, with legislation passed by Congress, with police raids on the private sector, and with reports on the most recent pandemic. And, since government impacts our life, it is important to develop a wholistic theology on God and government that is consistent with Scripture.

29.5 The Push for Maximum Compliance

In recent times, Evangelical pastors have pushed Romans 13 down the throat of their congregations advocating total obedience to totalitarian regimes. Rather than teaching Christians when they should not comply with the State, pastors take the easy path requiring the total subjugation of the total man to total government.

Bad governments begin with too much government according to Thomas Jefferson. Thus, the deterioration of every society begins with an overreaching State and receding responsibility to resist tyranny. Pastors with a cloud in the pulpit create a fog in the pew by encouraging the flock to surrender to autocracies. When sheep fail to recognize despotism in government, clarity is lost and conformity becomes the custom of the people.

Many have used Romans 13 to teach unlimited obedience to the government—even urging their churches to become state created organizations surrendering their authority to the Internal Revenue Service and abandoning the Headship of Christ.

Pastor Greg Dixon, Indianapolis Baptist Temple, said the following:

The opponents of unlimited submission to government are deemed as rebellious, anarchist and disobedient. However, there is no practical, historical or biblical consistency in the shallow arguments of these simpletons.

29.6 Who is Lord, Caesar or Christ?

Many Americans have absolute faith in all authority. The trend for the church to surrender its sovereignty to the state by becoming State-approved 501 c 3 Organizations has produced namby-pamby, spineless, passive, effeminate pew-sitters who do not have the moral backbone of a jelly-fish to confront the legal atrocities passed by legislatures or their military police force. The sheepish compliance of God's people with masking, social distancing, and shutting down churches comes to mind.

Today's pastors are so sweet, you could get tooth decay by listening to lollipop sermons on how Christians are supposed to smile and march through jello trying to comply with the demands of a Stalin, Pol Pot, or Mao Tse Tung -- a theology that Daniel, the three Hebrews, John the Baptist, and Jesus would not recognize.

The atrocities of the Nazi Party occurred in part because the church in Germany failed to develop a balanced theology of God and government. Hitler's favorite passage in the Bible was Roman 13 (Erwin Lutzer, Hitler's Cross).

Furthermore, Romans 13 was the most expounded and talked about passage by the Lutheran Church during Churchill's War against Germany. Unfortunately, the superficial, state-sponsored Lutheran Church in Germany fell into syrupy compliance with the Nazi Party. Likewise, the Anglican Church fell into bellwether compliance with Churchill's warmongering.

Lutheran pastors used Romans 13 to encourage their flocks to surrender to Nazi policy, and American pastors fell into the same dog-on-a-leash error as German theologians.

Something is radically wrong when pastors train Christians to obey bad laws and bad government!! Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and President Jefferson David did not think this way. These noble men understood that overthrowing oppression is the mark of true patriotism.

What is a Christian to do when the government he is supposed to honor is the enemy of God's Law turned traitor to its own constitution?

An overreaching government challenges us to go deeper into Christ and obedience to Him by resisting tyranny (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Judge Napolitano stated *that because the government breaks its own laws the government is not your friend* (Judge Andrew P. Napolitano, Constitutional Chaos, p. ix).

John Knox understood the tyranny of three queens. He preached, “Let a thing here be noted, that the prophet of God sometimes may teach treason against kings.”

Thus, Christians need to rethink Romans 13 and develop an accurate theology of God and Government from the whole of Scripture--a muscular theology that unleashes a militant Christianity that takes its marching orders from King Jesus and not a secular tyrant (Acts 17:1-7).

29.7 The Push for a Balanced View of Romans 13

Romans 13 does not teach total compliance of the total man to total government! It teaches cautious consent to a LETITIMATE government that enforces Biblical law.

J.B. Phillips: “Everyone ought to obey civil authorities, for all legitimate authority is derived from God’s authority.”

With so many pastors calling for maximum surrender to fatally flawed governments, and with churches rushing to make the IRS head of its corporate 501 c 3 organization, it is important that Christians see Romans 13 in light of the whole of Scripture and to push back against black sheep interpretations of Romans 13.

Reckless politicians hell-bent on creating a utopian society shackle Americans with unsustainable debt while cuffing them to binding statutes enforced by a police state.

We Americans find ourselves in the same predicament as the founding fathers, but this time the “long train of abuses” are by the "United States, Inc." (1871) (See the Declaration of Independence)

We Americans have been let down, slowed down, taken down, beat down, stripped down, dumbed down, locked down, broken down, thrown down, held down, clamped down, cracked down, shut down, and taxed down through a “long train of abuses” by Washington D.C.!

The whole idea that God expects us to submit to a police state is repugnant to Scripture and the mature Christian mind.

The problem of an overreaching government must be laid at the feet of the church and its black-sheep pastors.

*When the Lord's white sheep become dirty grey, the black sheep feel more comfortable
(Vance Havner).*

The church is the living body (corpus) of Christ, but today churches are rushing to become a dead-corpse 501 c 3 corporation owned and ruled by the State; and, ordered around by its ugly step-sister, the IRS (a UN organization).

When a church gives up its Scriptural status due to the deception of some British Bar attorney void of Biblical truth and not competent in Biblical law (Luke 11:53), the church exchanges its prophetic status as a prophet of God to become a government "non-prophet" organization.

Furthermore, deceived pastors teach their sheeple that it is necessary to commit themselves to the "unequal yoke" (2 Corinthians 6:14) because Romans 13 teaches that the church should always obey the state. Sounds like the Lutheran church under Hitler and Nazi Germany doesn't it?

All this is pure hogwash and must be abandoned if the church is going to fulfill Christ's commission to make disciples of all nations.

God-ordained "rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad conduct;" and must be supported. It follows, therefore, that bad rulers are a terror to good conduct, and a comfort to bad works, and must be resisted (13:3). Isn't this true?

The government to which Christians owe their allegiance for conscience sake must give countenance to the authority of Christ and supremacy of His Word—that allegiance is due to a state just because it exists irrespective of its moral character is unbiblical and undesirable.

States that do not acknowledge the authority of Christ over them have joined the rebellion of Psalm 2.

To teach a congregation they owe allegiance to humanistic regimes that rewrite history, that destroy our Christian heritage, promote Islam, sanction the murder of the unborn, approve of homosexuality, levy oppressive taxes, hostile to Christian Chaplains praying in the name of Jesus, or orders the Ten Commandments to be taken off courtroom walls creates tares and not wheat, goats and not sheep, and sons of Satan and not sons of the Kingdom.

God not only commands the people to obey him, but rulers to obey Him. Just as the church has a duty to surrender to the God's law-order for their ministry, the government has a duty to surrender to God's law-order for their services to mankind. When governments overreach their authority, Christians need to start doing the Ali Shuffle and begin counter punching.

Just as the Christians have a duty to say "No!" to evil, the State has a duty to say "No!" to evil . . . and, if it doesn't, Christians have a duty to say "No!" to government.

Preachers that instruct their flocks to always obey the government, are counseling the saints to join demons; and, for sheep to graze with goats in Psalm 2.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

Why aren't preachers calling congressmen to repent and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ? Maybe, because they are in bed with the Whore of Babylon (Revelation 17-18)!

When the text addresses "Every soul," every soul includes kings, prime ministers, presidents, governors, generals, and sheriffs, mayors as well as citizens. Civil rulers are not above God's law or their own law. They too must surrender to legitimate authority, and create friction against superiors grinding against Kingdom authority.

Muslims insist their leaders submit to the Koran. Why is it that Christians go into convulsions calling politicians to submit to Christ and His Word? Isn't it because the sheep fear men more than they fear God?

Not only do individuals have a responsibility to be Christian, governments have a duty to be thoroughly Christian and to "seek first the kingdom and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

The phrase, "there is no authority "except" (*ei me*) of God in Romans 13:1. The "except" (*ei me*) literally means, "if not" or "unless." ***That is, there is no legitimate authority unless (ei me) ordained of God.***

The government to which Christians are to support is a government that acknowledges the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and seeks to punish acts of rebellion against God's law-order.

The whole idea that Christians are to jock strap regimes that kills babies, promotes same-sex-marriages, taxes is people into poverty, and imprisons its own citizens for misdemeanors is repugnant to Biblical Christianity.

All man-made governments that organized around humanistic principles are de facto governments acting under color of authority and color of law⁵².

Acts by law enforcement done under color of law merit resistance rather than compliance. Resistance to official acts under color of law is service to God; compliance to official acts under color of law is service to the Devil.

⁵² Color of law: official acts under the "appearance" of legal authority or acts committed beyond delegation orders like arresting people without probable cause.

J.B. Phillips agreed and translated this verse as follows: **“Everyone ought to obey civil authorities, for all legitimate authority is derived from God’s authority.”**

Acts done under color of law, color of office, color of authority, and color of process is not “legitimate authority derived from God!” In America, an official who acts under color of law faces a range of punishments including fines and imprisonment.

Zionist governments are hostile to Christianity. The deep state is controlled by Satan. We are living in the matrix. If Jesus is Lord, it is not possible or desirable to always obey the State. Obedience to Christ can only be rendered where His authority is proclaimed and recognized; and, where obedience to Christ is romanced against the black velvet of tyranny. What we are hearing and seeing today is a delusion, a lie, and a deception by the Deep State exactly as Psalm 2 states. Moreover, this deception has reached the pulpit.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

In America, the people are not “subjects” but sovereigns. Therefore, Romans 13 must be applied to our unique constitutional government that not only empowers but limits the federal government—a government designed to be a servant of the states, not a ruler over the states.

The federal government commits nonfeasance when it fails to follow a constitutional mandate; and, it commits malfeasance when it deliberately violates a constitutional restriction.

Good government follows the *rule of law* while bad governments *rule by law*; that is, illegitimate governments try to rule you, control you, herd you, and manipulate you through ten million statutes while they exempt themselves from compliance.

When the federal government over reaches its authority and commits ultra vires acts, it not only violates Scripture, but it barbarizes its contract with WE THE PEOPLE.

Because the government breaks the law and denies it, the government is not your friend – Judge Napolitano, (Constitutional Chaos, p. ix).

Not only are Christians supposed to obey the law of God, governments are required to obey God’s law. God’s law is not a private matter! It is not for the Christian to obey while leaving the State to do as it pleases.

Israel’s God is the “King of the Nations” (Jeremiah 10:7).

We hear much from the pulpit about a Christian's duty to obey the government, but the same pulpits are dead-dog silent on the government's duty to obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only can individuals sin against God, governments can sin against God. The difference being that when a government sins, it has a Herculean impact on millions of people.

When injustice becomes law, rebellion becomes duty!*

Good government is ordained of God. WE THE PEOPLE are responsible to obey good government and good laws, but no Christian has a duty to obey bad officials and bad laws (Prov. 29:2). Daniel comes to mind (Daniel 6).

When a government fears the people, there is liberty and freedom, but when the people fear government, their is bondage and oppression.

While you have a right to know the government's business, the government has no right to know your business.

At times obedience to state policy is obedience to God; at other times, disobedience to the State is obedience to God (See the Hebrew midwives and the three Hebrews in Daniel's time).

The sovereignty and authority of God is unlimited and unconfined; civil authority is limited and confined.

The negative commands, "Thou shall not . . ." are in place to limit government men and their political powers from overreaching their delegation orders, and from establishing permissive policies that demoralize the people. When governments become permissive, the people must rise up and oppose disestablishmentarianism, the severance of biblical morality from state policy.

The purpose of government is not charity, but justice—that is, to defend the basic rights of man: life, liberty, and property (Declaration of Independence). When the government seeks to be a church-charity, it must be resisted . . . in part, because the purpose of government is not charity, and in part because a charitable government taxes its people into poverty.

When a government abandons this purpose and seeks to ignore Biblical law or duplicate the mission of the church (grace) by offering "privileges" and "franchises," it steps outside its jurisdiction, abandons its authority, and sins against God. It must be resisted.

Statism believes that the government is the answer to all things. When the government seeks to be the source of all goodness, wisdom, and power, it becomes a god. When government sees itself as a god, it must be resisted!

It is not possible to rebel against a bad government because bad regimes are in rebellion against God.

When politicians make an idol out government believing the federal government is the solution to all of man's problems, it must be resisted.

Mark Twain said it is much easier to deceive a man than to convince him that he is deceived.

It is much easier to teach Christians to always obey the State than to teach them when and how to resist the State.

If the State cannot be resisted in the minds of Christians, then the state has become their god!

If the State has to be obeyed at all times, then the State is a god!

If a State seeks to arm itself with enough firepower to render any citizen resistance futile, government has become a god!

“That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right (duty) of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness” (Declaration of Independence).

When the State becomes a god in the minds of Christians, you cannot expect Christians not to betray you.

Individual Christians have no duty to obey the state, and the church has no duty to the State (Hale v. Hinkle). But, black sheep feel they have a solemn duty to obey the State.

The church has its own jurisdiction, its own mission, and its own authority. It cannot command the State nor can the State command the church. The church can instruct the State regarding God's law, but the State cannot instruct the church about God's law. When the State orders Christians churches to do anything, it must be counter punched.

The State cannot force its will on the church, but the church can challenge the State to repent of its same-sex marriage, gender-bender policies. Challenging state policies is an acceptable form of resistance.

At no time is the church required to become a state church, a 501 c 3 organization, or obtain permission from the state to carry out its mission. ***If the State can't be resisted, then it has become a god in the mind of Christians.***

When a church seeks to incorporate under the state, it abandons the authority of Christ (Colossians 2:4-9). ***Better to be a prophetic church than a non-prophet, non-profitable church.***

America is unique in that it does not have a monarch. It is a republic. The president is not commander and chief of the American people, but commander and chief of the armed forces.

In America, the government is not a king -- the people are king -- sovereigns without subjects (Treaty of Peace-1783).

*"...Our government is founded upon compact. **Sovereignty was, and is, in the people**"
(Glassv.SloopBetsey,3Dall.(U.S.)6(1794)*

The federal government is not sovereign. It is a servant-government bound by the Constitution. The people are sovereign in the legal sense, and the State operates as a sovereign in relation to other international states. The great tragedy, therefore, is not the oppression of good people by bad people, but the submission of good people to oppression by bad people. The first rule Solomon gave his princely son was, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Proverbs 1:10).

The constitution does not enforce itself. The constitution can only be enforced when citizens stand up for their God-given rights as secured by the constitution. No movement is needed. A few individuals standing up for their rights can stop the "train of abuses" by tyrants.

"No legislative act, therefore, contrary to the Constitution, can be valid." Alexander Hamilton

The People, not the Supreme Court, are the ultimate judge of whether the acts of the federal government are constitutional or unconstitutional; and, the people are the judges of their own state as to whether legislatures and officers function within the restraints of the constitution (10th Amendment).

"... a law repugnant to the Constitution is void." (John Marshall, Chief Justice of U.S. Supreme Court, Marbury v. Madison)

Derativa potestas non potest esse major primitiva. The power which is derived cannot be greater than that from which it is derived. (A Law Dictionary, Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States. By John Bouvier. Published 1856.)

Since the first command says, "Thou shall have no gods before me," (Exodus 20:3) ***the first duty of a Christian is not to submit to authority, but to question authority.***

Questioning authority takes time and work. It's much easier to default to the stupidity of the mob than it is to think. A belief in the strength of numbers also comes into play. After all, tens of millions of people all believing the same thing can't be wrong, can they? But, history has shown us that almost without exception, the democratic mob is all wrong. (See Exodus 23:1-3).

George Bernard Shaw said, "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it."

Christians have no duty to democracy. In fact, they have a duty to resist mob rule.

Exodus 23:2 Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit (NIV).

Christians have a duty to create commotion when the State does not obey its own law. Moreover, Christians have no duty to comply with a government that disobeys God's law and ignores its own charter. They have no duty to submit to unconstitutional statutes enacted totalitarian legislators. A government that does not obey its own law or the laws of God is an enemy of the people . . . an enemy of the Kingdom . . . an enemy of God's law-order!

There is a difference between lawful and legal. It was legal to kill Jews in Nazi Germany, but it was not lawful. Something lawful reflects God's will; something legal reflects the will of the legislature. God's law restrains evil and liberates man; man's law releases evil and enslaves men.

God's law is negative, thereby confining the purpose of government. This is good. Because God's laws are limited, His law promotes freedom and security in society. Because Congress creates law 24/7 265 days of year, Congress is a Slave Master.

Man's law tends to be positive, thereby giving unrestrained power to government. This is bad. Unlimited government becomes a tyrant over the people.

The legal head of the church is Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18; 2:4-10); the legal head of a federally incorporated church *organization* is the Puerto Rican IRS (Trust #62)!

Has not the church denied the sufficiency of Christ by surrendering its affairs to this foreign agency?

The State can only tax that which it creates. The church is not created by the State and has no duty to the State. Because God creates the church, the State has no power to tax the church.

While individual Christians may have a duty to pay certain taxes, the free church has no duty to pay taxes, to reveal its records, or to cooperate in anyway with a State agency.

Congregations have no authority from Scripture to make their treasurer an uncompensated tax collector for the United States Government. The First Amendment erects a wall of separation between the State and the Church—if the Church claims its freedom in Christ.

A Christian should pay the taxes he legitimately owes, but he has no duty to pay taxes where no law exists . . . or purported taxes based on presumption.

To know what taxes a Citizen must pay, he must consult the Constitution and the laws created by Congress as recorded in the Federal Register. Upon information and belief, the only "persons" required to pay the "income tax" are government workers and employees, and government corporations.

A Christian has no duty to pay taxes not required by written law. While all Christians pay taxes they legitimately owe (indirect taxes), they have no duty to give what the government wants.

The Bible does not promote anarchy. We do not want to get rid of government; we want to get rid of wickedness in government. Christians are not anti-government, but anti-tyranny, anti-paganism, anti-Sodomy, anti-same-sex unions, anti-pornography, anti-lesbianism, anti-abortion, anti-imperialism, anti-globalism, and anti-communism,

We are not against good rulers; we are against ungodly rulers and ungodly statutes.

We are not against the *rule of law*, but we are against the *rule by law*.

A government that demands obedience by the people, but exempts its own officials from obedience to its own statutes is unworthy of respect. The slogan "Clinton for Prison" comes to mind.

We are not against citizens submitting to good law, but we are against citizens that are willing to trade blind obedience and silent submission to bad statutes for the sake of peace.

“Those who would trade in their freedom for their protection deserve neither. Those who give up their liberty for more security neither deserve liberty nor security” (Benjamin Franklin).

While Romans thirteen supplies general instruction on the authority of civil government and the duty of citizens to be generally subject to those powers, ***the whole of Scripture does not support unlimited obedience to any government!***

The Founders of America faced the oppression of King George and knew well the teachings of Romans 13. They understood their duty to surrender to good government. But, they saw King George in violation of Scripture, not themselves. No king had behaved so badly, and they confronted him for it through many formal and godly appeals. When he refused to surrender to the will of the LORD God, they saw no alternative but to resist his despotic rule.

They looked at God's Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11 and found condition precedent for resistance.

As Jonathan Mayhew said in 1750, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." In their minds, they could not obey a wicked law for the "Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13).

*“If we say that we will always obey the State, the State becomes our God”[\(1\)](#) (Pastor Erwin Lutzer, *Hitler's Cross*, p. 134).*

30 A MORNING PRAYER

Thy Kingdom Come, They will be done.

Our precious Lord taught us to pray, “Thy Kingdom Come.” It is part of the Lord’s Prayer a.k.a. the “Disciples’ Prayer.” Positively, it is a plea that all men and all man’s institutions would surrender to be ruled by God’s law; negatively, it is *coup de’etat* against godless authorities and de facto officials.

This is the rebel’s⁵³ prayer—a revolutionary’s cry against the immorality of this age and the promotion of wickedness by men in rebellion against the Creator. This prayer is God’s permission to resist evil, to take the high road, and swim against the stream; it allows men to shout “No King, but King Jesus.” It is permission to adopt the motto “one nation under one God and one absolute law.”

It is a prayer against the belief that man is god; that government is god; that man’s law and their constitutions are absolute.

It is a prayer against the status quo where ambitious men seek to advance the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is a prayer against abortion, oppression, homosexuality, pornography, and greed.

It is a prayer against secularism, atheism, humanism, socialism, Marxism and every other ism wherein secularists seek to build a city where man is the measure of all things.

It is a prayer against rulers in rebellion against “the LORD and His Anointed”—against governments who seek to enslave and control men through coercion, intimidation, and fear.

It is a prayer against governments hostile to the maxim that the Bible is the Source of all Law; and, it is a prayer against governments that break their own laws.

It is a prayer against unjust laws and legislators “who do mischief through law” by creating a system of man-made statutes and codes that enslave their citizenry (Psalm 94:20); who seek to create a new world order through law; who promote alien laws that undermine the Ten Commandments and the virtues they advance: faithfulness, justice, and mercy.

⁵³ A rebel against evil.

It is a prayer against those who defraud others; against rulers that steal from the people through color of law; against unlawful taxation that transfers power from the family to the State.

If you are angry at godless politicians, this prayer is for you: **“Lord, Thy kingdom Come.”**

31 THY KINGDOM COME

It is a rebel's prayer. We know it well. It is in most hymnals. We repeat it weekly in church. It is our prayer as Christians. But, we really don't understand it. Its words blow through our minds like gentle breezes making us feel good but seldom stirring our hearts. Let's take a look at this prayer.

As the disciples watched their Master pray, they noticed something special—something deep and wonderful about the Lord's prayer life—something totally different than the pharisaical rituals of the day. They approached Christ and made a request, "Lord, teach us to pray" And, He did (Luke 11:1). And, his instruction became the most common prayer in Christendom—a prayer that conquered Europe for a thousand years. Let's see what we can glean from just a portion of it as it relates to the Kingdom of God.

31.1 Hallowed be Thy Name

Matthew 6:9 "Hallowed be thy name."

We have all seen children's stories about Aladdin's lamp where the genie pops out and grants three wishes. If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

When I had young children and we were on vacation, I would hand the children ten dollars each and tell them that they could spend the money on anything they wished. Each would buy something different: an ice cream cone, a toy soldier, a rubber ball, jewelry, or some other treasure. Each purchase revealed values.

In this prayer, Jesus introduces us to His priorities. The first priority in prayer is the honor of God's name. A name in the Bible is often more than a title. It reveals the attributes and character of the individual, and this is especially true with the name of God (Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 9:10). God has many titles, such as "Elohim," or "Adonai," or "Jehovah-Shalom," but He only has one name. That Name is YHWH (יהוה, Yahovah) (pronunciation unknown) which means, "I Am Who I Am" (Exodus 3:14). His name conveys the concept of being. "He is" compared to the gods that do not exist. He is Who He is and will be what He needs to be for you and me.

The archaic term, "Hallowed" comes from the Greek word "holy" or "sanctify" (αγιασθητω). It is an aorist imperative instructing us that His honor should be our priority. Too often we are like toddlers demanding immediate gratification of our own lusts. All that is wrong with the world emerges from the neglect of God. When a Christian prays, "Hallowed be thy name," he is praying that all that he thinks and

says and does might stem from a heart organized around an ambition to exalt and glorify God. “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

It goes without saying that curse words and minced words should never be found upon our lips and that tattoos and idolatrous symbols should never be carved into our skin.

Haddon Robinson has an old recipe for Rabbit Stew. On the recipe card the first instruction is, “First, catch the rabbit.” If you want to live accurately, first pray that you might catch an infectious passion to honor the Father in all that you do and say.

31.2 Thy Kingdom Come

Matthew 6:10 “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Tired of man’s will dominating politics? Tired of political saviors promising change in government? For this reason **we pray, “Thy Kingdom come.”** The Kingdom of God is the rule of God. We want men to acknowledge his rule appeared in history through the Son and is operative from heaven today. The work of the Kingdom of God is prayer. Its success is not dependent on the work of man, but on the power of God. We do not pray so we can work, our work is prayer. Like a seed, man can plant it and water it, but only God can make it grow (Mark 4:26). Kingdom truth may be crushed to the earth, but like a seed, it will rise again.

First, we pray, that Christ might be Lord of our lives. We do not pray for the coming of Christ and the end of the world, but that Christ might reign in our hearts now! We believe in auto-basileia—the reign of Christ over the individual man. We find ourselves between history and eschatology; between the transcendent presences of the Kingdom and the immanent presence of the rule of God in history. We do not pray for a realm, but that the will of God might be accomplished in our personal lives now.

The word, “kingdom” (h` basilei,a) has to do with authority and sovereignty. It refers to “the rule of God” in the life of a person. “Let come” is an aorist imperative suggesting that we need to surrender immediately to the reign of the Lord Christ. Kingdom authority is not ethereal. It touches this life. When Peter was commanded to stop preaching, he looked rulers in the eye and said, “We must obey God rather than man.” (Acts 5:29).

The phrase, “Thy will be done on earth” suggest that His will is not being done on earth. Society’s problems are not due to economics and poverty, but to rebellion against God and His law. “It’s not the economy, stupid!” **it’s a lack of theonomy.** Men are in rebellion against God’s law-order. The great need among mankind is for men to confess their rebellion and accept Kingdom rule in their lives. A heart enthroned with Christ does no harm to his fellow man.

The blessings of the Age to Come have entered history in a first fruits way to be enjoyed now in advance of the climatic end of history. By confessing Him as the Lord, salvation is ours to enjoy now (Romans 10:9). But, in confessing Him as Lord, we have a duty to surrender to Kingdom rule now before the dynamic, irresistible presentation of the Kingdom at our Lord's *Parousia*.

God's Kingdom has rules. As Kingdom citizens we have the duty to live under His rules and His laws. While the gospel does not offer salvation by law, it does contain law. Failure to see N.T. commands as law is more than a product of a little evil.

The Shema lays the foundation:

Deuteronomy 6:4ff "And now, 'Christian' (spiritual Israel) what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"

First and foremost, we must accept Biblical authority. Each of us should be able to say, "Jesus is my Lord." "Thy Kingdom come" is a prayer that God's rule will be realized in our life now.

*It's me, it's me, oh Lord
Standing in the need of prayer;
It's me, it's me, oh Lord
Standing in the need of prayer.*

*Not my mother, not my father
But it's me, oh Lord
Standing in the need of prayer.*

Second, we pray that Jesus might be Lord of our families; that each member of our tribe will accept Jesus as Lord and Savior; that each member will surrender to His reign in their lives. May grandpa and grandma and Uncle Charlie surrender to the claims of the gospel! We pray, persuade, convince, challenge, teach, and even command our children in the ways of the Lord. God said of Abraham, "I know he will command his children and his household after him" (Genesis 18:19).

"Thy Kingdom come" means fathers must provide Kingdom education and bring their children up under the law of Christ. How can a father pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and then turn his children over to be educated by Philistines? John Witherspoon, Princeton University, only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence, said: "Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ."

Third, we pray that Jesus might be Lord of our church family; that God's Kingdom will be the passion and purpose of our church. May our church family confess Christ as Lord and surrender to His

will. May each of us act as Kingdom citizens and practice “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Every church should be surrendered to the authority of Christ and be governed by His gospel. Unfortunately, the church is tossed to and fro by many winds of doctrine. Secularists, psychologists, prosperity teachers, and “feel-gooders” are all trying to control the church.

Most churches today have nullified Christ’s authority by contracting with the United States, Inc. to be supervised by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt organization. Is any organization more reprobate the IRS? “Thy Kingdom come” means churches must repent of being governed by the rules of the state, give up their 501 c 3 status, and arrange themselves under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great need of the church is to acknowledge the Word of God, not as the word of men, but for what it truly is, the authoritative Word of God!

Fourth, we pray that Jesus might become the Lord of our nation. We want our neighbors and friends to enter the Kingdom. We want our nation to break free from the rebellion of Psalm 2 and acknowledge the rule of the risen Christ. All that is wrong with the world is wrapped up in man’s rebellion against the “LORD and His anointed (Messiah)” (Psalm 2). Man wants his way instead of God’s way; his statutes instead of God’s law; his happiness instead of His holiness.

In praying this prayer, we are demanding men recognize Kingdom authority and surrender to it now; that men repent and accept His sovereignty; that rulers acknowledge His law and His authority. Not only should Christians surrender to His law, but our prayer is that His law will be accepted by all men and applied to all of business and politics.

The prayer “Thy Kingdom come” is a rebel’s prayer! We do not pray the will Caesar will be done on earth and that all men might submit to it! The government is often the most hostile force opposed to the Kingdom of God. Praying “Thy Kingdom come” is revolt against the status quo; a *coup d’etat* against abortion, Sodomy, adultery, fraud, and corruption in government. “Thy Kingdom come” means rebellion against evil; against tyranny; and against tyrants.

If the Christian will not advance the will of God politically, be assured the bankers and Muslims stand ready to advance their agenda. Obedience to God requires resistance to insurgents against God’s law. It means that we advance His judgments on the moral issues of our time. It translates into a strategy to persuade men to acknowledge the Kingship of Christ over the nations. It translates into an intolerance of the laws of men that promotes evil. It means that Kingdom citizens refuse to surrender their families, churches, and schools to paganism. It means that we enter the political battles of our age and persuade men to yield to God’s law. Government is a divine institution, and it must be run by God’s rules and God’s laws. To surrender man’s institutions to pagans is to proclaim the death of God in politics.

The prayer, “Thy Kingdom come” means submission to God’s law. God’s Law cannot save society. But, it can preserve and protect society — if used correctly in a limited way by civil rulers it can purge evil men from the population.

The prayer, “Thy Kingdom come” means salvation. Kingdom law cannot save society, but Kingdom grace can save men and regenerate society. This is why the gospel is preached among men so that individuals might discover saving grace in Christ. The Kingdom of God is at work through the church. It will not achieve perfection short of the coming Christ, but in some mysterious way its purposes are advanced through prayer and Kingdom proclamation.

31.3 Thy Will be Done

Closely associated with God’s rule is the prayer, “thy will be done.”

The phrase “Thy will be done on earth” implies that God is claiming authority over all men, all families, and all nations: “For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and he is the governor among the nations” (Psalm 22: 28). We know that Christians cannot organize and bring in the kingdom. But, the gospel endows Christians with authority to confront evil in society and articulate Divine demands. He commands “all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

Wycliffe said, “The Bible is government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” The problem is not the economy, but a lack of theonomy—a lack of governance in accord with God’s laws. There is no alternative but theonomy or autonomy (Cornelius Van Til).

This is a rebel’s prayer. Tired of the dominion of man? The petitioner revolts: “Thy will be done!!” This is not a prayer that “my will” be done, but that “His will” be done. This is not a prayer that the will of “We the People” be done in America, but that His will be done in the nation.

The will of the majority is dangerous unless We the People are surrendered to His Law-word. It is not a prayer that the will of Congress be done in America, but that the will of God be done in our nation.

Mark Twain felt like he was repeating himself when he used “Congress” and “Idiots” in the same sentence.

This is not a prayer that the will of the President be done in America, but that the will of God be accomplished in our nation. Bill Clinton was dead-dog wrong when he said, “Character doesn’t matter.” Government works better when its rulers are Christian men who fear God and are surrender to Kingdom law.

When Ivan Denisovich was in a Russian prison camp, a fellow prisoner watched him praying silently. In a critical remark, the prisoner stated, “Prayers won’t help you get out of here any faster.” Ivan responded, “I do not pray to get out of here, but to do the will of God” (Daily Bread, December 29, 1993). Thus, we pray, “Hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

When we pray, “Hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom Come; Thy will be done on Earth” we are praying that Jesus might be Lord of our personal lives, our family, our church, and our nation; and, that His name and His will might be honored among us in a practical, substantial way.

Jesus is now the Lord; He is enthroned at the right hand of God; He is reigning in His kingdom. But this is a Lordship and a kingly reign which is known only to believers. It must be confessed by faith. His Second Coming will mean nothing less than the Lordship which is His now will be visible to all the world. When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," this is what we are praying for: the effectual and universal rule of Christ in all the world, not only over believers (Ladd, Last Things, 1978, p. 48.)

32 WHEN WILL THE KING RETURN?

The Kingdom of God is hidden now and the glory of Christ is veiled. It quietly works among men to produce “sons of the Kingdom.” It will be brought into full view at the second coming of Christ (2 Timothy 4:1-2). But, the manner in which the future Kingdom will be manifest remains a mystery, and Christians are not in agreement on how the end will come. Some see a bronze age and a golden age; others see a bronze, silver, and golden age (1 Corinthians 15:24, 25).

Since we won't have time to get ready when the kingdom appears, we have to get ready now!

When will the King return? We bring to bear the following passages on this question.

32.1 **No Man Knows the Hour**

*Matthew 24:36 But of that day and **hour** knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

*Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what **hour** your Lord doth come.*

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Every generation has the hope of Christ's return. But no man knows the hour of our Lord's coming. Indeed, we have no duty to know the time; i.e., Jesus said it is not our responsibility to know!!

Our duty is to “occupy till” He comes (Luke 19:13). Our interest may be the return of our Lord but our responsibility is to conduct Kingdom business until the end. We are to “watch” and “be alert,” but God has not assigned us the duty of predicting times and dates. While we do not know the hour of his coming, the Holy Spirit was pleased to let us know the character of the age in which He will come again.

32.2 **Increasing troubles?**

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? Deception . . . wars . . . pestilences . . . earthquakes . . . sorrows . . . persecution of Christians . . .

Referencing Matthew 24 or Luke 21 to find “signs” of the *Parousia* has its problems because the passage is clearly predicting the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Bray shows us that Christians throughout the centuries saw the destruction of Jerusalem as proof that Christ’s prophecy on every subject is authentic. The destruction in 70 A.D. is fulfilled prophecy. The disciples connected in their minds the “end of the age” and the “coming of Christ.” They also connected the destruction of the temple with the end of the age, but as the unfolding of history reveals this is not the case. Jerusalem was destroyed without ushering in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 24 must be interpreted as near prophecy that predicts the carnage of 70 AD, not signs of the end time. While all historical judgments reflect a form of the last judgment, one must be cautious about turning a Biblical prediction that has a near fulfillment into double prophecy. This is slippery hermeneutic which is easily distorted.

The catastrophic collapse of every civilization contains within it marks of what the final hours of history may be like.

As the premillennialist knows evil will continue to dominate this age until Christ returns (Galatians 1:4), God has not abandoned this age to evil, and Christians should seek to Christianize the world until the end as the postmillennialist knows.

32.3 Like the Days of Noah

Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

The Lord informs us that the second judgment will be like the first flood judgment. It will be unexpected and the majority will be surprised. Both Paul and Peter declared the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

Three facts about this period are worth noting:

First, the Lord will come on a normal day. On the day the rains came, men went to work in their fields, meals were being prepared for the day, and chores were planned. Men are not going to be thinking, “Today, the Lord might come!” or, “Today might be the judgment of the world.” Customs and traditions will continue until the last hour.

Second, the days of Noah were marked by a rise in violence. Thugs and mafia type figures littered the landscape. Corruption abounded and God repented He made man. We can assume that prior to our Lord’s return constructive fraud will have saturated all of man’s institutions.

Third, in the days of Noah there was a depletion of godly energy. The godly line lost their holiness, their separation, their spiritual perspective. Righteous men married unrighteous women; that is, the godly

started marrying pagans and this compromised faith and morals. Multiculturalism prevailed and the carnal won out over the spiritual.

This passage challenges us. One cannot easily distinguish a Christians by their dress, their words, their professions, or their daily habits. Worldliness has neutralized virtue. Integration is more popular than separation. Christians regularly marry non-Christians. The church mind drifts ecumenical. Being woke trends more important than sanctification. Cotton-polyester Christianity abounds. “Public education” corrupts the best of families causing the baking soda of humanism to neutralize vinegar Christianity.

32.4 Increase of Skeptics

2 Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

Peter reveals to us that mockers or skeptics will arise in the last days. Scoffers are autonomous humanistic men that question catastrophism, men of science that believe in uniformitarianism — that natural forces remain constant throughout time. In arrogance, pseudo-intellectuals arise that question the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus. They mock futuristic, catastrophism of the earth by the fiery judgment of God. These men adopt science as their religion.

When Ben Stein asked Carl Sagan, the intellectual’s intellectual to explain how life came from non-life, Sagan denied the existence of a transcendent creator-God. Sagan speculated that this earth was visited by aliens in UFO’s who seeded this earth with life (Interview in “No Intelligence Allowed”).

32.5 Moral Degeneration

*2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days **perilous** times shall come.*

“Perilous” means “fierce” or “intense.” This is the same word used to describe the violent, demonic forces confronting Jesus in the country of the Gergesenes (Matthew 8:28). Paul saw a powerful law of spiritual entropy at work; that is, the loss of moral conviction through time where relativism replaces absolutes; immorality overtakes morality; man-made statutes replace God’s law; conviction gives way to compromise; theology yields to anthropology. He saw violent social energy containing flawed humanistic interest gaining approval in the last days. Tolerance will be the doctrine preached when the false seeks conquest over truth. Multiculturalism is not a strength but a weakness to overcome. The weight of internationalism will squash the narrow interest of nationalism. Devotion to global citizenship may be more important than allegiance to family and country.

Paul expressions “lovers of pleasures”, “lovers of money,” “lovers of self” replacing a love for God is quite revealing. Paul informs us that a self-centered, man-centered, pleasure-centered disposition will gain

ascendency over a theocentric cosmology. External forms of religion will continue, but the value and power of personal piety will be dismissed as specious and irrelevant. Sexual predators will roam society conquering the weak. Depravity rules: up will be down, down will be up; wrong is right, and right is wrong; good is evil, and evil is good (Isaiah 5:20).

32.6 Wide Spread Apostasy

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

The term “falling away” is the Greek word *apostacia* which means “rebellion” or “the abandonment of orthodoxy.” The term “first” informs us that preceding our Lord’s return there is going to be a critical departure from the faith. The Wellhausen School of Higher Criticism a/k/a liberalism comes to mind.

32.7 Rise of Apostasy in the Church

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart (apostatize) from the faith . . .

2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 . . . and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (utter ruin);

The word “apostasy” refers to a movement where men “turn away” from the faith. The cause of the apostasy is the “man of sin.” The “man of sin” means “lawless man”— the antinomian man — a Bible rejecter in the pulpit. In the author’s view, this is not “the Antichrist” but an antichrist — the lawless man (mankind / including women) rising within church structures to positions of power. The Christian man is the lawful man, the man of sin is the lawless man – the antinomian man. The lawless man (a class of lawless men) wiggle their way into the church to infect and apostatize congregations. The ordination of homosexual bishops in the Episcopal Church or ordination of women pastors among liberals are an example of the lawless man sitting in the temple of God. Acting as a god, they undermine God’s law with their own brand of morality and religion.

Peter’s warning about false teachers (2 Peter 2:1ff) is closely aligned with Paul’s address on the lawless man. Peter mentions the rise of false teachers who have a commercial interest in the church — men / women who know how to turn a church into a for-profit business. From the term “merchandise” we get our word *emporium*. 501 (c) 3 organizations come to mind. Their well-polished tool is “feigned words.” The term plastic comes from this term (*plastois*). It means “made up.” The false teachers use specious terms to deceive the masses. Rather than employing tested principles (conservative), these people are idealists trying to build a perfect society on their own utopian theories. Don’t limit false teachers to

“religion.” False teachers are politicians, media anchors, and college professors. They are masters of the political argument and many of them are sophisticated debaters. Does legalese ring a bell? Lawyers are quite adroit at convincing pastors to turn churches into plastic organizations. Does the term “incorporate” or “corporation” turn your crank? Think of it!! Lawyers have taken the living body (corpus) of Christ and turning communities of faith into dead, artificial, plastic, fictional corporations.

Barnes says about these false teachers:

“They regard all government in the state, the church, and the family, as an evil. Advocates for unbridled freedom of all sorts; declaimers on liberty and on the evils of oppression; defenders of what they regard as the rights of injured man, and yet secretly themselves lusting for the exercise of the very power which they would deny to others - they make no just distinctions about what constitutes true freedom, and in their zeal array themselves against government in all forms” (Barnes, 1975).

The problem with apostasy is who among us is qualified to judge when this period of apostasy has arrived in history? The mystery of lawlessness was at work in the first century and there were periods when great corruption plagued the church during the church age – but, it was not the end. We are keenly aware of corruption in our era, but has apostasy so saturated our age that the Lord’s coming is right around the corner? Maybe! But, who knows? While we witness the ordination of Sodomites to church offices, there are many churches still loyal to the faith. Who is qualified to say this is the age of apostasy predicted in the Word of God?

32.8 Doctrines of Devils

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

The Spirit speaks “expressly” or *specifically* and references the coming apostasy. In the last days, “some” men will depart (apostatize) from the faith (an ablative meaning separation) while giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The term “giving heed” can refer to an addiction like drunkenness (Luke 21:34); that is, some will have an addiction to the fantasy cults. The term “seducing” means “deceitful” or “wandering.” There are unseen, primitive, barbarous spiritual forces that inveigle simple hearts and minds. When a society sees all religions as good and deserving of equal protection, the cults of chaos multiply.

The apostasy includes “seducing spirits,” “doctrines of devils,” and “hypocritical lies” proceeding from men with a seared conscience; that is, a callous, dysfunctional conscience that is undisturbed by lawlessness and radical permissiveness.

Consider the doctrines of devils listed: “forbidding to marry,” and “abstaining from meats.” Both of these are tied to man’s basic appetites: sex and dietary concerns. The term “forbidding” to marry can be translated “hindering” or “preventing” or “withholding” of marriage. Paul could have in mind the apotheosis of celibacy over marriage, or concubinage that replaces marriage, or general fornication that supplants marriage.

The extreme celibate demands made on Catholic bishops that turns ecclesiastics into Sodomites, and modern day sexual arrangements known as Lesbian and Gay “partnerships” fit this description. Both are an attack on God’s plan for marriage.

Paul’s reference to “abstaining from foods” (meats) relate directly to the dietary dogma of Jews and some of the Greek Platonic cults that practiced fasting as a means of experiencing God. Forbidding the eating of meats refers to all kinds of radical, religious vegetarianism that erupts during the course of history demanding everyone adopt a lacto-vegan diet for the economic, holistic “good” of society.

Food and sex are ultimate values, and all religions address these fundamental concerns. Both diet and sex are very religious. True Christianity gives liberal expression of sexuality in marriage, but discourages sexual promiscuity before marriage. Paul’s reference to the fact that God created foods to be received with “thanksgiving” provides evidence of broad dietary practices among Christians — something the cults of chaos are eager to restrict and cannot tolerate.

In examining “doctrines of demons” one should consider the devilish trends of our times: Sodomy, “living together,” “consensual sex,” no-fault divorce, women’s right to choose, therapeutic abortion, gender choice, transvestism, femboys, lesbianism, feminism that promotes female leadership in the home and nations with women as King and the men as pawns.

The doctrines of demons include evolution, gay rights, lesbianism, Judaism, promotion of drugs, pornography, pop-culture psychology, self-esteem movement, “black lives matter,” “blue lives matter,” facets of humanism, coming-out movement, Islam, ecumenism, multiculturalism, Arian superiority, alien invasions, Sunset Strip vegetarianism, and Planet X / Nibiru.

The doctrines of demons include democracy, socialism, communism, secularism, progressive income tax, taxing the rich and “paying your fair share,” globalism, global warming, progressivism, cannabis politics, gun confiscation, world citizenship, economic equality, guaranteed wages, Medicare for all, Keynesian economics, Zionism, totalitarianism, racial superiority, racial equality, Fascism, statism, Marxism, and the root of all evil in our time, the women’s suffrage movement a.k.a women’s liberation movement (WLM).

All of these devilish theories diminish the man, destroy the family unit, and interfere with God’s plan for the family and the nation.

32.9 The Gospel will be Preached to all the World

*Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*⁵⁴.

Luke 11:2 Thy Kingdom come . . .

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations . . .

2 Peter 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;

*1 Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the **end**, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*

This Kingdom gospel is the same as the gospel of Christ, and Christians would do well to connect the gospel with Kingdom theology (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:12; Matthew 24:14; Acts 28:23, 28). While Matthew 24:14 is clearly connected with gospel proclamation in the Roman Empire, it radiates a general truth that God loves sinners and “is not willing that any should perish.” That is, judgment delayed is salvation offered.

The Kingdom of God is the entrance of the rule of God in history to defeat God’s enemies: Satan, sin, and death. The gospel of the Kingdom is the announcement of Christ’s conquest over death (Revelation 20:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:26). The gospel will not be defeated by the degenerate society in which it is proclaimed. Christ rules now! The end comes when He has destroyed every authority and power. The gospel message is that Christ has dealt a death blow to all of man’s enemies in and through His death, burial, and resurrection. History is not circular, but linear. Christ is delivering men from the powers of this evil age and will consummate His victory at his *Parousia*.

Christ is creating “sons of the Kingdom” through gospel proclamation. Our Lord’s “patience” is an offer of salvation. The door into the Kingdom is still open . . . but, like the Ark when the door is shut, the rains will come. When the church accomplishes its mission, then He will return. What a responsibility! What a positive view of the church! It will succeed! Puritan Christianity will thrive. Though corruption abounds and apostate teachers rise to influence, the true church will not be leavened or compromised. She will remain victorious: “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,” (Revelation 14:4).

⁵⁴ “The end” is either the end of the Jewish age and the destruction of the temple that took place in 70 A.D., or the “the end” is the end of this present evil age.

33 THE PAROUSIA OF OUR LORD

33.1 Salvation for the Righteous

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

While many of the OT passages that address the coming of Christ are mysteriously preserved in apocalyptic stories and symbolic literature like Ezekiel and Daniel and Zechariah, Paul's teaching on the second coming of Christ is written in a clear epistolary style. While apocalyptic portions of the Bible expand our imagination, they leave us somewhat puzzled about the climax of history. Not so with this passage! Paul's description of the *Parousia* is simple, clear, and unambiguous. I Thessalonians four is perhaps the most important passage on the second coming of Christ.

The framework of Paul's eschatological theology is the dualism between "this age" and "the Age to Come." The Age to Come has entered history in the person and work of Christ to deliver men from this present evil age. The Age of the Eschaton will be consummated at the *Parousia* (coming) of our Lord. The fundamental meaning of the second coming of Christ is CONSUMMATION.

Therefore, we will take a look at the Parousia of our Lord in Thessalonians and we will observe the two phenomenon connected with the dynamic, irresistible, cataclysmic entrance of the Kingdom at the end of the age—the resurrection of the righteous at the Parousia and the judgment of the wicked.

33.1.1 Purpose for writing

15 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

The pagan world of Rome possessed little hope concerning an afterlife. Greek Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle speculated about celestial existence after death, but they had no assurance that their speculations coincided with reality. A pagan inscription on a Roman grave expressed this hopeless thought:

I was. I became. I am not. I care not.

A man can have no rest until it knows how God will dispose of him. Consequently, every society has its philosophers and theories about the end of man. Atheists believe there is no personal consciousness after

death. Plato speculated that there was a perfect spirit world after this imperfect carnal existence. New Agers and Hindus assert life and death are part of the cycles of life in a series of reincarnation experiences. Buddhists have no concept of life after death, only a philosophy of how to manage pain in this present life. Muslims have pictured a heaven where men will enjoy perpetual orgasmic experiences with a harem of wives, and they believe in a hell for the infidels with varying degrees of punishment. Mormons believe each man will be a god with his goddess wife (or wives) on some celestial planet. Catholics believe in a purgatory that purges good sinners of their bad sins before they step into heaven. Puritans believed that death is the blessed release from the trials of this world and an entrance into the joys of everlasting life.

The trouble with all the above views supra, but Puritanism, is that they are simply suppositions; i.e. unsubstantiated speculations germane to the human mind with no forensic evidence to substantiate faith claims. Despite these philosophies, the average person facing death is filled with fear and sorrow. But, the apostle Paul offered the Thessalonian believers **hope based on knowledge of the gospel.**

An eyewitness of the resurrection of Christ, the apostle injected Christian hope into the blinding darkness of the Greek world.

For Christians, death is an enemy of man, a robber of joy, but it is **not** Lord of the grave. Sleep (koimwme, nwn⁵⁵) is a Christian metonym for death. By sleep, Paul refers to the body-- **not** "soul sleep," the assertion that the soul is unconscious until Christ returns. In Pauline thought, the body sleeps in the grave, but the regenerated spirit goes to be with the Savior to enjoy his presence: "To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:8)⁵⁶. But, even here, there is no such thing as spirit without a body. A resurrected body is closely associated with a transition from earth into the eternal heavens. If our earthly tent is destroyed, "we **have** (present tense) a building from God . . ."

33.1.2 The Reality of a Resurrected Christ

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

⁵⁵ A present, passive participle translated "are sleeping."

⁵⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:8 "We are confident (present indicative), I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (The infinities are aorists indicating punctiliar action.) The indicative is the mood of reality, not speculation.

Since some Thessalonian believers died after Paul's first visit to the city, many in the church were distressed over the death of family members. Into this tomb of despair, Paul lit a candle of hope. This hope was not based on human philosophy, human propositions, or collective positivism. This hope was based on an essential fact — THE HISTORICAL RESURRECTION OF CHRIST!

Since Christ defeated death by virtue of his resurrection, He is Lord! If Christ defeated death, then **He solved man's fundamental problem**. If He solved man's fundamental problem, then there is forensic proof He can solve "our" fundamental problem — death of the body, the destruction of our earthly home, the dismantling of our earthly tent.

The Christ who died and rose again will come again, and when He comes again, He will come with all those that died in the faith. In other words, the "saints triumphant" are safe and secure in the arms of Jesus (Revelation 7:13ff).

33.1.3 The Revelation of Truth

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

The Greeks hypothesized about life after death. Philosophers speculate about the inexplicable mystery of death. But, Paul does not contemplate or speculate. He does not try to comfort these bereaving saints with risky, imaginative, hypothetical theories. His belief system is based on revelation. He grounds hope on the sure Word of God!

The word "coming" is the Greek word *parousia*. For this reason, scholars refer to the second coming as the "*Parousia* of Christ." The word means "coming" or "arrival" or "presence." It is used in 2:19 and 3:19. The word *parousia* is used in many ways in the NT and does not always refer to the 2nd Advent of our Lord. Here it does! Christ is coming again in history for the church militant.⁵⁷

When he comes, there will be Christians on the earth, "we which are alive." The use of the pronoun "we" indicates that Paul had this hope burning in his own heart at the time of writing this epistle. The phrase "shall not prevent" means "to precede." In the Greek, the word "prevent" is announced with a double negative (no, not⁵⁸). Paul assures us the living saint shall not rise until the Christian dead rise from the grave.

⁵⁷ See John's painting of the church militant and the church triumphant in Revelation 7.

⁵⁸ ouv mh. fqa,swmen tou.j koimhqe,ntaj\

33.1.4 The Return of Christ

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God . . .

33.1.5 What will we see?

We will not see an angel. The Lord will not send a messenger or emissary or special agents to do his bidding. This event is so important in the heart of Christ, that the great Administrator of the Universe will step out of His palace of praise to meet His bride personally. He will be arrayed in all his glory and majesty to welcome his people into their eternal destiny which was purchased with his blood.

33.1.6 What will we hear?

We will hear three distinct sounds. **First**, we will hear a thundering shout. So piercing will be his voice, it will awake the dead. Every grave in the earth and sea will hear the victor's shout, "**COME!!!**" Whether they are buried in shallow graves or under tons of geologic rock, the dead will rise and come forth leaping like calves released from the stall to meet the Savior (Malachi 4:1ff). **Second**, there will be the beautiful voice of the archangel. So glorious is this event, the conductor of the heavenly choir will take leave of his duties to lead this procession with a song of triumphant praise. **Third**, we will hear the distinct, clear blast of heaven's trumpet. It will announce the command to assemble. From above the earth and from below the earth, the saints will fall in rank to welcome Him as Savior, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

33.1.7 What will we feel?

I am not sure what we will feel. Perhaps, we will feel the sensation and thrill of a space shuttle lift off as we are released from gravitational forces of earth. Paul refers to "a moment of the twinkling of an eye," where we will feel a mighty surge of power transforming our mortal bodies into immortality (1 Corinthians 15:52). The word "moment" is the Greek word, *atomos* (εὐν αὐτο,μω|), the smallest particle in matter. We get the English Word "atom." In an atom of time, the church militant will join the church triumphant in the blessed parade to the Pearly Gates.

33.1.8 What will we say?

I am not sure, but the first words in Revelation five are "Worthy is the Lamb" (5:12). Or, maybe we will be like Zechariah who was so overwhelmed with the presence of God in the temple, he was not able to speak a word. I know this, that when the wonderment of our eternal state settles in, we will be in awe of the glory, beauty, and splendor of the Lamb.

33.1.9 The Resurrection of the Christian Dead

16 . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

We have the resurrection of the dead. The word “rise” is a term of resurrection. This is not resuscitation, nor reconstruction, nor a concoction from a lively imagination, nor spiritualization of a faith statement. It is an indisputable statement of fact! The dead will rise first and will receive **a resurrected body** — a real, physical, resurrected body like the Lord had after he left the tomb. It will be **a glorified body** — an object of beauty and health and strength. It will be **a spiritual body**—that is, it will be adapted through God’s metamorphic power to serve and submit to the regenerated, human spirit. It will be **an incorruptible body**; i.e., it will no longer be mortal-- subject to humiliation, disease, decay, and death. The sag, droop, and wrinkle will no longer plague this new creation.

Throughout the ages believers have suffered terribly from death, disease, and destruction. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the battlefield graves will yield their prisoners. The deserts that have bleached the sun-baked bones of martyrs will release their grip, and they will come to life. In Scripture, this is called the first resurrection and if any want to be a part of it, they must trust Christ now (John 5:24ff).

33.1.10 The Resurrection / Rapture of the Living Saints

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds . . .

Having announced the glorious destiny of the Christian dead, the apostle addresses the glorious destiny of living saints on earth when Christ returns.

The phrase “alive and remain” anticipates some part of the Church being alive on earth when Christ returns. Again, the plural pronoun is fused with hope as Paul himself anticipated being a part of that privileged company. Every generation of saints has this hope!!

The word “caught up” is the Greek word *harpzo* (ἀρπάγῃσιν, μετὰ), a future indicative, which means “to snatch away.” It is translated “to catch away” (Acts 8:39), “to seize by force” (John 6:15), “to claim for one’s self” (Matthew 25:6), “to move to a new place” (John 14:1-6; Philippians 3:20-21) and “to rescue from danger” (Acts 23:10).

The Latin word “*rapto*” is a translation of the Greek word *harpzo*. Hence, we get the word “rapture” from this word. The terms “rise,” “caught up,” “rapto,” and “rapture” are terms of resurrection. When Christ returns, the Christian dead will rise first, and those believers who are alive on earth at the *Parousia* will be suddenly snatched from the earth to meet the Lord in the clouds.

33.1.11 The Reunion with Love Ones

... shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The phrase “caught up together with them” implies the living will be joyously reunited with their loved ones. This will be a glorious reunion because all will have glorified bodies. It will be an **everlasting reunion** because we shall “ever be with the Lord.” It will be a **triumphant reunion** because we will be gathered around our victorious Savior. It will be a **happy reunion** because we will be with our Christian family in Christ.

33.1.12 The Reassurance of Triumph

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Death separates loved ones and grief rushes in to fill the vacuum. Death seems so final, so absolute, so commanding. What can possibly comfort broken hearts staring over a casket? Only the sure Word of Christ! Paul exhorts the believers to take his revelation about the *Parousia* of Christ and to find in them comfort for the heart. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ is not a fantasy, or myth, or speculation. It is a pure, sure hope based on the fact of Christ rising from the dead. Death is not the end! Death is not lord! Death is not the victor! Christ is Lord and He has defeated death by virtue of his death, burial, and resurrection in history. One day he will return and consummate that defeat with his glorious presence. This is our hope. This is our comfort. Comfort one another with these words!

Unfortunately, instead of comforting one another with these words, these words have been used to divide and multiply pain and anguish in the Christian community. The source of grief is over the timing of the rapture. In the past few decades, “rapture theology” has grown in popularity to include pretribulation views, mid tribulation views, pre-wrath raptures views, and post-tribulation views. There are even polls on the internet where a person can register their opinion about when Christ will return. Will majority vote determine truth? Will man’s wishful thinking make Him come sooner?

Several facts need to be pointed out. **First**, this passage does not tell us when Christ will return. **Secondly**, one cannot exegetically separate the rapture from the second coming. They are one in the same event in this text. **Third**, since 1 Thessalonians four and Christ’s comings precedes 1 Thessalonians five and Paul’s description of the day of the Lord and the sudden destruction that will come upon “them” (sons of darkness), it would be exegetically sound to say that believers will be raptured before this destruction engulfs the unbelieving world.

Furthermore, Paul assures the believers that they are not “appointed to wrath” in 5:9. This statement gives assurance that when God judges the world, not one drop of wrath will fall on his redeemed people. It

appears from this context that whatever wrath and destruction God has for the future, believers will not experience any of it.

When will the rapture occur? I am not sure, but I believe that God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth and “the dead will be raised . . .” We don’t need to know the future. We need to believe and take comfort in this promise.

Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

When Christ returns, will you be ready? You can be ready by coming to Christ now and receiving Him as your Lord and Savior (John 1:10-12) (Summers, 1951)). Since we won’t have time to get ready when the kingdom appears, we have to get ready now! Leave each day as if you will suddenly hear the trumpet blast.

33.1.13 Interpretive Issues:

The Scofield Bible created the position that 1 Thessalonians teaches a secret rapture, followed by a seven year tribulation, and a second coming of Christ without a rapture, and a 1000 year reign of Christ on earth. This view is not supported in this passage. There is no such thing as a secret rapture. There is nothing secret about millions of believers rising from the earth to meet the Lord in the air.

Further, there is no "seven year tribulation period" following the rapture in this section of Scripture. Nor is there a "seven year period separating the rapture from the Second Coming" supported in any passage in the NT. “The Great Tribulation” in Revelation 7 is the death that every Christian man faces at the end of his life; that is, the transition of earth to heaven.

The term “rapture” is not in the text. But, the term “rapture” (rapiemur) is used to translate the English phrase, “shall be caught up” in the Latin Vulgate; that is, there will be a rapture of the saints!

However, there is no distinction between the rapture and the Second Coming in this passage. They are one and the same event (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 and notice their grammatical linkage). These are terms of resurrection which refer to the same phenomenon.

The details regarding the final act of history is surrounded with mystery.

While 1 Thessalonians addresses the resurrection of the saints first (chapter four) and the destruction of the wicked second (chapter five), other texts indicate the tares will be gathered out of the kingdom and destroyed before the saints are gathered together to enter their eternal state (Matthew 13:26-30).

In the Parable of the Virgins (Matthew 25), the bridesmaids with oil entered the feast first, and then the bridesmaids without oil, found themselves outside the chambers.

In the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25), we see a scene where the nations stand before the Lord and He separates the sheep from the goats.

2 Peter 3 presents believers anticipating a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness along with an apocalyptic, cataclysmic announcement of the heavens and earth burning up with fire.

Revelation 20 presents a scene where Satan is loosed from his chains to deceive the nations just before the climax of history.

In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul wants the hope of Christ's return and the certainty of the resurrection to be a present hope to believers. We are not required to know the details. The fire that burns in the hearth of every Christian heart is that the Lord is coming!

Finally, we must remember there are no chapter divisions in the original Greek; that is, chapter five naturally follows chapter four in Paul's brief on the Christian hope.

Maranatha!

34 JUDGMENT FOR THE WICKED

Several passages address the fate of the wicked and what will happen to them at the *Parousia*.

34.1.1 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

This passage is so closely connected to the previous chapter that it is impossible to separate the two passages. To insert a seven year period between the rapture and the *Parousia* is not supported by the context; that is, both chapter four and chapter five are one and the same event. Chapter divisions are man-made. Both chapters refer to the “Lord” (4:15; 5:2); Both refer to the dead (asleep: 4:15; 5:10); Both end in a similar exhortation (4:18; 5:11). Both use the same word in the exhortation, the word “comfort” (*parakaleo*).

The difference between the two passages is that chapter four reveals details about the fate of the righteous and chapter five reveals the fate of the unrighteous—salvation for the righteous and judgment for the unrighteous (The two events of the Kingdom of God. John referred to it as the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* and *the baptism of fire*).

The phrase “coming of the Lord” (4:15) and “day of the Lord” are the same event.

The day of the Lord is characterized by unexpectedness: “like a thief in the night.”

The day of the Lord will be a day of final, irreversible, absolute destruction upon Christ-rejecters: “then destruction like labor pains . . . they will not escape.” (5:3). It is a day of darkness (5:4)—“darkness” and “night” are metaphors for evil, devastation, and hopelessness.

Believers are called “sons of light” and “sons of the day” (5:5) which are implicitly contrasted with sons of darkness (unbelievers).

Paul gives assurances to the believer. Notice three negations in this passage. The brethren are not in darkness (5:4); they are not of the night (5:5: they are not destined (appointed) to wrath (5:9). The day of wrath is for the people of the night (unbelievers). The day of the Lord is a day of salvation for the righteous and a day of darkness and destruction for the unrighteous. Believers will not participate in this judgment. They are raptured from the earth before this scene. The *Day of the Lord* means salvation for God’s people (chapter 4) and judgment for the unbeliever (chapter 5).

Paul's reflection on the resurrection at the Parousia (chapter 4) is designed to "comfort" believers who have had loved ones die before Christ's return, but his reflection on the judgment at his Parousia (chapter 5) is designed to stimulate living saints to moral excellence.

Note the hortatory subjunctives in this passage encouraging others to join him in a course of action: "Let us not sleep," "Let us be alert and sober" "Let us be sober having put on the breastplate of righteousness."

In light of the day of wrath, Paul wants faith, love, and hope stimulated among Christians (5:8) because the Lord's delay is an opportunity for the unsaved to hear the gospel and be saved from the Day of Wrath that is coming on all the earth.

Paul issues two commands: "Encourage one another and build up one another;" that is, come along side the distressed to strengthen them in their trials and restore them to spiritual health.

34.1.2 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

This passage references the trials which the Thessalonians endured as "persecutions" (political attacks) and "tribulations" (pressures due to the political attacks) (1:4).

Luke tells us that Kingdom proclamation to the Thessalonians not only produced conversions to the faith but indignations among Christ rejecters. A mob was formed. They attacked Jason's house, arrested him, and charged him with treasonous acts against Caesar to the city judges. Jason only escaped by providing a bond for his release (Acts 17:1-9). Paul was pleased with the Thessalonian response and applauded the Thessalonians for their faith and patience during these trials. He informs the Thessalonians that God knows their difficulties and will bring their adversaries to justice (1:4-6).

Paul states some indisputable facts about what will happen at the *apokalupsis* (revelation) of the Lord—another term for the *Parousia*.

The purpose of the Lord's appearance is twofold: (a) to penalize and punish the evil doers (1:6), and (b) to provide relief or remedy to the afflicted believers—those falsely charged with crimes against the state because they exercised their First Amendment rights.

This day of vengeance (1:6) will be characterized by the appearance of Christ from heaven (1:7), the accompaniment of mighty angels in flaming fire who will administer God's judgment on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus (1:7). The judgment involves "eternal destruction" -- absolute, final, terrifying, permanent banishment from the presence of the Lord (1:9).

The "when" of this judgment is "the Day of the Lord" a/k/a the "Parousia" or "coming of the Lord," or "that day" in 1:10.

The purpose of Paul's instruction is edification of the church. He encourages the Thessalonians to walk worthy of their high calling so that Christ will be glorified among them—even during their intense trials.

34.1.3 2 Thessalonians 2:1-16

This passage is laden with interpretive challenges and has at least a dozen different interpretations. One's theological presuppositions guide the outcome of an interpretation. Futurists see in this passage a singular Antichrist leading a rebellion against the gospel prior to the coming of the Lord. Many perceive a usurpation in an alleged rebuilt temple during the alleged tribulation period. Preterists see the apostasy of Israel and the rebels that took control of the temple prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Historists may see the weakening of the church in and through the apostate Roman Catholic popes.

Since this passage refers to the *Parousia* of our Lord and of our gathering unto him, this author leans toward a futuristic view minus the dispensational appendages.

This passage is rather lengthy and deserves a careful exegesis, of which, is beyond the purpose of this section. However, several facts should be observed with the judgment of God upon unbelievers.

What could possibly justify God's judgment upon humanity?

Before us is a contrast between the Thessalonians who received the love of the truth and their opponents who did not receive the love of the truth; between the lawful man (the Thessalonians) and the lawless man (those who opposed the faith of the Thessalonians in Acts 17 and as also referenced in 2 Thessalonians 1:4-6).

1. The "Day of the Lord" (2:2), "Coming of our Lord" (2:1), the "Day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6), "God's righteous judgment" (1:5), and the metaphorical use of a "fire came down from God out of heaven" (Revelation 20:9) are the same event. Multiplying distinctions through narrow definitions is a product of dispensationalism that confuses rather than clarifies.
2. The context of this chapter should be linked to Revelation 20:8-9 and the end of the Christian age wherein Satan is loosed from his chains to deceive the nations. At this time, Satan will cause civil rulers to strangle the gospel witness coming from the "camp of the saints" (the church); that is, governments will see the gospel as a hindrance to their political agenda. World rulers will view Christians as enemies of the state because "these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:6).
3. Consider the 2009 MIAC Report:

*The Miac report is very important in that it singles out an extremely wide spectrum of citizens as **potential terrorist**. Groups that are targeted include, but are not limited to: Supporters of state rights, people who believe in defending the constitution, Iraq*

veterans, Christians, people who voted for a third party candidate, gun owners, people against the North American Union, Nafta and the creation of a one world government... Basically any one with the guts to speak out against the totalitarian government that is being established right now. (Utube, 2009).

4. The *Grandville Sharp Rule* in Greek syntax observes that *the connection of two nouns by a single conjunctive with a singular definite article* requires the rapture (our gathering together unto Him”) and the second coming (Parousia) to be one in the same event (2:1).
5. Examples of apostasy would be champions of Higher Criticism, social engineers that change the Bible to suit gender-neutral wording, approval of Sodomite marriages, toleration of lesbianism, failure to identify abortion as an act of murder, promotion of evolution, syncretism of eastern mysticism into the church (psychology), acceptance of women bishops, promotion of extreme feminism, and the denial the Ten Commandments should be the rule for all men.
6. The use of the direct article before (the) “apostasy” points to a particular apostasy—the final apostasy at the end of Christian era.
7. The Day of the Lord (2:2) will be preceded by a period of apostasy in the end times; that is, before Christ returns, Christianity will witness a departure from the faith on a massive scale. The cults of chaos will capture the minds and hearts of many. The “falling away” must come first (proton). An apostasy is a serious departure from the fundamentals of the Christian faith so serious that it deserves a curse—the *anathema* of Galatians 1:8.
8. The “man of sin” (singular) has been identified as the proposed “Antichrist” or single charismatic world leader who appears during the alleged tribulation period to lead the world astray. By grabbing a “little horn” from Daniel, an “antichrist” from John, and a “beast” from Revelation, many presume the “man of sin” is a solitary, Satan-inspired political leader surfacing during the final conflicts of history. This view is compelling, but it is not the view of this author.
9. The “man of sin” is probably not “the antichrist.” The term “antichrist” is always in the plural and never used in the singular referencing a single figure. There are many antichrists in history.
10. The term “lawlessness” is the word *anomia* which means “without God’s law.” The gospel authenticates God’s law in and through Christ. The gospel does not contain salvation by law, but it does contain law. Love is a fulfillment of OT law (Romans 13:8). The Christian man is the *lawful man*, but he who forsakes God's laws is the *lawless man* or the *man of lawlessness* (sinful man). The *anomia* man is simply one who transgresses the laws of God. The man of lawlessness is any person in league with Satan, denies God's laws, and seeks to rule the church as if he himself were sovereign. He is an antichrist who rejects the authority of God’s Word, who practices personal autonomy, and whose megalomania causes him to promote the doctrines of men for narcissistic, commercial

purposes. Apostasy is brought about by the rise of lawless men and women (anthropos) in the structures of the church.

11. The “temple of God” (2:4) is the church. It is inconceivable to think that Paul, the revelator, who revealed that the church is the temple of God, would have anything else in mind other than the church as God’s temple. The whole idea that the use of the word “temple” refers to a temple in Jerusalem in the last days seems very presumptive and speculative.
12. Lawless man will rise within the church in positions of authority to deceive “those who perish” (2:10). The lawless man employs sophisticated, specious arguments to deceive its members. Such deceptions as we see in the doctrines of evolution or higher criticism or psychology or humanistic secularism or acceptance of homosexuality that find expression in the Unitarian Church conform to anomian agendas.
13. The mystery of lawless is already at work says Paul, but is being suppressed. Christ defeated Satan at the cross and restrains him for the purpose of gospel proclamation . . . but at the end of the Christian era, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations. What restrains Satan and his lawless man is Christ. But, someday that confinement will be removed or taken “out of the way.”
14. Evil is present. Lawlessness spreads. The mystery of antinomianism will multiply until it reaches a crisis point in the church. At the end of history prior to the coming of the Lord, an angel will set Satan free to poison the pot with *anomia* — some “ism” that empowers autonomous man to choose his own religion.
15. Mankind will be infected by the great apostasy. Those who perish will follow the delusion of the provocateurs (Satan’s man). The visible church will be ruled by the lawless man or woman. The contrast between the lawless man and the lawful man (the Thessalonians) will justify the mighty judgment of God upon Thessalonian agitators who “do not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2:10).
16. Paul thanks God the Thessalonians are not part of the deception, are not in league with Satan, and are not lawless men or ones who take “pleasure in wickedness” (*adikia*) (2:12). He is thankful the Thessalonians are chosen of God, sanctified, and have faith in the truth (the gospel of Christ). Therefore, Paul exhorts the believers to stand firm and not be swayed by the mystery of lawlessness already at work in that city (2:15).

34.1.4 2 Peter 3:3-18

1. Peter also discusses the eschatological “Day of Judgment” which is also called “the Day of the Lord,” (3:10) and “the Day of the God” (3:12). This passage should be linked with Paul’s teaching

about the Day of the Lord and John's revelation of "the fire coming from heaven" in Revelation 20. The context is the climax of history.

2. Like John and Paul, two themes are present: salvation (3:15) and wrath (3:7). Peter announces not only the destruction of the wicked, but the destruction of the heavens and earth. This present solar system will disappear with a howling roar (3:10), be destroyed by intense heat (3:10), and all of man's works (cities) "burned up" (3:10). It will melt under the blasting heat much like an atomic explosion (3:12). And, this is consistent with what Paul taught in other passages (Hebrews 12:25-29).
3. The Day of the Lord will come like "a thief in the night" (3:10); i.e., suddenly, unexpectedly, at a time when men are deaf to gospel proclamation.

2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

4. Peter says the Christian hope is not in an alleged millennium or a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, but in a "New Heavens and New Earth" which would be consistent with John's presentation in Revelation 21. If there is a passage that supports the amillennial or promillennial position, it is this one.
5. Two world judgments are mentioned by Peter, one historical and the other prospective: Noah's flood (3:3-6) and the Final Judgment of this earth by fire.
6. The apparent delay of judgment was of concern to Peter's readers. God's delay of judgment should be regarded as an opportunity for salvation; i.e., for ungodly men to repent and come to repentance (3:9, 15).
7. Peter's exhortation: In light of the coming judgment, Peter admonishes the Christians to be in "peace," to be "spotless," to be "blameless" (3:15) . . . and to maintain a perspective that God's delay of judgment is for the purpose of salvation (3:15). Like Paul, Peter addresses the mystery of lawlessness at work among men and exhorts the Christians to not be carried away "by the error of unprincipled men" (3:17), but to grow in "the grace and knowledge of our Lord" (3:18).
8. The word for "error" is not *anomia*, but *plānē* (*plane*) which refers to *wandering or roaming*; i.e., to the unwillingness of the worldly man to walk on the narrow path of truth. The wicked are always searching, seeking, hunting, exploring, probing, pursuing, and inquiring but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. To the world man, the truth is out there somewhere, but not in Christ. Thus, we see the need for Christian education. The world perpetuates error (evolution, humanism, antinomianism), and Christianity promotes truth (1 Peter 1:22; 2 Peter 1:12).

34.1.5 Jude 4-19

1. Jude references a quote from Enoch located in the Book of Enoch⁵⁹ (pseudepigraphical works) about the coming judgment. Like John the Baptist, Jude sees two dynamics connected with the consummation of history: Salvation for the righteous, which is identified as eternal life (1:21), and judgment, which is identified as “dark blackness forever” (1:13).
2. He comes with His saints to execute judgment upon the ungodly for their ungodly deeds (1:15). That God is going to judge sinners when he comes is not new. What is new in Jude is the colorful description of the apostate teachers who are “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:4). The purpose of Jude’s writing is to alert the believers and call them to preserve orthodoxy⁶⁰ (1:21). This is Jude’s way of identifying the positive, permissive, indulgent, anti-Christian, antinomian hustling liberals of his time.

34.1.6 Matthew 3:1-12

1. John preached the “Kingdom of Heaven” is at hand. Without a doubt, John saw himself near the end of history. He was expecting the dynamic, irresistible, cataclysmic entrance of the Kingdom of God in his day in a way that would disrupt society. He was correct on the nature of God’s Kingdom, but mistaken as to the time in which he lived.
2. Two themes are found in John’s proclamation of the Kingdom: wrath (3:7) for the unrighteous and salvation for the repentant. The righteous are compared to wheat and to good trees that bear fruit; and, the unrighteous are compared to chaff and fruitless trees (3:10-12). The “barn” is the Kingdom of God and “fire” is God’s judgment (3:12). “Gathering” is a term which includes men embracing gospel proclamation.
3. The eschatological judgment would be like an ax laid at the foot of a tree bringing down all of man’s hopes and dreams (3:10). Bad trees (the unrighteous) would be cut down and thrown into the fire. Good fruit (of repentance) comes from good trees, and the good trees would survive the fire.
4. John summarizes these two eschatological phenomenon as the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” (salvation) and a “baptism of fire” (judgment).

⁵⁹ This is a quote from the Book of Enoch. There is no doubt Enoch said it, but there is doubt about the Book of Enoch—who wrote and when. A quote from this book does not place it on the level of inspired text nor should this quote be used to legitimize the entire Book of Enoch.

⁶⁰ In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the church established “dogmatic” feasts (yearly church services) to preserve orthodoxy and to prevent apostasy from the faith.

5. The term “baptism” does not reference some kind of sacerdotal religious water ritual, but the experience of salvation; and, or the terrors judgment.
6. **The baptism of the Spirit** is the age of regeneration, the age of resurrection, the Messianic era we know later as “the new heavens and new earth.”
7. **The baptism of fire** is not charismatic zeal but the terrible judgment of Almighty God—the wrath of God. One’s destiny is determined by the character of the man, whether he is wheat or chaff, whether he is in relationship to the Son or without relationship to Christ.
8. Salvation is not a matter of genetics or ancestry. This is John’s way of saying “do not lay hold of Jewish myths” (Titus 1:14). A blood line connecting a man with Abraham has no weight in judgment (3:8-9). What matters is a repentance that attains salvation (3:8).
9. John does not preach “Invite Jesus into your heart!” Easy believism is not part of John’s *evangelium*. He demands a break with sin, a break with habit, and fruit in keeping with repentance. The fortunate must share with the unfortunate (Luke 3:11); the thief (tax collectors) must cease constructive fraud and embezzlement (Luke 3:13); abusive Roman cops must stop their abuse, coercion, professional accusations for commercial gain (Luke 3:14).
10. But, this kind of preaching landed John in jail (Luke 3:20), and it will bring every preacher of repentance into conflict with civil rulers.
11. The two events of the Kingdom, salvation and judgment, would happen through “Him”—the Messiah, the “beloved Son” (Matthew 13:17).

34.1.7 Matthew 13:24-30; 36-41

1. This passage addresses the final judgment. The seed are “sons of the Kingdom” (13:38). The Sower is the Son of Man. The wheat are people of faith, the righteous are those who respond to Kingdom proclamation. The tares are the “sons of the evil one” — the false and faithless.
2. The harvest contains a separation of the wicked that takes place “at the end of the age” (13:39). Both wheat and tares will be harvested in the resurrection by the angels who are called “reapers” (13:39). The destiny of the tares is certain, emphatic, and absolute: They are thrown into the “furnace of fire” where there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (13:42).
3. What characterizes the tares? They are called “stumbling blocks” and ones who commit “lawlessness;” That is, the tares are antinomian (anomia) Bible rejecters hostile to the rule of God. They reject God’s true laws (Nehemiah 9:13) and replace them with the statutes of men . This causes men to stumble. As to “stumbling blocks,” Hollywood, humanistic educators, liberal professors, pornographers, and crafty bankers and politicians come to mind.

4. Two emotional states are described: The tares will suffer the agony of weeping and teeth grinding, and the righteous will shine like the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father (13:42, 43).
5. The grand purpose of gospel proclamation in this age is to create “sons of the Kingdom,” but the false and true will grow together until the end. Delay is for the purpose of enlarging the harvest. Delay means men still have time to repent.

34.1.8 Matthew 25:31-46

1. This is one of the clearest passages about what will happen at the Second Coming of Christ. It powerfully supports the amillennial position and pours cold water on heated dispensational end-time schemes.
2. The subject of this passage is what will happen “when the Son of Man comes in his glory” (25:31).
3. Two themes of the Kingdom are present in this passage: salvation and wrath; i.e., “eternal life” and “eternal punishment.” The Lord is coming, and when He appears He will save the righteous and destroy the unrighteous. There is no seven-year end time scheme.
4. Two kinds of people from among the nations are mentioned: “the sheep” and “the goats” (3:32). The sheep are “the righteous” (3:37). The goats are the unrighteous like the tares in Jesus’ other parable.
5. This passage is about judgment. The Son is on His throne as God’s appointed judge (Romans 2:16). The accused are at the bar. The bank is open. Debts are demanded. All are under his jurisdiction and Christ the judge issues his verdict and sentence. The sheep are assigned the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (25:34). The goats are assigned “eternal fire” prepared for Satan and his angels (36:41).
6. The difference between the sheep and the goats is emphasized. A strong theme in this passage is relationship to the Son “giving me” “inviting me,” “clothing me,” “giving me to eat,” “visiting me,” and “coming to me” (25:35, 42, 43). Works are not meritorious, but they are evidence of genuine faith—faith that produces love.
7. Notice that the goats become suddenly aware of the authority of the Son of Man and address Him as “Lord” (25:44) . . . but, it is too late! They missed the acceptable time . . . the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). Their fate is sealed by eternal punishment in eternal fire.

John the Baptist preached the entrance of the Kingdom of God into history was at hand and that it contained two dynamic events: the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked (Matthew 3:7-11).

Jesus revealed that the wheat and tares will grow together until the end. The tares are sown by the enemy (Satan). At the final harvest at the end of this age, the tares will be gathered and burned in the fire.

Eschatological data in the two letters to the Thessalonians are consistent with Kingdom proclamation . . . and Paul builds upon Kingdom theology in his ministry to the Thessalonians (Acts 17:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5).

We await the dynamic, irresistible, climatic, disruption of the intervention of the Kingdom of God into history at the end of this age which will result in salvation for the righteous and the terrifying judgment upon the Christ-rejecter.

35 THE MILLENNIUM

Christ is sitting at the right hand of God and is reigning now. The millennial reign of Christ is not something years into the future, but a dramatic vision of Christ's present, exalted life and His rule beside the Father. Any doctrine that teaches that Christ is not in authority now bringing history to its proper conclusion diminishes the gospel of Christ and proclaims the death of God. One will search the NT in vain to discover any promise of a 1000 year reign of Christ on earth . . . unless it is Revelation 20.

Therefore, a proper interpretation of this chapter is essential for clarity on Kingdom theology.

35.1 Approaches to Interpretation:

The Kingdom of God is the main message of Christ. Premillennialists see a future 1000 year reign of Christ on earth known as the "millennium." Ladd, a premillennialist, understood the only passage in the Bible that speaks of a thousand year reign is Revelation 20. Therefore, we must attempt to interpret the passage correctly.

The amillennial interpretation is based on progressive parallelism, which perceives Revelation as a series of seven sections running parallel to each other (1-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12-14, 15-16, 17-19, 20-22). The seventh section (20-22) narrates the doom of Satan; thus, completing the overthrow of the enemies of Christ. Each section takes the reader deeper into ultimate realities. The final section takes us to the Great White Throne Judgment and the New Heavens and New Earth.

This author sees Revelation 20 as apocalyptic literature -- symbolic presentation of Christian era which John calls the 1000 year reign of Christ where Satan is bound from completely deceiving the nations when it comes to gospel proclamation.

The following passage is divided into two parts: the binding of Satan (1-3) and the reign of the Lord Christ (4-6). Note the progression: the binding of Satan, the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, the coming of New Jerusalem.

A Commentary on Revelation 20

35.2 The Binding of Satan

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Having described the Battle of Armageddon and the defeat of the beast, John now describes the defeat of the one behind the Beast, the old Serpent which is Satan himself. Revelation 20:1 takes us back to the beginning of the NT era. It is only proper that John takes us back to the beginning of Satan's defeat so he can show us Satan's final ruin at the end of the age (20:7ff). It is obvious the thousand-year reign of Christ is symbolic of His present reign from the right hand of God; and, that it occurs before, not after the Second Coming.

The key to this passage is to understand the nature of apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature is not concerned about time, chronology, and sequence as much as it is concerned about impressing the mind with ultimate realities. Like the "Tales of Narnia," it is a genre of literature that seeks to awe the imagination and to stir the heart with grand mythological imagery. Apocalyptic literature is **not** literal language: the key, the pit, the chain, the serpent, the dragon, and the thousand years are sensual, symbolic, literary tools that disclose a literal truth.

The "abyss" (a scary, deep, bottomless pit) is mentioned in chapter 9:1-6. It is the place from which the terrifying demonic locusts swarm. It is the home of the grotesque beast and the demonic forces that control earth's system of government (11:7).

Revelation 20:2-3 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Note the complex of names for Satan. He is the dragon, the aged serpent, the Devil, and Satan.

Like many of the numbers in Revelation, the number thousand is also symbolic. It is difficult to hold to a strict literal view in light of the symbolic use of numbers in this book. A thousand is ten to the third power and it represents an ideal period or a long, long time. It represents the Christian era. We are now living under the reign of the Lord Christ and believers look forward to its consummation in the future⁶¹.

⁶¹ Paul Kroll, Worldwide Church of God comments: Considering those limitations, some commentators nevertheless believe the figure given in Revelation 20 represents a literal 1,000 years. Other biblical commentators feel that while the "millennium" is a real period of substantial length, its actual time is undetermined. In the same way that "one hour" means a very short time (Revelation 17:12), 1,000 years would mean a very long time. Those who feel the number "thousand" refers to an indefinite though long time cite examples of similar usage from the Old Testament.

Linguistically, the word “bind” means “to bind, to tie, or to wind.” Jesus rode a bound colt (Matthew 21:2). Jesus was bound before Pilate (Matthew 27:2). Paul intended to bind Christians and bring them to Jerusalem (Acts 9:2). Paul was bound in spirit (Acts 21:11). Laws, statutes, and codes are binding upon those to whom it is properly applied. A binding contract implies duties and regulations with no wiggle room. Satan’s defeat began during Jesus’ reign: Jesus’ temptation in Matthew 4, His exorcisms (Luke 10:17), and at the cross (John 12:2-32). Finally, Satan’s defeat will be complete when Christ returns to earth to save believers and to punish the unbelieving (Revelation 20:7ff).

The word “bound” is not literal language. What kind of chain can bind a spiritual being? This is apocalyptic imagery designed to communicate the control and restriction of Satan during the age of gospel proclamation. The term “bound” is the same word as found in Matthew 12, “bind the strong man.” It is legal, metaphorical language expressing limited options and binding agreement. If a judge assigns you ten days in jail, you are not dead . . . rather, you are arrested and bound by legal decree.

In Matthew, the entrance of Jesus into history is interpreted as the thief invading the household of Satan. The thief ties up the “strong man” in order to steal his treasures; that is, to rescue men out from underneath the power of the evil one. The “treasures” represent the souls of the elect. The “binding” represents arrest and control. How could Jesus rescue men out of the kingdom of darkness unless he had command over Satan? In this passage, binding the serpent describes arrest, dominance, limitation, restriction, and management, not total constraint and helplessness. John wants believers to know that Jesus is now in authority and the power of Satan is restrained (Hebrews 2:14; Luke 10:17; Luke 10:19; Matthew 12:22-29; Colossians 2:15; Matthew 29:19, 20; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9).

The reason for the incarceration is that the nations should be deceived no more. We have here the curtailing of Satan’s power during the gospel age. His operation is downsized and diminished. What an encouragement this must have been for the original readers. These first century readers who witnessed the martyrdom of the apostles were given the assurance that gospel proclamation to which they were devoted would not be defeated, and that their efforts to make Christ known were not in vain. Their religious faith will make progress against the headwinds during the Christian era.

Likewise, we have the assurance that during this present evil age, Satan does not have total power to squash missionary efforts to reach the lost for Christ. Furthermore, history proves this is true. Before the cross, the knowledge of YHWH did not reach beyond the borders of Israel. After the death and resurrection of Christ, the gospel traveled into Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. Why

In Psalm 50:10 God speaks of himself as owner of all that exists. He says, "Every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills." Obviously, the expression is not to be taken literally, as though God owned cattle only on 1,000 specific hills. (<http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/Rev/millenn.htm>; Retrieved April 2004).

did the gospel have such power in the first century and why does the gospel continue to expand into every nation and tribe? The answer lies in the power of the gospel, the ascension of Christ, and the binding of Satan⁶².

We must remember that it is not at Jesus' *Parousia* that Satan is defeated. It is through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection that Satan was legally defeated and under house arrest: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out⁶³" (John 12:31).

35.3 The First Resurrection

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

John sees regal thrones and people sitting on them. Thrones are a symbol of authority. The word "throne" is used forty-seven times in Revelation. All but three appear in heaven, not earth. The use of the word "souls" indicates that the locus of John's vision has moved to heaven.

Jesus promised that those who overcome will sit with Christ and rule with Him (Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 5:9-10). Now John sees the fulfillment of this promise. The saints are not ruled over, but share in the reign of Christ; i.e., they enjoy the benefits of his rule. Daniel saw thrones and dominion was given to the saints (Daniel 7:27). Jesus promised his disciples that they would rule with Him over the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). Paul said the saints would "judge" (*krino*) the world (1 Corinthians 6:2).

Who is sitting on the thrones? The people sitting on the throne are those who "had been beheaded" for Christ and those who refused the mark of the beast; that is, these people represent Christians--those that lived and died for Christ on earth – the faithful followers of the Savior throughout the centuries.

⁶² Dispensationalist Carl Hoch (Grand Rapids: PNT) in his essay (Blaising and Bock, 1992) argues for an historical approach to Ephesians in contrast to a personal salvic interpretation; that is, there has been a change in Gentile status before God due to virtue of the cross. If this is the case, then Revelation 20:1-3 would be a by-product of the cross and explain the massive success of the gospel during this era.

⁶³ The word "cast out" (*evkblhqh, setai, ekballo*) means that Satan was cast out of power by virtue of Jesus' death and resurrection. Satan was defeated at Christ first coming. This does not mean that Satan does not exist or have power in this world. He is still the "god of this age." However, it does mean that our Savior snatched away Satan's legal power to exercise unrestricted control over men. He does not and cannot exercise unlimited authority to deceive entire nations about the truth as iterated in the gospel. Bailiff powers over the elect has many restrictions.

The first century Christians had many questions about the fate of the apostles and those that had been martyred by powerful, political rulers around the Mediterranean. John answers these questions in his work. He introduced the martyrs to us in chapter six where we see them safe under the altar. Being under the altar is a symbol that the martyrs were secure and enjoying the benefits of the work of Christ at Calvary. Now, John shows us another fact about the present state of the martyrs: they sit on thrones, that is, they are victors who share in the blessing of Christ's accomplishments. Reigning is another way of describing the fact that life triumphs over death⁶⁴.

“They lived” is possibly the most important phrase in this section. The pronoun “they” refers to “those who had been given authority to judge” and to the “souls of those who had been beheaded.” All saints are included in these two descriptions. Believers either have the privilege of living for the Lord or dying for their Lord. Both living and dying involve personal sacrifice.

“Lived” is the Greek word *ezezan* (ε;ζησαν).⁶⁵ John wants us to know that the departed saints are safe, secure, alive, and enjoying the wonders of Christ's accomplishments. “They lived” is simply another way of saying that death did not end the existence of departed saints. John saw Peter, James, Paul, and all the disciples alive enjoying the Savior. They lived!!!! What a revelation!! Martyrdom at the hands of Roman officials in time did not impact their eternal status. Death ended their earthly suffering and was merely a gateway into the joy of the Lord and the presence of the Savior.

John call this the “first resurrection.” The idea of a spiritual resurrection has its roots in Jesus' message in John five. Jesus made a distinction between the first resurrection, being spiritually regenerated (John 5:25), and the second resurrection, being physically regenerated (John 5:28, 29). The first resurrection is either (A) being made alive through the new birth so that a believer is said to sit with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:1-7) or it is (B) the transmigration of the soul into the presence of the Lord at death. Both are true!

⁶⁴ Revelation 20:4 “the souls of those who had been beheaded” and 6:9-11 “the souls of those who had been slain” are parallel texts. Note “the souls” (6:9) are conscious, alive, and with Christ. They are told to wait a little longer for the resurrection of the body. The only difference is that the saints in Revelation 6 are told to “be at rest” and the saints in Revelation 20 are said to be living and reigning with Christ.

⁶⁵ *e;zhzan* is a aorist, active, indicative, third person plural verb. It means, “they lived.” Ladd objects to “they lived” (*e;zhzan*) as having any NT authority to describe living souls. However, Luke 20:37 describes the state of the dead, “I am the God of Abraham of Isaac, and of Jacob . . . He is not the God of the dead, but of the living (*ζωντων*), for to him all are alive (*ζωντων*)” (NIV) . *ζωντων* is a present, active participle—a present tense, not future. The Sadducees denied not only the physical resurrection of the saints, but continued existence after death. Souls died with the body. Jesus corrected both errors of the Sadducees. Admittedly, no other uses of *ζωο* with this meaning can be found in Revelation.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

This verse is parenthetical. The word “lived” means the same thing here as it does in verse four. Neither refers to a physical resurrection. “The rest of the dead” corresponds to unbelievers. In contrast to the departed saints who **are alive** and enjoying the reign of Christ. Unbelievers are viewed **as dead!**

The rest of the dead (unbelievers) do not appear until the end of history. At the end of history, there will be a physical resurrection of the just and the unjust (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:25).

The “first resurrection” is not a bodily resurrection⁶⁶, but a spiritual resurrection⁶⁷. It either refers to (a) the coming to life of a man by virtue of the regenerating work of the Spirit of God in his soul as Jesus iterated in John 5:25, “a time is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live;” or, it refers to the transmigration of the soul to God following physical death as iterated in 1 Corinthians 5:6 “to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

The phrase “they came to life” is not referring to a physical resurrection at the end of the age. It is a simple reference letting the original readers know what happened to the martyred apostles and the first generation of Christians who had passed from the scene of history. The departed saints are alive! John sees the church triumphant. Glory! Victory! Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

⁶⁶ According to Jesus (John 5:25-29), there are two kinds of resurrections. The first is a *spiritual resurrection* that we identify as regeneration. When a person hears the gospel and believes in Christ, he comes to life, that is, he is born again and united with the Savior (Romans 5:3-5; 6:2-6; Ephesians 2:4-5). The second resurrection is a *bodily resurrection* and it refers to the physical transformation that will take place at the *Parousia* of Christ when the believer’s body will be raised from the dead (1 Thessalonians 5:17ff; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58). The “first resurrection” is not physical, but the “transition from physical death to life in heaven with Christ” (Hoekema, p. 237). It is an unusual term, but understandable against the background of the text.

⁶⁷ Much is at stake theologically on the doctrine of resurrection and much theological capital is spent seeking to justify doctrinal positions. Dispensationalists advance three or four resurrections in history (the rapture before the tribulation, a rapture after the tribulation, the resurrection of believers that die during the supposed millennium, and the resurrection of the wicked dead after the supposed millennium). I fear that my dispensational brethren are guilty of multiplying distinctions. My understanding of Scripture is that there are only two resurrections mentioned in Scripture, spiritual and physical. The spiritual resurrection that happens when one believes or when one dies and his spirit is taken into the presence of Christ and the physical resurrection that happens at Christ’s second advent.

The first resurrection is a *spiritual resurrection* that unites souls with Christ. Those resurrected are called “blessed” and “holy” because the second death hath **no** power over them. The “second death” refers to the final judgment of unbelievers where they will be sentenced to depart from the presence of Christ forever and ever—a terrifying thought. Remember, physical resurrection is no guarantee that one will escape the fate of the second death. To be united with Christ in eternity, one must be united to Christ now. If one is first saved from sins, he will be saved from the second death.⁶⁸

Another fact supporting the interpretation that the first resurrection is spiritual in nature is the fact that those participating in the first resurrection are called “priests to God.” Being a priest to God is not a status connected with the second coming of Christ but a status associated with his first coming of our Lord or with faith in this lifetime. According to Peter, Christians join the priestly caste when they believe in Christ (1 Peter 2:5-9). Reigning with him has the idea of kingship, of sovereignty, of authority. Believers are not subjects of any government; they are free men under the authority of Christ conducting His business on earth (See Matthew 28:18-20).

35.4 Gog and Magog

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

The conclusion of history is shrouded in mystery. Any interpretation of Gog and Magog must conclude that this war is postmillennial. It happens after the millennium mentioned in this chapter. The only way the battle of Gog and Magog could be the next great event in history is in light of an amillennial or postmillennial interpretation of this passage. In the premillennial scheme of things, the battle can only come after the supposed earthly millennial reign. In the dispensational scheme of things, there are two Battles of Gog and Magog – one at the end of the church age and another at the end of the alleged future millennium. To say that the Battle of Gog and Magog will happen before and after the millennium is a dispensational presumption – Theological diplopia or double vision. This tendency to multiply events is not supported in Scripture.

This research takes an amillennial approach. The thousand years does not refer to an alleged 1000 year reign of Christ on earth future to our time. The thousand years refers to the Messianic Age, the Gospel Age that is taking place now, but that was totally future to the original readers. At the end of the Christian era, Satan will be released to deceive the nations once more. The “four quarters of the earth” refers to the global nature of Satan’s recruitment. He will have no difficulty finding subjects willing to menace God’s people. The battle between God and Satan, good and evil, and the sons of light and the sons of darkness

⁶⁸ “Born once, die twice; Born twice, die once.”

will continue until the end. However, toward the end of history, Satan will emerge with unprecedented power to deceive souls and to squash Christianity⁶⁹. At this time, Christ will act and bring the prophecy of Gog and Magog to its prophetic fulfillment; that is, toward the end of this age Satan will have unprecedented power to deceive -- sweeping powers not known in the first two thousand years of Christian history. The rise of liberalism, humanism, evolution, abortion, homosexuality, and plandemics may be preliminary tremors preceding the volcanic eruption of horror to come.

The battle of God and Magog is a symbolic, mythological battle presented in Ezekiel 38-39 and Genesis 10:2 on the canvas of the literal, geographical landscape of Israel. This account unites historical detail with apocalyptic imagery to show the ultimate fate of the wicked and the ultimate victory of God's people. Death and destruction will feed on the enemies of God, and *God's people* typified as *Israel* in the setting of Jerusalem will be safe and secure. Augustine, in his work "The City of God" taught these nations shall rise up against the Church in a final confrontation only to be crushed by the returning Savior.

Apparently, John is informing his readers the gospel will triumph in the Christian age, not completely but substantially. Toward the end of the age, there will be some type of departure from the faith due to Satanic deception. The age will end with a climatic display of God's dazzling power resulting in the dramatic, cataclysmic, terminal defeat of God's enemies and the glorious salvation of God's people.

Revelation 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

The reference here is not to literal Jerusalem and some alleged battle in the Valley of Jezreel, but to "the breadth of the earth" indicating global resistance. The terms "*camp*" and "*city*" are a double symbol of the *true church*, the people of God. Employing the term *camp* may refer to the *pilgrim nature* of the church or *the church militant*, and the *beloved city* may refer to her *permanent* status before God. There are only two cities in Revelation: the city of Satan where the beast and the harlot reign, and the city of God that honors and exalts Christ. Toward the consummation of history these two worlds collide. No literal battle actually occurs, but the armies are destroyed. Possibly, the battle is logical rather than geographical. The gospel will triumph over the anti-God forces. God's people are destined to enjoy God's protection. Christ's enemies are destined to experience the terror of his wrath. This is the message John wants the readers to grasp.

⁶⁹ The neutering of Christianity in Europe and Great Britain, and the cultural decay in America like the propaganda of abortion, homosexuality, the assault on the phrase, "In God We Trust," the removal of the Ten Commandments from public buildings, and the secularization of Christmas appear to be consistent with the apostasy toward the end of the age mentioned in this chapter.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The emphasis is again upon the spirit behind the rebellion. First, the armies are destroyed, then the power behind the army is confronted. In Revelation the Devil is mentioned first, then the beast, then the false prophet. They are ruined, however, in reverse order. Babylon is demolished first (17 & 18), the beast & false prophet second, and finally Satan himself. The destruction may be logical rather than referring to something in linear time. The lake of fire, which was planned for Satan, now fulfills its purpose. The language here is difficult. Satan is a spirit; fire is an earthly phenomenon. How can non-physical being with negative energy be touched by fire? The imagery, however, is that of painful suffering.

John is showing us ultimate reality in physical terms. Satan will be utterly defeated and he will experience the same fate as the beast and false prophet.

The term “torment” (basanishq,sontai) is translated “tossed” or “toiling in the winds” in Mark 6:48. The term “day and night” is used in 4:8 to describe the eternal nature of praise. It is used here to describe the terrible, round-the-clock punishment of all the anti-God forces. The phrase “forever and ever” comes from the Greek words “ages of ages” and properly conjures up images of an endless nightmare so terrifying our finite souls cannot grasp it. Dante tried. There is no sense of annihilation here. This is eternal suffering—endless, desperate rowing by frantic men on the seas of hell in the fires of eternal affliction towards shores that do not exist. Before us are images of final comic destruction and the conclusion of history as we know it.

Note: Ladd consistently remained a pre-millennialist and interpreted this passage accordingly. Sources: (Hoekema, 1979; Clouse, 1979; Cox, 1966; Grenz, 1992; Hendricksen, 1967)

36 THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

The hope from Genesis to Revelation is Paradise restored where the “wolf lies down with the lamb.” When the Bible says, “the meek will inherit the earth,” our Lord refers to the New Heaven and the New Earth or Paradise Restored.

36.1 O.T. References

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”

The Bible begins with the announcement that God created the cosmos. The seven Hebrew words found in Genesis 1:1 reveal that God created time, space, and matter.

The Bible ends with the appearance of a “new heaven and a new Earth” (Revelation 21).

The great questions are these: “Will the prophecies of Bible be fulfilled literally in an alleged millennium? Are we to accept the spiritualization of biblical prophecies that we will be wearing white robes, playing harps on clouds in the heavenly sky, or will prophecy find its ultimate fulfillment in a new heaven and new Earth?

It is the premise of this professor that all of God’s promises that relate the Eschaton will find their literal fulfillment in “the new heaven and new earth.” This is not the supposed millennium nor is this interpretation a spiritualization of biblical prophecy.

Genesis 3:15 is called the “Mother Promise.” It is sometimes called the *protoevangelium* or the *first gospel*.

*¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and **her seed**; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Following the devastating destruction due to Adam’s sin, God gave a precious promise in the hearing of man that He would send “the seed” of the woman to redeem man from the curse by crushing the power of Satan under the feet of “the seed” (Messiah).

Contained within this marvelous promise is not only the redemption of man, but the redemption of the universe. Paradise Lost is destined to become Paradise Regained. If God does not redeem the Earth that was cursed, Satan gains a victory. But, as we read through the Bible we learn the beautiful serpent in

Genesis becomes the hideous dragon of Revelation twelve. Before Paradise is restored, an angel will seize this dragon by the tail and throw him into the lake of fire (12:9, 20:3, 12ff). After Satan's final defeat, we will see a new heaven and a new Earth coming down from heaven.

*^{NAS} Genesis 17:8 "And I will give **to you** and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."*

God promised to redeem the Earth. In Genesis seventeen, God **temporarily narrows** the promise to something that Abraham can see and grasp. God launched His plan of an invasion of the Kingdom of God on this narrow piece of real estate in his operation to liberate man and earth from the Satan's occupied forces. It should be noted, however, that God did not just promise this land to Abraham's descendants, but He promised it to Abraham himself (and, "to you"). Abraham never owned a single piece of real estate in the land except his burial ground at the Cave of Machpelah near Hebron. Because this promise has yet to be fulfilled, we can assume Abraham will receive his full portion on a redeemed earth.

^{NAS} Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new Earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."

In this passage of Isaiah, God renews the original Mother Promise **and expands** Israel's hope to include the redemption of the cosmos. The new heavens and new earth is not something man creates by political acumen, but something God creates by Divine power at the consummation of history.

The great question remains, "Will God renovate this present Earth, or will God create a new heaven and a new earth ex nihilo?"

*^{KJV} Psalm 37:11 But the meek shall inherit **the land** (erets); and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

The psalmist holds out a hope that the faithful will inherit the land (probably a reference to Canaan).

36.2 N.T. References

Jesus expanded the promise of the psalmist supra to include **not only Israel**, but **all men** who respond correctly to Kingdom proclamation: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth (th.n gh/n⁷⁰)" (Matthew 5:5). The King wanted his followers to know that God's redemptive program included the earth and that all of God's people in every country in every age had a right to it.

⁷⁰ Refers to the inhabitable Earth.

Peter announced,

*Acts 3:19-21 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the **times of refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive **until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

The phrase “the restitution of all things” (α;cri cro,nwn avpokatasta,sewj⁷¹ pa,ntwn) appears to follow the return of Christ to Earth, that is, this text is a reference to the Eschaton. The word “restitution” means “to restore.” When Jesus returns, He will restore Paradise Lost. This promise is consistent with the voice of the prophets, in particular, Isaiah 65 and 66.

In looking at the land grant promise to Abraham, Paul observed,

*Romans 4:13 For the promise, that he should be the **heir of the world**, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Under the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul interprets the land-grant promise as a promise, not just for Canaan, **but for the whole world** (cosmos). Here we learn that *the fulfillment is greater than the original promise!* The Promise Land in Genesis has become the Promised Cosmos in Romans and the New Heaven and New Earth referred to in Isaiah.

Let’s look at Pauline theology regarding the Eschaton:

*Romans 8:19-21 For the earnest expectation of the creature(creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature (creation) was made **subject to vanity** (frailty or depravity), not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered (set free) from the bondage of corruption (depravity) into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Kingdom consummation).*

Not only does mankind long for a new heaven and new earth, creation itself craves to be redeemed. When Adam sinned, creation fell with the original couple. Paradise became Paradise Lost (subject to vanity). Paul teaches that once the sons of God are manifest and fully redeemed, then the earth will be set free and released from its bondage to decay; that is, creation will not be glorified until men are glorified in their new bodies. *The New Heavens and New Earth are made for men with resurrected bodies.*

⁷¹ The word “restitution” is used only here. But, in some Greek papyri the word is used to refer to temple repairs.

*Ephesians 1:13, 14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until **the redemption of the purchased possession**, unto the praise of his glory.*

The term “earnest of our inheritance” refers to the Holy Spirit. The presence of *the Holy Spirit* in our lives is the *down payment or earnest* that we will receive our full and complete inheritance to come.

The phrase “until the redemption of the purchased possession” (ειvj avpolu, trwsin th/j peripoih, sewj⁷²) could refer to (1) the physical redemption of the believer’s body, or (2) it could refer to the physical redemption of the earth which he calls “our possession.” Both are true.

*KJV Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an **heavenly one**: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Here we learn that Abraham was not looking for an earthly city in Canaan, but **a heavenly city** whose builder and maker was God. The text says, “he prepared for them a city.” This city could be none other than the “New Jerusalem” referred to in Revelation 21, 22.

Hebrews 12:21-23 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire . . . And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, {written: or, enrolled}. . . Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but also heaven.

The author of Hebrews is contrasting judgment under Torah with life under grace (12:15). In the OT, God led His Israel to Matthew Sinai that burned with fire . . . and eventually to Canaan which include the primitive City of Jerusalem (Joshua 10:1). In the NT, God leads the New Israel to the true mountain, the true city of the living God, the true heavenly Jerusalem. It appears from the text that “Mount Zion” and “the city of living God” and “heavenly Jerusalem” and the “company of angels” and the “church of the firstborn” are closely related — possibly metonyms⁷³.

⁷² Literal translation: “into the deliverance of the possession.”

⁷³ The series of datives in the Greek and the use of the conjunction *kai* indicate a strong linkage between these terms and the concepts behind them.

The heavenly city that Abraham sought is already in existence. The verb “you have come” is a perfect tense indicating a past action with present results; that is, the author infers the Hebrew believers have come and are now a part of the Kingdom community with its seat of government in the city of the living God.

Philippians 3:20 “For our conversation (politeuma, place of citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

The phrase “shake the earth” in Hebrews 12:23 is a metaphor for judgment indicating some kind of literal, future cataclysmic event. The term “once more” may be a reference to the first global destruction in Noah’s day.

If this be the case, we can expect a future global catastrophe on the level of Noah’s flood⁷⁴ before the Eschaton appears. The permanency of the New Jerusalem is contrasted with the ephemeral nature of this creation. One is glorious and eternal, the other weak and temporal.

*2 Peter 3:10–13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall **pass away**⁷⁵ with a great noise, and the elements **shall melt with fervent heat**⁷⁶, the Earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be **dissolved**⁷⁷, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements **shall melt**⁷⁸ with fervent heat? {hasting...: or, hasting the coming} Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new⁷⁹ heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

The day of the Lord appears to encompass the total destruction of the heavens and the earth as we know it. All of the earth will melt when God judges the cosmos, and not just a third of the earth or the sea or the

⁷⁴ Just as Noah was lifted up from the Earth when the flood came, it is quite possible believers will be lifted up from the Earth via the rapture as the judgment of fire descends on this Earth.

⁷⁵ The Greek word *pareu,sontai* means “to pass away” or “to pass by” (future, indicative).

⁷⁶ The phrase *kausou,mena luqh,setai* can be translated as follows: the elements “shall be set aside (destroyed) while being burned up.”

⁷⁷ Dissolved is translated “while being dissolved” (*luome,nwn*).

⁷⁸ Melt: present tense used in a futuristic sense. The term means “to melt” or “to make liquid.”

⁷⁹ New: *kainos* not *neos*. The former meaning new in quality, while the latter means new in time.

trees or the waters will be destroyed. This destruction is not partial, but cosmic, universal, exhaustive, global, plenary, uncondensed, all encompassing, and absolute.

One of the great questions that Bible students face is whether this earth will be annihilated, or renewed and refashioned? **Annihilation or liquidation** infers total **discontinuity** between this earth and the promised new earth. **Renewal or restoration**, however, expresses some kind of **continuity** between this cosmos and the one to come.

While the English text sounds like the earth and the heavens will be obliterated, the concept of complete renovation (renewal or restoration) (continuity) is preferred for the following reasons:

(a) **Linguistically**: the adjective “new” heaven and a “new” earth is the term *kainos* (kainoj). It refers to something with a *new quality rather than* something *new in time*; and,

(b) **Holistic continuity**: Hermeneutically, every verse in the Bible must submit to the authority of the whole. In Romans 8:20-21, Paul seems to be saying the earth will be liberated, not annihilated. If this be the case, then Peter would not contradict Paul. He must be informing us that the present heaven and earth will be **not be obliterated but totally reformed** much like a potter will scrap his work and begin again with the same lump of clay; and,

(c) **Theologically**: If God has to annihilate the present elements to gain a victory over Satan, then Satan has won a certain victory. Satan defiles, but he has not so polluted the cosmos so that it needs to be completely destroyed. Once Satan and sinful man are banished from this cosmos, God can easily regenerate the entire cosmos into a new ambiance fit for redeemed humanity; and,

(d) **Eschatologically**: Since entrance into the Kingdom of God is by the new birth of the human spirit (John 3:3-5) and “that age” is only entered into via the resurrection (Luke 20:35), it seems reasonable to assume resurrected / regenerated saints will inherit a regenerated earth rather than one created *ex nihilo*⁸⁰.

That is, just as there is continuity between this earthly body and the resurrected body, there will be continuity between this earth and the new earth.

Peter’s point, however, is that because this world will be melted down and remolded into a new one where righteousness dwells, believers ought to live consistent with the new reality and practice holiness now.

^{KJV} Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first Earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for

⁸⁰ “Out of nothing.”

her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

First, John says he saw a “new” heaven and a “new” earth coming down from heaven. The Greek adjective for “new” is *kainos*, **not** *neos*. The word *kainos* refers to something *new in quality*, not new in time. What John sees is not a *neos* universe; that is, something totally unknown to him, but something he recognizes as having continuity with the world from which he came. All sinful imperfections created by Adam’s fall will be removed and eliminated. The ancient curse will be lifted. Sin will not be present. Death will not be allowed to spread misery in the new cosmos.

As soon as John sees the new earth coming down from heaven, he looks around for the old earth. It is no longer present. The only thing he can see is the new physical, material reality.

John immediately notices a difference in the two worlds. The new earth does not have a sea.

However, is John referring to something literal or figuratively? To an American, water spells “fun:” boating, swimming, and fishing. Who among us can imagine a world without lakes and streams? Who would want to live on a planet without waterways?

But, to a biblical character, the sea spelled terrifying “d e a t h.” The sea was a changing, untamable, black, mysterious deep cavern filled with salty water. The sea with all its ferocity could swallow up a Mediterranean fishing boat on a stormy night nanoseconds. Fear and sea voyages were inseparable. Possibly, John is informing us that the sea with all its hostility to ancient mariners will not be a threat to life in the new world.

Second, John sees the holy city, New Jerusalem. It is so associated with the new heaven and new earth that his eye focuses on the grandeur of the capital city.

The concealed, heavenly city for which Abraham searched now appears in the eye of John’s mind. Immediately, he tells us that it is “from God.” As John searches for words to describe the beauty and wonder of this city, he compares this celestial city to a beautifully adorned bride. Who among us is not captivated by the mystery and beauty of young woman with sparkling skin and dazzling hair, clothed in pure white, and garnished with jewelry? Is there anything more beautiful? Yes, there is — the New Jerusalem.

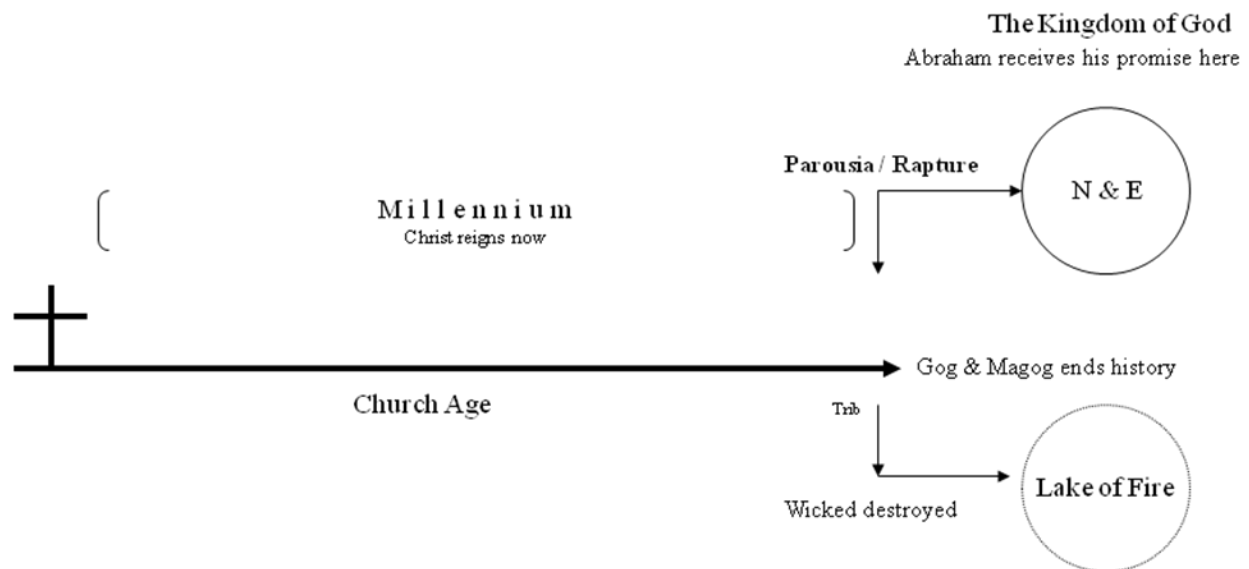
Third, John hears a voice announcing that this city is the true tabernacle and that God tabernacles (skhnw,sei) among men, that his people stand in a right relationship to him, that none of them are lost or forgotten, and that He is with them in this city in a way that ancient Israel never dreamed.

He does not immediately describe what he sees in this city. Rather, he describes **what is NOT there**: no tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying, and no pain.

Who can imagine such a world? The fact that there will be no tears, happy or sad, indicates that people will be able to completely express their emotions. There will be no death in this city, no mortuaries, no funerals, and no cemeteries. Not only will the fear of death be absent in this city, but also there will never be a reason to be sad, or discouraged, or depressed, or hopeless. There will be no crying, no clamoring, no complaining, and no protests in this city.

And finally, there will be no pain, no hurt, no injury, no loss in this capital. God makes all things new. The old order passes away, and the new order arrives to delight the people of God. It is a world that stretches our most spectacular imagination and it is John's privilege to try and describe it.

Figure 45: Amillennial View



In conclusion, the final destiny of God's people is not "pie in the sky when we die" nor is it like the carnal earth we know today with all its threats, deprivations, and uncertainties. The new heaven and new earth has continuity with this cosmos . . . but, it is not so unlike this world it cannot be recognized. But, while it has continuity with this earth, it is so unique and different, John strains the Greek language to employ words to describe its magnificence.

37 INTERPRETING REVELATION

The term “kingdom” is used five times in Revelation — three times in reference to the Kingdom of God. In fact, it announces that the Kingdom of God has come in chapter twelve. Chapter twelve is a vision of the dragon hunting the woman giving birth to the Christ and his immediate conveyance into heaven to the throne of God. This is John’s way of painting the ascension and enthronement of Christ as Lord at the right hand of God. This story informs us that in Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, Satan experienced a devastating defeat in heaven. Immediately, a voice was heard, “Now have come the salvation and power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ” (12:10).

In chapter twelve, Satan is defeated in heaven, but he still spews out venom against “the rest of the woman’s offspring;” i.e., Christ is in heaven, so Satan has declared war against the spiritual Israel, the Christians who have embraced Christ as their King and obey His commandments.

The word “come” in verse ten is an aorist indicating the Kingdom operates due to Christ’s administration as King over Christian history. The Kingdom is not postponed until the *Parousia*, the Kingdom is here now! Christ rules and the saints overcome the evil in “this age” by the blood of the Lamb and their devotion to their risen Lord. Interpreting Revelation exclusively futuristically robs the believer of Kingdom power and authority in his war against evil now in this age. Since believers are bombarded by futuristic interpretations of Revelation, it is essential the reader of this work grasp the literary character of the Book of Revelation and the principles of apocalyptic interpretation of this work so he can properly apply the lessons of Revelation to his present political battles in this age.

37.1 Five Rules for Interpreting Revelation

Adapted (Summers, 1951, p. 46-51)

Get into the mind of Original Readers: What did the vision as a whole mean to the Greek-Hebrew Christians living in Asia Minor? Revelation was not written to twenty-first century people, but for the edification and encouragement of the Christians in Asia Minor. The objective is to “get into the mind” of the first-century Christian in order to understand their moral, religious, social, cultural, and political conditions. *The question is not, “What does Revelation mean to me?” but, “What did it mean to the first-century saints?”*

Understand the nature of Apocalyptic Literature. What did the symbols in Revelation mean to the original readers? Because this book is crammed full of symbols, ordinary principles of interpretation will

not work. Usually, we should take a Bible passage as literal, unless there is a reason to take it figuratively. In Revelation, there is a commanding reason to take the visions figuratively — it is an apocalyptic vision. “No method of interpretation can get to the real message of Revelation unless it recognizes and follows the symbols” (Summers, 1959, p. 49).

Insist on New Testament authority over the OT: What is the final authority on the meaning of a symbol or vision? “Revelation uses OT terminology with New Testament meaning” (NT) (Summers, p. 49). John is not giving a commentary on Ezekiel or Daniel. He borrows from their visions and “adapts them to suit his own message. Revelation is a NT Christian book with its own meaning” (p. 50).

Seek the essential meaning of the whole series or vision: What is the whole vision seeking to communicate to the first-century mind? Summers says, “One must seek to grasp the visions or series of visions as a whole without pressing the details of the symbolism. The visions not only have a message to convey, but they are designed to convey that message to the original readers. Thus, contemporary readers have the task of applying these lessons to their political conflicts with Satan’s emissaries working through human institutions in their time.

Consider the intent to impress the imagination: Why did God use a particular representation or vision? Quoting Pieters, Summers says, “Revelation is addressed chiefly to the imagination.”

This does not mean we are to let our twentieth-century minds go wild using our own codes and symbols to interpret the book; Rather, the reader should seek to adopt the mind of the original readers and inter into the intense drama of the book. He must allow himself to be caught up in the “majesty of the movement as Christ walks among his broken churches with healing for their weaknesses. Unless the reader can do this, he will miss the greatest messages of Revelation.”

Summers continues, “The man who has not, or has and refuses to use, a fertile imagination, will do well to leave this book alone.” (p. 51). Engineers and mathematicians need not apply.

37.2 Interpretive Principles

Generally speaking, the Christian community spends more time watching T.V. than studying the Bible.

Consequently, many but not all, are ignorant of the interpretive principles of Revelation. The following excerpts are designed to inform believers of the nature of the Book of Revelation and why a straight, flat, literal method of interpretation is totally improper for this book containing hundreds of symbols.

Revelation is apocalyptic literature and must be interpreted accordingly.

37.3 Purpose of the book

William Hendricksen: “The purpose of the book of Revelation is to comfort the militant Church in its struggle against the forces of evil” (Hendricksen, 1967, p. 7).

Edward McDowell: “The Seer of Patmos recognized the irreconcilable nature of the rising conflict between Rome and Christianity. He realized that it was a battle to the death. He saw that two sovereignties, each claiming absolute allegiance, could not exist side by side. Christ or Caesar must emerge the winner of the struggle.

In the meantime Christians were dying in the conflict and others would suffer and lose their lives because of their loyalty to the gospel . . . *Its message was one of encouragement and hope and of ultimate victory for those who were loyal to Christ.* No doubt the message fired many an anxious Christian heart with holy zeal for the gospel and made him ready to die in the cause, if death was to be the price of his loyalty” , 1951, p. 6, 7)

37.4 How to interpret the book

Hendricksen: “the Apocalypse must take as its starting-point the position that *the book was intended for believers living in John’s day and age.*” (Hendricksen, 1967, p. 10)⁸¹. (Emphasis added)

Ladd: “We conclude that the correct method of interpreting the Revelation is a blending of the Preterist and the futurist methods” (Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John, 1973, p. 11).

Richard Bauckham: “John’s prophecy is of *immediate relevance* to his contemporaries. It relates not to the distant future but to the situation John himself shares with his contemporaries in the seven churches of Asia” (Bauckham, 1993, p. 12). (Emphasis added)

Vern Poythress: “We can sum up . . . the major symbols of Revelation represent a repeated pattern. This pattern has realization in the first-century situation of the seven churches. It also has an embodiment in the final crisis. And it has embodiment now” (Poythress, 2000, p. 37).

Ray Summers: “This book is written largely in symbolic language. The word ‘symbol’ is from the Greek *su,vvn*, ‘with,’ plus the infinitive *ballein*, ‘to throw,’ hence ‘to throw together.’ A symbol is that which

⁸¹ The opposite of Hendricksen’s view is **peshure interpretation** or the view that seeks to interpret Revelation in light of the twenty-first century. Peshure interpretation is the style of interpretation that looks at Revelation through the lens of its own culture; that is, with a Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other to determine its meaning. As an example of peshure interpretation see Hal Lindsey’s work, *There’s A New World Coming*, Harvest House Publishers, 1984.

suggests something else by reason of relationship or association. It is a visible sign of something invisible, as an idea or a quality . . . *for this reason the ordinary rules of interpretation cannot be followed . . .*” (Summers, 1951, p. 48). (Emphasis added).

The Author: We should ask the question, “What did John’s work mean to the first-century readers?” We must interpret the book in light of the mind of the original readers, but apply its lessons to the political conflicts of our time. If we see the bulk of the book as something future to our time, we will not only misinterpret the book, but be robbed of a proper application to our battles now.

37.5 Revelation as a Book of Symbols

Paul Kroll: “To understand Revelation it is helpful to think of this writing as first and foremost a book of symbols” (Kroll, 1999). “To the modern western world, Revelation’s symbols seem *weird and alien* . . . these **symbols** were not strange to John’s original audience for whom the book was written. Revelation drew on common known **pagan myths**, OT and Jewish typologies, as well as New Testament Christian traditions and beliefs. These symbols were generally understood to refer to spiritual truths and **historical realities**. For example, in the Roman worlds of John’s time there were various stories about a god of heaven slaying the sea monster.”

G. R. Beasley-Murray: Revelation and its graphic genre can be compared to a “*political cartoon*” as “the closest modern parallel” to Revelation’s symbols.

Beasley-Murray compare John’s visions to political cartoons in American newspapers. As an example he cites the American eagle or the Russian bear that they are often drawn as political figures, “Frequently the situations depicted are deliberately exaggerated, and even made grotesque, in order that the message may be made plain.”

Beasley-Murray explains further, “The symbols by which the contemporary political forces and the spiritual powers of heaven and hell are portrayed (in Revelation) were as traditional as Britannia and the British lion, the Russian bear, and the Chinese dragon . . . What to uninitiated modern reader appears grotesque imagery, spoke with power to John’s fellow Christians” (Beasley-Murray, 1974)(The New Century Bible Commentary, p. 17) (Emphasis added).

Edward McDowell: “The book of Revelation belongs to a particular type of literature which was popular in Palestine in the last two centuries before Christ These writing are designated ‘apocalyptic literature,’ the word ‘apocalyptic’ being taken from the Greek word *apocalupsis* in the first verse of Revelation . . . Revelation being the greatest of all the apocalypses, the word was taken from its title to designate all the apocalyptic literature It is superior to the other apocalypses in its organization” (McDowell). E. A., 1951, p. 7, 9).

Edward McDowell: “There can be no doubt that the author of Revelation was influenced by other apocalyptic writing in his style and choice of symbols It is most likely that much of the symbolism used was more than a matter of style. Many of the symbols were doubtless employed **to conceal ideas** that would have caused trouble for the readers of the book had they become known to the Roman authorities” (McDowell). E. A., 1951, 9). (Emphasis added)

Ray Summers: The first sentence in Summer’s book reads, “The book of Revelation belongs to a special class of writings *known as apocalyptic.*” He goes on to say, “the apocalypse was written *to conceal and to reveal*—to conceal the message from the outsider, but to reveal its message to the initiated . . . the writer of the apocalyptic tried to get behind the surface, to delve to the bottom of the essence of things and find their real significance” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 1-7). (Emphasis added).

Ray Summers: “The vision or rapture is *apocalyptic writings is a literary form* wrought out with great fullness of details, often with *strange symbolism and with fantastic imagery* . . . one of the main characteristics of apocalyptic is the use of symbol. Among writers of this type of literature there was developed an elaborate system of cryptic symbols and figures of speech for the expression of spiritual ideas. The writer was faced with the task of seeing the invisible, painting the unpaintable, and expressing the inexpressible. The writing is therefore full of imagery and symbolism which are hard to understand, and which make the task of the modern interpreter *far removed from those conditions* exceedingly difficult” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 19) (Emphasis added.)

Richard Bauckham: “The book belongs to the genre of ancient Jewish and Christian literature which modern scholars *call apocalypses* Thus, John’s vision creates **a single symbolic universe** in which its readers may live for the time it takes them to read (or hear) the book . . . the power, the profusion and the consistency of the symbols have a literary—theological purpose. They create a symbolic world, which readers can enter so fully that it affects them and changes their perception of the world.” (Bauckham, New Testament Theology of the Book of Revelation, 1993, p. 1, 10) (Emphasis added).

Bruce Metzger: “JOHN’S SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE: In reporting his visionary experiences John frequently uses symbolic language. Of the 404 verses that comprise 22 chapters of the book of Revelation, 278 verses contain one or more allusions to an OT passage Therefore, in attempting to understand John’s symbolism, we must consider not only the book itself, but also his use of the Old Testament” (Metzger, 1993, p. 13)

Simon J. Kistemaker: “As the prophetic books and the wisdom literature of the OT are filled with signs, so the last book of the New Testament has its share of *symbols* . . . *what we need to consider is an adequate description of figurative language*” (Kistemaker, 2001, p. 12). (Emphasis added.)

37.6 Literalness vs. the apocalyptic

Paul Kroll: “*We should not force Revelation’s symbols into a literal mode.* If the book is a kind of painting of God’s purpose, it is much more expressionistic or impressionistic than realistic” (Kroll, 1999). (Emphasis added)

Paul Kroll: “Christ is pictured as speaking through a mouth out of which a sharp double-edged sword protrudes. If an attempt is made to understand the anthropomorphic picture of Christ in Revelation 1 as a literal representation of what he looks like, this part of the portrait admittedly is bizarre” (Kroll, 1999).

Ladd: “Apocalyptic language does not convey its message in precise photographic style, but more in the style of modern surrealist art with great fluidity and imagination” (Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John, 1973, p. 11.)

Dr. Edward McDowell: In reference to the “third part of the earth” is burned up, “These cannot be ‘the plagues of the last days.’ It is reasonable to believe that plagues of the last days would be unlimited in their power to destroy. Apparently these plagues depict the continuous operation in history of the effects of sin and evil” (McDowell). E. , 1951, p. 7.).

Ray Summers: “Objections of the Futuristic Method (extreme literalness): It is inconsistent with the statement made by John that the events predicted were in the main **to come to pass soon**. The word *dei* is an impersonal Greek verb which involves a moral necessity. ‘It is morally necessary’ in order for a just end to be accomplished . . . the second term which *refutes futurism* is (the term) translated ‘quickly’. Summers continues, “**One of the strongest objections to the futurist method is that it leaves Revelation altogether out of the relation to the needs of the churches to which it was addressed and which first received it.**”⁸² (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 19).

Richard Bauckham: “It would be a serious mistake to understand the images of Revelation as timeless symbols. Their character conforms contextually to Revelation as a letter to the seven church (not 21st century Christians) . . . *we need also to avoid the opposite mistake of taking them too literally* as descriptive of the ‘real’ world and of the predicted events in the ‘real’ world” (Bauckham, New Testament Theology of the Book of Revelation, 1993, p. 19, 20) (Emphasis added).

Bruce Metzger: Commenting on Revelation eight: “We must remember that the objects and events seen in a vision are not physically real . . . *in the book of Revelation the descriptions are not descriptions of real occurrences, but of symbols of real occurrences.* The intention is to fix the reader’s thought, not upon the symbol, but upon the idea that the symbolic language is designed to convey . . . only a third

⁸² Summers does not object to a future application of Revelation to future generations, but he does insist on a primary interpretation to the original readers.

(9:18) or some other fraction of the whole is affected. The fraction is symbolic of the mercy of God” (Metzger, 1993, p. 66) (Emphasis added).

Ray Summers: “A symbol is . . . an idea or a quality . . . *for this reason the ordinary rules of interpretation cannot be followed* . . . Usually the words of any passage of Scripture must be understood in their plain and natural sense, unless there is some reason to take them figuratively. The presumption is always in favor of the literal meaning. . . . This is not the case in Revelation. In this book, presented in pictorial form, *one must assume that the symbols are to be taken figuratively unless* there is good reason for regarding them as literal” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 48). (Emphasis added).

Ray Summers: “When the Bible story of David and Goliath is read, one sees the boy, the giant, the armor, the sling and the victory. This is the entire story. But when one reads in the twelfth chapter of Revelation about a battle between Michael with his angels and the dragon with his angels, *he must see not just the story but what is symbolizes*” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 48). (Emphasis added).

The Author: The Symbolic Approach, the approach that I take, understands the book as a symbolic presentation of existing reality -- a giant, holy, political cartoon⁸³ portraying the Christian struggle with the anti-god forces in mythological proportions like we see in daily newspapers of the struggle between elephants and donkeys. The conflict that was raging in John’s day will have a grand consummation at the end of time. John is attempting to unveil the forces behind the political scenes in John’s day. Thus, we have an unveiling, a revelation” (B. R. Stockton, Unpublished manual 2003, A Commentary on Revelation: Standing Firm in Our Time).

37.7 Interpreting Numbers in Revelation

Because the American mind is different from the Hebrew mind, numbers in the Book of Revelation has given Bible students difficulty. Our minds are more scientific, literal, and precise. But, for the oriental mind, numbers are a literary device that tease the mind and expand the imagination. Numbers were often used as words that codified a truth. When studying Revelation, the student needs to keep in mind that Hebrew letters had a numerical value and that numbers are used symbolically to convey a truth. Ray Summers, says, “(Numbers) are purely symbolic, and we must discard our mathematical ideas and seek to discover their symbolic significance” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 25).

⁸³ The term “cartoon” is not meant to blacken the holy character of this extraordinary book, but to compare the images in this book to modern day political cartoons found in newspapers that capture our attention and stimulate our imagination about present political conflicts and anomalies. John paints pictures with mythological proportions to stimulate our imaginations.

37.8 Significance of Numbers

“1”:

One has the idea of unity or complete existence. It does not appear in the book of Revelation, but it is at the root meaning of other numbers.

“2”:

Two is the number of companionship (Adam and Eve). Two are stronger than one. Two are better than one (Ecclesiastes 4:9). The law came on two tablets. Man has two hands, two feet, two eyes, and two ears. In the OT, it took two witnesses to confirm a truth (Deuteronomy 17:6). In the Book of Revelation, the truth of God is confirmed by two witnesses⁸⁴. The two beasts confirm and support each other⁸⁵. There is a two edged sword, two woes, two witnesses, two beasts that confirm and support each other, two olive trees, two candlesticks, two prophets, and the woman was given two wings of an eagle. Two, therefore, stood for confirmation, strengthening, for courage and energy.

“3”:

Three is symbol of unity and strength. A cord of three strands is not easily broken (Proverbs 4:12). A family was made up of a father, mother, and children. Noah had three sons. The world is three dimensional. Three, therefore, came to represent something that was complete, full, and strong. In it are glimmers of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

“4”:

The Hebrew had little concept of the Copernican world. The Hebrew world was flat with boundaries on the east, west, north, and south. There were four winds⁸⁶, four sides of the earth⁸⁷, and four walls in a town. Four became a cosmic, earthly number⁸⁸. In Revelation there appears four living creatures symbolic of the four divisions of animal life, and four horsemen that inflict havoc on the cosmos. Four represents the world where men are born, live, and die.

“5”:

Five is the number of a man’s fingers or toes. Together, a man had ten toes and ten fingers; that is, if he was lucky. In that ancient cruel world, men were often missing fingers and toes. Five and ten, therefore, was the number of completeness. There were Ten Commandments, five of which were directed Godward, and five of which were directed manward⁸⁹. In Revelation, the dragon⁹⁰, the first beast⁹¹, and

⁸⁴ Revelation 11

⁸⁵ Revelation 13.

⁸⁶ Ezekiel 37:9.

⁸⁷ Isaiah 11:12.

⁸⁸ Ezekiel 1:15; Daniel 7:17.

⁸⁹ The first five of the Ten Commandments contain the word “LORD” and are intended to outline man’s responsibility to God. The second five commandments are known as common law and outline man’s duties toward his fellow man.

the scarlet beast⁹² have ten horns. During the writing of Revelation, Rome appeared to have complete power over the world. Ten and its multiples (70, 100, 1000) are a symbol of completeness raised to the nth degree (Summers, 1951, p. 23).

“6”: The number six had a sinister meaning. It was one less than seven, a perfect number (3 + 4). “6” fell short of seven. It represents failure, defeat, and imperfection. It was to the Hebrew mind was the number “13” is to the Western mind. It is an unlucky number. For this reason, many hotels will not put the number “13” on a door. In its place will be “12A” or “12B.” One should keep this in mind when one looks at the number 666, the number of the beast⁹³.

“7”: The number seven has fascinated Hebrews as well as mathematicians. To the Hebrew, the number “7” is a divine number, a perfect number, the number for God. 3 + 4 = 7. Three (3) is a divine number and four (4) is an earthly number. The union of heaven and earth are represented by the number seven. There were seven days of creation. Seventy souls came out of Jacob into Egypt. There were 70 elders in Israel⁹⁴. A man is purified seven times (Psalm 12:6). The psalmist praised God seven times a day (Psalm 119:164). There are seven abominations (Proverbs 6:16). Wisdom is built on seven pillars (Proverbs 9:1). A good man falls seven times and arises (Proverbs 24:16). In Revelation, there are seven Spirit, seven churches, seven golden lampstands, seven stars, seven hills, and seven sections in the Book.

“3 ½”: Three and one-half is the number that is one-half of perfection. The numbers 3 ½ or 42 months or 1,260 days all have the same meaning. They symbolize the imperfect, difficult, unhappy, and trying. It refers to a period of difficulty or deep longing for freedom. A period of 3 ½ speaks of time of patience and testing where the heart longs for better days. In Revelation the two witnesses preach “3 ½” years. The church was in the wilderness “3 ½” years. The court in the temple was trampled for “3 ½” years, which was a solemn reminder of the terrible days of Antiochus (171 B.C.).

If “4” is multiplied by “3” it equals the number “12.” Twelve is the number of religious organization on earth. There are 12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 gates in the Holy City. The 144,000 is “12” x “12,” a perfect organization of redeemed saints, the true Israel made up of believing Jews and Gentiles, the church of

⁹⁰ Revelation 12.

⁹¹ Revelation 13.

⁹² Revelation 17.

⁹³ One theory of the number 666, is that it represent Nero Caesar in the Hebrew consonant system. In Hebrew “Nero Caesar” is “Nron Ksr.” In the Roman system V = 5, X = 10, C= 100, etc. In Hebrew the numerical equivalent would be: N = 50, R = 200, O = 6, N = 50, K = 100, S = 60, R = 200 for a total of 666.

⁹⁴ Exodus 24:9.

God militant, known and sealed by God while doing their work for the Lord on a planet hostile to Christianity.

Apart from the symbolism of numbers in Revelation, there is an abundance of other figurative language: birds, beasts, persons, cities, elements of nature, weapons, qualities (light, darkness, etc.), and precious stones. All of these **are used as literary vehicles to convey truth**. They are not to be taken literally. Rather, they are to be interpreted in order to discover literal truth. “One cannot possibly approach the true interpretation of Revelation if he ignores this central characteristic” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, 1951, p. 25).

38 REVELATION 19: THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

The Kingdom is now and not-yet. It is present now by virtue of the fact Kingdom citizens are here on earth growing as wheat in God's field. But, the Kingdom has not yet been consummated. Futurists understand this section to refer to the second coming of Christ, the *Parousia* mentioned in 1 Thessalonians four, and the consummation of history.

The symbolic-apocalyptic view understands this as imagery pertaining to the present risen life of Christ warring on behalf of His people against the anti-God forces during the Christian age.

I hold to the symbolic-apocalyptic approach for following reasons: (a) the scene is a heavenly vision; (b) the white horse, blazing eyes, robe dipped in blood, and sword out of the mouth cannot possibly be a literal description of Christ. Rather the vision is an illustrative presentation of our Lord's command from heaven; (c) the warrior is symbolic and not literal; (d) the war is spiritual and not literal; (d) the context of this section is surrounded by iconic imagery, and (e) John's presentation is written in an apocalyptic, dramatic literary form suitable for his purpose of revealing the work of Christ in history. This image functions like a giant, full-page political cartoon we see in newspapers—a caricature of actual political events.

The vision before us is personified by the Rider on a white horse showing us how Christ wages war from His position in heaven. The vision shows us that it is through the gospel and the proclamation of the Word of God that He penetrates society to win souls and to root out evil. Christ will indeed come again, but this is not a picture of the Second Advent. It is an image of Christ coming in history to defeat His adversaries.

We have seen in previous chapters the defeat of the beast and the destruction of the great harlot. Now we see the means of that defeat and the sure and ultimate destiny of the unholy trio of evil.

38.1 The Great Warrior

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful (pistos) and True (alethinous), and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

The periscope of prophecy just announced the marriage supper of the Lamb, but what we see is a captain warrior and a mighty army arriving at a battlefield. The warrior can be interpreted in no other way than Christ. He is the One Who intercedes at the right hand God “above” us (Romans 8:34) and sends his Holy Spirit to help with our infirmities in us (Romans 8:26-27).

The white horse is not a literal horse. Christ does not come to fight the anti-God forces via the medium of a cavalry. The white horse is a symbol of conquest, of royal, military leadership, of a righteous cause, and of pure virtue – something that would make perfect sense to first-century readers and makes not sense to modern man infatuated with machines.

John identifies the Rider as “Faithful and True” as opposed to fraud and deception which characterized the beast, whore, and the devil. By “faithful” (pistos) John means that Jesus is dependable. By “true” (alethinos)⁹⁵ John means that Jesus is genuine, authentic, and real. The idea is that in Christ’s person and work, He is the “real deal.” Through Him, God is keeping His covenant with men. Ascended to the right hand of God, He acts in history to save his people and to defeat evil.

Revelation 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

The Savior is portrayed as having eyes as a flame of fire. This signifies his knowledge and intense focus. The crowns on his head are not literal figurines, but a florid image representing Christ having a victor’s authority by virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection to wage war against evil. He has achieved nothing but victories against the anti-God forces in history. He is the Victor over sin, over death, over temptation, over Satan. He is King of creation, and King of the new creation (Colossians 1:15-18). He, not Satan, rules the universe. He, not Caesar, must be obeyed. He is on the throne now as Head over “all rule (arche)⁹⁶ and authority” (Colossians 2:10). Is this how we see Jesus?

The fact that he has a name that no man knows indicates his personal depth of character as well as the fact that there is much about Christ that is incomprehensible to the mind of man. His ministry in heaven, his work of saving souls, and his conquest over evil in history is often invisible and unfamiliar. It remains a mystery.

Revelation 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

⁹⁵ Jesus is genuine and real in contrast to something that is disingenuous, fake, fictitious, or synthetic.

⁹⁶ Arche: the beginning of things, origin, first cause, ruling power, ruler, magistrates. It is people that occupy positions of power; that is, Christ is Head over all kings, officials, princes, and rulers.

Having a cloak dipped in blood is not literal of course but representative of seasoned experience in war — face-to-face, hand-to-hand, nose-to-nose combat. Our Lord is a battle-scarred Veteran of holy conflict. The blood here is not his own, but that of rebels splattered in a hack-and-cut brawl of a battlefield. His garment is stained with blood before the battle begins demonstrates that this is apocalyptic imagery, not prose. Reality, not sequence is the issue here. We are dealing with facts, not fiction. Like Miriam who was stunned to learn “The Lord is a man of war,” we need to consider that Jesus is more fierce than a “do or die” Spartan Warrior. Those who serve him will find themselves engaged in bloody combat for the truth of the gospel.

John now erases any ambiguity about the identity of this general. He is none other than the Word of God, the eternal *Logos* made flesh. Christ is the perfect representative of God, the complete revelation of the will of God, and the supreme reflection of God in bodily form. To see Him is to see God, and to obey Him is to obey the Living Torah (John 1:1, 14; 14:6-10; Colossians 1:15-18; 2:9).

Revelation 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

With whoops and hollers Christ leads the charge. Dressed in white, his army mounts white stallions to engage the kings of darkness. The strength of the saints is their holiness and pure devotion to the Savior. We are not told what they do or even that they participate in battle. Before us is a huge army, a symbol of hope and power and deliverance. We are on the winning side. The saints are more than conquerors through him that loved us not because Christians fight the war, but because they rely upon the victories and accomplishments of Another.

Some think the armies of heaven could be angels (Zechariah 14:5; Mk 8:38; Luke 9:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7); others believe the army represents the sum total of Christians who trust Christ and follow him in this life. Before us are captives who share in the conquest of our Lord and Savior—not defeated foes, but beneficiaries of His royal winnings (Romans 8:37; Ephesians 4:6ff; Colossians 1:9-14).

Revelation 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

His only weapon in the conflict of the ages is not in his hand, but in his mouth—the Word of God. He does not use the clanking, thundering, banging metal rods of muskets to force the retreat of His enemies. He uses persuasive arguments consistent with the Word of God on the bloody battlefield of public debate. Political adversaries lie like corpses before His gospel offensive. The imagery looks back to Isaiah 11:4 where He shall smite His enemies with the rod of His mouth. It is the power of the gospel rather than the exercise of brute force that achieves victory. Jesus wins souls, not by compulsion, but by persuasion; not by force, but by the faithfulness of his followers; not by coercion, but by the kindness of His people.

By using the terms “iron scepter” and “winepress of the wrath of God,” John informs Jewish readers that Jesus is Israel’s true messiah, and that He is the One through whom Yah advances the kingdom of God within the human race. Enough of man! We pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy rule be done.” And, the rule of God is extended when hearts surrender to the authority of the King of the nations as their Ruler and Lawgiver (Jeremiah10:7; Jeremiah32:22; James 4:12).

Here we understand the nature of this battle. This is a spiritual warfare. Christ does not wage war against the forces of evil with guns and tanks, but by proclamation of the gospel! It is through the Word of God that Christ defeats the anti-God forces, wins hearts, and judges men (Hebrews 4:12). He is seen here in the fierce capacity of treading the winepress of the wrath of God squashing lies and rooting out evil among men.

As a way of application, the early Christians would have taken courage from this image to proclaim the gospel to neighbors and friends in the Roman theater. This is why Christians involved in political struggles and cultural wars of our age must never stop quoting the Word of God. It is in the nature of things to be politically correct and not to appear religious. We drop our main weapon when we fail to quote the Bible in the arena of ideas because it irritates humanists.

When Christians stop quoting God’s Word, they lay down their swords and experience a loss of power and effectiveness. This does not mean Christian politicians must hammer people with Scripture, but it would be refreshing to hear Christian politicians quote an appropriate verse in critical debates. It is their honor to acknowledge the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of the Father. It is this truth that will defeat the decrepit ideas coming from tenets of atheistic humanism. Christ reigns; not Caesar; Christ rules the affairs of men; not the governments of this world.

Revelation 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Christ has a secret name that only He knows. The Church knows Him as “faithful and true.” The world knows Him as “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” If he rose from the dead, he conquered the greatest enemy of all and deserves the title “Lord.” By virtue of His exalted position to the right hand of God, He is our representative, King of kings. There is no potentate whose power exceeds that of Christ. All are responsible to Him and will one day stand before Him in their individual capacities to give account of their stewardship. Take off your crowns! Bow your heads, O kings. Jesus reigns!

38.2 The Great Supper

Revelation 19:17-18 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of

mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

To see an angel standing in the Sun was blinding. He calls to the birds of the air to come to a great supper. Beckoning to the call, John sees turkey vultures circling in the sky. Men are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. What we see in this vision is continuity with the proceeding visions announcing the defeat of the anti-God forces.

The background of this scene is found in Ezekiel 39:17-20. Foreseen is a supper -- a supper in contrast to the Marriage Supper of the lamb. This supper is for the carrion. Vultures, eagles, and crows are invited to attend this battle because of the tremendous slaughter that will take place in the land. But, this is not a literal slaughter with literal birds on a literal landscape. John's vision is logical and spiritual, not literal and geographical.

The main course at the banquet will be human flesh. This imagery is not literal but symbolic of utter defeat. Destroyed in this battle will be the great and the small, generals and privates, mercenaries and soldiers and any who accepted the mark of the beast. Regardless of wealth, or status, or sex, or achievement, all will bow the knee to Christ; that is, men can bow the knee now voluntarily, or bow the knee later by force.

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

The center figures in this campaign are the beast and his forces. This war is presented as the battle of the ages, the final showdown – a battle to the death. John wants his readers to understand that Rome was not fighting Christians, but the King of kings. Godless States arise because they hate the Christ; His Word; and His rule. The icy chill in the wrinkles on their brow are rows of murmurs against God's law order. Rulers are like angry roosters crowing with purple faces in protest against the authority of the highly exalted Christ.

There is no description of the battle. John described the defeat of the beast and the great whore in early chapters. John wants his readers to understand that Christ knows their trials, that in the mind of God, He has already defeated the ugly monster. The leviathan's demise is certain.

God wants us to understand the continuous process of history. The Lord Jesus is the central fact of history. His death, burial, and resurrection is the triumph of history; and, His ascension to the right hand of God must be embraced and acknowledge for the ongoing progress of civilization. The inauguration of the Lord Christ spells ultimate defeat for the anti-god forces.

39 THE LAMB WILL CONQUER THEM

Revelation 17:14 “They will fight with the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, for He is the Lord of lords, and King of kings.”

In touch with the news and the political turmoil of our time, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless. We need perspective, and the Apostle John provides this insight, not only to the first-century Christians, but to us. The Lamb is the victor!

Who said this? While on the Island of Patmos in the Greek Islands around 65-68 AD, the apostle John saw the living, ascended Christ in His session at the right hand of God in His royal robe splattered with blood.

Who is this Lamb? He is the Lord of lords; the Master and Ruler to whom all the potentates, kings, princes, prime ministers, presidents, congressmen, and parliamentary bureaucrats are accountable. He is the King of kings, the Prince of the Nations, Lawgiver, and Judge of all Mankind, Commander of all the angels, and the Royal Executor of the Divine Will.

With whom does He wage war and whom will He defeat? He is the ugly, hideous, unclean, banal, brutish, fire-breathing beast with iron teeth, the seven headed dragon-monster that rises out of sea of politics to whom all the kings of the earth lend their wealth and power.

The “them” represents all who owe their allegiance to the beast.

The Lamb defeats demons: Surely this wolf-pack of spirits can defeat one little Lamb. But, No! He has them at his feet begging not to be cast into the fires of eternal torment;

Luke 8:31 “And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.”

The Lamb defeats Rome and the Kings of the earth: Surely, the proud, pompous monarchs who control the world’s wealth and police forces can defeat the little Lamb! No! He spoiled principalities and powers by virtue of his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead (Colossians 2:15). At His Name, “Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord” (Philippians 2:11-12).

The Lamb defeats the Jews: Surely, the tight-knit money-magnets that control the economies of the world, international trade, and Babylon’s currency can defeat Christianity and the Lord Jesus Christ! No, one glance of the Lamb and they will Greek mourners (Revelation 1:7).

The Lamb defeats philosophers and educators: Surely, proud-flesh intellects that deny the truth of Scripture; that control academia and the universities of the world can out-smart the Lamb. No! Though they spread their form of knowledge through printing presses that run day and night, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are in the Lamb (Col. 2:3).

The Lamb defeats atheists: Surely, the proud-flesh of those who hate the Creator, the Word of God, and His law-order can prevail against the Lamb! No, He “scatters the bones of those that camp” against the Lamb (Psalm 53:1, 5).

The Lamb defeats scientists: Surely, NASA and all the evolutionists with all their industry and “science” will stamp out all faith in the Creator! No, the “heavens declare the glory of God,” and pure hearts will acknowledge the “Creator in the day of their youth” (Ps. 19:1; Eccl. 12:1).

The Lamb defeats the Media: Surely, the proud-flesh, spin misters that twist the news with their secular, religious bias, prejudice, and hate for the gospel will be able to propagandize the world to hate against the Lamb! No, His disciples are pure virgins that follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

The Lamb defeats Lawyers and BAR attorneys: Surely, these lecherous vipers from the pit of hell with their words of art and sophisticated sorceries will be able to prevent the saints from receiving their inheritance from the Lamb! No, voices from heaven have spoken, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15).

The Lamb defeats Feminists: Surely, loud butch women that push and shove their way through society killing babies, ruining families, and seeking franchises and privileges will be able to out shout, out fight, and out box, out run, out dispute, and out argue the Lamb! No, if the Lamb is able to make the great whore “naked and destitute,” He is able to humble the lesser.

The Lamb defeats Muslims: Surely, those who bear the sword of Ali ibn Abi Talib to stab and behead their way through the Middle East demanding people worship Allah or die can overcome the Lamb! No, by the grace of the Lamb, he saves some; the rest, He knows how “to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9).

The Lamb defeats Mystery Babylon and the NWO: Surely, the crown with its law merchant banks and commercial schemes that can induce, bribe, and finance their will among the nations can buy the Lamb? No, the Lamb is not for sale.

The Lamb defeats the DNC, the RNC, and Congress: Surely Congress and America’s political parties can create a law that will bind and control the Lamb! No, the Lamb will defeat these criminals and all their corporations and coalitions, “for out His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations”

Do you face enemies bigger than you—enemies aligned with the beast and his followers? Your enemies are His enemies, and the Lamb above all ravaging beasts in the Plaza de Tierra will defeat them all.

He is able

He is able to do

He is able to do above what you think

He is able to do above what you think or ask

He is able to do exceedingly above what you think or ask

He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what you think or ask

He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all what you think or ask according to the power at work within us! (Ephesians 3:20)

“Do not fret yourself because of evil doers” (Psalm 37:1)–

40 APPENDICES

41 THE BINDING OF SATAN

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound (e;dhsen) him for a thousand years.

41.1 The Issue

Amillennialists (AMs) interpret Satan's binding in Revelation 20 as descriptive of the church age. AMs interpret Satan's binding as relative — a limitation of his powers during this present age for the purpose of gospel proclamation.

Classical dispensationalists (CDs) interpret Satan's binding as a futuristic period identified as a 1000 year millennium for the purpose of civil control. CDs interpret Satan's binding as absolute—a total limitation of his powers during a proposed, future, interim millennium.

CDs fix Satan's binding as something absolute and literal, and therefore, make it difficult to consider any other interpretation. If the term "bound" (ejdasen) means absolute restriction so that Satan cannot move an inch, then CDs are correct. But if the imagery of binding (ejdasen) is figurative language sign-i-fied to depict limited power, then the AMs are correct.

At stake is the issue of the millennium, whether it is a present reality (amillennialism) or a future expectation.

41.2 The Questions

What is meant by Satan's binding? Is it a present reality or a future expectation? Is it absolute or relative? What material object can possibly bind a spirit?

41.3 A Look At Matthew

Jesus predicted Satan's defeat (Genesis 3:15), and his kingdom was assaulted during our Lord's ministry. What ever happened between Satan and Christ during his ministry, two truths must be observed: (A) Satan was free to roam and confront Christ, (B) but his power was resisted and overcome by Christ. Thus, Satan experienced some kind of defeat (binding) during Christ's ministry.

Mathew. 12:28, 29 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you (epthasen – Aorist). Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind (dh,sh|) the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

The imagery depicts Christ as an Invader in the house of Satan who comes to redeem men (spoil his goods) out from under Satan's authority. The word "bind" (deo) in Matthew 12:29 (an aorist subjunctive) is the same word as "bound" in Revelation 20 (deo -- an aorist, active indicative) are from the same root: "bind," "tie," "knit," or "wind" (Strong's).

The word "bind" is often used figuratively:

Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I go bound (deo) in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Romans 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound (deo) by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

The word "bound" (deo) in the verses above is the same word as found in Revelation 9:14 & 20:2. Both times the word "bound" (deo) is used in a spiritual, or illustrative sense. Neither are absolute. In both instances, the one bound has considerable freedom of movement.

Matthew ends with this statement: "**All power** in heaven and earth is given unto me" (Matthew 28:19). The word "*power*" (pa/sa evxousi,a) is the Greek word for *authority*. Who is in authority, Satan or Jesus? Who is defeated, Satan or Jesus? Who has limited power, Satan or Jesus?

The text says Jesus has ALL AUTHORITY, and if Jesus has all authority, Satan is restricted in what he can do. For this reason, Jesus was able to say, "Go in to all the world and make disciples." The apostles were **given assurance** that gospel proclamation would be successful because of the supremacy of Christ. Would you enroll as a missionary if you thought Christ was not reigning as Lord of lords and King of kings over your mission field?

41.4 A Look at Luke 10:18

Luke 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Jesus informs his disciples that Satan was being defeated in and through his ministry. The defeat was not absolute or final, but it was a real, substantial conquest.

41.5 A Look at John 12

The binding of Satan happened at the cross.

John 12:31-32 Now (vnun) is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (ekblhqhsetai). And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

What does “cast out” (ekballo) mean? It appears from the context that Satan was cast out of office, or out of authority over the world. He usurped authority at the fall, but lost his authority by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ. The defeat appears to be in reference to souls enabling our Lord to “steal” men out from underneath the powers of Satan and to “draw” men to himself. The language is not absolute, but relative to the cross.

The word “cast out” (ekballo) is the same word for “threw” (ballo) in Revelation 20:3. The language in chapter twelve fits well with John’s language in Revelation twenty. Satan was “cast out” in John 12:30 and “bound” according to Revelation 20:2 for the purpose of redemption. He is no longer permitted to completely “deceive the nations.” Historically, this is true. Christianity is a global religion. It accomplished what Judaism did not do, and it has accomplished what no other religion has ever done in so short of time — global occupation.

41.6 A Look at Acts 17:30

Acts 17:30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,

The “times of ignorance” refers to pre-cross history. The “now” (ta. nu/n) anticipates a new age, a period of gospel proclamation and the time where God makes saints out of pagans. This has become possible because the Lord defeated Satan at the cross by virtue of His resurrection; and in part, because Satan has been cast out of a position of power — a sort of spiritual binding (Blaising & Block, 1993).

41.7 A Look at Ephesians

The binding is real, but does not appear to be final and absolute; rather, Satan no longer has universal, global, unabridged deceptive powers. In some way, his deceptions are restrained. C.B. Hoch, contributor to Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church, argues that Ephesians chapter two should be interpreted historically, not personally. That is, one should not read the passage subjectively as if Paul is discussing the Christian's personal experience, but historically as a soteriological summary of the Christ's accomplishments through the cross—a contrast of pre and post cross realities (Blaising & Block, 1993) .

*Ephesians 2:2-3 Wherein in time past ye (Gentiles) walked according to the course of this world (pagan history), according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we (lost humanity) all had our conversation in times past (BC) in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
(Parenthesis, my comments.)*

Hoch is correct in saying the Gentile soteriological status that has changed. In one sense, Ephesians chapter two portrays Gentile history as the Gentiles Before Christ (B.C.) and After Christ (A.D.). Furthermore, the context must relate to chapter one that notes the exaltation of Christ in the two ages: this age and Age to Come. Though Hoch may disagree with the comparison, his interpretation of Ephesians two fits nicely with the concept of Satan's limited binding in Revelation 20.

Another reason for believing in Satan's binding is Christological: Since Christ has "all authority" given to him (Matthew 28:19), and all things are "under his feet" (Ephesians 1:21, 22), then Satan does not have unlimited power. Christ possesses all authority. If Satan is unbound, then what is Paul's point in insisting that Christ is seated in authority "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:21)?

Surely, Paul is not saying Christ is out of reach of Satan's powers. He asserts **Christ rules over Satan now!** If Christ is now reigning and Satan is under his feet, then Satan's powers are limited! Possibly, Satan's defeat is legal and forensic. He has lost his battle in the Supreme Court of Heaven, but has yet to be fully incarcerated. Legally, Satan is under a restraining order. Consequently, the elect experience injunctive relief from his magician's tricks.

41.8 A Look at Colossians

*Colossians. 2:14-15 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having **spoiled** principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

The word for “spoil,” *apekduomai*, means “to wholly put off from one’s self” (denoting separation from what is put off) (Strong’s). Here the idea is that through the cross, Satan has been stripped of his power at the cross much like a traitorous soldier is stripped of his rank at a court martial. He is not annihilated, but neutered. He is not destroyed, but disarmed.

41.9 A Look at Hebrews

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy (katarghsh) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

What is meant by the word “destroy?” Again, the word appears to indicate a major defeat. The Greek word *katarghsh* means “to render idyll,” “to subdue,” “to make inoperative.” The word does not mean to annihilate, but to abrogate or nullify. At the cross, Satan suffered a major crippling, but his defeat is not absolute or comprehensive.

An example of this could be like the search for Osama Ben Laden. When the Taliban was routed in Afghanistan by the American armed forces, the Taliban was crushed. The U.S. army gained quick control and was in power in that country. A remnant of the Taliban still survived in the mountains and at the time of the writing Osama Ben Ladin was uncaptured. Ben Laden was cast out of power, but still lived. He was alive but bound in the sense he was not free to roam the world. His movements were limited to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Likewise, in the Gulf War II, the Iraqi forces were completely crushed. Within weeks, the U.S. gained complete air and ground supremacy over Iraq. However, a small resistance force continued to engage in terrorism. In the same way, Satan was crushed at Calvary, but like terrorists Satan continues to manage a resistance force in the world today.

41.10 A Look at Revelation 20

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

One should immediately notice the words “key,” “bottomless pit,” and “chain.” What kind of chain can bind a spiritual being? What kind of pit can contain Satan?

The language is definitely figurative. The imagery before the reader is brushed on the canvas of our imagination to assure the original readers that Satan is a defeated foe. The purpose of this binding is so he

will not “deceive the nations no more.” To quibble about “binding” being literal is to fail to grasp the symbolic intention of apocalyptic imagery.

41.11 The Main Objection to Limited Binding

Dispensationalists interpret the binding of Revelation 20 as plenary, though not final; as something related to the future, not to this present dispensation. They register their objection: How can anyone look around and see all the evil in the world, and say, “Satan is bound?” Does not Peter tell us that Satan is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour? Dispensationalists have a point—a big point!

In H. W. Hoehner’s work, “Evidence from Revelation 20,” in the book, *A Case for Premillennialism, a New Consensus by Campbell and Townsend* (1992), he argues that Satan is not bound or limited in this present age and he cites the following references: 1 Peter 5:8; Acts 5:3; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:21 Timothy 2:26. He goes on to say, “It seems that Satan has not been bound since Christ’s first advent” (Hoehner, 1992, p. 250).

41.12 Answering the Objection

The CDs’ argument is conceived primarily by experiential knowledge. Who has not felt the powers of evil? Many believers can testify to inexplicable encounters with sin’s power. But, the opposite is also true. Many believers can testify to experiential freedom from Satan’s power. In relation to the former, very few, if any, will testify to a direct, verifiable confrontation with the Prince of Darkness Himself. The argument from experience is subjective and becomes a double-edged sword.

If Scripture says Satan is bound, then Satan is bound!! The job of the interpreter is to determine the extent of that binding by Scripture, not by experience. Hoehner (1992) cites several verses in his favor, but his statement, “It seems that Satan has not been bound since Christ’s first advent” (p. 250), appears to contradict clear statements that Satan was bound during our Lord’s ministry (Matthew 12:28, 29; John 12:31-32).

The Scripture stands solid on the historical defeat of Satan, but this does not infer that every man, woman, and child is free from spiritual tyranny. The Scripture does not deny Satan’s freedom to seek and to devour; rather, Scripture insists his power is limited when it comes to global deception. Before the cross, Satan appears to have had a global grip on the minds and hearts of humanity historically. After the cross, Satan has suffered defeat on every continent in every generation historically during the church era.

The Scripture informs us that Satan’s defeat began during the Christ event, but that it is not yet consummated. His final defeat will occur at the *Parousia* of Christ (2 Thessalonians 1, 2). Premillennialists do not disagree with this.

Limited as to deception: Scripture leads us to view Satan's defeat as firm, but partial and focused. That is, he is restricted from deceiving all the people in all the nations completely. His binding is closely associated with the missionary activities of the disciples (Luke 10:18) and the present missionary program of the church:

*"**All power** is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:18-20). (Emphasis added).*

Christ is in authority, not Satan! Acts 2:32-36 and Ephesians 1:19ff make it clear that Jesus is reigning on God's throne as part of His present risen life. Revelation paints a picture of Christ on the throne with the scroll of authority in HIS HAND. Satan is prevented from squashing the spread of the gospel to the nations of the world. The making of disciples among the nations is possible because Satan's power is limited (Hoekema, 1979). If we look at the binding as limited instead of absolute, this passage makes sense. *Jesus, not Satan, is Lord of this age!* Is not this the message of Revelation -- that Jesus is in control of the unfolding events of history?

The timing of Satan's release: Another argument for the view of Satan's binding comes from the concept of Satan's release from the pit. When does it occur?

Revelation 9 & 12 mentions Satan's release from the pit. Both passages put this release prior to the *Parousia* of Christ. Does not the release in Revelation 20 parallel the release in chapter nine? Or, does his release, as dispensationalists insist, occur after a supposed 1000 year millennium? If one takes the dispensationalist's view, then one has two bindings and two releases. This is why some critics accuse dispensationalists of multiplying categories.

It appears the better interpretation is to understand that Satan was bound once, during our Lord's ministry, and that he is released once for a short time towards the end of the church age to deceive the nations once more. At that time he will furiously rally his troops to pursue the people of God and to mount a rebellion against the gospel which will culminate in the battle of God and Magog (Revelation 20:8). His release in Revelation 20 references to his activity towards the end of this age, before Christ's *Parousia*, not at the end of an interim millennium.

The redemptive reign of Jesus in His Kingdom: One of the difficulties dispensationalism has with the limited binding of Satan is their view of Christ's Kingdom. Classical dispensationalists interpret the Kingdom as the Davidic Messianic Kingdom, offered to Israel, rejected by Israel, then postponed.

This view, I believe, is incorrect. If Christ offered Israel a Davidic, Messianic Kingdom, they would have gladly received it (See John 6)! Matthew 12: 28-30 also makes it clear that Christ's mission was redemptive, not political. John 12:32 clearly states that it is through the cross, not through His life, that

Christ draws all men to himself. The Lord came, not to install a Davidic Kingdom, but to deliver men out from underneath the power and authority of Satan and to bring them under Kingdom blessing — the gifts of the *Eschaton*. His mission was invasive. He tied up the “Strong Man” (Satan) and spoiled his goods, and is still spoiling his goods by making Christians out of pagans. The failure to see Christ’s mission as spiritual and redemptive clouds the truth that Christ reigns and all power is given unto Him.

The purpose of the statement: Why would Satan’s binding be included in apocalyptic literature as applying to this age? Quite possibly, Satan’s binding was intended to encourage the original readers. Imagine what it would be like in the first century knowing the beloved apostles were martyred. Think of the insecurity that blanketed the church in the Roman Empire. It appeared to these readers that Christianity was being defeated. Revelation 20 would encourage believers to know Satan does not have absolute power and that the gospel will be a victorious, formidable force in the first century and the centuries to come for good. In one sense, the church is invincible. It fights at the gates of hell “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:17-19).

In conclusion, the binding of Satan refers to His defeat in and through the cross of Christ. Satan is not in control of the universe. Jesus is Lord. Jesus reigns and is charge of history. The gospel will continue to win the hearts and minds of people, in part, because Satan no longer has unlimited power to deceive the nations.

Despite their overthrow, the powers of darkness have not yet conceded their defeat; they continue to contest every inch of their territory. The kingdom of Satan retreats only as the kingdom of God advances. (Stott, What Christ Thinks of the Church: An Exposition of Revelation 1-3, 2003: 58)

42 IDENTITY OF THE MAN OF SIN

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

42.1 Thesis

The thesis of this study is that the “Man of Sin ” or “man of lawlessness” in II Thessalonians 2 is not the theological antichrist as commonly defined by eschatology teachers, but an individual man under the influence of Satan who transgresses the laws of God. (Yes, the Pope is one of those men).

42.2 Importance

Daily across the air waves of America, eschatology teachers advance the theory that we are in the last days, that Europe is going to unite into a ten nation confederation and elect a super leader known as the Antichrist who will invade modern Israel, enter the 4th temple constructed in Jerusalem, proclaim himself to be God, and to initiate the final holocaust against those who call themselves “Jews⁹⁷.” “The man of lawlessness” in II Thessalonians is used to support this view that a single ruler will control the world during the supposed tribulation period that is supposedly just around the corner.

These teachers are not ungodly, non-Christian men, but genuine, sincere students of Scripture. The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it is a worldview that affects people’s choices in life, in politics, and in finances. Eschatology is the study of last things and one’s view of the future controls daily life. People make decisions based on their view of the future for good or bad. Take Y-2k for example. Many Christians stockpiled food in their pantry because they united their eschatology with the supposed computer crisis. The view that the “Man of Sin” is the Antichrist is a pillar in some eschatological schemes. II Thessalonians is pivotal in the debate.

⁹⁷ In Biblical times, Jews were those of Semitic descent from Judah. When Christ came, all true Jews put their faith in Christ to form spiritual Israel. False Jews did not believe, and John called them “those who call themselves ‘Jews’, but are not” (Revelation 2:9, 3:9). The majorities of those who call themselves “Jews” today are of European descent (Ashkenazim), and have no Semitic blood in them. They are “Jews” by faith, not bloodline (See Genesis 10:1-3 on the blood line of Ashkenazim).

We do the best we can to interpret Scripture correctly so that life may be lived correctly. I believe the single Antichrist concept is false and produces false expectations about the future and how we ought to respond to life.

42.3 Identity of the “man of lawlessness”

Man, deceived by Satan, forsakes God's laws for his own. Unregenerate men often oppose God and exalt themselves among men. The Christian man is the lawful man, but he who forsakes God's laws is the antinomian man or the *man of lawlessness* (sinful man). The lawless man is simply one who transgresses the laws of God. The man of lawlessness is any man who is deceived by Satan, forsakes God's laws, and seeks to rule God's Temple as if he himself were a god.

This man is not some future supernatural Anti-Christ or Satan's incarnate figure. The Man of Sin is unregenerate mankind at work among Christians. In Paul's time, the Man of Sin would be any Jew or Gentile apostatizing from the faith. Lawless man is one who forsakes God's Word to be his own authority in order to rule in the House of the Lord (*Church*) — the place where God alone should rule the hearts and minds of men.

Anyone whom Satan uses to attack the Church from within fits the description of the Man of Sin. In Paul's day, the Judaizers who Paul called “enemies of the cross”⁹⁸ slipped into individual churches hoping to turn Jewish Christians back to Judaism. But, it could be any man who abandons God's law and replaces it with man-made statutes. For this reason, the Reformers considered the Pope as the man of sin. They were correct. The Man of Sin is a son of perdition, a child of the devil, and the man of lawlessness found in the temple as described in II Thessalonians 2:1-13.

42.4 Observations about the Text

Three problems are addressed in II Thessalonians: lawlessness (a nomos: 2:3), unrighteousness (a dikia: 2:12), and unruliness (ataktos: 3:6). All begin with the negative “a.” All three refer to the behavior of individuals who are self-ruled. Before us is the autonomous man -- a humanist and anarchist.

The word “lawless” (anomos) means “without law” and is translated *iniquity* or *wickedness* or *lawless* in the N.T. Jesus addressed those that work iniquity or produce iniquity (Matthew 7:23) and it is used in conjunction with a plural participle. In Matthew 13:41, Jesus spoke of a time when the workers of iniquity (plural participle) would be expelled from His Kingdom. John labeled the sinning ones as lawless men doing lawlessness (anomia). The word “lawless” is anomos (avnomi,aj), and it means “without law.”

⁹⁸ Philippians 4:18

The mystery of lawlessness appears to represent the work of unprincipled men in history. Lawlessness was already at work in Paul's day, but it had not reached maturity or the age of apostasy. Apparently, Paul is telling us that lawlessness is being restrained, but one day that restraint will be removed. Possibly, this is a reference to the end-time activity of Satan as mentioned in Revelation 20:7ff).

Paul was concerned that some minds in Thessalonica were being disturbed and troubled by a false report. This false report spread through Judaizers. He warned them about being deceived with a double negative (mh,, and mhde,na). The word "falling away" is the word apostasy⁹⁹ (h` avpostasi,a). It refers to a political revolt in Maccabees 2:15 and is translated "forsake" in Acts 21:21. In Paul's day, some Jews who embraced the gospel apostatized from the faith through false teachers seeking to lead them back into Judaism—a system that replaced God's law with the rabbinic tradition – a type of legalism on steroids (Matthew 15:1ff). Paul is either referring to the problem in his day or to a future day when many would abandon the Christian faith.

The word "revealed" (avpokalufqh/)¹⁰⁰ can mean the disclosure of hidden things (Matthew 10:26; Matthew 11:25), revelation of new knowledge (Matthew 11:27; 16:17), exposure of hidden thoughts (Luke 2:35), an unveiling of something hidden (Luke 12:2; Philippians 3:5), a revelation to man's mind (John 12:28; Romans 1:17, 1 Corinthians 2:10), an historical display (Romans 1:18), a manifestation of something hidden (1 Corinthians 3:13), a revelation of ideas or prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:3), something hidden in history that comes to light in time (Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 3:5), something that shall be revealed in the future (1 Peter ; 5:1).

The word "revealed" is used three times in II Thessalonians chapter 2. All three references appear to represent the unveiling of the lawless one, that is, full exposure that enables everyone to clearly see and understand the true nature of the transgressor. The true nature or the identity of a man is not always apparent. But, when Christ returns, he will ignite the light of truth and separate the sheep from the goats.

The word "perdition" means "destruction" or "perish." It is translated "destruction" (Matthew 7:13), and "waste" (Matthew 26:8), Judas as the "son of perdition" (John 17:12), "perish" (Acts 8:12), the end of evil doers (Philippians 1:28; 3:19), evil, negative consequences of a lustful life (1 Timothy 6:9), and judgment of false teachers (1 Peter 2:1; 2:3; 3:7).

The term "son of perdition" simple refers to one who is going to be destroyed by God's judgment.

⁹⁹ h` avpostasi,a is a nominative noun. The verb "come" is an aorist subjunctive. The phrase should be translated, "lest the apostasy come first." It is translated as an accusative noun in Acts 21:21, "to forsake Moses." Paul was charged with apostasy telling Jews not to circumcise their children. The word "lest" (eva.n mh) or "if not" is a negative condition of the third class.

¹⁰⁰ The word "revealed" (avpokalufqh/) is an aorist, passive, subjunctive, 3rd person, singular.

The second coming was definitely not imminent during Paul's day because certain things must happen first, namely the apostasy and the exposure of lawless men. Apparently, Paul is informing us that before "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him" (2:1) there will be a great apostasy characterized by antinomianism in the church.

The word "temple" in Paul's writings refers to (a) the temple in Jerusalem, (b) the human body as a temple, or (c) the church as a temple, (d) pagan temples. To what is Paul referring in this chapter? This is an interpretive decision.

Out of the eight times Paul uses the term *temple* (naos), the term is used seven times as a reference to the church¹⁰¹. Why would Paul care about the temple in Jerusalem in the old order since God was dwelling in His new temple among believers?

It appears this reference to **the temple** also **refers to the church as a temple** (naos).

Consider the following reasons: (a) this passage refers to the *Parousia*; (b) the temple in Jerusalem was marked for destruction (Matthew 24:1-3); (c) the problem addressed in II Thessalonians is one of harassment by evil doers towards the church; (d) the church as the temple of God was a pinnacle revelation to the Apostle that cannot be underestimated or over appreciated (See Ephesians 2:21); and (e) the man of lawlessness appears to reference individual men (lawless men) that set themselves up in local churches as false teachers that lead people astray from gospel truth.

You have known the one restraining (2:6): The "restrainer" has been interpreted as Michael the archangel, the Antichrist, governments, the Holy Spirit, the church, Ananias the priest, and the power of God. Since Christ binds the Devil in Revelation 20:1-2 and since only Christ can unbind the Devil, it appears to this interpreter the restrainer refers either to Christ or the power of God as the One who restrains evil.

The phrase that the wicked shall be revealed and destroyed **at the "brightness" of his *Parousia*** is the Greek word *epiphaneia* referring to Christ's notable or conspicuous appearing or manifestation. The revealing of the lawless one and his destruction are closely related to the *Parousia* of Christ. Lawless men hiding in the church spreading lies is not always apparent to everyone. Not until the *epiphaneia* (brightness) of the *Parousia* will antinomian men be fully exposed and destroyed.

¹⁰¹ The term *naos* (**nao.j**) refers to the inner sanctuary of the temple where the Shekinah glory dwelled. Paul, however, uses this holy term to describe the true temple, the church, the Christian people among whom God dwells: I Corinthians 3:16; 17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21.

The phrase “whose coming is after the working of Satan” refers to the lawless man whose “presence” (*Parousia*) among men is energized by Satan. In one sense, the lawless man is Satan’s man who works by his power to deceive those who are perishing.

The phrase “God shall send them strong delusion” (2:11) refers either to the fact that God has the power to restrain evil or that he sends unshackle the power of deceit to work through lawless men. Paul teaches even deception is under the sovereign control of God. God orders deception toward those who take pleasure in unrighteousness and towards those lawless men who are going to perish.

42.5 Interpretation

Paul seeks to comfort the believers in Thessalonica who were being afflicted by adversaries (1:6-12; 2:13-17). Second, he seeks to correct a false report that the day of the Lord had come and gone (2:1-2). Paul saw a day of apostasy coming when sheep would depart from the faith and goats would lead people astray. The unrighteous, *adikia* (2:12) and *lawless* (anomos) appear to be **one category of mankind**. The believers are the other category of mankind called “beloved” (2:13). The lawless man does not “know God” (1:8), “obey the gospel” (1:8), or “love the truth” (2:9). He is destined to be punished (1:8) and be destroyed (2:9) when Christ returns. Believers on the other hand are chosen (2:13), sanctified (2:13), loved (2:16) and destined to share in the glory of Christ when he returns (2:15-16).

The lawless one is any person who rejects the truth, opposes God, exalts himself, and achieves power in the temple (naos; the church) as anthropocentric man — a sort of god in order to deceive those who are perishing (2:3-9).

I conclude the “man of lawlessness” is simply the individual transgressor under the control of Satan who opposes God. He hates what God loves and loves what God hates. He will be destroyed along with all lawless men who resist the gospel and seek to subvert the truth. Paul talked about “those” (plural) who will be punished for disobedience in chapter 1, and in chapter 2 he discusses the lawless man (singular) who will be exposed and destroyed at Christ’s *Parousia*. The reality, however, is that the lawless one is not easily identified in this world by nominal minds. Wheat and tares sometimes look alike. Sheep and goats graze together. The separation will take place when Christ returns. At that time the lawless will be fully exposed and destroyed.

42.6 Problems with this view:

This position is not without difficulties. However, accepting this view solves doctrinal problems in the whole of things.

42.7 Evidence for this View

2 Thessalonians was written to help the believers at Thessalonica to understand the nature of the resistance against them, to comfort the oppressed, and to correct the misnomer that the day of the Lord had come and gone.

The Thessalonians were not strangers to hostile resistance of the gospel. They were a persecuted people and Paul identifies the Man of Sin as one of those persecutors. *The difficulty with identifying the Man of Sin is the fact that the Man of Sin is referred to in the singular in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.*

Paul experienced resistance against the gospel by unregenerate Jews who eventually ran him out of town (Acts 17:1ff). The gospel was hindered by unbelieving countrymen in Thessalonica who were under the control of Satan (1Thess. 2:18; II Thess.2:8-12). Likewise, the lawless man hinders the gospel.

Paul identifies these men as hostile, unregenerate Jews that sought to hinder the gospel in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). The Man of Sin fits this category.

Paul discussed this hostility in the context of the Lord's coming (*Parousia*). By setting up a Greek dualism between the sons of darkness and sons of the light, Paul contrasted the destiny of the unbelieving and the destiny of the righteous (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9). The Man of Sin is identified with the sons of darkness because he is under the control of Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

This dualism or contrast between the wicked and their destruction and the righteous and their salvation is a common theme throughout Scripture (Ezekiel 38-39; Zechariah 14; Matthew 3:10-12; 13:1ff; Ephesians 5:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5; 2 Thessalonians 1). The lawless man is set in contrast to Christians who were lawful men.

In Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, he addressed the affliction of believers in Thessalonica by opponents of the gospel and promised that God will punish their adversaries when Christ is revealed from heaven. In chapter one, we can see two groups of people: (a) those (toi/j) who do not know God and do not obey the gospel (1:8), and (b) the Thessalonian believers who know God and obey His commandments. The Man of Sin is part of "those" who do not know God and do not obey the gospel. The "those" (toi/j) who persecuted the believers are identified as antinomian men.

2 Thessalonians two was written to correct a false report circulating among the Thessalonians that the "day of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 5:2ff; 2 Thessalonians 2:2) had already passed. Paul wrote this section of his letter to correct false claims. Two events must happen before Christ returns: (a) the apostasy, and (b) the exposure of lawless men.

As reported in argument two, the difficulty with identifying the Man of Sin is the fact that the Man of Sin is referred to in the singular in 2 Thessalonians chapter two. Notice the following facts: (a) Paul speaks of adversaries plural in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, adversaries plural in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8, and adversaries

plural in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. However, in the middle of addressing this hostility Paul identifies the individual nature of the men who persecuted the Thessalonians. The individual persecutor was a lawless man (οὐ νόμιμος) in 2:3.

Why then does Paul discuss plural resistance (chapter 1), then singular resistance 2:1-9), then plural resistance (2:10-12)?

The author read 2:2-9 as if Paul was seeking to discuss lawless men or antichrists as a group of hostile forces. Take for example, this reading of the text with plural references:

2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that men of lawlessness are revealed, the sons of perdition;

2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth themselves above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that they as Gods sitteth in the temple of God, shewing themselves that they are gods.

This **makes** sense, but as you can see, using the plural has literary difficulties, and it creates theological difficulties. For example, if Paul used the term *lawless men* as the ones setting themselves up as God in the temple we would be left with the false impression that a **group of men** or a **board of evil men** might rule in the temple. This seldom happens. Rather, the rule of evil usually happens by the apotheosis of a single maniacal individual to a position of power.

Quite possibly, Paul refers to *lawless men* (pl) as a *lawless man* (sing.) to reduce the transmission difficulty of discussing subjects in the plural. In addressing some subjects, it is easier to use the singular such as *I, it, he, or she* rather than *they, them, and those*. This could be the case here.

It appears that the lawless man (sing.) is really lawless men (pl.) **or lawless mankind**. Paul uses the singular number to address the anti-God forces in order to reduce the conversive difficulties of addressing his immediate subject in the plural number. Because the man of lawlessness “opposes” God (2:4), he may properly be called an antichrist.

A question to remember is this, “Does the term *antichrist* refer to a singular person or to a plurality of persons?” That is, does the term “antichrist” refer to a singular antichrist or a plurality of antichrists?

The term “antichrist” appears to apply to the appearance of plural antichrists¹⁰² in history rather than a single individual unless it is I John 2:18 (avnti,cristoj)¹⁰³. However, antichrists do not come in bunches or

¹⁰² References to the term “antichrists” or “antichrist”: I John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).

as a board of elders in churches, they are represented by single individuals in given localities who make up the whole classification of antichrists who oppose Christianity. In the first century . . . as well as today, the Jews are identified as antichrists.

The description of the Man of Sin is not unique. Paul's description of the lawless man fits all lawless men: lawless (2:3), doomed to destruction (2:3), opposes God (2:4), exalts himself (2:5), sets himself up as God (2:5), in league with Satan (2:9), deceptive (2:9), refuses to love the truth (2:9), deluded (2:10), believes a lie (2:10), delights in wickedness (2:10), is now restrained by God (2:6), will be overthrown when Christ returns (2:8). Does this not describe the unregenerate? Does it not describe lawless man?

Lawlessness was already at work, but it is now restrained until the end of the age when Satan will be released to create the day of apostasy referred to in Revelation 20:8-11. Paul argues that the day of the Lord had not yet come because the day of apostasy, the day when a clear division between God's people and Satan's people had not yet arrived in history. The word "revealed" (avpokalufqh/, apokalypse) can mean "exposed." That is, while the mystery of lawlessness is at work now, lawless men are not clearly exposed as such and will not be clearly exposed until Christ's *Parousia*, at which time, they will be destroyed.

The temple (2:4) could refer to (a) the temple that was still standing in Paul's day, or (b) a future temple, or (c) the church. If it was the temple in Paul's day, the interpreter must look for a fulfillment before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. If Paul is referring to a future time then the interpreter must look for literal rebuilding of a temple by the Jews sometime in the future. If the temple is the same in 2 Thessalonians as Paul iterates in Ephesians 2:18ff, then the interpreter must see the temple as the house of God or the gathering of the people of God.

In my own thinking, Paul knew and insisted on Christians understanding that God now dwells in his church, not temples made with hands.

If Paul is being consistent, then we must see the temple (vaos) as the church of Jesus Christ.

Identifying the man of lawlessness as unregenerate man as opposed to regenerate men is consistent with other contrasts in Scripture.

- The house of Israel (God's People) vs. Gog & Magog (Ezekiel 38 & 39)
- Jerusalem vs. the nations (Zechariah 14)

¹⁰³ 1 John 2:18 (Greek font) Paidi,a(evsca,th w(ra evsti,n(kai. kaqw.j hvkou,sate o(ti avnti,cristoj e;rcetai(kai. nu/n avnti,cristoi polloi. gego,nasin(o(qen ginw,skomen o(ti evsca,th w(ra evsti,nÅ (Note the term "antichrist" is a singular, inarticulate, nominative noun.).

- Baptism of the Holy Spirit vs. baptism of fire (Matthew 3)
- Wheat vs. Tares (Matthew 13)
- Good fish vs. Bad fish (Matthew 13)
- Goats vs. sheep (Matthew 25)
- Flesh vs. Spirit (Romans 8)
- Sons of light vs. Sons of darkness (1 Thessalonians 5).
- The man of lawlessness vs. the lawful man or Christian man

In conclusion, the “man of lawless” means exactly what it says, the lawless man is the individual transgressor who disobeys the gospel and infiltrates the church opposing God and leading others astray.

He is **not** THE SUPER ANTICHRIST of modern eschatological schemes, but one of many antichrists who deceive unbelieving people. He is the man, the individual, who transgresses the laws of God. He is the individual man in society who loves sin and opposes God. He is the “liberal” pastor that gains access to the pulpit to deny the veracity of Scripture. All female pastoreses fit the description of the lawless anthropos (1 Timothy 2:11-15). The lawless man is set in contrast to Christian men who are lawful men. He who forsakes God's laws or the gospel is the lawless man or the man of lawlessness (sin). These kind of men will continue to exist and deceive many until the *Parousia* of Christ, at which time, the Lord will destroy them by the Word of His mouth.

43 INTERPRETING MATTHEW 24

43.1 Interpretive Positions

Consistent Preterism: Preterists interpret Matthew 24:1-51 as applying exclusively to the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by Titus.

Difficulty: The most difficult interpretive hurdle to overcome for consistent preterism is how to explain verses 29-31 and what it means for the “Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.” It sounds like “second coming” language. Furthermore, consistent Preterists tend to link every prophecy in the N.T. with the events of 70 AD. Something not conceivable!

Partial Preterism: Partial Preterists assert the passage does indeed apply primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem, but insist that part of the passage applies to the *Parousia* of Christ. They divide the two subjects as follows:

Matthew 24:1-28 refers to the destruction under Titus; 29ff refers to the second coming.

Matthew 24:1-35 refers to the destruction under Titus; 36ff refers to the second coming.

Difficulty: The word “immediately” in verse 29 connects the following instructions to the events in 1-28. Furthermore, the supposed divisions seem artificial.

Futurism: Futurism sees the events in Matthew 24 as applying completely to the events preceding the *Parousia* of Christ. Some may allow for some type of double fulfillment or see a shadow fulfillment in 70 A.D.; i.e., linking some application to 70 A.D. while applying the bulk of the passage to the *Parousia*.

Difficulty: Futurism minimize the main subject of the passage which is the destruction of the temple (24:1-2) and the announcement of Jesus of the end of the Jewish nation (23:38). It is built on a dispensational priori and its end time schemes.

Typological: This is similar to Futurism. Those who use the typological method get the “cake” and “eat it too.” These scholars agree that it refers to the destruction of 70 AD, but insist that the destruction of 70 AD was merely a shadow or a type of the end of the cosmos; that the tribulation of 70 AD is a shadow of a “great tribulation” which is to occur before Christ comes in the future.

Difficulty: What is the basis, principle, or hermeneutic that allows a “double fulfillment” of this passage? That is, on what authority can such an interpretation rest? This view gives too much credit to view that

there are two questions in verse three instead of one¹⁰⁴. It assumes the disciples knew exactly what they were asking in verse three; that is, they understood future history very well. Something improbable.

43.2 Preterist Interpretation of Matthew 24

What is the evidence that Matthew 24 should be interpreted preteristically?

8. John warned that wrath was near and that the ax was already laid at the root of the tree. He warned that the Messiah would clear the threshing floor and burn up the chaff (Matthew 3:10).
9. Jesus warned the “sons of the Kingdom” (unbelieving Jews) would be cast out into outer darkness (Matthew 8:11).
10. Jesus invited men to come to him (Matthew 11:28, 29). Subsequently, He reinstated a new Israel centered around Himself the Rock of God (Matthew 16:18) — a new nation of believing people without spatial boundaries or geographical limitations.
11. Jesus said, “Some of you standing here will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). Jesus speaks of the death of the disciples. Thus, He had to come in His Kingdom before all of them died. If he is predicting the transfiguration in chapter seventeen which happened a week later, why then did he speak of their death? Preterists believe this passage was fulfilled in 70 AD. From His position as Messiah at the right hand of God, Jesus ordered judgment upon the wicked nation in 70 AD; i.e., the coming spoken of here is not the *Parousia* at the end of history, but a coming in time for judgment as the glorified Lord and Christ.
12. Jesus cursed the barren fig tree, a symbol of Israel (See Hosea 14:6), and said to it, “No longer shall there ever any fruit from you” (Matthew 21, NASB). The verb *ge,nhtai* is a middle imperative or subjunctive. The command is extended into “the age” (aeon); i.e., is a permanent condition. The curse of the tree was a symbolic pronouncement of judgment upon the unbelieving nation. Just as the tree shriveled up and died, so Israel as geo-political instrument of God shriveled up and died in 70 A.D.
13. Matthew 23 is the announcement of impending judgment on Jewish leaders. Matthew 23 is closely connected with Matthew 24 which announces the impending judgment on Jerusalem. He says, “*Your house is left unto you desolate;*” i.e., *a desert*. After 70 AD, Palestine turned into a desert and remained so for 2000 years.

¹⁰⁴ The views of the disciples were not fully developed at this time on the Kingdom of God. In their minds, the destruction of the temple would be the end of the world. Jesus knew this and therefore included “correctives” in the Olivet Discourse. See how Jesus was correcting His disciples: 24:6, 15, 23, 26, 36.

14. Matthew 23:36 mentions “this generation” and it speaks of Christ’s generation, not a distant generation. Interpreting “this generation” as “Christ’s generation” supports the Preterist’s view.
15. Matthew 24 appears to be not only a response to the disciples’ questions, but *a corrective* to their thinking. What error circulated in the minds of the disciples? Ans: They mistakenly thought the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the age were closely connected. Jesus’ teaching corrects this misinterpretation. Some think the key question is about “the end of the age.” But, this is not so. The key question is about when the beautiful, glorious temple structure would be destroyed. We must not read into this question modern eschatological schemes and or to assume the disciples were even acquainted with premillennial dispensationalism or other modern theological blueprints.
16. The handing over of the believers to be persecuted and the declaration that the gospel would be preached to the whole world (v. 14) can easily refer to the first century persecution and proclamation (Acts 2:5, 11; Romans 1:8; Romans 10:17-18; Colossians 1:6, 23).
17. We should let Luke 19:43-44: 23:28-31 interpret Matthew, the “abomination of desolation” (erhmosews) of desolation as the Romans Armies which surrounded and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. We should not think of the abomination as some destruction of the city in the Eschaton.

Mark and Luke also contain the Discourse. However, both Mark and Luke exclude “the coming” question. That is, the questions in Mark and Luke only concern themselves with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This would support the Preterist’s view.
18. The language of the discourse is apocalyptic and does fit the Isaiah 13:9-13 model of apocalyptic language involved in predicting the destruction of Babylon; i.e., terms like “the stars will fall,” “the moon will not give its light,” “the heavens will not give their light” is not talking about the end of the world, but is apocalyptic language (end of the world language) used to describe the end of a political reality. This would also support the Preterists view.
19. The “sign of the son of Man” is not the literal, physical coming of Christ to earth. Since Jesus predicted the fall of Jerusalem, the fall of Jerusalem is the sign that the Jesus is the Son of Man endowed with power in the clouds sitting at the right hand of God (Daniel 7:13).
20. The phrase “The coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” is not a reference to the second coming of Christ, but an allusion to the coming of the Lord Christ as the installed King in heaven to judge the nation. Jesus comes many times to judge men and nations. He comes many times to aid His people. But, there is only one, unique, physical coming we know as the *Parousia* and this is not it.
21. The warning about false messiahs and our Lord’s disconnect of the destruction of Jerusalem from his second coming occurs in Matthew 24:23-28. This section is corrective.

22. A change in pronouns occurs. The pronoun “they” in verse 30 and the pronoun “you” in verse 32 may indicate a change in time. The “they” indicates the disciples will not be present during the destruction of Jerusalem.
23. A corrective is found in Matthew 24:36. The pronoun “those” (plural) in verse 29 and the demonstrative pronoun “that day” (singular) in verse 36 may designate a change in time. The Lord appears to be addressing a new topic, the *Parousia*. The parables of the householder (24:43-44), the wise and wicked servants (24:45-51), the ten virgins (25:1-13) and the parable of the talents (25:14-30) is a corrective to the disciples’ misinterpretation that the destruction of Jerusalem, his Second Coming, and the Eschaton would occur at the same time. The destruction of Jerusalem appears to be accompanied by a sign, but the *Parousia* and the Eschaton no one knows. Therefore, the disciples of future generations should “watch.” To watch is the application for disciples who remain until our Lord’s *Parousia*.

Conclusion: The Preterists view makes a lot of sense except for the difficulty of including Matthew 24:29-31 as an historical fulfillment. Interpreting Matthew 24:29-31 futuristically is certainly coherent.

For this reason, historicists take a “both” view of this passage, but we must question the principle upon which such an interpretation rests. And, such a question is more than this study consists.

44 THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG

44.1 Introduction

Following the millennium in Revelation 20 and prior to the New Heaven and New Earth John introduces us to the Battle of Gog and Magog; that is, the Battle of Gog and Magog appears to be the final act of history.

In reading works by dispensationalists, there appears to be two Gogs and Magogs, one following the alleged seven year tribulation period and one following the alleged 1000 year millennium. In fact, many doomsday preppers are preparing now for Armageddon and the final act of history.

Some perspective is needed in order that we may conduct Kingdom business without seeing the only solution as the *Parousia* of our Lord.

Ezekiel 38 & 39 was penned around 572 BC to the exiles scattered throughout Babylon to encourage the exiles and instill hope to a defeated people living under the rule of a despot.

However, because of the eschatological nature of this passage, it has been a subject of debate (38:8).

Futurists use this passage to support an elaborate literal end-time battle against restored Israel. Since the Ashkenazim declared their newly formed nation to be another “Israel” in 1948, these interpreters conclude that Gog & Magog is modern Russia; that at some time in the future (soon), Russia will invade Israel. Using other passages, these interpreters predict China, Egypt, and a 10 nation confederation from Europe will seek to eliminate Israel as the source of conflict in the Middle East. There, the nations of the world will witness the greatest military defeat in history.

Since this passage does not seem to have an historical corollary, the futurist’s doomsday view appears to trump all others.

44.2 Problems with the Literal View

Futurists tend to be literalists; i.e., they seek to use the literal method of hermeneutic consistently. And, normally, this is the method that we should use unless the text demands another approach. There is much to be said for the literal interpretation of this passage:

- Real names are used: Gog, Meshech, Tubal, Cush, Put, Togarmah.

- The use of “after many days” is an eschatological sign.
- A narrative style is used. It reads like a prophetic documentary.
- The geographical location of the battle is in Palestine, a real place.
- Israel is a passive, but a real political entity.

But, there are some **problems** with the literal approach.

First, the passage employs apocalyptic imagery which cannot be interpreted literally (38:20-22; 39:9-19);

Second, if this battle is future to our time, and one insists on applying the literal hermeneutic consistently, then this battle is not one with guns, planes, and tanks, but one with bows, arrows, shields, spears, horses, and cavalry (39:3, 10). The wooden weapons are used for fuel for seven years. It is difficult to understand how modern military equipment could be in view here.

Third, if this passage is the final act of history as we know it, then the first task in the new millennium will be spent burying corpses. The first seven years will be spent and burning guns, tanks, and military equipment for use as fuel for homes; which, by the way, were all destroyed by the great earthquake (38:20).

However, there could be another approach to this passage. This passage could be interpreted symbolically as *a mythological battle that seeks to convey a literal truth about Israel's future*. This is the approach of this author.

44.3 Outline of Chapter 38

Description of Gog and her Confederacy (38:2-9)

Motivation of Gog (38:10-13)

Military Operation of Gog (38:14-16)

Divine Intervention against Gog (38:17-22)

Interpretation (38:23)

Outline of Chapter 39

The Slaughter of Gog (39:1-8)

The Spoiling of Gog (39:9-10)

The Burial of Gog (39:11-16)

The Complete Devouring of Gog (39:17-20)

The Restoration of Israel from Babylon (39:21-29)

44.4 Evidence for a Mythological Interpretation

First, we must consider the lack of historical facts about Gog & Magog. While many diligent scholars have done their utmost to identify Gog and Magog on the map, no one has been completely successful in locating a population group or geographical location called *Gog or Magog*. The title *Gog or Magog* is generally assigned to regions north of Israel (Scythians); that Ezekiel had knowledge of the far regions of North Asia seems improbable. Israel knew nothing of Russia or the Baltic states. Using modern political tension to interpret Gog as Russia is peshet¹⁰⁵ interpretation and not sound hermeneutics.

Another approach is to consider Gog & Magog as a symbol of Israel's ancient enemies. Since Israel's traditional enemies during the Iron Age invaded Israel from the north, Gog and Magog could be a general title representing Israel's foes—*a symbolic representation of all those nations that Israel feared*.

Since the Christian Church is the True Israel of God, the final battle is going to be against believers, not unbelieving fake Jews.

Second, we must consider the purpose of the prophecy. The prophecy about Gog and Magog was given to surviving exiles deported into Babylon from Canaan. Judah was defeated; Babylon was victorious. The Jews were slaves; the Babylonians were masters. Israel's crushing defeat was still fresh, vivid, and painfully real to the exiles. For what purpose would God be telling them about a massive, military invasion into their country 2,600 years removed from their time? What relevance would this have to these people and why should they even care? The literal-prophetic view tends to make God some kind of sadistic monster informing these crushed people of greater disasters to come.

The message of Gog is teleological and appears to apply through all of time because it shows the reader an ultimate truth: the wicked will perish, and the righteous will live.

The purpose of this prophecy was motivated by YHWH's compassion to inform Israel that they were going to return from captivity (39:25) and *to encourage them that He was going to reverse their destiny*. In the past they were defeated by their northern enemies, but in the future, God was going to defend Israel

¹⁰⁵ Peshet Interpretation: using modern newspapers and current events as the authority to interpret portions of Scripture.

and to defeat her enemies in such a way that the imagery of cleansing the land of corpses would inspire his people with hope that their future was secure and blessed.

What would motivate these deported captives to return to the land of Israel since they were enjoying a relatively peaceful lifestyle in Babylon? Canaan was a war zone! Lusty generals understood the importance of this land bridge between Africa, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. Israel was used as canon fodder in these wars. Why would they even consider a return . . . **unless they had confidence that the God who severely judged their nation in 586 B.C. would vigorously defend them and defeat enemies in the future?** The Battle of Gog and Magog communicated one truth: **God will defend Israel and destroy her enemies.** *This fact would inspire courage among the captives to reinvest their lives in the promises of God.*

Third, we need to consider Gog and Magog in light of kingdom theology (Matthew 3). When John the Baptist began to preach his kingdom message, he announced two possibilities: the baptism of fire and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John's interpretation of the kingdom was twofold: (a) when the kingdom appears, God will judge His enemies (**the baptism of fire**), and (b) God will bring salvation to His people (**the baptism of the Spirit**).

In looking at Ezekiel 38 and 39, we see **both of these truths** presented mightily: God is going to severely destroy Israel's enemies (39:1-6), and he is going to bless his people with salvic blessings, namely the Holy Spirit (39:29). Ezekiel's Gog and Magog message is consistent with kingdom truth which reveals judgment on Israel's foes and salvation for God's people (Isaiah 2, 11, 25, 35, 65, 66; Zechariah 14; Malachi 4).

Fourth, we need to explore the apocalyptic imagery presented in the prophecy of Gog and Magog. Some interpreters reject an apocalyptic interpretation of this passage. But, the apocalyptic is used in these two chapters. The use of apocalyptic language with mythological proportions suggests this battle is not to be taken literally, but to be taken symbolically. That is, it is not an historical prediction, but a mythological battle using apocalyptic language to convey a powerful, literal, spiritual truth—*that though Israel was defeated by Babylon, Israel will one day witness the utter destruction of her enemies.*

Note the use of **apocalyptic language**, hyperbole, and dramatic presentation:

38:9 Like a storm, like a cloud (simile)

38:19 A great earthquake that rattles fish, birds, animals, and every creature, and every person on the face of the earth.

38:20 Mountains are overturned, cliffs crumble, and every wall tumbles to the ground.

38:22 Plagues and bloodshed are ordained.

38:22 Torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning suffer reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom are declared.

39:6 Fire falls even on those in distant lands.

39:9 Weapons used as fuel for seven years.

39:12 The burial takes seven months.

39:14 The burial takes longer than seven months.

39:17 Vivid imagery of scavengers gorging themselves on human flesh.

The key section in these chapters has to be the imagery of a massive death and destruction. Could this macabre imagery be literal? Yes, it could. Could God literally destroy nations in this way? Yes, He could. However, the seven-month burial campaign and daily occupation with retrieving cadavers does not appear to be a literal battlefield with literal dead bodies scattered on a literal country side from a literal battle.

We must ask, “Is a literal Gog with a literal army being defeated in literal Israel with Sodom-like destruction three millenniums in the future what God intended the exiles living in Babylon in 572 to understand?” Or, “**Is Gog and Magog a mystery designed to instruct the exiles (and us) that even though God’s elect suffered a temporary setback in the Babylonian exile, in the end all of God’s people would be victorious and all of God’s enemies will suffer permanent defeat?**” The latter makes more sense!

A literal seven-month campaign to cleanse the land of corpses seems unusually long for a modern people. Even Stalin could dispose of corpses faster than this.

There is another approach. Look at the prophecy of Gog & Magog as a powerful, figurative account of a Herculean war — an eschatological, apocalyptic military cartoon. Ezekiel uses military imagery to communicate in vivid, sensual terms the complete demolition of Israel’s foes. In terms ancient Israel understood, God sought to impress upon His elect of the massive, permanent defeat of Israel’s enemies. This is similar to the message in 1 Thessalonians 5.

Why would God employ the apocalyptic in this section? Possibly this: God sought to stir the imagination and to impress on the exile mind that when God defends his people he works dynamically for them! In other words, when God goes to work, “He rolls up his sleeves and punches their lights out.” Note that rolling up “sleeves” and “punching lights out” is a modern metaphor for intense work and sobering conquest not unlike what God intended to communicate when Ezekiel spoke his prophetic message. It appears that God wants his people to understand one powerful truth: **In the end, God’s people will be victors who witness the total defeat of their enemies.**

This mythological battle conveys several important lessons:

1. Israel is so protected, that God must hook and pull Israel's enemies against her.
2. Those who intend to harm his people arouse God's anger (38:18).
3. When God acts to defend his people the effects are cataclysmic, catastrophic, and complete. This is similar to Nebuchadnezzar's vision which Daniel interpreted for us in Daniel chapter 2.
4. Israel's enemies will be totally destroyed and Israel will be totally saved under God's work for them (38:4).
5. The spoils of war teach us that God's people will "inherit the earth." God's people will not be plundered, but they shall enjoy the fruits of God's salvation.
6. The burial imagery and the carrion feast conveys the truth that defeat of Israel's enemies will be thorough and final.
7. Finally, this passage teaches that God is for Israel and God is against her enemies.

The use of the term *Israel* is prominent. There is no doubt that Ezekiel is addressing historic, geo-political Israel. The landscape is also literal Palestine. While God could have used a different landscape to convey the same thoughts, God used **the landscape familiar to Israel to assure them of His personal superintendence over the affairs of His people.**

The massive battle expanded Israel's hope. *Familiarity of geography* provided assurance and comfort to the exiles under the foot of Babylon.

If the Spirit had employed modern terms, and modern military technology familiar to the modern mind, and modern concepts of the victorious, post-Calvary church, Ezekiel's audience would have thought his prophecy that of a raving fool. Ezekiel's message would have seemed incredible, farsical, and fantastic.

Though Ezekiel is addressing a literal Israel and a mythological battle on Palestinian real estate, it is not limited to that geographical location. In other words, a literal Israel in a literal Palestine in a literal war is **not** necessary to convey the truth that God's enemies will be defeated and God's people around the world will be victorious. This grand battle and interplay of Gog with Israel does not substantiate the dispensational scheme of a global, physical, military invasion of Israel in future by four alleged superpowers.

We must remember that God is addressing the OT mind and conveying truth to the exiles in terms the defeated nation could grasp and believe. The exiles in 573 B.C. possessed a shriveled, narrow, near-sighted view of what God was going to do in history. They had no understanding of Jesus, the cross, the resurrection, and the incoming of Gentiles into the family of God. They had no idea that from those survivors would come the Christ and that through gospel proclamation Gentiles would embrace YHWH; that the true Israel would be composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

God's promises, however, are broader than just the exiles. God's promise to defeat His enemies is for all believing Israel, the true vine, the true people of God, the church of Jesus Christ. YHWY wants His people in all ages to know they are safe under his guidance. Historic Israel is addressed to convey this universal truth for all of God's people to enjoy. Christians all over the world will share in the ultimate victory. The enemies of God's people will be radically, permanently destroyed.

44.5 Revelation and the Battle of Gog and Magog

Revelation 20:7-9 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

John places the Battle of Gog and Magog at the end of the millennium; that is, the end of the Christian era of gospel proclamation (Revelation 20:7-9). At the end of the church age before the consummation of history, Satan will be set free from his chains in order to deceive the nations one last time. We are not given much detail, but we assume this battle will be global and not limited to a particular piece of real estate in the middle east; that Satan's deception will be a disinformation-psy-ops campaign and not a military campaign; that Satan's assault will be against the entire gospel community. Satan will spread descent and rouse the nations to attack Christianity. Like birth pains, assaults on the church will increase in frequency and intensity. Men under the command of Satan will work feverishly to extinguish the gospel — not unlike what is happening in universities and through the media today. The city of God is not Jerusalem, but the people of God as a whole, the true church of Jesus Christ. The age will end with the Second Coming of Christ and the rapture of the Saints (1 Thessalonians 4:17ff), the out-pouring of the wrath of God upon the unbelieving (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9); and, the destruction of the earth by fire (2 Peter 2:10ff).

44.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Battle of Gog and Magog appears to be a mythological story of grand proportions designed to impress the sixth century mind with God's ability to judge Israel's enemies and to save His people. God uses the imagery of a military battle combined with apocalyptic language as the vehicle to communicate literal truth.

The Battle of Gog & Magog is **not** a detailed account of a future battle, mythological imagery, which conveys a central truth: *God loves Israel and in the end, true Israel will be saved. In the end, God's anger will fall upon Israel's enemies who will be utterly destroyed.*

With this comfort, the remnant exiles could return to Palestine to rebuild their temple clinging to the promises. Knowing that their return to Canaan would contribute to the final victory of God's people, many would volunteer to return and endure the hardship of rebuilding the nation . . . and they did return in 536 B.C.

With this comfort, God's people today have the assurance that no enemy will prevail against the church. God will be there to protect his people. *There will be conflict till the end, but in the end, God's people will prevail and their enemies destroyed!!*

And finally, no battle imagery or apocalyptic war could prepare people for what God did to save His people and to defeat their enemies through Christ. When God sent His warrior Son to die on a literal cross, he manned the battle stations and went to war to crush our enemies: sin, death, and Satan. There is no battle in history that compares to chopping of meat and bone that took place at the cross. None! So defeated are our enemies and so victorious are we that Paul declares, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Like Israel in this Battle who were spectators of God's massive deliverance, we passively behold the massive accomplishments of Another. The Defeat of Gog and Magog is a reminder of how God smashes our adversaries, and how we can enjoy the spoils of the war that took place on Calvary.

In Christ, believers are more than conquerors through him. Out of Christ, there will be utter destruction . . . and, this is consistent with the Kingdom message in the rest of the Word of God.

45 BIBLE REFERENCES

BIBLE

<p>1 Corinthians 1:13-1496</p> <p>1 Corinthians 10:31.....311</p> <p>1 Corinthians 11:24.....160, 199</p> <p>1 Corinthians 11:31.....105</p> <p>1 Corinthians 12:13.....102</p> <p>1 Corinthians 14:3.....386</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:22.....90</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:24.....80, 92, 322</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:24, 25.....316</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:24-2895</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:25.....90</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:26.....322</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:35-58346</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:50.....81</p> <p>1 Corinthians 2:10.....386</p> <p>1 Corinthians 2:6.....77, 80</p> <p>1 Corinthians 3:13.....386</p> <p>1 Corinthians 4:20.....225</p> <p>1 Corinthians 5:17.....102</p> <p>1 Corinthians 5:1ff104</p> <p>1 Corinthians 5:7.....172</p> <p>1 Corinthians 5:8.....324</p> <p>1 Corinthians 6:.....225</p> <p>1 Corinthians 6:2.....344</p> <p>1 Kings 18:21.....292</p> <p>1 Kings 21.....268</p> <p>1 Kings 4:21.....181</p> <p>1 Kings 8:46, 53.....189</p> <p>1 Kings 8:56.....182</p> <p>1 Kings. 4:21.....157</p> <p>1 Peter ; 5:1.....386</p> <p>1 Peter 1:10-12140</p>	<p>1 Peter 1:1146</p> <p>1 Peter 1:1-2138</p> <p>1 Peter 1:2; 2:5-9152</p> <p>1 Peter 1:5ff.....46</p> <p>1 Peter 2:1; 2:3; 3:7386</p> <p>1 Peter 2:5-9347</p> <p>1 Peter 3:4154</p> <p>1 Peter 5:8381</p> <p>1 Peter1:22336</p> <p>1 Samuel 8268</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 2:12.....225, 340</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 2:12.....225</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 2:14-16389</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 2:15.....138</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 2:16.....193</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 4.....330</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 4:17ff403</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5.....392, 401</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:1-11331</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:17ff346</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:1-9389, 403</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:25.....151</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:2ff389</p> <p>1 Timothy 2: 11-12.....113</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:11-15392</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:1-13225</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:26.....381</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:5.....140</p> <p>1 Timothy 4:1.....320</p> <p>1 Timothy 4:1-3.....226</p> <p>1 Timothy 5:24.....100, 105</p> <p>1 Timothy 6:15.....260</p> <p>1 Timothy 6:9.....386</p> <p>2 Chronicles 12:149</p> <p>2 Chronicles 26:8-21268</p>
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2 Chronicles 36:17-18	185	2 Timothy 2:3.....	141
2 Chronicles 36:17-21	185	2 Timothy 2:4.....	257
2 Chronicles 7:17-20	180	2 Timothy 3:1.....	318
2 Corinthians 1:20.....	172, 194	2 Timothy 4:.....	78
2 Corinthians 4:3,4.....	80	2 Timothy 4:1-2.....	316
2 Corinthians 4:3-4.....	381	Acts 1:7	316
2 Corinthians 5:11.....	74	Acts 1:8	141
2 Corinthians 5:17.....	98	Acts 10:38	275
2 Corinthians 5:19-21	275	Acts 10:38;	275
2 Corinthians 5:21.....	172	Acts 13:32, 33	171, 172, 182
2 Corinthians 6:14.....	300	Acts 15:15-17.....	202
2 Corinthians 6:17.....	290	Acts 15:15-18.....	196
2 Corinthians 6:2.....	339	Acts 15:16;	152
2 Corinthians 7:1.....	194	Acts 17: 6-7	228
2 Kings 16:6.....	149, 176	Acts 17:1-7.....	15, 340
2 Kings 17:7-8	157, 297	Acts 17:1-9.....	332
2 Peter 1:11	19, 226, 274	Acts 17:1ff.....	389
2 Peter 1:12	336	Acts 17:28	273, 274
2 Peter 2:10ff	403	Acts 17:30	292, 314, 378
2 Peter 2:9	336, 374	Acts 17:30-31.....	230
2 Peter 3:10 –13.....	354	Acts 17:6,7	222, 271
2 Peter 3:10-13	161	Acts 17:6-17).....	229
2 Peter 3:15	322	Acts 19:8	19
2 Peter 3:3	318	Acts 2:30-32.....	229, 274
2 Peter 3:3-18	335	Acts 2:32-36.....	382
2 Peter 3:7	100	Acts 2:36	259
2 Samuel 7:14	169	Acts 2:38	101
2 Samuel 8:3	156, 181	Acts 2:38; 3:19	27
2 Thessalonians 1:5.....	141, 226, 340	Acts 2:5	395
2 Thessalonians 1:5-12	332	Acts 20:21	124
2 Thessalonians 1:7.....	370	Acts 20:22	377
2 Thessalonians 1:7-10	174	Acts 20:25	19
2 Thessalonians 2:11.....	161	Acts 21:11	343
2 Thessalonians 2:1-16	333	Acts 21:21	386
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3	329	Acts 23:24	293
2 Thessalonians 2:3.....	319, 384	Acts 24:25	346
2 Thessalonians 2:7-9	343	Acts 25:12	293
2 Thessalonians 2:9.....	389	Acts 28; 23, 28	274
2 Thessalonians 3:10-15	95	Acts 28:23	19
2 Thessalonians 2:25.....	222	Acts 28:31	19, 271
2 Timothy 1:10.....	322	Acts 3:21	74, 101

Acts 4:12	227, 270, 274	Deuteronomy 17:14-20	290
Acts 5	104	Deuteronomy 18:18.....	173
Acts 5:29	231, 311	Deuteronomy 18:18;	268
Acts 5:3	381	Deuteronomy 28:1, 2.....	171, 183
Acts 7	170	Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 13.....	171
Acts 7:49	170	Deuteronomy 28:58, 63, 68.....	184
Acts 8:12	passim	Deuteronomy 30:1-5	184, 188
Acts 8:39	327	Deuteronomy 33:2.....	50
Acts 9:2	343	Deuteronomy 33:5.....	50
Amos 8:9.....	97, 98	Deuteronomy 4:23, 26-27	184
Amos 9:11.....	95	Deuteronomy 4:29.....	188, 189
Amos 9:11-12.....	202	Deuteronomy 4:29-11	188
Colossians 1:13	46, 225	Deuteronomy 5:29.....	220
Colossians 1:13-14	74	Deuteronomy 6:4ff	312
Colossians 1:15-18	369, 370	Deuteronomy 7:12.....	180
Colossians 1:15-18; 2:9	370	Deuteronomy 8:19, 20.....	184
Colossians 1:18; 2:4-10.....	306	Deuteronomy. 11:24.....	156
Colossians 1:19-24	173	Ephesians 1:1-22.....	225
Colossians 1:6, 23	395	Ephesians 1:13, 14	353
Colossians 1:9-14.....	370	Ephesians 1:19ff	382
Colossians 2:10	369	Ephesians 1:21.....	77
Colossians 2:15	343, 373	Ephesians 1:21, 22.....	379
Colossians 2:17	194	Ephesians 1:3.....	140, 158, 171
Colossians 2:19	261	Ephesians 1:3-7.....	151
Colossians 2:4-9	304	Ephesians 2:11-22.....	161, 201, 208
Colossians 2:8-10;	257	Ephesians 2:11-3:10.....	152
Colossians 2:9, 19	271	Ephesians 2:11ff	225
Colossians 3:12	152	Ephesians 2:12ff	164, 209
Colossians 3:3 4	225	Ephesians 2:1-3.....	79
Colossians 3:3ff.....	225	Ephesians 2:13ff	169
Colossians. 2:14-15	379	Ephesians 2:1-7.....	345
Daniel 2.....	18	Ephesians 2:1-8.....	96
Daniel 2:37	49	Ephesians 2:18ff	391
Daniel 2:44.....	52	Ephesians 2:2;.....	381
Daniel 5:26.....	49	Ephesians 2:20.....	137
Daniel 6.....	303	Ephesians 2:21.....	212
Daniel 7:13.....	395	Ephesians 2:2-3.....	379
Daniel 7:27.....	344	Ephesians 2:4-5.....	346
Daniel 8:23.....	49	Ephesians 2:6.....	162
Deuteronomy 1:7-8	156, 181	Ephesians 3:12-3:8.....	201
Deuteronomy 11:24.....	181	Ephesians 3:20.....	375

Ephesians 3:5	386	Galatians 3:28, 29	164, 168, 209
Ephesians 3:6	169, 207	Galatians 3:5ff.....	154
Ephesians 3:6-8.....	207	Galatians 3:7	138
Ephesians 4:22	225	Galatians 3:7-9.....	196
Ephesians 4:6ff.....	370	Galatians 4:26	190
Ephesians 5:18-20.....	102	Galatians 5:16-23.....	102
Ephesians 5:5	46	Galatians 5:19ff.....	79
Esther 2:5	176	Galatians 5:6	177
Exodus 19:5.....	171, 183	Galatians 6:15	201
Exodus 19:8.....	171	Galatians 6:16	152
Exodus 2:23, 24.....	171	Genesis 1:1	350
Exodus 20:1-3).....	231	Genesis 1:2; 2:3	101
Exodus 20:3.....	305	Genesis 10, 11.....	176
Exodus 23:1-3	305	Genesis 10:3	205
Exodus 3:14.....	310	Genesis 12	passim
Exodus 3:6.....	170	Genesis 12: 1	155
Exodus 34:5-7	310	Genesis 12:1	178
Exodus 5:2.....	266	Genesis 12:1-5; 13, 15, 17	178
Exodus 6:1-8	171	Genesis 12:3	55
Ezekiel 11:20.....	136	Genesis 13:15	178
Ezekiel 11:7	188	Genesis 15:18	156, 180
Ezekiel 16:8.....	85	Genesis 17,	178
Ezekiel 36: 27	63	Genesis 17:8	351
Ezekiel 36:26-27.....	101	Genesis 18:19	312
Ezekiel 37	187	Genesis 2	155, 179
Ezekiel 37:12.....	186	Genesis 22:16	179
Ezekiel 37:12-14.....	157	Genesis 25:1-2	168
Ezekiel 38 & 39.....	391, 397	Genesis 26:3	179
Ezekiel 39:17-20.....	372	Genesis 26:3-5	149
Ezra 8:1	49	Genesis 26:5	155, 179
Galatians 1:4	passim	Genesis 3:15	54, 55, 197, 350
Galatians 1:8	334	Habakkuk 3: 3, 10-13	51
Galatians 3	169	Hebrews 10.....	163
Galatians 3:10-13.....	172	Hebrews 10:31.....	100
Galatians 3:10-14.....	151	Hebrews 10:7.....	171
Galatians 3:11	209	Hebrews 10:8.....	183
Galatians 3:1-14.....	138, 183	Hebrews 11:10.....	190
Galatians 3:13	386	Hebrews 11:16.....	190, 353
Galatians 3:26-28.....	196	Hebrews 11:19.....	194
Galatians 3:27-29.....	161, 201	Hebrews 11:22.....	170
Galatians 3:28	201	Hebrews 11:8.....	155

Hebrews 12: 28.....	226	Isaiah 2, 11, 25, 35, 65, 66	400
Hebrews 12:21-23.....	353	Isaiah 2: 4;12; 11:9ff	107
Hebrews 12:22.....	passim	Isaiah 2:1-5	52
Hebrews 12:22-24.....	194	Isaiah 2:2.....	108
Hebrews 12:28.....	226	Isaiah 2:4.....	18, 57, 107
Hebrews 13:18.....	151	Isaiah 2:4ff.....	108
Hebrews 2:14.....	91, 93, 343, 380	Isaiah 24.....	18
Hebrews 2:15.....	94	Isaiah 24:23.....	107
Hebrews 2:3.....	122	Isaiah 25:6.....	60
Hebrews 4:12.....	371	Isaiah 25:6-9	18
Hebrews 5-8.....	173	Isaiah 25:7.....	60
Hebrews 6:2-5.....	94	Isaiah 25:9.....	60
Hebrews 6:5.....	96	Isaiah 26:13.....	53
Hebrews 7, 8.....	163	Isaiah 26:2.....	136
Hebrews 7:22.....	171	Isaiah 32:15.....	63
Hebrews 8:5; 10:1.....	194	Isaiah 33:22.....	260
Hebrews 9.....	164	Isaiah 35:3.....	59
Hebrews 9, 10.....	173	Isaiah 35:3-7	18
Hebrews 9:27; 10:27.....	100	Isaiah 35:4.....	53, 59
Hosea 1:10.....	195	Isaiah 35:4-10 4	53
Hosea 14:6.....	394	Isaiah 35:6.....	59
Hosea 2:20.....	85	Isaiah 35:7.....	59
I John 2:18.....	390	Isaiah 40:3.....	27, 59
I Thessalonians 4:13-18	323	Isaiah 40:4.....	59
Isaiah 1:19.....	171	Isaiah 40:5.....	59
Isaiah 1:19;.....	183	Isaiah 42:6.....	171, 183
Isaiah 1:22.....	268	Isaiah 43:15.....	267
Isaiah 1:3, 4.....	268	Isaiah 5:20.....	319
Isaiah 1:31.....	63	Isaiah 52:7-10	75
Isaiah 11.....	18, 108	Isaiah 53.....	211
Isaiah 11: 9.....	108	Isaiah 53:6.....	20, 124
Isaiah 11:1.....	57	Isaiah 54:1.....	85
Isaiah 11:10.....	187	Isaiah 55:6-7	63
Isaiah 11:1-5.....	55	Isaiah 62:4.....	85
Isaiah 11:1ff; 65:17	107	Isaiah 65:17.....	61, 351
Isaiah 11:2.....	57	Isaiah 66: 22.....	107
Isaiah 11:3.....	57	Isaiah 66:22.....	61
Isaiah 11:4.....	107, 370	Isaiah 66:24.....	63
Isaiah 11:6.....	54	Isaiah 9:6.....	18, 57
Isaiah 11:9.....	18	Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:9.....	108
Isaiah 13:9-13.....	395	Isaiah 9:6-7	55, 268

Isaiah 9:7.....	57	John 12:25	103
James 4:12	222, 260, 371	John 12:28	386
Jeremiah 11:18	185	John 12:30	378
Jeremiah 11:5	182	John 12:31	94, 344
Jeremiah 23:3	58	John 12:31-32	378, 381
Jeremiah 23:4	58	John 14:1-6	327
Jeremiah 23:5	58	John 14:16-17	101
Jeremiah 23:6	58	John 14:19	92
Jeremiah 23:7	58	John 14:6	212
Jeremiah 25:8, 11	185	John 15:1-15	103
Jeremiah 29:12-14	189	John 17:3	103
Jeremiah 30:7	188	John 18:36	passim
Jeremiah 31:31	60	John 18:37	15
Jeremiah 31:32	60	John 19:11	289
Jeremiah 31:33	60, 136	John 2.....	288
Jeremiah 31:34	60	John 2:13ff.....	104
Jeremiah 32:21	156	John 3:14	113, 129, 172
Jeremiah 7:23	136	John 3:15	103, 129
Jeremiah10:7	20, 371	John 3:3	129, 168
Jeremiah10:7; 33:22	267	John 3:3; 14:6	221
Jeremiah20:4	157	John 3:3-5	355
Jeremiah30:3	157, 186	John 3:36	151
Jeremiah31:34	108	John 5:21-26	103
Jeremiah32:22	371	John 5:24	98
Jeremiah7:2	63	John 5:24ff.....	327
Jeremiahs 32:21.....	182	John 5:25	98, 345
Job 9:2.....	100	John 5:25-29	346
Joel 2:27.....	61	John 5:26, 6:5ff; 4:10, 14; 11:25: 14:6.....	103
Joel 2:28-32.....	63	John 5:28, 29.....	345
Joel 2:29.....	61	John 5:29	103
Joel 2:30-32.....	95	John 6:15	135, 327
Joel 2:31.....	107	John 6:26	121
John 1:1, 14; 14:6-10	370	John 6:63	177, 200, 209
John 1:10-12	158, 191, 329	John 8.....	140, 149, 154
John 1:10-13	102, 141	John 8:12ff.....	104
John 1:12-13	102, 177	John 8:33	191
John 1:12-13; 3:3	102	John 8:39	191
John 1:14; 2:12ff.....	172	John 8:44	154, 191
John 1:14; 6:36; 9:37; 14:19; 16:16-17	103	John18:33	269
John 10:14-15; 14:7	103	Joshua 10:1.....	353
John 12:2-32	343	Joshua 11:23	181

Joshua 21:43	156, 181	Luke 18:13-14	218
Joshua 21:45	156, 181	Luke 18:17	115
Joshua 23:43-45	182	Luke 18:17-30	75
Joshua 8:32	217	Luke 18:30	77
Jude 21	75	Luke 19:10	27
Jude 4-19	337	Luke 19:11	114
Judges 5:4-5	51	Luke 19:11-12	73
Leviticus 26:31-33	183	Luke 19:13	316
Leviticus 26:33	157	Luke 19:42	135
Leviticus 27	179	Luke 19:43-44: 23:28-31	395
Leviticus 27.	155	Luke 2:35	386
Leviticus 27:33-	190	Luke 20:34	77
Luke 1: 28	270	Luke 20:34-36	78, 193
Luke 1:32	270	Luke 20:35	77, 81, 355
Luke 10: 23	87	Luke 20:37	170
Luke 10:11	115	Luke 21	317
Luke 10:17	85, 343	Luke 22:29	141
Luke 10:18	98, 378, 382	Luke 22:3	79
Luke 10:19	343	Luke 23:11	269
Luke 10:9;18	93	Luke 23:51	115
Luke 11:1	310	Luke 3:10	261
Luke 11:2	322	Luke 3:11	338
Luke 11:20	85	Luke 3:11-14	64
Luke 11:28	45	Luke 3:12-14	293
Luke 11:52	87, 137	Luke 3:13	338
Luke 11:53	300	Luke 3:14	262, 338
Luke 12:12	102	Luke 3:2	27
Luke 12:2	386	Luke 3:7-9	63
Luke 12:32	115	Luke 3:8	64
Luke 13:29	114	Luke 3:9	191
Luke 13:32	293	Luke 4:18-19	84
Luke 13:35	128	Luke 6:20	120
Luke 14:14	346	Luke 9:2	120
Luke 14:24	193	Luke 9:26;	370
Luke 16:16	46, 74, 87, 96	Luke 9:60	218
Luke 17:20	114	Malachi 3:1	182
Luke 17:20, 21	45	Malachi 4:1-4)	63
Luke 17:20-21	46	Malachi 4:1ff	326
Luke 17:21	46	Malachi 4:3	107
Luke 17:26	317	Malachi 4	400
Luke 18	120	Malachi 4:1	59

Malachi 4:1-3	54	Matthew 10:14-15.....	141
Malachi 4:2	55	Matthew 10:15	124
Malachi 4:2-3	59	Matthew 10:15; 12:42	100
Mark 1:15.....	27, 84, 114, 120	Matthew 10:26.....	386
Mark 1:32.....	80	Matthew 10:32	129, 131, 135
Mark 10:15.....	19, 115	Matthew 10:32-33.....	137
Mark 10:23.....	80, 110	Matthew 10:34	137
Mark 10:23, 30.....	110	Matthew 10:35, 36	137
Mark 10:29-30	77	Matthew 10:37	127, 131
Mark 10:30.....	75, 81	Matthew 10:38	131
Mark 10:7;.....	115	Matthew 10:39	131
Mark 11:12-25	140	Matthew 10:40	131, 141
Mark 11:13-26	159	Matthew 10:5-7.....	134
Mark 11:14.....	153, 155	Matthew 10:7	124, 274
Mark 11:25-25	158	Matthew 11: 11-15	87
Mark 12:1-9	140	Matthew 11:11	132
Mark 12:26.....	170	Matthew 11:12	114, 125, 132, 134
Mark 12:9.....	141	Matthew 11:1-6.....	46, 119
Mark 13:10.....	120	Matthew 11:16-17.....	134
Mark 13:35-36	141, 267	Matthew 11:2	46
Mark 14.....	97, 98	Matthew 11:22	96
Mark 14:62.....	98	Matthew 11:25	386
Mark 15:33.....	98	Matthew 11:27; 16:17	386
Mark 2:19.....	85	Matthew 11:28.....	130
Mark 4:11.....	120	Matthew 11:28, 29	158, 394
Mark 4:15.....	79	Matthew 11:28,29	124
Mark 4:19.....	110	Matthew 11:28-29.....	132, 137, 219
Mark 4:26.....	114, 311	Matthew 11:3	46, 72, 88
Mark 5:4.....	115	Matthew 11:4	46
Mark 6:1-6	135	Matthew 11:5	47, 109
Mark 9:13.....	87	Matthew 11:6	47, 110
Mark 9:37.....	141	Matthew 12	86, 96, 110
Mark 9:47.....	74	Matthew 12: 28-30.....	382
Mark 9:47;.....	114	Matthew 12:17	99
Mathew. 12:28, 29.....	377	Matthew 12:20	130
Matthew 1:18	102	Matthew 12:21	46
Matthew 1:21	171	Matthew 12:25-29.....	86, 110
Matthew 1:21-23; 2:2-3; 4:17; 5-7: 6:33; 15:1-10; 23:1ff).	269	Matthew 12:26	110
Matthew 1:22	99	Matthew 12:26-29.....	96
Matthew 10: 34	126	Matthew 12:27	86
		Matthew 12:28	passim

Matthew 12:28, 29	381	Matthew 2:23	72, 99
Matthew 12:29	86, 110, 377	Matthew 2:9	138
Matthew 12:32	76	Matthew 21:18ff.....	104
Matthew 12:39	127	Matthew 21:19	159, 192, 197
Matthew 13	392	Matthew 21:31	87, 138
Matthew 13:14	99	Matthew 21:36.....	159
Matthew 13:17	338	Matthew 21:4	99
Matthew 13:22	79	Matthew 21:41	159, 198
Matthew 13:24	84, 338	Matthew 21:42	192
Matthew 13:26-30.....	329	Matthew 21:43.....	passim
Matthew 13:33	46	Matthew 21:43.....	141
Matthew 13:35	99	Matthew 21:45	161, 199
Matthew 13:38	135, 140	Matthew 21:5	269
Matthew 13:41	81	Matthew 22:21	269
Matthew 13:41, 42	46	Matthew 22:32	170
Matthew 13:46, 47	128	Matthew 22:46	104
Matthew 13:49	81	Matthew 23	passim
Matthew 13:49-50.....	95	Matthew 23:13	87, 115, 141
Matthew 13:50	81	Matthew 23:13-35.....	104
Matthew 13:9	75	Matthew 23:23	219
Matthew 14:15	161	Matthew 23:37	199
Matthew 15:1f	288	Matthew 23:38	161, 193
Matthew 15:1ff; 19:1ff; 21:23ff; 22:46.....	104	Matthew 24	288
Matthew 15:24	134	Matthew 24:1-3.....	387
Matthew 16:16-18).....	141	Matthew 24:14	322
Matthew 16:16f	169	Matthew 24:1-51.....	393
Matthew 16:16ff.....	198	Matthew 24:23-28.....	395
Matthew 16:17ff.....	159, 196	Matthew 24:3	passim
Matthew 16:18	137, 138, 394	Matthew 24:34	99
Matthew 16:19	138	Matthew 24:36	316
Matthew 16:25	132	Matthew 24:42	316
Matthew 16:26	132	Matthew 25	330
Matthew 16:28	106, 394	Matthew 25).....	392
Matthew 18:3	27, 128, 132	Matthew 25:31-46.....	339
Matthew 19	120	Matthew 25:34	46, 115
Matthew 19:21	126	Matthew 25:34-40.....	135
Matthew 19:28	75, 81	Matthew 25:6),	327
Matthew 19:29	81	Matthew 25-32-33.....	100
Matthew 2	173	Matthew 26:54	99
Matthew 2:15	72, 99	Matthew 26:56.....	99
Matthew 2:17	72, 99	Matthew 26:8	386

Matthew 27:2	343	Matthew. 23:37	161
Matthew 27:9	99	Matthew. 4:17	19
Matthew 28:18-20	228, 347, 382	Matthew. 8:11-12	191
Matthew 28:19	98, 377, 379	Matthew12:22-29.....	343
Matthew 28:19, 20	259, 272	Matthew21:2	343
Matthew 28:19-20	322	Matthew21:20	190
Matthew 29:19, 20	343	Matthew24:43	162
Matthew 3	392, 400	Matthew7:13	158
Matthew 3:10	394	Matthew7:23	385
Matthew 3:11	63, 109	Micah 1:3-4.....	51
Matthew 3:1-12.....	337	Micah 5:2	55
Matthew 3:12	18	Micah 6:8.....	219, 220
Matthew 3:1ff: 4:1ff	102	Mk 8:38.....	370
Matthew 3:2	passim	Nehemiah 9:13	338
Matthew 3:7-10.....	27, 63	Nehemiah 9:7-8.....	156, 182
Matthew 3;2; 4:17	114	Numbers 34:17	171
Matthew 36:37-24:1-31.....	104	Philippians 1:20).	151
Matthew 4:14	99	Philippians 1:28; 3:19	386
Matthew 4:17	46, 74, 131, 274	Philippians 1:9	151
Matthew 4:23	94	Philippians 2:10-12	271
Matthew 5:19	114, 220	Philippians 2:11-12	373
Matthew 5:20	114	Philippians 2:1-12	211
Matthew 5:29	126	Philippians 3:14-20;	275
Matthew 5:3	135	Philippians 3:1-5	133
Matthew 5:5	351	Philippians 3:19, 20.....	194
Matthew 5-7	219	Philippians 3:2	193
Matthew 6:10	114, 311	Philippians 3:20-21	327
Matthew 6:21	131	Philippians 3:5	386
Matthew 6:33	passim	Proverbs 1:10.....	305
Matthew 6:9	20, 310	Proverbs 4:12.....	365
Matthew 7:13	191, 386	Psalms 1:1-3	151
Matthew 7:23	219	Psalms 10:16	267
Matthew 8:11	46, 153, 158, 394	PSALM 101.....	283
Matthew 8:11-12	158	Psalms 103:19	49
Matthew 8:12	134	Psalms 105:8-10	171
Matthew 8:17	99	Psalms 106:3	171
Matthew 8:19	125	Psalms 122:6	151, 212
Matthew 8:21	125	Psalms 145: 13	49
Matthew 8:22	137	Psalms 145:11	49
Matthew 8:27	230	Psalms 145:11-13	49
Matthew 9:13	131	Psalms 149:6	275

Psalms 15:1-5	100	Revelation 20:14.....	322
Psalms 2.....	passim	Revelation 20:2.....	94, 376
Psalms 2:1.....	15	Revelation 20:7-9.....	403
Psalms 22: 28.....	314	Revelation 20:8.....	382
Psalms 24:8.....	267	Revelation 20:8-9.....	333
Psalms 37:11	351	Revelation 20:9.....	333
Psalms 47:2.....	267	Revelation 21.....	350
Psalms 47:5.....	229	Revelation 21, 22.....	190
Psalms 53:1, 5.....	374	Revelation 21:1.....	355
Psalms 72.....	18	Revelation 7:13ff	325
Psalms 72:20	54	Revelation 7:1ff	117
Psalms 89:18	267	Revelation 9 and 12	382
Psalms 9:10.....	310	Revelation 9:14 & 20:2	377
Psalms 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1	228	Romans 1:17.....	386
Psalms 96:10-13	50	Romans 1:18.....	386
Psalms 97:1.....	141	Romans 1:18f.....	80
Revelation 1, 5, 13, 14, 19	271	Romans 1:18ff.....	105
Revelation 1:19ff.....	140	Romans 1:8	395
Revelation 1:7	373	Romans 10:17-18;.....	395
Revelation 11:15.....	46, 374	Romans 10:3.....	162
Revelation 12).....	80	Romans 10:9.....	234, 271, 282, 312
Revelation 12:10.....	250	Romans 11.....	164, 165, 169, 209
Revelation 13:10.....	275	Romans 11:16.....	162
Revelation 13-14:1-5	272	Romans 11:17ff.....	138
Revelation 14:1-4.....	226, 275	Romans 11:20.....	199
Revelation 14:4.....	322	Romans 11:25, 26.....	209
Revelation 15:3-4.....	275, 292	Romans 11:25-26.....	163
Revelation 17-18.....	301	Romans 11:26:.....	165, 210
Revelation 19:11-16.....	95	Romans 11:29.....	180
Revelation 19:11ff.....	104	Romans 11:32.....	177
Revelation 19:16.....	231, 272, 371	Romans 12:2.....	94
Revelation 19:6.....	229	ROMANS 13	295
Revelation 2:2.....	275	Romans 13:1.....	266, 301
Revelation 2:27.....	199	Romans 13:8.....	220, 334
Revelation 2:4.....	265	Romans 14:17	46, 127, 139, 313
Revelation 2:9.....	111, 196	Romans 14:17).....	219
Revelation 2:9, 3:9	152, 168, 208, 384	Romans 14:17).....	74
Revelation 2:9; 3:9.....	138, 200, 212	Romans 14:9.....	230
Revelation 20:10, 14.....	92	Romans 15:12.....	187
Revelation 20:1-2.....	387	Romans 2:11.....	177
Revelation 20:1-3.....	93	Romans 2:1-3.....	177

Romans 2:16	339	Romans 8	392
Romans 2:28	138, 168, 200	Romans 8:1	162
Romans 2:28, 29	200	Romans 8:18-25	140
Romans 2:28-29	154, 168	Romans 8:19-21	352
Romans 2:29	172	Romans 8:2	162
Romans 2:5-12	100	Romans 8:20-21	355
Romans 3:21-22	101	Romans 8:26-27	369
Romans 3:23	100	Romans 8:33	101
Romans 3:2-3	177	Romans 8:34	369
Romans 3:24	101, 162	Romans 8:37	370, 404
Romans 4, 5-6	92	Romans 8:39	162
Romans 4:13	passim	Romans 8:4	93, 123, 218
Romans 4:1-5	100	Romans 8:4; 13:8	221
Romans 4:17	225	Romans 9:23-26	195
Romans 4:5	101	Romans 9:25	163, 209
Romans 5:1	101, 218	Romans 9:6	passim
Romans 5:10-11	101	Romans 9:8	195
Romans 5:14	194	Titus 1:12	189
Romans 5:2-5	102	Titus 1:14	157, 176, 338
Romans 5:3-5; 6:2-6	346	Zechariah 13:7-14:5	97
Romans 5-8	173	Zechariah 14	391, 400
Romans 6:2	92	Zechariah 14:1	54
Romans 6:23	103	Zechariah 14:5	370
Romans 6:6	92, 102	Zechariah 9:9-10	55
Romans 7:2	377		
		Alexander Hamilton	305
OTHER AUTHORITIES		Augustine of Hippo	38
"The Myth of Separation" by David Barton	233	B. R. Stockton	364
1629 Charter of Massachusetts	263	Barnes	289, 419
1629 Charter of Massachusetts states	263	Bauckham	360, 362, 363, 419
1662 Charter for North Carolina	264	Ben Merkle	165
1663 the Charter for Rhode Island	264	Benjamin Franklin	266, 307
1893 Dictionary of Arts and Sciences	220	Benjamin Freedman's: Warning to America	150
A Theological Interpretation of American History" by C. Gregg Singer	233	Blaising & Block	passim
A. C. Gaebelein	116	Blaising, Bock, Hoch, Saucy, Glennly	38
Adolf Von Harnack	38	Branch Davidians	30, 31
Albert Schweitzer	40, 83, 106	Bray	43, 317, 419
Albrecht Ritschl	39	Brinsmead	190, 419
		Bruce Metzger	362, 363
		Bruce Waltke	209

Bultmann	41, 419	Jean-Jacques Rousseau.....	230
C. H. Dodd	40	Johanne Weiss	40
C.I. Scofield	35	Johannes Weiss	39
Chafer	passim	John Hagee, Four Blood Moons.....	111
Charles C. Ryrie,.....	36	John Knox.....	299
Charles Dyer.....	36	John Lennon.....	17
Charles Spurgeon	228	John Locke	265
Charter of Connecticut	264	John McArthur	122
Chuck Smith	36	John Stott.....	217
Constitution of Connecticut, 1639.....	264	John Walvoord.....	35, 42, 116, 206
Cornelius Van Til	314	Judge Napolitano	299, 302
Cullman	41, 76, 95	Kaiser	119, 121, 206
Cullmann.....	passim	Ladd	passim
David Reagan, Learn the Bible, Millennium and the Sermon on the Mount).....	217	Lyndon B. Johnson.....	28
Dietrich Bonhoeffer	299	Mark Twain	314
Dodd	passim	Martin Luther King.....	16
Dostoevske	17	Mayhew	307
Dostoyevske.....	17	McArthur	122, 123, 421
Dwight Pentecost.....	35, 42, 108, 205	McDonald	111, 113, 117, 421
Edgar C. Whisenat.....	36	McDowell.....	passim
Erwin Lutzer	298, 307	Merkle	165, 166, 421
Feinberg.....	118, 217, 420	Oscar Cullman.....	41
Freud.....	17	Oswald J. Smith.....	35
G. R. Beasley-Murray	361	Pastor Lee Jan Rim,.....	37
Gabelein.....	116, 117, 420	Pate.....	92, 95, 421
Geerhardus Vos	83	Patrick Henry	233
Genesis 13.....	191	Paul Kroll.....	361, 363
George Bernard Shaw.....	305	Plato.....	17
George Caird.....	98	Psalms 2:6, 10-12	234
Hal Lindsey.....	passim	Random House Dictionary	48, 422
Harnack.....	38, 83	Ray Summers	passim
Harold Camping	37	Reymond.....	164, 197, 209, 422
Hitler	17	Richard Bauckham	360, 362, 363
Hodge.....	122	Ridpath's History of the United States Volume I.....	265
Hoehner	381	Ritschl	39, 83, 422
Hoekema.....	passim	Rob Lindsted	36
Hoekema, 1977, p. 13.....	72	Robert Saucy.....	162, 209
Huxley	17	Ronald Weinland	37
J. Randall Price,	116	Rudolf Bultmann.....	41
J.B. Phillips	295, 299, 302	Ryrie.....	passim
		Ryrie, 1995.....	43

Salem Kirban	36	Things to Come	35, 117, 205, 421
Scofield	passim	Thomas Jefferson.....	266
Simon J. Kistemaker:.....	362	Tim LaHaye's.....	31
Soren Kierkegaard.....	41	Time Magazine,	37
Stockton (2015).....	206	Treaty of Peace-1783.....	305
Summers	passim	Tubigen School of Rationalism	33
the Charter of New Haven	264	Vance Havner.....	300
the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.....	262	Vern Poythress.....	207, 208, 360
The Late Great Planet Earth.....	29, 30, 35, 421	Walvoord	passim
The Late Great Planet Earth, Hal Lindsay.....	186	Wellhausen School of Higher Criticism.....	34, 319
The Light and the Glory" by Peter Marshall and David Manuel	233	William Bradford	262
The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology, John F. Walvoord	186	William Hendricksen.....	207, 360
The Scofield Bible.....	143, 144, 145, 146	William Penn.....	264
		Wycliffe.....	314
		Zane Hodges	122

46 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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