

Just What Do You Mean...KINGDOM of GOD?

By Herbert W Armstrong
Circa 1962

Is it the CHURCH? Is it something "setup in the hearts of men"?
Is it the British Empire? Is it "the good within you"?
Is it "the Millennium"? Each of these is widely taught - yet none is right!

The shocking TRUTH is here made PLAIN!

Why cannot the churches agree on what is the GOSPEL? Jesus Christ came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Yet few preach about the Kingdom of God today, for they have lost all knowledge of what it is!

A prominent evangelist said to a worldwide radio audience that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is not for us today. Some denominations proclaim a "Gospel of Grace"; some what they call a "Gospel of Salvation"; some a gospel about Christ; some a social gospel; some the "Science of Mind" or "Religious Science."

Not One Is Right!

Some churches claim either that their particular denomination, or "Christianity" as a whole, constitutes the Kingdom of God. Not one is right! Could anything seem more incredible? Yes, to the mind reared in this world's concepts, one thing is, indeed, still more incredible! And that is the PLAIN TRUTH about what the Kingdom of God really is!

The truth is not merely surprising - it is shocking - staggering! Yet it is truly GOOD NEWS - the most glorious GOOD NEWS ever to enter human consciousness!

CHRIST'S Gospel

What is the one and only Gospel of Jesus Christ? THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW! It has not been preached for 18 1/2 centuries, strange as that may seem. Look into your BIBLE. Look at it from the very beginning!

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" you'll read in Mark 1:1. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

It is necessary to believe that GOSPEL to be saved! And how can you believe it, unless you know what it is?

Jesus went everywhere preaching the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD. He taught in parables about the KINGDOM OF GOD. He sent out seventy men preaching, and commanded them to preach THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 10:9). He sent the apostles, on whom the Church of God was founded, to preach only THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 9:1-2).

Isn't it amazing that the world has LOST the knowledge of what it is?

The Apostle Paul preached THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:28, 81). And God Almighty, through Paul, pronounced a double curse on man or angel that would DARE preach any other Gospel! (Gal. 1:8-9.) Why, then, do so many DARE to preach so many other gospels? The good news of THE

KINGDOM OF GOD is something you must understand, and BELIEVE, in order to be saved! Jesus Christ said so! You had better be finding out what it is!

Daniel Knew!

Haven't you heard men speak of the Kingdom of God something like this: "By Christians everywhere working together to bring about world peace, tolerance and brotherly love, the Kingdom of God may at last be established in the hearts of men."

Because they rejected Christ's Gospel 1900 years ago, the world had to supplant something else in its place. They had to invent a counterfeit! So we have heard the Kingdom of God spoken of as merely a pretty platitude -a nice sentiment in human hearts - reducing it to an ethereal, unreal NOTHING! Others have misrepresented that the "CHURCH" is the Kingdom. Others confuse it with a millennium." Still others have, in our century, claimed the British Empire is the Kingdom of God. How DECEIVED CAN THIS WORLD GET?

The Prophet Daniel, who lived 600 years before Christ, knew that the Kingdom of God was a real kingdom - a government ruling over literal PEOPLE on the earth. Jesus Christ brought additional knowledge about it which the Prophet Daniel might not have known. Still, Daniel knew there was going to be a real, literal Kingdom of God on the earth.

Daniel was one of four extraordinary, intelligent and brilliant Jewish lads in the Judean captivity. These four men were stationed in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldean Empire, in training for special responsibilities in the Babylonian government. Daniel was a prophet who had been given special understanding in visions and dreams (Dan. 1:17).

Nebuchadnezzar was the first real world ruler. He had conquered a vast empire, including the nation Judah. This king had a dream so impressive it troubled him - moved him to tremendous concern. He demanded that his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers tell him both what he had dreamed, and what it meant. They could not. They were baffled. Then Daniel was brought before the king.

Daniel disclaimed any more human ability to interpret dreams than the Chaldean magicians, "BUT," he said, "there is a GOD in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:28).

First, God's purpose was to reveal to this world-ruling human king that there is a GOD in heaven - that GOD IS SUPREME RULER over all nations, governments, and kings that God RULES THE UNIVERSE! This Chaldean king knew only about the many pagan demon gods. He knew nothing of the true living ALMIGHTY God. Like people and rulers, even today, he did not know that GOD is the living, REAL, active, RULING - and GOVERNING PERSONAGE who actually and literally governs not only what is on earth, but the UNIVERSE ENTIRELY!

The whole purpose of this DREAM was to reveal GOD'S GOVERNMENT - the fact that God RULES - the truth of THE KINGDOM OF GOD - the very thing that is the one and only true GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST! And, secondly, to reveal - preserved in writing for us TODAY - what is to happen "in the latter days" - actually within the next two decades - THIS LAST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY!

For US, Today!

This is no dry, dull, dead writing for a people of 2500 years ago. This is LIVING, TREMENDOUS, BIG NEWS for OUR DAY! It is advance news for us, NOW. News before it happens - of the most colossal event of all earth's history certain to occur in your lifetime - during the very next few years!

This is THE TRUE GOSPEL! It is the very Gospel Christ preached! It is intended for you and me TODAY! It is vital that you UNDERSTAND!

Read, in your own Bible, verses 28 through 85. In his dream, this king had seen a vast statue - larger than any image or statue ever built by man - So tremendous it was terrifying, even in a dream. Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, legs of solid iron, feet a mixture of iron and clay.

There was a time element. Nebuchadnezzar had viewed it until a supernatural STONE came from heaven, smashing the statue on its feet. Then the whole of the statue broke into small pieces, and was actually blown away by the wind - it disappeared! Then this STONE expanded miraculously and quickly became a great MOUNTAIN - so great it filled the whole earth!

What did it mean? Did it have meaning? Yes, because this was God's doing. Unlike ordinary dreams, this one was caused by God to convey the message of God's sovereignty to Nebuchadnezzar - and, because it is part of the written Word of God, to us today - to reveal important facts of the TRUE GOSPEL!

"This is the dream," said Daniel (verse 36), " and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." This, then, is GOD'S interpretation. It is decidedly not Herbert W. Armstrong's interpretation. Men ought never to interpret the Bible. The Bible gives us GOD'S OWN INTERPRETATION! Here it is:

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings" - he was the first real WORLD RULER over a world empire! "... for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." God was revealing Himself to this human world-dictator as the MOST HIGH Ruler over all.

People today, like this Chaldean king, seem not to think of God as a RULER - as the Supreme One who GOVERNS - as the Head of GOVERNMENT. The Eternal was revealing Himself through Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar - and through the Bible to you and to me TODAY - as a SOVEREIGN, ALL POWERFUL, GOVERNING GOD who is to be obeyed!

"Thou," continued Daniel to this human emperor, "art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another KINGDOM inferior to thee, and another third KINGDOM of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth" (verses 87- 39).

What IS a Kingdom?

Notice! This is speaking of KINGDOMS. It is referring to kingdoms that bear rule over the people on earth. It is speaking of GOVERNMENTS! It is not speaking of ethereal sentiments "set up in the hearts of men." It is not speaking of churches. It is speaking of the kind of GOVERNMENTS that bear RULE and AUTHORITY over nations of PEOPLE here on earth. It is literal. It is specific. There is no misunderstanding, here, as to what is meant by the word "KINGDOM."

There is no misunderstanding the interpretation. GOD gives His own interpretation through the Prophet Daniel. The great metallic image represented national and international GOVERNMENTS - real, literal KINGDOMS.

It represented a succession of world-ruling governments. First was the head of gold. That represented Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom - the Chaldean Empire. After him - later, in time sequence - was to come a second, then a third KINGDOM "which shall bear RULE over all the earth" - world empire!

Then, verse 40, the legs of iron represent a fourth world-empire. It was to be strong, even as iron is strong - stronger militarily than its predecessors. Yet, as silver is less valuable than gold, brass than silver, iron than brass, though each metal was harder and stronger, the succession would deteriorate morally and spiritually. The two legs meant the fourth empire would be divided.

After the Chaldean Empire came the still larger Persian Empire, then the Greco-Macedonian, and fourth, the Roman Empire. It was divided, with capitals at Rome and Constantinople.

Now - verse 44! Read it! Get your Bible. See it with your own eyes in your own Bible. Here, in PLAIN LANGUAGE, is God's explanation of what the KINGDOM OF GOD is:

"And in the days of these kings. . ." it is here speaking of the ten toes, part of iron and part of brittle clay. This, by connecting the prophecy with Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17, is referring to the new UNITED STATES OF EUROPE which is now forming, out of the European Common Market, before your very eyes! Revelation 17:12 makes plain the detail that it shall be a union of TEN KINGS OR KINGDOMS which (Rev. 17:8) shall resurrect the old ROMAN EMPIRE.

So, mark carefully the time element! "In the days of these kings" - in the days of these ten nations or groups of nations that shall, IN OUR TIME, resurrect briefly the Roman Empire - notice what shall happen:

". . . shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed... but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever"!

Yes, in OUR TIME!

Now here we have described FOUR universal world-empires - the only four that ever existed! Revelation 17 shows that after the fall of the original Roman Empire there would be SEVEN revivals which would be ruled over by a Gentile CHURCH - the "daughter" of ancient BABYLON - a church claiming to be Christian, but actually named by God "MYSTERY BABYLON the Great" - or, more plainly, BABYLONIAN MYSTERIES!

Six of those have come and gone. The seventh is now forming - the last, final, brief resurrection of the Roman Empire by ten European groups or nations. These are the ten toes of iron and clay mixed. In their days - and they shall last but a very short space, possibly no more than two to three-and-a-half years - shall the GOD OF HEAVEN SET UP A KINGDOM.

This, then, shall be THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Compare with Revelation 17. Here is pictured a church. Not a small church - a GREAT church. She rules over "many waters" (verse 1) which are described in verse 15 as different nations speaking different languages. She posed as the Church of GOD - which Scripture says (Eph. 5:23; Rev. 19:7; Matt. 25:1-10, etc., etc.) is the affianced "bride" of CHRIST, to be spiritually MARRIED to Him at His second COMING.

But she has committed fornication. How? By having direct political union with HUMAN GOVERNMENTS of THIS WORLD! She "sat on" (Rev. 17:3) all seven of these resurrections of the Roman Empire - called the "Holy Roman Empire." She RULED OVER the human kingdoms - as a common-law and unmarried "wife" ruling her paramour "husband" - a totally unnatural and ungodly relationship.

She is, therefore, to "sit on" this last "head of the Beast" - this final resurrection of the Roman Empire. It will be a union of church and state. It is to endure but a very short time. It is to FIGHT AGAINST CHRIST at His SECOND COMING! That will be its END.

We see it in process of rising, now. Therefore we are CLOSE to the coming of Christ! We are now very near the END of this world! When Christ comes, He is coming as KING of kings, ruling the whole earth (Rev. 19:11-16); and His KINGDOM - the KINGDOM OF GOD - said Daniel, is to CONSUME all these worldly kingdoms.

Revelation 11:15 states it in these words: "The kingdoms of this world are become THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST; and He shall reign for ever and ever!"

This is THE KINGDOM OF GOD. It is the END of present governments - the governments that rule Russia, China, Japan, Italy, Germany - yes, and even the United States and the British nations. They

then shall become the kingdoms - the GOVERNMENTS of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, then KING of kings over the entire earth.

This makes completely PLAIN the fact that the KINGDOM OF GOD is a literal GOVERNMENT. Even as the Chaldean Empire was a KINGDOM - even as the Roman Empire was a KINGDOM - so the KINGDOM OF GOD is a government. It is to take over the GOVERNMENT of the NATIONS of the world. Jesus Christ was BORN to be a KING - a RULER!

When He stood, on trial for His life, before Pilate, "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." But Jesus also said to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world" - (John 18:37, 36). His Kingdom is of THE WORLD TOMORROW!

Have you not read what the angel proclaimed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, prior to His birth? Jesus told Pilate He was born to become a KING. The angel of God said to Mary: ". . . thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. 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: and He shall reign over the House of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be NO END" (Luke 1:31-38).

These scriptures tell you PLAINLY that GOD is supreme RULER. They tell you in plainest language that Jesus was born to be a KING - that He is going to RULE ALL NATIONS OF THE EARTH - that His Kingdom shall rule eternally.

But all this is only part of the fantastic, amazing, actually SHOCKING TRUTH about the KINGDOM OF GOD.

The KINGDOM OF GOD will rule over the peoples and nations of the earth. Yet these mortal peoples and nations will NOT be the Kingdom, not even in the Kingdom of God. They shall be merely RULED OVER BY IT! We still have to learn OF WHAT, or OF WHOM it is composed. Can YOU, as an individual, ever become a part of this Kingdom?

Can Be Entered!

In Jesus' day, the religious leaders knew He was a Teacher sent from God with GOD'S TRUTH. They branded Him a false prophet, heretic, and seditious. Yet they knew His was the voice of GOD! One of them, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, occupying an office of authority over the Jews, came secretly by night to see Jesus.

"Rabbi," said this Pharisee, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). Yes, we Pharisees, he said, know that! He did not say "I know it." He said "WE know" - we Pharisees! They knew He spoke the TRUTH - yet they not only rejected it, they crucified Him!

But Jesus hewed straight to the line! He told Nicodemus about THE KINGDOM OF GOD. He told him some things you need to UNDERSTAND!

Notice! "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 3:3). Yes, notice! The Kingdom of God is something that CAN be seen, but only by those who have been "born again." It is something others cannot see! Request our free booklet Just What Do You Mean - Born Again? (See page 31 for our mailing address nearest you.) But what about the CHURCH? Can carnal people who make no claim to having been "born again" SEE a CHURCH? Of course! But they cannot see the Kingdom of God! So SAID JESUS! Then, if you believe Jesus, the CHURCH cannot be the Kingdom of God!

Notice further: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (verse 5). The Kingdom of God is something that can be entered into - BUT, only those "born of water and of the Spirit" can enter into it!

Notice further! In the resurrection chapter of the Bible, we read: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (I Cor. 15:50). The Kingdom of God is something no human, of flesh and blood, can enter or inherit!

Now do flesh and blood people enter into the CHURCH? if so, then the Kingdom of God cannot be the CHURCH - for the Kingdom of God is something flesh and blood humans cannot enter into!

What do you think the "Church" is? Is it the building? Flesh and blood people can and do enter buildings and cathedrals called "churches." Is it the converted PEOPLE? Flesh and blood people can and no enter into the membership of any group of PEOPLE that may call itself the church. But flesh and blood cannot enter the Kingdom of GOD - so the CHURCH is not the Kingdom of God!

In Men's Hearts?

Now some think the Kingdom of God is some ethereal sentimental feeling or something set up in men's hearts. If so, then the Kingdom of God enters into mortal man. But these plain scriptures say plainly that it is men after they are no longer flesh and blood - but resurrected into spirit-composed bodies - who can enter into the Kingdom of God. It does not enter into men. Men enter into it - after resurrected in glory - after they are no longer "flesh and blood."

Is it the "god within you"? No, it is not something that was born inside of man, or has ever entered into man - it is something man may enter after he is "born again."

What about the British Empire? Well, I have been pretty well over the British Isles, Canada and Australia and all of the multi-thousands I have seen there were flesh-and-blood humans. They did enter the British Empire - but they cannot enter the Kingdom of God, in their present flesh-and-blood life. So the British Empire cannot be the Kingdom of God.

But, someone misunderstanding the scripture may ask, "Didn't Jesus Himself say that the Kingdom of God is within you?" In the 17th chapter of Luke, verse 21, King James translation, is a MISTRANSLATION which has led some to suppose the Kingdom of God is some thought or feeling or sentiment within man.

In Hearts of Pharisees?

Let's take a good look at this. First realize, if it does say that, it is contradicted by all the other scriptures I am giving you in this article. If the Bible does contradict itself, you can't believe it anyway - so then it still would prove nothing.

First, to whom is Jesus speaking? Read it!

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21).

He was speaking to the unconverted, carnal, hypocritical, lying Pharisees. Notice, "He answered them, and said -" It was the Pharisees who asked Him the question. Were they in the CHURCH? No, never! If one thinks the Kingdom is the CHURCH - and the Kingdom was "within" the Pharisees - was THE CHURCH within the Pharisees? Such an assumption is rather ridiculous, now, isn't it?

Notice again, precisely WHAT JESUS SAID. Remember the CHURCH had not yet been set up. Jesus did not say "the Kingdom of God shall be set up in your hearts." He said none of the things people interpret into this verse. He said to the Pharisees "the Kingdom of God IS" - present tense is, NOW! whatever He was saying the Kingdom of God is, He made it present tense, not future.

Luke wrote these words, originally, in the Greek language. The Greek words he wrote were translated into the English words "within you." But, if you have a Bible with the marginal references, you will notice that this is alternately rendered "in the midst of you," or "among you." "The context indicates that this indeed is the better translation. If your Bible is a Moffatt translation, you will notice that the translation recognized that Jesus was talking of His reign or rule, at the head of government.

This is the Moffatt translation of the same verse: "He answered them, 'The Reign of God is not coming as you hope to catch sight of it; no one will say, "Here it is" or "There it is," for the Reign of GOD IS NOW IN YOUR MIDST.'" The Revised Standard translation renders it "the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you." All these translations render it present tense.

Jesus was not talking about a church soon to be organized. He was not talking about sentiments in the mind or heart. He was talking about His REIGN, as the Messiah! The Pharisees were not asking Him about a church. They knew nothing of any New Testament church soon to be started. They were not asking about a pretty sentiment. They knew, from the prophecies of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others, that their Messiah was to come. They overlooked completely the prophecies of His first appearing as the "Lamb of God" to be slain for the sins of humanity - being born as a babe, growing up, being rejected and despised by them, as recorded in Isaiah 53. They looked only to the prophecies of His second coming as the all-conquering and ruling KING.

But they had even these prophecies distorted in their minds. They looked for Him to come as a purely Jewish Messiah, to liberate them from the Romans, and reversing the situation so that the Jews would be masters over the Romans. They looked for a limited Jewish Kingdom, located in only a small part of the world, with the Messiah ruling and letting the Jews lord it over the Romans.

This, the Pharisees anticipated as the Kingdom of God. They had an erroneous conception of the Kingdom of God - but at least they did know it was to be a REIGN - a GOVERNMENT.

World-Ruling Government

Jesus set them straight. He explained that it would not be a local, or limited Kingdom for the Jews only. It would not be merely one of many human and visible kingdoms which men could point out or see, and say, "This is it, here"; or "that is the Kingdom, over there" But He, Himself, was born to be the KING of that Kingdom, as He plainly told Pilate (John 18:36-37). The Bible uses the terms "king" and "kingdom" interchangeably (see Daniel 7:17-18, 23). The KING of the future Kingdom was, then and there, standing in the midst of them. And in the language in which He spoke to them, that is precisely what He said - as the marginal rendering and other translations state.

Jesus went on, in the following verses, to describe His second coming, when the Kingdom of God shall rule ALL THE EARTH. In Luke 17:24 He refers to lightning flashing, just as in Matthew 24:27, describing His second coming to RULE the whole world. Verse 26 - as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when Christ comes in power and glory as world Ruler. Verse 30 - the day when He is revealed.

Plainly, Jesus was not saying that the Kingdom of God was within those Christ-hating, hypocritical Pharisees. Nor was He saying that the Church would be the Kingdom.

Now continue with the other scriptures, and it becomes very PLAIN!

Jesus distinctly said that those Pharisees would not be in the Kingdom of God. To them, He said: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye [you Pharisees] shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:28-29).

The Kingdom of God is something men shall ENTER - at the resurrection of the just! Yet Abraham is not there yet (see Heb. 11:13, 39-40).

Has Not Yet Appeared

But one may ask, did not Jesus Christ say the Kingdom of God was "at hand"? Yes, we quoted this, in the beginning of this booklet, from Mark 1:15. This naturally led some to mistake what He said, and what He meant, and assume the Kingdom of God was established and set up during Jesus' ministry. Thus some supposed it was the Church.

But Jesus did not say the Kingdom of God had been established. It was now being preached (Luke 16:16). He did not say it was already here. Jesus, Himself, corrected this false notion. Will you read this IN YOUR OWN BIBLE? Will you then believe Jesus Christ - or will you call Him a liar and believe so-called "Christian" traditions of men? Will you believe your BIBLE?

Notice - read it in your own Bible: Jesus "added and spake a parable... because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11). WHY did Jesus speak this parable? Because some, even then, mistakenly thought the Kingdom should immediately appear - because some thought it would be THE CHURCH!

Now continue: "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (verse 12). Christ is that "nobleman." He is speaking of His ascension to the throne of God His Father, in heaven. Notice, He went there to be given rulership of the Kingdom - to receive the Kingdom.

Notice, too, He is to return, when He has received it! He has not yet returned! Other scriptures explain this. We will turn to them a little later.

But continue: "And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." The original 12 tribes of Israel had been divided into Two nations, immediately after the death of King Solomon. The nation Israel rejected Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and set up Jeroboam as their king. They made the city of Samaria their capital. But the tribe of Judah seceded from Israel, in order to retain Rehoboam as king, and Jerusalem as their capital. Then the tribe of Benjamin joined them, and many Levites. The northern Kingdom then became known as the TEN TRIBES.

Now Jesus Christ was born of the tribe of Judah. The promise of the "Sceptre" - or kingly tribe, from which Messiah was to be born - was divinely given to Judah. Consequently when it is stated that Christ "came unto His own, and His own received Him not," it is speaking of His having come to the Jews of the Kingdom of JUDAH, dwelling then in the Holy Land, with its capital still at Jerusalem. At that time the TEN TRIBES had migrated from Assyrian captivity northwest across Europe. They were far away, had lost their identity, were speaking a different language. It was then 700 years after their captivity and removal from the Northern Kingdom (Samaria).

Not Church Language

And so the nobleman's citizens who rejected him were the Jews at Jerusalem and dwelling in Palestine. And notice, Jesus is here talking about a KINGDOM which is a literal GOVERNMENT. His citizens would not accept Him as KING - they refused to have Him REIGN over them. That is not CHURCH language - that is civil government language!

So it becomes plain that the ten servants of the parable, to whom He gave the ten pounds, represent the TEN TRIBES, who had become known as the LOST Ten Tribes. After the Jews rejected Christ, He sent His original apostles to the "LOST sheep of the HOUSE OF ISRAEL" -and the term "House of Israel" always applies, after the division, to the ten-tribed kingdom - never to the Kingdom of Judah - or, as often called, the House of Judah.

Continuing the parable, spoken because some thought the Kingdom of God was immediately, then, in the first century, to appear: "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom,

then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading" (Verse 15). When Christ returns, we shall all be called before the Judgment Seat of Christ - to give account!

Now notice in verse 17, the one who had gained ten pounds is given authority to RULE CITIES - "have thou authority over ten cities"! To the one who had gained five pounds, he said, "Be thou also over five cities." This is speaking of the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST - and of His delegating authority to rule to saints converted during this Christian era, between Christ's first and second appearances on earth.

This parable, then, was spoken to make clear to us that the Kingdom of God is a literal GOVERNMENT, to be set up AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING - and not before! The CHURCH, then, cannot be the Kingdom of God. But the true Church of God is to be changed, by a resurrection and instantaneous change from mortal to immortal, INTO the Kingdom of God. The Church, when all its members have been changed to immortality, shall BECOME the Kingdom of God. But it is not, now, the Kingdom!

Saints to Rule

Now read the description of Christ's actual receiving authority to RULE the Kingdom. He is the nobleman who went to heaven to receive this kingship, and to return. We have already seen how the Prophet Daniel recorded the setting up of the Kingdom of God - at Christ's coming - to consume all present national governments on earth, and set up the world-ruling Kingdom of God. This was recorded in the second chapter. Notice now chapter seven:

"I saw in the night Visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man [Christ] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (verse 18). Jesus continually referred to Himself as the "Son of man" - all through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.. Christ ascended to heaven in clouds (Acts 1:9). He ascended to the very throne of God in heaven (Mark 16:19). Now continue:

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14).

That is plain! Christ ascended to the throne of God in heaven. God is Sovereign over the entire universe. This vision shows God Almighty, Father of the resurrected living Christ, conferring on Christ dominion. Dominion means sovereign or supreme ruling authority. Also given to Him was "a kingdom." Where is that Kingdom to be? It says "a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him." The people, and the nations speaking different languages, are here on earth. He is given dominion over ALL NATIONS - the whole world!

Important Word "UNTIL"

Now will you read, in your own Bible, Acts 3:21? It says the heavens have received Jesus Christ UNTIL - not permanently, just until a certain time. Until when? Until the times of RESTITUTION of all things. Restitution means restoration to a former state or condition. It is speaking of restoring God's laws, God's government - of restoring happiness and universal PEACE.

In this 7th chapter of Daniel, the prophet had experienced a dream, and visions. He had seen four wild animals. Notice, verse 16, the interpretation begins verse 17. This is GOD'S inspired interpretation - not mine: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the KINGDOM, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever" (Dan. 7:17-18).

Notice it! Not only is Christ to rule - but the saints - that is, converted true Christians - those begotten as sons of God - are to take and possess the Kingdom! They are to rule under, and with Christ! In the New Testament it is recorded that converted saints are co-heirs with Christ!

In this same 7th chapter, Daniel explained another power. The fourth beast of his dream - the fourth empire - the Roman Empire, was pictured as an animal having ten horns - explained here and in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 as ten revivals or resurrections of the Roman Empire, after its original fall in 476 A.D. But among them - after 476 A.D. - arose another little horn - a religious kingdom, actually ruling over the last seven of the other "horns" or revived Roman kingdoms (verse 20).

Now read about this "little horn" - the religious kingdom - verse 21: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, UNTIL [note, another 'UNTIL'] the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

The saints - then no longer human flesh and blood, but immortal - are to possess the Kingdom, at the second coming of Christ!

Jesus Christ makes that plain. It is Christ who is speaking in Revelation 3:21, and 2:2&27: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." The Father's throne is in heaven - where Jesus Christ is now; but Christ's throne, in which the saints shall sit with Him, is the throne of David, in Jerusalem. (Luke 1:82).

Further: "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

Can't Know the TIME

After His resurrection, on the Mount of Olives at the very hour of His ascension to heaven, Jesus was explaining to His disciples how they would receive the inspiring God-begetting POWER of the Holy Spirit on the approaching day of Pentecost.

His disciples wanted to know whether the Kingdom of God was to be set up at that time! The CHURCH was established on that approaching day of Pentecost. Was that CHURCH, then, to be the setting up of the Kingdom?

"Lord," they asked, "wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus again made plain that the Church is not the Kingdom.

"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. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost [Spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:7-9).

The commission He had given the CHURCH was to preach His Gospel to all the world. They were to receive the Holy Spirit, begetting them as saints - as Christians - putting them into God's CHURCH. This would infuse them with the power to carry out the mission of the Church. But it was NOT the setting up of the Kingdom of God. Of that they were not to know the time.

Just what did Jesus mean, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons"? He explained it another time. It is recorded in Matthew 24:36: There He was speaking of the end of this world, and His second coming:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." He was speaking of His second coming, and setting up of the Kingdom, the time of which no man knows, but only the Father.

However, though we do not, even now, know the day or the hour, we do know, from God's prophecies, that it is today very near! Notice this, in Luke 21:25-32: He had been foretelling the world events, right now beginning, leading to "distress of nations" in world troubles and world wars, "with perplexity" - "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" - world trouble such as never before experienced. "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

The Two Fateful Alternatives

This world trouble began in 1914, with World War I. There was a recess from 1918 until 1939. We are in a second recess now - although we have been in what we call "COLD WAR." But now at last we have nuclear energy. We have hydrogen bombs stock-piled in such power and volume that they could blast all human life off this planet several times over. There are two other destructive weapons today in existence, either of which could erase humanity from the earth.

Today world-famous scientists say only a super world-government can prevent world cosmocide. Yet MEN cannot and will not get together to form such a world-ruling government.

It's time we face the hard, cold, realistic FACT: humanity has two alternatives: either there is an Almighty, all-powerful GOD who is about to step in and set up THE KINGDOM OF GOD to rule all nations with supernatural and supranational FORCE to bring us PEACE - or else all human life would be obliterated (Matt. 24:22).

If the deceived religionists, who think the CHURCH is the Kingdom of God, were right, and there is not going to be any supernatural and all-powerful WORLD GOVERNMENT which is the Kingdom of God, then humanity is utterly without HOPE. All human life is in danger of extinction.

But notice what Jesus Christ said!

Can you BELIEVE JESUS CHRIST?

Where is your trust - in the Word of God, or in paganized, empty, deceiving teachings falsely labeled "Christianity" - inherited as "Christian tradition" - which says the CHURCH is the Kingdom of God; or, that the Kingdom is merely a meaningless, frothy and ethereal sentiment "set up in our hearts"? It's about time you come to know who are the false prophets, and WHO is speaking the true Word of God faithfully!