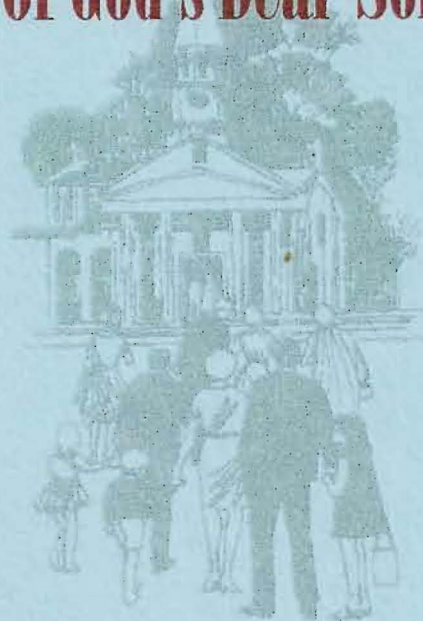


1999 WATCH THOU ALL THINGS  
LECTURESHIP

Entering The New Millennium In The Kingdom  
Of God's Dear Son



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and  
Darrell Broking  
Editors



## Chapter One

# CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

*Mark Lance*

### **Introduction**

One of the greatest teachings in all of God's Holy Word is that Christ will return again (John 14:1-4). It should bring comfort to the child of God to know that the Lord will return, but at the same time it should serve as a call to duty. One must simply be prepared at the second coming of Christ, for there will be no more chances to obey the commands of God after this life, as some falsely teach.

The greatest event the world has ever known was the first coming of Jesus Christ to establish his church (Matthew 16:18)<sup>1</sup>. The next greatest event in the future will be the second coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11)<sup>2</sup>.

The world in which man now lives is only a place of preparation for the world that is to come. Man must put Christ first in this life that he may be ready when the Lord appears.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, 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" (Philippians 3:20-21).

The word "conversation" in this passage (KJV) means one's citizenship, so a Christian's true home is to be in heaven.

There are over 300 references to the second coming of Christ.<sup>3</sup> God thought it was important or He would not have had the Holy Spirit guide the writers of the Bible to make so much mention of it. The subject of Christ's return has been given a great deal of attention, but so much of what has been written has no scriptural bases. Let God's people go back to the Bible for their instruction and not the mind of man (II Timothy 2:15; I Peter 4:11).

### **The Fact Is Christ Will Come Again**

Jesus made a promise that He would come again (John 14:16). One must have faith in God and His Dear Son Jesus to truly have faith in the second coming of Christ, but it is not a blind faith, but

rather one based on evidence. When Jesus was upon the earth He did not ask anyone to believe on Him without giving evidence; He was indeed the Son of God (John 3:1-2). Jesus, by the miracles He preformed, proved without doubt He was the Son of God. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God"* (John 1:1-2). One also reads in the same chapter, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (vs. 14).

There is more than one kind of faith. There can be a blind faith, which is really just hoping something will happen but having no real reason to believe that it will. This kind of faith is not the kind of faith Christian people are to have. They are the ones who have examined the evidence and can live a life filled with confidence that the Lord they serve will again return to take them to be with Him in eternity (Acts 17:11).

Acts chapter one gives details as to how the Lord left this earth (vss. 9-11). But in the same context the promise of the return of Jesus is also given.

As children of God, focus must be maintained on Jesus; the fact that He is indeed coming again, but along with that remembering another promise Jesus made. While we remain in this world the things that man needs to sustain this life such as food, clothing, and shelter will be provided if we put the kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33).

Going through this life is not easy but it should still be a life that is lived with confidence rather than going through life down hearted and filled with doubt. Christians know they serve a risen Savior and that He has promised to return for us, which gives the faithful victory as well as peace (I Corinthians 15:54-57; Philippians 4:4-9; I John 5:4).

### **When Will Jesus Come Again?**

Sometimes people sing the song, "Jesus Is Coming Soon." This song has no scriptural authority (Colossians 3:17). It teaches the false doctrine of Premillennialism. The Bible makes it very clear that no man, nor even angels know when the second coming of Christ will take place. The Father is the only one that knows when He will send His only begotten Son (Matthew 24:36).

Many religious groups have attempted to place a date upon the Lord's return such as the so called "Jehovah's Witnesses"; and the false teachers in the church, such as Max King and his A. D. 70 false theory; as well as a host of others. Without exception these false prophets have failed, and most have come up with one excuse after another as to why the return of Jesus did not take place

when they said it would. It would be so much easier if people would take the time to read what God has already told us about the second return of Christ instead of spending all the money that is spent on books, tapes, TV programs, radio programs and seminars that do not help man in the least, except to relieve him of his hard earned money and waste the time he could have spent in a study of God's word. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (II Timothy 2:15).

Why would anyone want to attempt to set the date of the Lord's return when the Bible clearly says he cannot know? Well, one reason would be for the money they can make off of the material which they sell to those willing to listen to their damnable doctrines, but another reason is they want people to follow after them (Acts 20:29-30). It would seem that so many love to have power and control over others. This has caused no small problem in the Lord's church. So many good works are either stopped altogether, or hindered greatly by those who are determined to run the show or ruin the work others have accomplished. Those who would do such had better enjoy their rewards now, because the cost of trying to play God comes with a high price tag.

People such as Ellen G. White and William Miller of days gone by, and the false teachers of today can keep on making their worthless predictions, but God's word will remain true just the same. *"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night"* (I Thessalonians 5:1-2).

One main concern in this life should not be, "Will Christ come again," nor "When will He return," for He promised He would come again and said no man knows when that will take place. The focus of God's children should be that of serving God faithfully while upon this earth so that they can be prepared when He does come.

Jesus pointed out that His return would be like in the days of Noah. No one knew until the flood came when it would be. He also showed the importance of watching and being prepared when He did come again. It is even pointed out that there will be a separation. The faithful and the unfaithful will be separated on that great day (Matthew 24:37-51). How terrible it will be if the Lord returns to find us unprepared.

Jesus gave us a parable that illustrates that some will be prepared, and yet others will be found who have not made the preparation that is necessary to live with the Lord in eternity (Matthew 25:1-13). He shows how the five wise virgins made preparation for when the bridegroom came, but the

five foolish virgins did not bring enough oil for their lamps. It sounds so much like many members of the church. They give half-hearted service to the Lord, but fully expect to be ready when the Lord returns. They get mad when the preacher says anything in the sermon about people whose lives are not in accordance with God's will rather than make the needed corrections that would put them in a saved relationship with God almighty. While it is true that the pulpit should not be used to make a personal attack on someone, it is true that when a sermon is prepared with the thought of what is best for the entire congregation and presented in the right manner, and someone comes up to the preacher after the services are over and says, "That sermon seemed as if it were pointed directly at me," that person has admitted more than what they meant to. If the sermon is about worldliness and it seems to someone that it is directed at them, just maybe they need to do some repenting. Watch for the return of the Lord whenever it may be, it will be the greatest event one could see. But most of all, be prepared when the Lord does return.

### **What Will Happen When Jesus Returns?**

The Lord shall return; He has left this earth (Acts 1:9-11). Jesus ascended unto heaven on the clouds, and He will return in the same manner. There is no evidence at all that Christ will return to this earth as those who hold the view of Premillennialism teach.

This says Jesus will reign on earth for a thousand years, the apostle Peter said:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"

(II Peter 3:10).

Now if the earth is going to be burned up as Peter says it will be, where does that leave room for a thousand-year reign? It is so amazing that the Bible can make a clear statement such as this, which a small child can understand, but there are millions of those who claim to be adults, who say, "Well that is not what it really means." It is also amazing the amount of people who hold to this false doctrine with all their might when they are shown plain Bible teaching on the subject. It is still true today what the prophet said many years ago, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"* (Hosea 4:6). Today there is such a lack of knowledge in the religious world, and even in the Lord's church. It is not

because people do not have the opportunity to learn what the will of God is, but they simply have no true desire to know and will not put forth the effort it takes to learn for themselves what God would have them to do.

The Lord's church is suffering the consequences of a generation that does not know what the Bible says about the second coming of Christ or anything else for that matter. Too many preachers are afraid to proclaim the entire gospel for fear they will lose their paycheck or someone will not like what they have to say. We may call such men preachers, but they are far from being "gospel" preachers and have no right to even stand in the pulpit.

Elderships, and other members of the congregation where there are no elderships, have the responsibility to make sure false doctrine is not taught on the second coming of Christ with Premillennialism, or any other ism, from the pulpit or the classroom. It is not all right to accept people into a congregation when they hold false views that will cause souls to be lost. They may seem like good people and may be popular as well, but the Lord's church must remain pure if it is to be acceptable to Christ.

The apostle Paul tells us when the Lord returns it will be with a shout from the voice of the archangel and there will be a trump of God (I Thessalonians 4:16). No one will have to ask when they hear the voice of the archangel or the trump of God, "What was that?" Everyone will know what it is without a doubt.

It will be a great day of joy to those who have prepared themselves, because Jesus will tell them to enter into the blessings. He prepared for them (Matthew 25:34-40). This group will be made up of those who loved God and served Him unto death (Revelation 2:10). They are not perfect, but they are faithful. This group of people never did ask, "Do we have to go every time the doors are open?" They are glad to worship God and be with their fellow Christians. They looked for opportunities to be of service in the kingdom of God. They were not those who had an excuse every time there was work to do.

The day the Lord returns will also be a sad day for those who have not made proper preparation (Matthew 25:41-46). It will be sad when the sentence is passed to go into everlasting punishment. It will be sad for the fact it did not have to be this way, but it was a choice that was made by all who will suffer the punishment of Hell. Often people do not want to consider that Hell is real, but the same Bible that tells about Heaven also tells about Hell. This group is made up of those who thought

they had better things to do when the saints gathered than to be there alongside of them. There will be some in this group that laughed and ridiculed those who tried to talk with them about their soul. Some in this group will also be those who did everything they could to hinder the cause of Christ. Some in this group will be those who thought they needed to work overtime rather than attend when they could have been there, and now their money does them no good at all (Matthew 16:26). Name just one faithful member of the Lord's church who gave up some overtime to be at the services of the church that had to do without the things he or his family needed. There has never been one, nor will there ever be one that can fill the blank with a name, because God promised to provide when His children put Him first (Matthew 6:33).

From the passages just stated and the comments made, it can be seen that on the day the Lord returns there will also be a great separation. How sad it will be for unfaithful family members who are separated from those who have gone on to their reward. It must also be stated that this will be a permanent separation. Parents who did not bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will be faced with the fact that if their children are lost, it is greatly because of them (Ephesians 6:4).

When Jesus comes, it will be to render punishment to the unfaithful and give reward to the faithful who will glorify their Lord (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). There will be no doubter.

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

Those same people who once took God's name in vain will now bow and confess that Jesus is Lord. What a difference one moment in time can make. All the riches in the world will not amount to anything on this great day. How important someone may have been in the eyes of some men (including their own) will no longer matter.

Even with all the Bible has to say about Christ and His return, some still will not accept the evidence. People such as Max King teach the second coming of Christ has already taken place. This is a complete disregard for plain Bible teaching, when the Bible says that every eye shall see Him when He comes with the clouds (Revelation 1:7). People must decide whether they are going to take God's word or man's word. *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are*



*of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).*

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that the Lord will return, even if we do not know when. Are you satisfied with the spiritual condition you are in right now? If not, make a change and obey God's commandments while you still have the time and opportunity (Matthew 7:21).

### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Thomas H. "Lasting Truth About Last Things." Brentwood, TN: Penmann Books, 1998. pg. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Cox, Joe. "Fundamentals Of The Faith, Truth In Love Lectureship Series." Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1993. pg. 366

<sup>4</sup>All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

## Chapter Two

# ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, WHEN WAS/IS THE KINGDOM TO BE ESTABLISHED?

*Mark McDonald*

### **Introduction**

The theme for this lectureship is, "*Entering the New Millennium in The Kingdom of God's Dear Son.*" This lectureship is needed and will be appreciated. The topic which will be discussed at this time is, "*According to The Bible, When Was/Is the Kingdom to Be Established?*" In this lecture three things will be studied: the Bible is the word of God, the kingdom/church of Christ has always been in the mind of God, and the kingdom/church for which Christ died was established on the Day of Pentecost following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Believing that the Bible is the word of God is imperative. There are those who reject the Bible as God's word; however, this rejection does not change what the Bible teaches. Jesus Christ said, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).<sup>1</sup> Those who reject Jesus Christ are those who "cast off or despise"<sup>2</sup> Him. People who reject Jesus do not receive His words; however, this rejecting and receiving not His word does not change what He said. Jesus said My word "*shall judge him in the last day.*" Jesus is talking about all people who reject and receive not his words; these will be judged.

On the other hand, those who love Jesus will show their love toward Him by keeping His commandments. Jesus said, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (John 14:15). The apostle John said, "*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments*" (I John 2:3). Love and commandment keeping cannot be separated.<sup>3</sup> People show their love and know Jesus Christ by keeping His commandments.

With the words of Jesus and the apostle John in mind, notice these things: the Bible is the word of God, the Bible teaches the kingdom/church of Christ has always been in the mind of God, and the Bible teaches the kingdom/church of Christ was established on the Day of Pentecost following the

crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

### **The Bible Is The Word Of God**

The Bible has sixty-six books all of which are inspired of God. Peter said, *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"* (II Peter 1:20-21). No Scripture of either testament came of private interpretation. "Private" refers to what is one's own; interpretation is explanation. The prophecies did not thus originate as a result of the prophet's peculiar or personal explanation. He did not think them up; they are not his inventions to any extent of the term.<sup>4</sup>

Some people teach that God gave the writers of the Bible ideas and the writers put these "God-given ideas" into their own words. This theory is known as "thought inspiration." If God gave only "ideas" to the writers of the Bible, then the Bible would teach that only "ideas" were given; however, the Bible does not teach only "ideas" were given. The Bible says, *"The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue"* (II Samuel 23:2). Second Samuel 23:2 does not teach that God gave only "ideas" to the writers of the Bible. Jeremiah wrote, *"Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth"* (Jeremiah 1:9). Jeremiah 1:9 does not teach that God gave only "ideas" to the writers of the Bible. Ezekiel wrote:

"And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house" (Ezekiel 3:26-27).

This is a perfect illustration of Bible inspiration.<sup>5</sup> God does the talking, and God used Ezekiel's mouth to do it.<sup>6</sup> "This is inspiration; this is a verbal message from God through Ezekiel."<sup>7</sup>

Man communicates with man through words. God communicates with man exactly the same way; i.e., through words. "One's attitude toward the Christian religion in general is largely determined by one's concept of just what the Bible is."<sup>8</sup> Almighty God communicates with man and it is man's responsibility to read, study, obey, apply, and teach God's word. The ONLY way God communicates with man today is through His word; i.e., the Bible.

**The Bible Teaches The Kingdom/Church Of Christ Has Always Been In The Mind Of God**

The apostle Peter wrote:

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:18-20).

Redeemed means to release for a ransom.<sup>9</sup> If any man at any time has been, is, or will be redeemed, then he has been, is, or will be redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. People are not redeemed "*with corruptible things, as silver and gold*" (I Pet. 1:18). People are "set free by payment of a ransom"<sup>10</sup> with and ONLY "*with the precious blood of Jesus Christ*" (I Pet. 1:19). Jesus Christ said He came "*to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10). Paul said Jesus Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Are the kingdom and the church the same thing? Yes, Jesus taught that they were (Matt. 16:18-19). Speculation leads nowhere (Matt. 16:13-14). Men ought to seek revelation (Matt. 16:14-17).

The kingdom/church of Christ has been a reality for about two-thousand years, but the kingdom/church has always been in God's mind. The Bible teaches God knew about Christ's coming to redeem man "*before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*" (I Pet. 1:20). Jesus Christ purchased the church with His very blood (Acts 20:28), and it is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God "*is made known*" (Eph. 3:10 ASV) which is according to God's eternal purpose, "*which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Eph. 3:11). If the church was not in God's mind before the earth was created, how could the church be according to God's "eternal purpose"?<sup>11</sup>

Before man was created, the church of Christ existed. The church existed in God's mind. Friends, God does not have back-up plans, but He does have and He has always had His "eternal purpose." His eternal purpose was to make known His wisdom, and His wisdom is made known through the church of Christ (Eph. 3:10,11 ASV). The Bible teaches God is omniscience. Solomon wrote, "*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings*" (Prov. 5:21). Furthermore, Solomon said, "*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*" (Prov. 15:3). "The word 'omniscience' is derived by the combining of the Latin prefix 'omnis,' meaning 'all,' and the Latin verb 'scire,' meaning 'to know.'"<sup>12</sup> Hence, God knows all, and He

has always known all. The moment one limits God's foreknowledge is the moment one limits God.

God said through Jeremiah and the Hebrews' writer that He would remember sins no more (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12); hence, men are justified. How is this possible? This is possible only by the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The Bible teaches Christ tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9). In Jesus' death, He shed His blood (Heb. 9:11-14, 22-28), and with His blood, He purchase His church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28) which is His kingdom. Therefore, the church of Christ has always been in the mind of God because the Bible says Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:20). The word foreordained means, "to repose hope and confidence in a person or thing beforehand."<sup>13</sup>

### **The Bible Teaches The Kingdom/Church Of Christ Was Established On The Day Of Pentecost Following The Crucifixion Of Jesus Christ**

The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the coming of the kingdom of God, which is the church of Christ, when he said:

"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" (Isa. 2:2-3).

Isaiah was very clear when he said, "*It shall come to pass in the last days.*" After reading these verses, one needs to ask two questions. The first of which is, "What is going to come to pass?" Second, What are "the last days?"

The answer to the first question is Isaiah said something was going to be established. What is going to be established? The LORD's house is going to be established. Paul said the house of God is "*the church of the living God*" (I Tim. 3:15). The answer to the second question is the Christian Dispensation. Friends, "*the LORD's house*" mentioned in Isaiah 2:2 is the kingdom/church of Christ. Isaiah said, "*it shall come to pass.*" What the prophet is talking about is the Lord's church being established in the last dispensation of time; i.e., the Christian Dispensation.<sup>14</sup> The church of Christ began on the day of Pentecost following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Another Old Testament prophet who prophesied of the kingdom to come was Daniel. Daniel wrote:

"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" (Dan 2:44).

Jesus said to Peter:

"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. 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" (Matt. 16:18-19).

Daniel said God would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed. Jesus said He would give His disciples the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Daniel and Jesus are talking about the same kingdom. This kingdom is the church of Christ.

When was the church of Christ established? The words of the prophet Joel point toward that time. Joel said:

"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: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:28-32).

Joel talks about the LORD pouring out of His spirit, wonders that will be shown, and deliverance. When will these things take place? Joel says, "*it shall come to pass afterward*" (Joel 2:28). The "afterward" about which Joel is speaking is the same as the "last days" recorded in Isaiah 2:2 and "in the days of these kings" recorded in Daniel 2:44. These prophets are talking about the same time; i.e., the Christian Dispensation.

If one will read Acts chapter two, he will read the fulfillment about which Isaiah, Daniel, and

Joel have spoken. To prove this fact, notice the words spoken by the apostle Peter:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:16-21).

What is Peter doing? He is quoting the prophet Joel. Peter said, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" (Acts 2:16). What had been done? God had poured out of His spirit upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4), wonders were shown (Acts 2:2-13), and those who obeyed the gospel call would be saved (Acts 2:38-47). The Bible teaches these events occurred on Pentecost (Acts 2:1). All of the events recorded in Acts chapter two took place on the Day of Pentecost after the death (crucifixion), burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ (Matt. 27:11-28:20; Mark 15:15-16:20; Luke 23:13-24:53; John 19:1-21:25; Acts 1:1-11).

### **Conclusion**

The Bible is the word of God. It does not contradict itself, and the words written therein are living and shall abide forever (I Pet. 1:23). The kingdom/church of Christ has always been in the mind of God, and the kingdom/church for which Christ died was established on the Day of Pentecost following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

### **End Notes**

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12Daniel Denham, "The Omniscience Of God," in *The Godhead: A Study Of The Father, Son, And Holy Spirit*, ed. B.J. Clarke (Southaven, Mississippi: the Power Lectures, 1998), 141.

13Wesley J. Perschbacher, "proelpizo," in *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1990; repr. 1996), 345-346.

14Billy Bland, *Class Lecture Notes, The New Testament Church, Memphis School Of Preaching, Summer 1997*.



## Chapter Three

# THE KINGDOM IS FOR ALL MEN

*Eric Owens*

### **Introduction**

It is an honor to speak on this lectureship. I appreciate the invitation from Tim and the leadership. This year's theme is timely and important any time, but especially as we enter a new millennium.

My subject, "*The Kingdom Is For All Men*," is also very important and I am grateful that I was asked to speak on it. This message must be believed and proclaimed by every child of God wherever he may be. For if racial harmony will ever exist in the world, the church of our Lord will lead the way. Improvements in this area will come from God's children or things will never improve. A better nation, and a better world, can only come about by the influence of Christians. Without the salt of the earth and the light of the world the world will forever grope in darkness. It is true that a better world begins with me. Therefore every individual must take responsibility for his part in improving the world in which we live. However, the only way to improve any individual is by bringing him to Jesus Christ. In order for one to become selfless instead of selfish, he must follow the example of the matchless Savior. Only by having the mind of Christ, can one emulate the actions of Christ. And the only way to have the mind of Christ is by prayerfully studying, patiently meditating, and personally applying his word. And only when this happens, will the world become a better place to live.

The world is not in need of another program. The world is in need of the gospel. Before we can make peace between humanity, we must first restore it between God and man. Man can only accomplish this by becoming a part of God's kingdom. It is plain to see that this message can not come from Washington. Neither can this message come from the denominations. The only source for this message is God, and the only people who can display the effectiveness of this message in their lives, are Christians.

It should go without saying that God's kingdom is for all men. But, as it often happens, something that should be understood by all, is misunderstood by many. It is not at all uncommon to hear someone claim to be following God while at the same time hating their fellow man. Some have

built entire religions on the theory that God accepts some but rejects others. God has not founded nor does he approve of these groups. The Bible reveals to us a God that is loving to all, just in his judgment, and impartial in his dealings with man. As Peter declared, *"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"* (Acts 10:34-35). In this study we will notice four reasons why the kingdom is for all men.

### **Because God Loves All Men**

During the six days of creation God created the world and all its inhabitants. The crown of God's creation week was mankind. Of the human race alone it is said, *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Genesis 1:27). Note that man had nothing to do with his existence. Man did not evolve over eons of time by chance. Instead, God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Life came from life. Never has anything dead produced anything living. Intelligence comes from intelligence, not from dead inorganic matter. Life for man originates from God and He sustains it for man. Man then owes his very being, his existence, his soul, his life to God. Well did Paul say, *"For in him we live, and move, and have our being"* (Acts 17:28a). God created us for his purpose and plan, but the motivation behind our creation was love. In simple and yet profound language John captured the idea when he wrote, *"... God is love"* (I John 4:8).

Possibly the best known scripture in all the Bible is John 3:16. Rare is the person who does not know what this scripture says. This beautiful passage teaches quite clearly why the kingdom is for all men. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). The fact that the Jews were God's chosen people during the Law of Moses, must not be interpreted to mean that God loved only the Jews. John makes it clear that God loves the whole world, and He always has. We can see this in the fact that God made promises to Abraham to bless the world before the Law of Moses was ever given (Genesis 12:1-3). Paul's application of the promises further drives this point home. He said:

*"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect"* (Galatians 3:16-17).

Paul's point is undeniable, God chose Abraham's seed to save the world before the Law of Moses was ever given. Therefore it is impossible for the Law of Moses to disannul those promises. Later in the same chapter he would write:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abrahams seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29).

Paul called this fact the mystery that has been revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Paul explains this fact to the Ephesians:

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephesians 3:4-6).

Paul's language is equal to that of John's, John wrote that God so loved the world. Paul wrote, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female. God's love and offer of salvation is extended to all. The kingdom is for all men, because God loves all men.

### **Sin Affects All Men**

The kingdom is for all men because sin has affected all men. The God of heaven created Adam and Eve and from them every race of man has come. In spite of the racial disharmony in the world we all have a common ancestry. Adam called Eve "*the mother of all living*" (Genesis 3:20). From this couple came all the people of the world therefore Paul would say, "*And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*" (Acts 17:26).

In showing the universality of the problem of sin Paul wrote to the Romans, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they passed the effects of that sin unto all men. Because as Paul says in Adam all have sinned (Romans 5:12). It is not true, as some suppose, that Adam's sin was passed unto all men so that all are born sinners. Yet, the consequences of Adam's sin were passed on to all men so that all die. "*For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die,*

*even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:21-22). Calvinism notwithstanding, sin is something that is committed not inherited. John writes, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). John through inspiration tells us that sin is not something we inherit or pass on, but something we as individuals do. If studied with an honest heart, the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel would forever rid the world of this terrible doctrine. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). The rest of the Bible supports Ezekiel's point. the life we live and the choice we make to follow God is determined individually and not by the actions of another. This is the only fair way for God to deal with man. An individual must choose to follow God or choose to reject God (Matthew 12:30). There can be no middle ground in our dealings with him. No one can say, "I have not made up my mind" or "I have no interest in God but neither do I have any animosity toward him." According to Jesus when one does not make a decision to follow him, by that he has chosen to be against him. Having made this choice in our life we will one day give an account to God for our decision (II Corinthians 5:10). God will judge each person according to the deeds he has done whether they were good or bad (Colossians 3:25). It should be clear then that no one (including Adam) can pass his sin to another. Because sin affects all men, the place where man can overcome is open to all. Since sin affects all it would be unjust for God to extend a cure to only a few. It is sad that not everyone will avail themselves of the cleansing blood of Jesus, still God extends his offer to all. Notice just a few of the passages that teach this truth.*

"Come unto me **all** ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But **as many** as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

". . . I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation **he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him**" (Acts 10:34-35).

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto **all them that obey him**" (Hebrews 5:9). (Emphasis mine ELO).

By combining these scriptures the point can really be seen. Christ invites everyone to come unto him, and as many as will receive his offer, and whosoever believes, fears, and works righteousness, and all those that obey him will have everlasting life.

We must understand that sin is not something made up by the religionists but is a real part of our lives. When man fails to live according to the will of God either through willful acts of disobedience or neglect to do that which is known to be right (James 4:17), sin is the result. And when this is the case man walks contrary to God's plan for his life. In this condition he is lost, floating aimlessly through the sea of life without the aid of compass or map. Jeremiah makes it clear that, without God, man is not able to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23). There is no nation, no people, and no place on earth that is not affected by the leaven of sin. Since this is the case, the kingdom; the place where peace prevails, where sin is forgiven, and where fellowship with God is restored, is for all men. the kingdom is for all men because sin affects all men.

### **Jesus Is The Savior Of All Men**

If any man will inhabit heaven it will be because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. All men who have been or will be saved will enjoy salvation because of Jesus. The man who does not need Jesus does not now exist and never has existed. If it is the case that sin affects all men (and it is) then it is equally true that all men need a Savior. No man has an answer for the problem of sin. No man can, "pull himself up by the bootstraps." Sin stands between God and man and breaks the fellowship once enjoyed. When sin is committed man is in need of someone who can atone for that sin. Under the Law of Moses the blood of animals was sacrificed to atone for sin. These sacrifices were not intended to be a cure but served only as a shadow of the sacrifice to come. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. Therefore a body was prepared so that God in the flesh could die and atone for the sins of mankind. When Jesus instituted his supper he said, "*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). There is a volume of reasons why Christ is the Savior of the world, following are just a few.

#### **a. He is the Savior of all men because of his Person.**

Jesus Christ is the express image of the Father. He said to Philip, ". . . *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*" (John 14:8). His claim was substantiated by John the Baptist (John 1:29-34).

The Father confirmed the claim of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17; 17:1-5). The miracles done by Jesus served to confirm his claim. *"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God"* (John 5:17-18). Again Jesus would say: "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me" (John 10:30-31)?

**b. He is the Savior of all men because of his Power.**

Jesus Christ has the power of life and of death. *"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man"* (John 5:26-27). He is the one who upholds all things by the power of his word. Jesus purged our sins and sat down on the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:3).

**c. He is the Savior of all men because of his Preeminence.**

"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: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:21-23; cf. Hebrews 1:1-8; I Corinthians 15:23-24).

**d. He is the Savior of all men because of his Purpose.**

Christ came to save the whole world (John 3:16-17). He came that we (everyone) might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). He came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). He came to give us the peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7). In light of all these things, first and foremost, he came to give his life a ransom for the sins of the world. He died so that the entire world through him might live. Therefore, his kingdom, his body, his church, and his blood is for all men.

### **The Gospel Is For All Men**

No man will or can be rescued from the snare of Satan unless he obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ. Since God is the author of salvation, he alone decides how man is saved. God has chosen to save man through the preaching of the gospel (I Corinthians 1:18-31). Paul, through inspiration, tells us that the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4). This plan of God, or gospel as it is called, was not known by man but had to be revealed to man by

God (I Corinthians 2:8-13). One of the things these scriptures teach us is that no man knew or could know God's mind (his will, his gospel) unless he told us. Only then could we come to know what God would have us do to please him. This refutes the idea that one can come to know God's will through his intuition, or feelings, or experiences. No man could know God's mind unless God told him. Thankfully, God has told us his plan, to put it in Paul's word's, "he hath revealed it unto us through his Spirit."

Because of the impartial nature of God, and because of the problem of sin, the gospel is for all men. We sing a beautiful song by J. M. McCaleb with this sentiment in the first verse: *"Of one the Lord has made the race, Thru one has come the fall; Where sin has gone must go his grace: The gospel is for all."* Wherever sin has gone, the blessed gospel of Christ must go. For the gospel is God's means through which he calls man into Christ. To the Thessalonians Paul wrote, *"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (II Thessalonians 2:14). To the Romans he would write, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). Because the gospel is God's power to save it must be understood that there has never been anyone saved (after the cross of Christ) who has not heard and obeyed the gospel. The force of this truth must weight on the minds of Christians and spur us on to be more evangelistic. The gospel is for all men whether they obey it or not. The idea that the gospel is for the world and the doctrine is for the church is false. Paul preached the gospel to the saints (Christians) in Rome. In addition to that, the phrases, doctrine of Christ, the gospel, or the faith, all refer to the one body of teaching or system of faith brought by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Another prominent teaching being taught is that the gospel is for some men while not applying to others. This teaching says, that once you become a Christian then God's law, or parts of that law, apply to you, but before you obeyed the gospel it did not. This is not at all in keeping with the nature of the gospel or the power of Christ. The great commission shows this idea to be false. Jesus said he had all power (authority) in heaven and in earth. The only way for his message not to apply to you, is for you to live outside of his jurisdiction. Also the fact that he will judge the world by his word (John 12:48) demonstrates that the world is accountable to his will. *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). The question that must be answered is, "How can God judge or

condemn who is not accountable to his law?" There is a reason why no one today stands condemned for not making animal sacrifices per the Law of Moses. The reason is simply that the Law does not apply to the world, the Law of Christ does. Today we know that if one does not have his sins removed by the blood of the Lamb he stands condemned because of sin. The reason we take the world the gospel is because by so sinning they have broken God's law.

### **Conclusion**

The kingdom of God is the greatest institution on the earth. Only the blessed, blood bought kingdom of God can give man the peace for which he longs. Only the kingdom of God can cross all color and racial lines and make all men one. Only the kingdom of God can shine the glorious light of Jesus Christ to a world lost in darkness. Only in it can we enjoy communion with God and his dear Son.

Entrance into the kingdom of God's dear son is not based upon the subjective standards we have for things in this life. The kingdom of heaven did not reserve these blessings for only those who were rich and famous. God is not a respecter of persons therefore there is no advantage to be gained from being of a certain race. God's love is extended to men, not based on exterior appearance of the body, but on an inward condition of the heart. The kingdom is for all men, because God loves all men, because the Savior God sent came to save all men, because the gospel he gave can save all men, and because the problem of sin affects all men. May we always praise and thank God for his love, his mercy, and his kingdom.



## Chapter Four

**"AND SO SHALL ALL ISRAEL BE SAVED"***Russell Kline***Introduction**

The Phrase which constitutes the title of this chapter comes from Romans 11:26, the complete text of which reads: "*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*"<sup>1</sup> Relevant to a discussion of *Entering the New Millennium in the Kingdom of God's Dear Son*, the Biblical text under consideration in this chapter is quite significant. Many in the modern "religious" world teach a great deal of false doctrine about the new millennium and the second coming of Christ, using this text to make their assertions seem to be based upon fact. In order to deal effectively with this issue, the error which is commonly taught about Romans 11:26 must be documented and refuted, the truth about it must be fully exposed, and any lessons that may be learned in the process must be carefully considered.

**The Error**

Some in the modern "religious" world believe that Romans 11:26 teaches that there will come a day when all (but not necessarily "all") Jews shall be saved (but not necessarily from their sins). For instance, Albert Barnes, a well known and highly respected scholar in denominational circles, writes in his commentary on the book of Romans about the passage under consideration: "He does not mean to say that *every* Jew of every age would be saved . . . It is not clear that he means that even then every *individual* of them would be saved . . ." <sup>2</sup> Mr. Barnes interprets this passage to mean that Israel, as a nation, shall be restored to God's favor, and shall again be His special people.<sup>3</sup> Matthew Henry, in his commentary on the New Testament, claims that, "Not every individual person, but the body of the people" is what is meant by the words "all Israel."<sup>4</sup> Adam Clarke argues that "no man can conceive that a time will come in which every Jew then living, shall be taken to the *kingdom of glory*."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Clarke proposes that the phrase "shall be saved" should be interpreted "Shall be brought into the way of salvation . . . for the word certainly does not mean eternal glory."<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, the consensus among many denominational commentators is that Paul, in Romans 11:26, promised that the Lord would one day "restore again the kingdom to Israel."<sup>7</sup> Henry lists two

schools of thought about this promise, saying that "Some think it to be done already," when a great number of Jews were converted to Christianity before, during the destruction of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70, and that "Others think that it is yet to have its accomplishment towards the end of the world."<sup>8</sup> Even some in the churches of Christ held this view, at one time.<sup>9</sup> It is evident that many in the modern religious world still expect God to restore Israel's status as people for His own possession, sometime before the end of the world, and perhaps the most blatant advocate of this view is Hal Lindsey, who advanced it in the fourth chapter of his book, The Late Great Planet Earth.<sup>10</sup>

There are, however, some major problems with this view of Romans 11:26. First of all, why would Paul express such heartache over the condition of Israel in the first century, if he knew that "all Israel" would be "saved" sometime in the future? In Romans 10:1, Paul wrote, "*Brethren, my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is this, that they might be saved.*"<sup>11</sup> In Romans 9:1-3, he wrote,

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."<sup>12</sup>

In the second place, the very idea of a national restoration of the Jews prior to the final coming of Christ contradicts what the rest of the Bible says about that great event. The New Testament depicts the coming of the Lord in judgment as an event which will happen suddenly, taking everyone in the world by surprise (Matt. 24:36-25:46).<sup>13</sup> Jesus said it best, when He said, "*for in such an hour as ye know think not the son of man cometh*" (Matt. 24:44).<sup>14</sup> Those who look for national restoration of Israel as one of the "signs" of the second coming of Christ are looking for something which the Bible simply does not promise to us.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Truth**

The truth about Romans 11:26 has best been expressed by Foy E. Wallace, Jr., in his classic work on the subject of false teaching about the end of the world: "It is not declaration of universal salvation for the Jews, or national restoration of Israel, but rather stating the conditions upon which all Israel alike should be saved."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, when one considers the passage in the full context in which it appears, one can see clearly that it is not, in any way, a prophecy of future events.<sup>17</sup> I agree with commentators like Gobel Music, which stress the importance of considering Romans 9, 10, and 11

together, as a unit.<sup>18</sup> Concerning chapters 9 and 10, he wrote:

*"In Chapter Nine*, Paul refers to the depth of his sorrow (vss.1-2) and explains the reason why (vs. 3). He discusses the opportunities, promises, and blessings of the Jews (vss. 4-5) and then states that their condition does not mean that God's word has failed (vs.6). He explains this and then emphasizes the condition of fleshly Israel does not mean that God is unrighteous (vss. 6-13; 14-18). He then states the Jews have no right to question God's actions (vss. 19-24) and mentions the fact that even the prophets spoke of the salvation of spiritual Israel (vss. 25-29; Hos. 2:23; 1:10; Isa. 10:22ff). From these facts the necessary conclusion is given, which is, God chooses to save believers which is by faith in Christ (vss. 30-33). A remnant of Israel is to be saved, but the majority stumbled at the stone which God intended to be their Savior (Isa. 28:16). They simply failed to believe the Christ and His message and sought salvation by works without faith in their deliverer.

*In Chapter Ten*, Paul continues his deep and everlasting concern for his brethren (vs.1). In essence, it seems there are three major thoughts herein expressed letting Israel know she was at fault for being lost: (1) She sought righteousness by the law (10:1-4); (2) Righteousness for Jews and Gentiles is by faith (10:5-13); and (3) Israel is lost because of disobedience (10:14-21). Israel certainly had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge, and, for this reason, they were outside of the covenant. Salvation is definitely on the principle of faith and is for both Jew and Greek if they will but trust in the message of Christ. However, with all of this, Israel, as a whole rejected the message and, therefore, they are lost in their present condition. Although once elected, she refused to have faith in Christ, and the refusal became the condition upon which she was rejected. It is self-evident that she rejected the very end, the design and purpose, of the law. Even their failure to obey was mentioned by Isaiah (Isa. 53:1). Paul discusses God's plan (which plan Isaiah foretold) (Isa. 28:16), a plan for all who need it and will believe it. It involved a "*calling*" upon the name of the Lord. She heard, but did not obey, and, thus, fleshly Israel stood condemned of God. She was

guilty of disobedience. the term "*disobedience*" is from *apeitheo*, meaning to "*refuse belief and obedience.*" It is present participle, therefore, it denotes "*continued action.*" This is why she is responsible for her condition.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly, Romans 9 and 10 set the stage for Romans 11, in which the apostle Paul affirms that in spite of Israel's spiritual condition, all of Israel can still be saved.<sup>20</sup>

Roy C. Deaver, in his commentary on the book of Romans, breaks chapter 11 down into four parts, as follows: "Romans 11:1-10, *Israel's Condition Does Not Mean That God Has Cast Off His People* . . . Romans 11:11-24, *Israel's Fall Does Not Mean That Salvation is Impossible* . . . Romans 11:25-32, *The Mystery Regarding the Jews* . . . Romans 11:33-36, *The Magnificent Wisdom of God.*"<sup>21</sup> Concerning the first page of this chapter, Robert L. Whiteside observed that,

"God had rejected the whole Jewish system, and would soon destroy what government the Romans had so far left to them; but he had not barred the door of salvation against the Jew that became obedient to the gospel of grace through Christ."<sup>22</sup>

Concerning the second part of this chapter, Howard Winters, in a discussion of the metaphor employed by Paul, writes, "*This is simply another way of saying that all Jews who are saved must be saved in exactly the same way as were the first converts, that is by obedience to the gospel of Christ.*"<sup>23</sup> Just as Paul and every other Jew had to obey the gospel in order to be saved, so would all of the other Jews who had not yet obeyed.<sup>24</sup> Concerning the third part of this chapter, which also includes verse 26, Deaver argues that it is simply a re-enforcement of what has been stated already by Paul, saying: "*The 'so shall all Israel be saved' is exactly the same point made in verses 15-24. If Israel should continue not in unbelief, they could be grafted back into God's favor. This is the manner in which all Israel could be saved.*"<sup>25</sup> Concerning the fourth and final part of this chapter, David Lipscomb noted, "*Inexpressibly wise and deep is the wisdom that could so arrange that the punishment of the Jews for their unbelief would open the way for the Gentiles to believe in Christ, and that the reception of the Gentiles would be means of bringing Israel back to God.*"<sup>26</sup> As the apostle Paul had said earlier, in declaring his pride in the gospel of Christ, "*it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*" (Romans 1:16).<sup>27</sup>

### **The Moral of the Story**

It has been my experience that many people who seek to study the Bible often look for symbolism in passages where none exists. For example, The Late Great Planet Earth, a national

bestseller by Hal Lindsey, set out to reveal what the prophets of the Bible have to say about the end of the world, but instead, it makes the mistake of finding symbolism in every passage, even Romans 11:26.<sup>28</sup> The Bible does employ symbolic language, as in the Book of Revelation, but it does not do so *exclusively*. Whenever you study the Bible, consider each passage carefully in its own context, and do not make this common mistake in your Biblical hermenutics.

### End Notes

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4Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol.6, (McLean, VA: Mac Donald Publishing Co., no date), 452.

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8Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol.6, 452.

9Moses E. Lard, A Commentary on Romans, (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing Co., no date), 370-372.

10Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1973), 32-47.

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14Ibid.

15Foy E. Wallace, Jr., God's Prophetic Word, (Fort Worth, TX: Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, 1960), 106-159.

16Wallace, God's Prophetic Word, 155.

17Ibid. 144-159.

18Gobel Music, The CONDITION of Fleshly Israel in the Rejection of the Gospel," in The Book of Romans, Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren, ed. (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, Inc., 1983), 153.

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20Ibid, 154-158

21Roy C. Deaver, ROMANS God's Plan for Man's Righteousness, (Austin, TX: Biblical Notes Publications, 1992), 392, 398, 410, 424.

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23Howard Winters, Commentary on Romans, (Greenville, SC: Carolina Christian, 1985), 133.

24Ibid.

25Deaver, ROMANS God's Plan for Man's Righteousness, 414.

26David Lipscomb, Romans, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1989), 215.

27God, "The Book of Romans," in The Holy Bible, New Testament: 202.

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## Chapter Five

**SHALL WE BE RAPTURE READY?***John Daniels***Introduction**

Why are so many members of the church uninformed regarding the rapture? The simple reason is, the Bible does not mention the rapture anywhere!

In a book entitled On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Come in 1998, Edgar C. Whisenant predicted that Christ would return to rapture His saints on Tuesday, September 13, 1988, at 11:00 A.M. Central Daylight Time. Christ did not come at the time predicted so Whisenant moved the date up to Wednesday, then Thursday, and then Friday. In an interview with Christianity Today magazine, this false prophet said: *"The evidence is all over the place that it is going to be in a few days anyway."* Even though his prediction did not come to pass, Whisenant's book sold three million copies and made him a prophet who made a profit!!! (Rod Rutherford, "The Millennial Mania", A Study of Premillennialism, p. 60).

It's amazing that the religious world, as a whole, has built beliefs on issues never found in the Bible. *"It is evident to any honest observer that the notes in the 'Schofield Bible' have had more impact than the inspired words themselves in many hearts in the denominational world"* (Johnny Ramsey). Johnny Ramsey also suggested that believers in the Rapture should not be licensed to drive for they pose a safety hazard to other drivers on our highways (Premillennialism: True or False, p. 188).

**What Is The Rapture?**

The theory of premillennialism is that Jesus will return secretly to snatch away the righteous immediately before a period of great tribulation. When the Rapture occurs people will be going about their lives as usual. Suddenly, cars will have no drivers; chairs in schools, offices and waiting rooms will be vacant; seats on buses, trains, and planes will be empty; workers will instantly and silently disappear without a trace from their homes; and chaos will result as a frenzied search for the missing is carried out!

The word "rapture" is not even found in the Bible! (Hal Lindsey - "The Late Great Planet

Earth", p. 126). Our English word "rapture" simply refers to a state of being carried away with joy, love or ecstasy; it well describes the happiness faithful Christians will experience in heaven. It comes from the Latin "rpto" which means "to snatch away."

The premillennial position on the Rapture involves several prominent points: 1) In the last days a great period of tribulation will take place on earth. 2) Just before the Tribulation begins, the Lord will return secretly and snatch His saints away to heaven so they do not have to experience the time of trouble; the righteous dead will also be raised to be snatched away with living saints - this will be the first resurrection. 3) At the end of seven years, the Lord will return to the earth with his saints and intervene in the Battle of Armageddon thereby assuring victory for the forces of righteousness. 4) The martyrs made during the Tribulation will be raised - the second resurrection - to join the saints who have returned from the Rapture. 5) Christ will then reign for one thousand years in a glorious earthly kingdom - the millennium.

Terms describing the coming may be reduced to four words which are made into "separate steps or stages in the second coming" according to the Dispensationalists, these words are: appearing, revelation, coming, day (Compare Schofield Bible, p. 1212). *Parousia*: Means "his presence." The word is translated "coming" in the New Testament. *Epiphany*: "appearing," "manifestation," "brightness." *Apokolupto*: "disclosure," "appearing," "coming," "revelation." *Hemera*: "day," "Fig. a period (always defined more or less clearly by the context). These four terms are synonymous terms and do not "depict different occasions, but rather to draw attention to unique aspects of the one great occasion" (William E. Cox, Bible Studies in Final Things, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975, p.119). They are all used in connection with his second coming. I Corinthians 1:7 - "the revelation (*apokolupto*) of the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:10 - "unto the day (*hemera*) of Christ." I Thessalonians 3:12, 13 - "at the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Titus 2:12, 13 - "the glorious appearing (*epiphany*).

"The theory is that when the Lord comes 'for his saints,' it will be the time of his 'presence' - the *parousia*. But when he comes 'with his saints,' it will be the time of his 'manifestation' - the *epiphaneia*. And it is argued that there will be a seven year period between the *parousia* and the *epiphaneia*. This period is what is called 'rapture of the saints' in the heavens with the Lord, while the tribulation is blasting out its fury on the earth. (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., God's Prophetic Word, Lufkin: The Roy E. Cogdill Publishing Co., 1946, p. 203).



Dave Miller also correctly points out that these words are used interchangeably to refer to the second coming of the Lord. ("The Rapture," Biblical Truth Versus Dispensationalism, a series of sermons presented to the church of Christ in Dongola, IL, Winter 1983-84).

### **Proof Text of the Premillennialists for the Rapture are**

#### **I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Jude 14, 15**

Paul was writing to reassure some of the saints in Thessalonica who had the mistaken notion that Christians who had already died would lose their reward. He says those who "sleep in Jesus" will come with the Lord when He returns (verse 14). He shows that the living saints will have no advantage over the dead for the dead saints will be raised before the living ascend to meet the Lord (verses 15-17). When the saints all meet the Lord in the air, they will *always* be with Him - not just for seven years (verse 17).

The question Paul answered concerned those who had died in the Lord. Non-Christians are not under consideration in this context. The Bible teaches that all will be raised at the same time on the Last Day (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15).

Jude 14, 15. These verses state that the judgment of the "ungodly" will take place at the coming of the Lord "with his saints" - before the millennial. But premillennialists say the ungodly will not be judged until after the millennial. This text doesn't fit their doctrine. This also violates clear Bible teaching concerning the parable of the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30; 38-43). Both the wheat and the tares were to grow together "*until the harvest*" (verse 30). Jesus tells us "*the good seed are the children of the kingdom*" and "*the tares are the children of the wicked one*" (verse 39). The scriptures teach that both will "grow together" until the end of the world instead of the saved being raptured from the earth over a thousand years before the wicked are judged. In fact, it is the wicked (not the righteous) who this text says are to be dealt with first when the harvest (the end of the world) does come (verse 30). Jesus, in his explanation, gives this same account (verses 41-43).

#### **The Key Text For The Tribulation Is Matthew 24:21**

Other verse used by the premillennialist as proof are Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1; Mark 13:19).

Christ and the apostles use the word tribulation 20 times in the New Testament and referred it to the suffering and trials of Christians now (Matthew 13:21; Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; II Timothy 2:11; Revelation 7:14). The tribulation of Matthew 24:21 could not possibly refer to the tribulation of premillennialism. First, they teach the saints will escape the tribulation by "rapture" into heaven,

whereas Jesus teaches them to escape it by fleeing into the mountains (Matthew 24:16). Second, they were to pray that their flight not be in the winter-time or on the Sabbath day (Matthew 24:20). Third, the tribulation talked about here was fulfilling during that generation (Matthew 24:34). "Nowhere in the Bible is the word 'tribulation' used in connection with a seven year period at the end of the age, either while the church is still on the earth . . . or after the church has been removed from the earth, as dispensationalism holds. Instead, it is used to describe (1) the suffering of Christians during the present age; (2) the suffering inflicted upon worldly rejecters of Christ; and (3) the suffering especially prophesied for the Jewish nation at various times in its past history. the most general use is to describe the sufferings of Christians during this present age" (Loraine Boettner, The Millennium, p. 177).

### **The Bible Teaching On The Second Coming Of Christ**

#### **(Is There Room For The Rapture?).**

Jesus is coming again (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11). His coming will be sudden and unexpected (Matthew 24:42, 44; I Thessalonians 5:1-11). His coming will be seen and heard by everyone, living and dead (I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7).

When He comes, the dead will be raised and changed (John 5:28, 29; 6:54; I Corinthians 15:23-27, 35-55).

The earth and the works in it will all be burned up (Hebrews 1:10-12; II Peter 3:7-13).

All who have ever lived will be judged by Christ (Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15). The separation of good and evil will occur at the same time (Matthew 13:30-50; 25:31-46). The righteous will go to heaven (Matthew 25:34, 46; II Thessalonians 2:7-10). The unrighteousness will be cast into hell (Matthew 25:41, 46; II Thessalonians 2:7-10).

### **Conclusion**

"As popular and common as this teaching has become, few people realize how relatively new it is. Although "historic" premillennialism (also false) has been around longer, dispensational premillennialism (for which comes the rapture idea) is usually dated as beginning with John N. Darby in about 1830. This was the beginning of the Plymouth Brethren movement. One writer claims the two-stage idea of Christ's coming to have begun by a Miss Margaret MacDonald in Scotland a few years earlier, but none seem to be able to trace it back before the 1800's. This should be sufficient reason to reject this doctrine. It started over 1700 years too late to be from God" (Joe Galloway,

"What About The Rapture", p.2).

Neither the word nor the concept of the "Rapture" is found in the Bible!!! It is the theory of men, a part of the false teaching of premillennialism. Saints will experience the true rapture (the joy of heaven) when they get to heaven to be with the Lord forever and ever!

"Harry Rimmer once confessed that he was amazed to find that what he believed about the end of the world had not been based on the Bible teaching, but what Darby and other premillennial teachers and books had said" (Johnny Ramsey).

We do not need to worry about the so called Rapture, but we must prepare for the coming of the Lord to raise the dead, destroy the earth, and judge all mankind. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14:1-6). Note the promise, "I will come again." 1) Come to "receive you!" 2) "Where I am" (See: Colossians 3:1-3). Where did Jesus go to prepare this place? 1) Ascension record (Acts 1:9-11) 2) By God's right hand (Hebrews 1:3; 12:2). 3) Into heaven itself (Hebrews 9:24). Any theory that gets the mind off of heaven and onto earth is false (Matthew 6:19, 20; Colossians 3:1-3)!!!

Let us get ready to meet the Lord and live with Him (Hebrews 9:27, 28). "SHALL WE BE RAPTURE READY?" Only in the sense of spending eternity with Christ in heaven and not in any way as the premillennialists suggest.

*Chapter six***THE COLOSSAL IMAGE'S TOES AND THE RESTORED ROMAN EMPIRE***David Brown*

Premillennialists deny that Christ has set up His kingdom on earth. They teach that He came the first time to establish His kingdom, but was prevented from doing so because the Jews rejected Him. They, therefore, teach that Christ set up the church as a sort of "stop gap" temporary institution. Furthermore, they teach that Christ is coming again in order to establish His kingdom.

Since Daniel, chapter two clearly teaches that the kingdom will be set up during the Roman Empire, premillennialists claim Rome will be revived before the second coming of Christ.

The most popular premillennial writer today, Hal Lindsey, wrote: "The Bible shows us that the Roman Empire will be revived shortly before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth" (Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p.222). It is important to note that Lindsey also admits that the fourth beast in Daniel, chapter seven is Rome. He says "Phase 1, was the old Roman Empire. 'Phase 2' will be the revived Roman Empire which is even now being formed in Europe" (The Late Great Planet Earth, pp. 90-92).

Does Daniel 2 teach that only four kingdoms would come before the kingdom of Christ was established? Premillennialists hold all sorts of spurious views regarding the interpretation of Daniel chapter two. In this chapter we shall set out one of those views, examine it and expose it for the error that it is. This false doctrine is based on an erroneous interpretation of Daniel 2:44, 45. These verses are part of Daniel's interpretation of the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of "a great image" (Daniel 2:31-45).

In this passage Daniel interpreted the different materials of the image to be different kingdoms. Of course, he is not giving all the kingdoms of the world that ever existed or ever would exist. The image is comprised of materials that represent the kingdoms existing before the time that God established His kingdom; ending with the establishment of our Lord's kingdom and its duration. Daniel declared:

1. The head of gold is the Babylonian Empire (Dan. 2:37, 38).
2. The breast and arms of silver is the Medo-Persian (Dan. 2:39).
3. The belly of brass and its thighs represented the Grecian Empire (Dan 2:39).
4. The legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay is the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:40-43).

Daniel declared that in the days of the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire) the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that would last forever. Daniel makes no mention of a fifth kingdom. No meaning is given to the toes except the fact that they were of iron and clay, "so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken."

Through the centuries various world empires were said to be revived Rome.

1. Charlemagne's ninth century empire.
2. The empire of Napoleon in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
3. Hitler's Third Reich in Germany.
4. Today's European Common Market is the choice of most premillennialists for revived Rome.

"On January 11, 1993 Western Europe became a single economic market linking 345 million people in 12 nations and eliminating tariff and customs barriers" (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 219). "In phase 2 of the fourth kingdom Rome will be in the form of a ten nation confederacy. Therefore we can expect two nations to withdraw from the Common Market or we can expect some mergers of nations" (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 223). "A generation ago, no one could have dreamed that an empire formed of the nations that were part of old Rome could possibly be revived. But today, as Europe is on the advent of real unity, we see the potential fulfillment of another vital prophecy leading to the return of Jesus Christ (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p.221).

Do the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image symbolize a ten nation confederacy which will constitute a revival of Rome? Daniel said: "*In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom.*" He did not say, "After the days of these kings." If the prophecy Daniel 2:44 was "not completely fulfilled in the days of the Roman kings when the church was established, then prophecy failed and the Bible is not true! Foy E. Wallace, Jr.'s discussion of the toes totally annihilates the

premillennial contention. He wrote:

But it is argued that the image of Nebuchadnezzar had ten toes, which represented the ten kingdoms, in addition to the four kingdoms of the image proper. The four kingdoms part of the prophecy was fulfilled and the body of the image was destroyed - but the toes survived the destruction, still exist, to revive in the future! Some toes they are! The body of the image was only about 600 years long, but the toes according to that picture are already 2000 years longer than the body. Magic toes! The toes of that fellow could be coiled around his body ten times and could still scratch the back of its neck with its toe nails! And these toes lived two thousand years detached from the body! Such an argument is obviously a forced explanation to escape the complete New Testament fulfillment of Daniel's kingdom prophecy. The text says the image was "crushed" - not all but its toes. It says the image was crushed - which cannot mean other than the whole image. If a man is pronounced dead, it would not mean all but his toes! The fact that Daniel himself made no such application of 'the toes' is the proof that the toes were not distinguished from the image. On the contrary, he said the image was smitten on its feet, the last of the four kingdoms in its weakness, and crushed. The simple truth, therefore, is that Daniel saw only four world kingdoms, and since the kingdom of God should be set up 'in the days of these kings' it follows that the kingdom had to come while the Caesars were ruling, and before the Roman Empire ceased" (God's Prophetic Word. p.170).

Daniel chapter seven is a parallel passage to Daniel chapter two. Daniel 2 prophesied of the rise of four world empires which were represented by four different parts of an image. In the time of the fourth empire, God would set up His kingdom which would stand forever.

Daniel 7 speaks of exactly the same thing except four "beasts" are used to represent the four empires. Daniel saw four beasts come up from the sea (Daniel 7:1-8). The sea refers to the nations -- these "beasts" would arise out of the struggle and turmoil of nations. The first beast, which was like a savage lion and had eagle's wings, represented Babylon (Daniel 7:4). Wings represent the speed with which Babylon arose to supremacy among the nations.

The second beast was like a savage bear with great strength. It had three ribs in its mouth and represented Medo-Persia (Daniel 7:5). The three ribs represent the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia,

and Egypt. Each one of these kingdoms was conquered by the Medes and Persians.

The third beast was like a leopard. It represented the Greek (Macedonian) Empire established by Alexander the Great (Daniel 7:6). The leopard represent swiftness. Accordingly, Alexander established a great empire in a very short period of time. The four heads represent the four divisions of the empire after the death of Alexander.

The fourth beast was very terrible. It represented Rome (Daniel 7:7). Militarily, Rome was the strongest of any of the four empires. Like the terrible beast representing her, Rome was the most diverse of the four empires.

Let us now study the meaning of the ten horns of Daniel 7:7,8, 15-27. Premillennialists say that the ten horns refer to a ten-nation confederacy which is being fulfilled in the European Common Market. They teach that the little horn which came up, before whom three horns fell, is the Antichrist (Hal Lindsey, The Late, Great Planet Earth, pp. 91-97).

Daniel 7:24 tells us the ten heads represent ten kings. Some conservative scholars understand that ten is used to denote completeness and therefore the ten horns refer to kingdoms which existed during the beast's history (Edward Young, The Prophecy of Daniel, pp.159,160). Other conservative commentators believe the ten horns refer to ten emperors of Rome. Rex Turner wrote:

"...there is the distinct possibility that Pompey was the first of the ten horns of that terrible beast, and thus of the following order: (1) Pompey, 63 B.C.; (2) Julius Caesar, 47-44 B.C.; (3) Augustus Caesar, 27 B.C. - A.D. 14; (4) Tiberius Caesar, AD. 14-37; (5) Caligula Caesar, A.D. 37-41; (6) Claudius Caesar, A.D. 41-54; (7) Nero Caesar, A.D. 54-'58; (8) Galba, A.D. 68-69; (9) Otho, A.D. 69; (10) Vitellius, A.D. 69. If such an arrangement can be justified, the eleventh ruler would be Vespasian, who ruled A.D. 69 - 79" (Rex Turner, Sr., Daniel: A Prophet of God, p. 115).

Furthermore, Turner wrote:

"Beginning the line of emperors with Pompey and including Julius Caesar is highly questionable historically, for neither man is acknowledged as an emperor; the line of emperors began with Augustus Caesar; if one begins with Augustus, then Titus is the tenth ruler and Domitian, who unleashed the persecution of A.D. 95, would be the little horn who "made war against the saints and prevailed against them..." (See Turner, p.120).

Daniel, chapters two and seven, have already been fulfilled. They were fulfilled in the coming of the kingdom of Christ during the days when Rome ruled the world. A prophecy once fulfilled cannot be made to be fulfilled over and over again. The feet and legs of Nebuchadnezzar's image and the fourth beast of Daniel's vision both represent Roman Empire.

From the Bible or secular history does one find anything of a "Phase 1" and "Phase 2" of Rome. The number of toes of the image is not given. Furthermore, there is no special significance attached to them. The European Common Market is not a revival of the Roman Empire. Moreover, no other such organization or government is either.

The Lord's kingdom has come. Christ is now reigning on His throne in heaven. He will continue to reign until He comes again, raises the dead, and delivers the kingdom back to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).



## Chapter Seven

**THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**

Clifford E. Newell, Jr.

**Introduction**

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Ar-ma-ged-don" (Rev. 16:16).

Would you be surprised if you were to hear that the "Battle of Armageddon" is greatly debated by the religious world? Would it catch you off guard if you were to find out that even among brethren there is disagreement? For centuries man has been interested in the battle of Armageddon. We know this one thing: Whatever view one holds regarding the interpretation of Revelation will greatly influence the position taken regarding the battle of Armageddon.

**Background Study**

Every book in the Bible must be studied in the light of its historical background. God has never operated in a vacuum. He has always acted in history. The book of Revelation was written either 68-70 or 95-96 A.D. It was written by John the apostle while he was exiled to the island of Patmos, by the Romans. It was there that John was told, "*write the things which thou hast seen*" (1:12-18), "*and the things which are*" (2:1-5:14), "*and the things which shall be hereafter*" (6:1-22:21) (Rev. 1:19, divisions are mine, CEN).

No book in the New Testament mirrors more its historical background, than does the book of Revelation. It reflects the persecution and death of thousands of Christians by the Romans, and to a small degree by the Jews. The occasion of the persecution and loss of life of the Christians was their refusal to worship the Roman emperor as Lord and God which was required by the time of Emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.). To thus worship the emperor was to declare the divinity of the Roman Empire inasmuch as he was symbolic of it. This was more a political than a religious matter with the Romans, who designated that it bring unity to and unreserved loyalty, for the Roman Empire.

The pagan Roman people welcomed the addition of another god, the emperor, to their pantheistic position. They were utilitarian-the more gods the better. The Jews in the Roman world were exempt from emperor worship for the Romans knew how important they were to their world,

as doctors, bankers, lawyers, and business men and that they were a monotheistic people. It was consequently to the Roman advantage to exempt them. The Romans viewed differently the matter of emperor worship for the Christians. The Christian stance was that they could not worship the emperor as Lord and God. Paul expressed the case in these words: *"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, through whom are all things and we through Him"* (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). Pagan Roman people may worship a number of gods but the Christian could worship only one!

In Revelation 1 the apostle John states that he was *"a partaker"* with the Christians addressed in Revelation, referring to their persecution *"in the tribulation"* (Revelation 1:9). To the church in Smyrna he wrote:

"I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Fear not the which thou art about to suffer; behold the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (Revelation 2:9-10).

To the church in Pergamum, John wrote: *"And thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth"* (Revelation 2:13). At the opening of the fifth seal John,

". . . saw underneath the alter the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth. And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course" (Revelation 6:9-11).

The foregoing passages are a few among the many, that set forth the tone and tenor of the book of Revelation's historical background.

### **Methods Of Interpretation**

We recognize that there have been and are four basic methods of studying this last book of Inspiration. The *preterist* method involves one's going back to the time frame in which the book of

Revelation was written. It requires sitting where John sat and to have the mind set that he had and to see as John saw. Dr. W. B. West has correctly observed, "It is read and studied through first century glasses" (Dr. West's lectures in Revelation Classes). This helps one to understand the book in the light of its historical background. What did it mean to its first readers? Some students take this approach to mean there are no prophecies in the Book to be fulfilled, but many preterists hold that there are prophecies which will have consummation at the end time of history. An example of these is found in chapters 21 and 22.

The *futurist* method hold to the view that from chapter 4 the Book concerns itself with the end time, the time beyond history. This procedure does not deal with the historical milieu of the time of its writing. This method is largely incorrect because it does not address itself to the primary message of the Book and moves the student from its historical setting.

The *historical* method looks at the Book as giving an overall view of history from the time of its writing until the end of time. Papal Rome and not Imperial Rome is identified with the beast. Evil men since the first century have been the subject of the writer-Napoleon, Hitler, and many others. The weakness of this method is it fails to take into account the historical setting, nor does it identify any event or persons the writer of the Book had in mind.

The *idealist* method approaches the Book with the belief that its main theme is to encourage Christians who are persecuted and threatened with death because of their refusal to worship the Roman emperor as lord and god and to live by the Roman life-style. To fulfill this theme, the writer employs symbolic language, not meant to be understood to signify anything, other than a number of imaginative descriptions of the triumph of the church.

### **Various Views Relative To The Battle**

The battle of Armageddon according to some has been applied to every major conflict that has transpired on this earth. In the 1860's when the Civil War was fought it was proclaimed, "This is the battle of Armageddon." Just before World War I began huge headlines blazoned the "Battle of Armageddon." The same position was taken with World War II; "This is the battle of Armageddon." The millennial advocates shouted the same phrase in regards to the "Desert Storm", this is the battle of Armageddon!

Hal Lindsey, a dispensational premillennialist, and a widely read author sets forth his views regarding the battle of Armageddon. Lindsey avers that political indications suggests that likely Israel

will soon be invaded by a confederation of Arab-African forces headed by Egypt. When this happens, Russia and her allies will use such as an occasion to invade and conquer (for a short time) the Middle East. Subsequently, the Russians learn of the progressive mobilization of Oriental forces (under Red China) and Western European forces (under the Anti-Christ, a fuhrer-like dictator). She will prepare to fight but will be completely destroyed (probably in a nuclear attack) by Western Europe (which is suppose to be the revived Roman Empire). Accordingly, this sets the stage for *"the final climatic battle of Armageddon: the combined forces of the Western civilization under the leadership of the Roman Dictator and the vast hordes of the Orient probably united under the Red Chinese war machine."* (Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 151). This mighty battle between the Oriental forces ("with 200 million soldiers", Lindsey, p. 151) and the armies of the Anti-Christ will occur with the vortex centered at the Valley of Megiddo. So many will be killed that *"blood will stand to the horses' bridles for a total distance of 200 miles northward and southward of Jerusalem"*; in fact, Lindsey claims, this war will spread over all the earth, destroying cities like London, Paris, New York, etc. Finally, *"as the battle of Armageddon reaches its awful climax and it appears that all life will be destroyed on earth-in this very moment Jesus Christ will return and save man from self-extinction"* (Lindsey, p. 156). Thus, the millennialist have made ridiculous the battle of Armageddon. This view of the battle of Armageddon is totally false.

Some brethren, such as Meadows, Jackson, etc. suggests that "it is more likely that Armageddon is used as a symbol of the final overthrow of all forces of evil by an almighty God. Jackson, summarizes this view as follows: (1) The battle of Armageddon will occur when Christ comes to judge (Revelation 16:16; 19:11). (2) But He will judge at His Second Coming. (3) The battle of Armageddon will thus take place at the Second Coming of Christ. Or consider: (1) The Armageddon war will take place when Jesus destroys His enemies with the breath of His mouth. (2) But such will occur at His coming. (3) Therefore, Armageddon is the punishment inflicted by Christ at His Second Coming. (Wayne Jackson, Premillennialism, True Or False?, p. 134).

There has always been conflict between right and wrong, good and evil. This is reflected on every page of the book of Revelation. For its first readers and for its last readers of history, this conflict ends in victory for the right and good. Those in the battle for the right will win and those for the evil will lose. The finality of the struggle will be determined by choices made and pursued unto the end. This is the same battle that we are in today-a battle between truth and error, the church and

denominationalism, between atheism and theism, between morality and immorality, in essence between everything that is right and everything that is wrong. The everyday conflict that every person experiences is the battle of Armageddon!

What will be the outcome? The struggle will be difficult but God will be with us and for us. Victory will be ours. From heaven we have this message: *"The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever"* (Revelation 11:15)!

### **The Identity Of The Battle Of Armageddon**

In the Hebrew the word *har* signifies mountain, hence the mountain of Magedon or Megiddo. Megiddo was a city in northern Palestine on the plain of Esdraelon with some hills around it. It was strategically located on the north and south road between Egypt and Mesopotamia, commanding the direct route from one to the other by the way of Galilee and Syria.

Megiddo, with its plains and hills, was the scene of many memorable and decisive battles in the history of Israel. The low hills around Megiddo, with their outlook over the plain of Esdraelon, have witnessed possibly a greater number of battle scenes than that of any other surface of the world comparable in size. Among the many encounters was that of Deborah and Barak who won, with their army, the resounding victory over the Canaanites which was immortalized in the song of Deborah and Barak, as recorded in Judges 5. This was a very crucial battle for the future of the Israelites as the people of God. There the good king Josiah was killed, fighting Pharaoh-Necho as the Egyptians marched toward Assyria, in a battle which was never forgotten by the Jewish people. It was also at the nearby Gilboa that Saul and his three sons were killed by the Philistines (2 Samuel 21).

Armageddon or Megiddo was proverbially the scene of decisive contests. At Armageddon Israel achieved some of her greatest victories and suffered some serious defeats. It has been referred to as "the classic battleground of Scripture."

What did the apostle John and the first readers of the Book of Revelation understand the battle of Armageddon to be? Did they know it was a physical battle located at or near Megiddo fought with weapons of carnal warfare? Is it to be a battle fought with carnal weapons between Christ and the devil, with their respective forces, at the end time as is believed by many today?

### **The Battle Of Armageddon**

The identity of the battle of Armageddon can be known by going back to the latter part of the first century A. D. to the time the book of Revelation was written and by looking at the battle

mentioned in chapter 16 verse 16; remember, through first century glasses. In the first century two empires went forth to conquer the hearts and minds of men and women-the empire of Rome and the church of our Lord. This battle is mirrored in the book of Revelation. It is a conflict between God and the devil, Christ and the Roman Caesars, the church and the Roman Empire, monotheism and polytheism, morality and immorality, and all that was right and everything that was wrong. John knew that the battles fought in and around Megiddo were conflicts arising from moral and spiritual ideologies as also were those reflected in the book of Revelation. The latter were reminiscent of the former. The Holy Spirit used details of the former as background in descriptions of the latter. John saw the battle of Armageddon as one between right and wrong in all of their dimensions-symbolic of a world-wide battlefield, in an age-long war, fought not with carnal but with moral, spiritual, and intellectual weapons used by the minds and hearts of men and women. It is not a single battle but is different encounters between wrong and right, going on day and night. It has been in progress since Adam and Eve and will be until the end of time.

The battle of Armageddon was first fought by Adam and Eve when the devil came into their sinless home and tempted them, to which they succumbed (Genesis 3). Joseph fought the battle in the house of Potiphar and won it (Genesis 37 and 38). The battle for David in the case of Bathsheba was lost (2 Samuel 11:1-27). Our Lord was victorious in His Armageddon in the wilderness of temptation (Matthew 4). Paul referred to his Armageddon in these words: *"For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice"* (Romans 7:19). This statement of the great apostle characterizes countless thousands of people today!

We fight the battle of Armageddon frequently until *"each victory helps us some other to win,"* so states a beautiful song we sing. The moral and spiritual encounter lies in the choices of life. Moses stated in his farewell address to the children of Israel: *"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"* (Deuteronomy 30:19). Later Joshua in his farewell to the Israelites said:

*"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15).

Our Lord stated: *"No man can serve two masters..."* (Matthew 6:24). *"He that is not with me is*

*against me..." (Matthew 12:36), and "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).*

### **Summary**

In summary, it is in the choices of life we fight the battle of Armageddon as did the Christians to whom the book of Revelation was first written. What are our priorities? If they are for God, Christ, and His church we will win every Armageddon encounter! *"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).*

## Chapter Eight

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT THE LAST DAYS?

*Eddie Craft*

"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" (Isaiah 2:1-4).

We have heard much about the last days and what is going to happen. The false teacher has had a field day on this subject. It is of course no wonder when we consider how little people read and study their Bibles. In this lesson we want to look at what the Bible says about the last days.

There is a discussion about what the days has reference to. Is it the last days of the Jewish economy? Does it have reference to the Christian age? I think it would be safe to say that it is truly the end of the Jewish age and also the beginning of the Christian age. The Christian age was going to begin in the last days of the Jewish economy. When you consider that the church was established in AD 33 and the destruction of Jerusalem took place in 70 AD we can see the church was established in the last days.

The Bible says that the Lord's house was going to be established in the last days. (Isaiah 2:2). Micah also taught the same thing, "*But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it*" (Micah 4:1). When we consider what the Bible has to say



about the house of the Lord we can see that this is a prophecy of the Lord's Church. Notice the following verse, "*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Timothy 3:15). We don't even have to guess or take anyone's word for it, inspiration tell us that the house of God is the Church. Now, this does a number of things for us, (1) It proves that the Church of the Lord was prophesied in the Old Testament, (2) Shows when it was to be established. Either the Church was established when the scriptures say or it was not. If we cannot rely on the scriptures in all points, then we cannot rely on the scriptures at all. The scriptures here, as well as every where else, are right. The Church was established in the last days as we can see when we look at Acts 2. Acts 2 points out that we are dealing with the last days:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-17).

The apostles inform us that these prophesies that were being fulfilled had reference to the last days and in verse 47 he informs us that the Church was established, "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47). Those who think that the Church was an after thought and that it was not mentioned in the Old Testament should take a close look at these verses. Paul also in the letter to the Ephesians made it clear that the Church was in the eternal purpose of God, "*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Ephesians 3:10-11).

We also learn that the kingdom was going to be established in the last days:

"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" (Daniel 2:44).

These kings being the Roman Kings. We as well learn from the scriptures that Christ was going to be Priest and King when He sat on His throne and He accomplished this in the last days,

“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:12-13 ).

You can't sit upon a throne unless you are a King. The kingdom was established in the last days and people are spoken of as being in it, *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”* (Colossians 1:13-14). *“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (Revelation 1:9). How could the kingdom not be in existence at this time and yet some be in it? The church and the kingdom are the same. The Church is spoken of in different terms such as, the body, bride, Church of the first born, Church of God, kingdom etc. The Lord Himself used the words kingdom and church interchangeably,

“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. 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 16:18-19).

From Isaiah 2 we learn that in the last days the Law of the Lord was going to go forth from Jerusalem. Notice the word *“Law.”* Now folks in the last days the Law, yes the Law, was to go forth. In the Christian age the Law was to go forth. How many times have you seen someone show his or her ignorance by saying in the Christian age we live under grace not law? They might even argue that under the Old Testament the people lived under law, but we live under grace. Some of this grows from a misunderstanding of John 1:17, *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* Friends, the passage is not saying that there was no grace in the Old Testament because we know that there was, *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD”* (Genesis 6:8). Not only was there grace in the Old Testament as we have seen there was also Law

under the New Testament, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"* (Romans 8:2). *"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well"* (James 2:8). The only thing that was being pointed out by John in John 1:17 was that the New Testament system came by Jesus Christ not by Moses. The word Law is not a dirty word as some in the religious world think it is. The Hebrew writer points out the following important point relative to the change of the Law, *"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law"* (Hebrews 7:12). Notice again the word Law. The Law of God and the Grace of God are not on a collision course, they go together. The text doesn't say there will be no law under the New Testament but rather there would be a change of the law. Language could not be any plainer. As a matter of fact you can't have the grace of God without law. *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"* (Titus 2:11-12). Notice that the Bible says that grace is taught. If the grace of God that brings salvation is taught, and it is, then you can't have grace without law.

There is also something that we want to make note of relative to the premillennial theory concerning the last days. They need to learn the difference between the last days and the last day. The last days were already here when the Church began on the day of Pentecost,

*"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams"* (Acts 2:16-17).

Notice the second coming of Christ is do be on the Last day, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). Notice others things that were going to happen on the last day: All the dead are going to be raised, *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"* (John 5:28-29). All humanity will be sent to their eternal destiny, *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal"* (Matthew 25:46). The earth will be destroyed at the last day, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall*

*pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”* (2 Peter 3:10). From the proceeding we can clearly see there is a big difference between the last days and the last day.

We must also observe that the Bible warns against false teachers in the last days. According to some of our brethren we are made to wonder where these false teachers are. In spite of what some of our brethren say the Bible still says that in the last days false teachers will come.

“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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 Timothy 4:1-5).

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3 1-7).

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day

of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:3-7).

These verses clearly show us that false teaching was going to be running rampant in the last days. Since these false teachers would be proclaiming their heresy what should be the Christians attitude toward it?

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

These and many other verses could be given to show that the last days would be marked by false teachers. I don't think anyone in his or her right mind could deny this fact.

The Holy Spirit was also going to be poured out upon all flesh in the last days,

"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: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:28-32).

We see this fulfillment in (Acts 2:16-21). The day of Pentecost provides compelling evidence proving the Holy Spirit works through the word in converting sinners. The marvelous work that the Holy Spirit accomplished in giving men the word of God in the last days shows the value of His work. In these last days the Apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as is evidenced by the personal pronouns of Acts 1:23-2:4. This in fulfillment of the words of Jesus, "*Jesus answered and said unto*

*him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"* (John 14:23). *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"* (John 16:13). The apostles received the needed ability to impart spiritual gifts to other Christians for the purpose of carrying out the great commission. The work of the Holy Spirit was to see that the word of God was revealed to man. The Holy Spirit guided the hands of the apostles so they could write be the inspiration of God. This was clearly pointed out by the apostle Paul,

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:1-5).

God's plan of salvation was now completed. When the apostles and the last person that they laid hands on had died then the miraculous was over and the word of God would have been completed. These are the last days there will be for one to obey the gospel. Preaching the remission of sins in the name of Jesus was to begin in Jerusalem as recorded by Luke,

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

We have been given all things that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Paul was right on the money when he said, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). My friends there will not be another time than now to obey the gospel. There will not be a purgatory or a space of time in eternity for you to get right with God. Its now or never as we see in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

## Chapter Nine

**WAS JESUS A FAILURE (WHY THE CHURCH)?**

Steven E. Yeatts

**Introduction**

There are likely very few people in the so-called Protestant religions who would make the claim that Jesus Christ was fallible, and that subsequently He would be subject to failing to do something which He said He was going to do. Although there may be few who would directly make that claim, much of denominationalism, by what they teach, supports the claim that Jesus Christ was a failure when it came to establishing His kingdom.

Those who deny the fact that the church and the kingdom are the same and exist right now are claiming that Jesus had to react to the rejection of His people, the Jews, with a back-up plan that He haphazardly put into place. This line of thinking would have us believe that the Lord Jesus Christ implemented a temporary earthly institution (church) for that which is yet to come (kingdom).

**God Planned The Church**

The essence of the belief that the church was an uh-oh is a blasphemous lashing out at God Almighty. The scriptures affirm in Ephesians 3:10,11, *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

God has always had a plan for those who follow him. A Saviour was promised as far back as Genesis 3:15 when the Lord God spoke of the one (Jesus Christ) whose heel would be bruised, but who would strike a mortal blow upon Satan. Is God susceptible to being caught off guard? Those who would teach anything contrary to the truth that it is according manifold wisdom and eternal purpose of God that the church exists would, in fact, hold to the view that God was unprepared for man's response to the Saviour.

If the church was not part of the eternal foreknowledge of God, is not the kingdom, and was instead a reaction to mankind's will, then one would have serious trouble defending the Divine origin of the church. That is exactly what denominationalist's do; they deny the essentiality of the church,

and thereby disregard numerous prophecies from the Old Testament that prove their theories to be untenable.

### **Old Testament Promises/New Testament Fulfillment**

II Samuel 7:12,13 state,

"And when the days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

God informed David that one was coming of his lineage whose kingdom was eternal. Some scholars throughout the years have indicated that this promise from God was in regard to Solomon, who was the next king chronologically after David.

Certainly the language in the first part of verse 13, "*He shall build a house in my name,*" could refer to "the house (temple) which king Solomon built for the Lord." The difficulty with that view would arise in dealing with the second half of that verse, "*and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*" Solomon's reign, as David's and Saul's was an earthly, physical kingdom with a definite ending. The references in the scriptures of an eternal, non-earthly, but spiritual realm are in regard to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which is His church (Daniel 2:44,45; 7:13,14; John 18:36; Colossians 1:13, et al). The kingdom of Jesus Christ will abide forever and ever.

The Apostle Peter spoke while miraculously indwelt with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:29-30, saying,

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne."

This is certainly parallel to what we saw from II Samuel 7:12,13, and it is true to the test of prophecy. Peter stated in Acts 2:31-33 that the fulfillment of this prophecy came to pass due to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and his subsequent ascension back into heaven where He sits on the right hand of God.

The kingdom that is eternal is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ, which is the church. These (the kingdom and the church) are one, and efforts to tear them apart are futile if rightly dividing the



word of God is a paramount concern of the reader (II Timothy 2:15). One would need only to look at the consistent theme preached by John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the 12 disciples called in Matthew 10, and the 70 disciples sent out in Luke chapter ten.

Each of these individuals preached that the kingdom was at hand. We know that the term "at hand" indicates a time that was near. We learn from Luke 3:23 that Jesus began to teach (preach) when he was about 30 years old. Certainly the three-year time frame during which He was teaching along with His disciples fits the "at hand" terminology leading up to the fulfillment of the promise of the kingdom that was established as recorded in Acts 2.

The church of our Lord was never an afterthought. It was prophetic in its establishment. Isaiah, the Messianic prophet affirmed in Isaiah 2:2,3,

"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 them mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into 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."

These verses affirm that there was an institution to be built and that it would occur in the "last days." The location was identified as Jerusalem and all nations would have access into this spiritual establishment, indicating a oneness in Christ. The status of this institution was that it would "*be exalted above the hills*", letting us know that it had superiority over all other establishments.

The congruity of the scriptures is both amazing and a comfort to those who study. When comparing the aforementioned prophecy of Isaiah to the word of our Saviour, we see the consistency that exists. In Luke 24, after Jesus had risen from the dead, He met with the disciples to enhance their understanding of what was about to happen (verse 45). He told them "*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*" (verse 47). Then in verse 49, Jesus stated, "*And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*"

Isaiah wrote some seven centuries earlier in Isaiah 2:2 that "*all nations shall flow into it.*" Jesus said, "*repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations*"

(Luke 24:47). Isaiah gave the city of this happening as Jerusalem, as did our Saviour. The beauty and the comfort of this consistency should not be lost on all those who preach the word of God. There are no contradictions contained in the scriptures. The Bible fits together so perfectly because it is inspired and preserved of God. Only God could deliver a message over a 1,600 year time frame, with some 40 different writers and have the truth untainted and the message infallible (II Peter 1:20,21).

### **Jesus Promises His Church**

We have already seen some of the evidence for the prediction of the church, which is the kingdom of our Saviour. Certainly time will not allow for an exhaustive approach to this subject, but there is much more on the subject that can be covered to solidify one's understanding of the existence of the church. In Matthew 16, Jesus was with His disciples as they came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi and He asked them in verse 13, *"Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."* Then in verse 15, Jesus asked that powerful question of His followers. *"But whom say ye that I am?"*

The words of Simon Peter were beautiful as he affirmed in verse 16, *"Thou art the Christ the son of the living God."* It did not matter who men thought Jesus Christ to be. They thought wrong. Jesus knew that His mission was to fulfill the will of God the Father.

*"And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which art in heaven. 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. 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 16:17-19).*

Let us consider the logic involved with these statements by our Saviour. Did Jesus Christ promise to build institution A (the church) and promise to give Peter the keys to institution B (the kingdom)? That would not make any sense. Even the shallowest of perspectives on this passage (the prevailing worldly adage that Peter has the keys to the gates of heaven in a literal sense) cannot lessen the impact of Jesus' words of truth.

Jesus was in fact informing His disciples that the church and the kingdom were one entity, a spiritual entity. This is easily understood within the same chapter of Matthew 16, when Jesus stated in verse 28, "*Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.*" It is an elementary, but powerful point to note that the disciples all died over 1,900 years ago. Did Jesus mislead His disciples by promising them the church, which is the kingdom in their lifetimes, even to the extent of telling them to go to Jerusalem to wait for the power of the Holy Ghost, only to fail in His efforts to build His church? Who would dare to make such a blasphemous accusation against our Saviour? I will tell you who makes that claim; anyone or any religious organization that would deny that the kingdom is in existence, and that the kingdom and the church are the same glorious establishment.

We have seen the promise of the church through Old Testament prophecies and the prophecies of Jesus. We have read from the scriptures that the proper location was Jerusalem. There are more pieces to the puzzle that needed to be in place to fulfill the establishment of the church. Jesus did not leave His disciples ill equipped to fulfill His promise. He knew they needed an influence to assist them.

### **The Power Of the Holy Spirit Is Promised**

In John 14:26, Jesus told the disciples, "*But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" This statement is totally harmonious with the promise of "*power from on high*", as we saw from Luke 24:49.

In yet another parallel reference from Acts 1, Jesus said, "*For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*" (Verse 5). Then in verse 8, Jesus said, "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*" These statements join together in perfect harmony everything we have looked at so far: the place (Jerusalem); the power (Holy Ghost); and the purpose (to preach the word of the Lord to all), and the precious institution that was established, that being the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The Church Is The Kingdom**

Saul the zealous persecutor of the church knew that Jesus was successful in establishing His

church because he expended much energy in tormenting the members of it (Acts 8:58; Acts 9:1,3, 4, 21). After Saul obeyed the gospel and became a Christian, he certainly understood that by obedience, he and his fellow Christians were in the kingdom. In Colossians 1:13, Paul wrote in regard to God the Father, *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."*

The deliverance that Paul wrote of transports one from the wickedness of this world into the glorious spiritual realm of the saved, which is the church, which is the kingdom of Jesus Christ. For those who would promote by their religious teachings and practices that Jesus was a failure, what makes them think that Christ will be any more successful next time? There will be no next time. If folks do not get on board with the kingdom now, they will find themselves separated from God for an eternity.

Paul had the confidence that the kingdom existed in his day, as he wrote by inspiration of the Holy Ghost in I Corinthians 15:24, 25 regarding the end of time on earth,

"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. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

This passage speaks to the fact that Christ is reigning now, and will that His reign will continue forever.

The Apostle Paul as the most prolific writer in the New Testament never questioned the infallibility of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. In his first epistle to Timothy (1:15-17), it is written,

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Keeping those words in mind, let us move ahead in I Timothy to 3:15,16. Paul wrote,

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of

angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in the glory."

Those five verses we just looked at are powerful. Did Jesus fail in His effort to set up the kingdom? Paul affirmed that the purpose of Jesus' coming was to save sinners. We saw earlier that Paul informed the Colossians that he and they had been translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. What is the saving institution? The church is. Ephesians 5:23-25 lets us know that. Could Paul and the Colossians have been translated into something (the kingdom) that had nothing to do with the saving institution of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the church? Remember the promise from Jesus Christ to Peter given in Matthew 16:19, that He would give Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven? Remember the promise to the disciples (Peter included) on the Mount of Transfiguration that the kingdom would come in the lifetimes of "some" who were there?

Compare those statements made by our Saviour to the message He preached as per Matthew 4:17, *"Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* If the church was a last second replacement for the kingdom, that would surely be in direct conflict with the teachings and promise of our Saviour. Who will make that claim directly? All of the religious ducking and bobbing and weaving in the world cannot sincerely miss that plain truth about the foreknowledge and prophecy of Jesus Christ.

The church was delivered on the Day of Pentecost, AD 33 because the Lord Jesus Christ promised it. The kingdom was available for entrance on the Day of Pentecost because the church and the kingdom are one and the same. Those who reckon differently will have to reckon with Jesus Christ the Righteous Judge regarding their perceived inability of Jesus to keep His promises.

I bring us once again to the words of Paul to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy. In I Timothy 6:15, Paul wrote *"Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords."* If Jesus is not now ruling over His kingdom, then he could not be referred to honestly as a king. However, we know from Hebrews 12:2 that He *"is set down on the right hand of the throne of God."* The king, Jesus Christ, assumed the throne the day He ascended back to heaven. *"Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord"* (Acts 7:49). The church is not the physical structure so many folks in the religious world have put their faith in. The church is comprised of people. And the only church that Jesus Christ established is Divine in its origin, was definite in its appointment, it has been delivered and it is defined as the kingdom!

### Conclusion

Jesus did not fail! The fact that a subject like this is not only relevant, but is a very needed one just shows the lack of respect for the prophecies (both Old Testament and New Testament) of the scriptures. If God in His infinite wisdom and knowledge did not know that Jesus would be rejected by His own, that He would be delivered up to be crucified at an appointed time, and that the blood that He shed would save all obedient souls and purchase the church (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25), then my friends, we can have no faith that anything else in God's Word is reliable either.

Why the church? It was always part of the plans of God. Genesis 49:10 states, "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*" Judah, one of the sons of Jacob was blessed (verse 8) by his father and Shiloh was promised from his seed. Shiloh means the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Israel (Jacob) also stated that "*unto him the obedience of the people shall be*" (ASV 1901).

Obedience to the Messiah requires understanding that He was always promised in the scriptures and that He would establish a spiritual refuge that all who truly love Him would enter into. In Acts 2, following the obedience to the plan of salvation by the Jews, "*They continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). The new converts reached out to one another daily, and were unified in their new family (2:46). "*And the Lord added to the church daily those that were saved*" (2:47; ASV 1901).

The church is the Divine institution of the saved that Jesus promised and delivered. Why the church? So that you and I will have the opportunity to obey the gospel and be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ by telling others about the glorious gospel of the blessed God, Jesus Christ (I Timothy 1:11).

### End Notes

1All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version 1611, unless otherwise noted.

## Chapter Ten

**WILL TEMPLE WORSHIP BE RESTORED IN  
JERUSALEM BY THE AUTHORITY AND  
DIRECTION OF THE LORD?**

*Bob Winton*

**Introduction**

We have been hearing some strange and sensational things in recent years. "Iraq is the Gate to Armageddon" (Title of article in "Pulpit Helps," Nov., 1990). The article, written by Moody Adams, went on to say that the Bible warned us against Iraq in the Book of Revelation! He cited Revelation 16:12: "*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*" Somehow, according to Adams, the mid-east wars of recent years are fulfilling this passage. He asserts that an army of 200 million troops will move across the dry river bed and meet another great army at Megiddo in the battle of Armageddon in a little valley in northern Israel. He says the plain is only 14 x 20 miles (1,478,400 square feet). This would give the space of less than one square foot for each of the 200 million invading soldiers (not counting the opposing force). His claim is pure speculation, and is nonsensical!

He cites Revelation 9:14-15: "*...Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*" Mr. Adams thinks that this supports his theory, but again, he offers no evidence that this speaks of modern-day Iraq and that one-third of humanity will be wiped out as a result of the fighting that has been going on over there. What happens to his theory when Iraq is defeated?

He cites Revelation 18:21: "*And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*" Adams claims that Hussein is rebuilding ancient Babylon, and that

Iraq is really Babylon. But the Bible says that Babylon was to be destroyed in ancient times and would rise no more (Isa. 13:19-20). Whoever tries to rebuild Babylon will fail, just as Mr. Adams' theory will fail.

Herman Stalvey, leader of The First Church of The Last Chance in Vero Beach, Florida said in 1980 that some events would occur in 1988 which would lead to the Second Coming of Christ. He cited Matthew 24:32-34, and claimed that "*this generation*" had reference to our current generation. He died in a hospital in 1985.

James Monroe, coordinator of the Joy Outreach Ministry in Melbourne, Florida, said in 1982 that the "*beast*" of Revelation 13 was at that time serving in the White House. He claimed that the letters of Ronald Wilson Reagan match the mystical number of 666 (Rev. 13:18)! Mr. Monroe was beaten to death with a concrete birdbath in his own home in 1982.

In 1985, Lyndon LaRouche appeared at Merritt Island, Florida to announce the USSR was going to launch a "*thermonuclear Pearl Harbor*" against the US in 1988. At the time this article appeared, LaRouche was on trial for running a credit-card scam.

Barney George, a retired water system engineer from Kennedy Space Center, told the writer of the article that "*the end of the world is near.*" Again, 1988 was the year of emphasis in George's speculations. He cited Isaiah 10:24-26, Daniel 11:20-21, and Revelation 11:3-4 as offering evidence of his conclusions. But only a mind that is full of speculation would find anything in these passages to support his view. "Desire is the mother of the thought."

The year 1988 has come and gone, and none of the things predicted have appeared. This makes the men quoted false prophets (Deut. 18:20-22).

Dispensational Premillennialism seems to be the most prominent millennial view today. It is a more recent theory, and teaches that human history has gone through several stages. It lists seven stages of human history: 1) Innocence: from the Garden of Eden to the fall. 2) Conscience: from the fall to the flood. 3) Government: from the flood to the promise given to Abraham. 4) Promise: from the promise given to Abraham to the giving of the Law. 5) Law: from the giving of the Law to the sacrifice of Christ. 6) Grace: from the sacrifice of Christ to his return. 7) The Kingdom: from his return for the 1000-year reign to the end of time.

Dispensationalists say the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3) represent seven stages of church history in which the conditions of the seven churches depicted the condition of the church during



subsequent times. 1) Ephesus: Duty Without Love: 33-100 A.D. (Rev. 2:1-7). 2) Smyrna: Poor and Persecuted, but rich: 100-312 A.D. (Rev. 2:8-11). 3) Pergamos: Compromise with the World-System: 312-590 A.D. (Rev 2:12-17). 4) Thyatira: The Great Counterfeit: 590-1517. (Rev. 2:18-29). 5) Sardis: Dead Orthodoxy: 1517-1750. (Rev. 3:1-6). 6) Philadelphia: Revival and Evangelism: 1750-1900. (Rev. 3:7-13). 7) Laodicea: Compromise and Apostasy: 1900-Tribulation. (Rev. 3:14-22).

The basic features of the premillennial view are these:

1. The kingdom of God is not now in existence. They think that Christ came to establish an earthly kingdom, reigning on David's throne in Jerusalem for a thousand years. But when the Jews rejected him, he was forced to set up the church instead of the kingdom. Premillennialism teaches that Christ will set up the kingdom after his Second Coming.
2. Just before Christ comes, there will be a time of great apostasy and wickedness. The false prophets of millennialism have convinced many that these events are impending.
3. Our present generation lives in the "last days" immediately preceding the coming of Christ; his coming is said to be imminent.
4. When Christ returns, only the righteous dead will be raised (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The passage cited offers no support of the theory.
5. The righteous who are still living at the Lord's return will be secretly caught up out of the earth to meet the Lord in the air. This operation they call *The Rapture*. This is easily shown to be false.
6. The saints who have met the Lord in the air will be with him there for seven years, during which time the *Great Tribulation* will be taking place on earth.

The Dispensationalists take this view; the premillennialists think the saints remain on earth during the tribulation (Matt. 24:21f). During this tribulation, the Jewish nation will be gathered back to Palestine, and the whole nation will be converted to Christ (Rom. 11:26). Also, the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and animal sacrifices will be resumed.

During the "great tribulation" on earth, the Russians will invade the land of Israel. (Ezek. 38:14-16). The Lord will fight against this great army and defeat it (38:22f). Now that the USSR has

faded from the scene in our world, the millennialists are left with an empty sack! Having defeated his enemies, Christ will then establish his kingdom in Jerusalem, and he and his saints will reign there for a thousand years. But over whom will they reign?

During the millennium, Satan will be bound. He will be loosed for a short time at the close of the 1000-year reign. Wickedness will have a short-lived triumph while Satan is loosed, but Christ will put down this rebellion in what DeHaan calls *"the last war of human history"* (p.14). All of this is based on a literal (but inconsistent) interpretation of Revelation 20. The scenario is given as follows: Satan will find those who obeyed the Lord in the millennium only because their obedience was coerced. *"Eager to rebel, and deceived by Satan, they will try to overcome Christ and His people by attacking the saints and the holy city. In this final rebellion, however, they will meet with sudden and super-natural destruction"* (p.14).

The *"Great White Throne Judgment"* will take place. Revelation 20:11-15. The *"new heaven and new earth"* will be the new home of the redeemed. Revelation 21:1-3.

### **What Does The Bible Teach Regarding The Restoration Of The Temple?**

It is incumbent on us to turn to God's Word if we are to discern the truth on this matter. Two prominent passages that relate to the subject:

"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews" (Acts 26:6-7).

"And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound

with this chain" (Acts 28:16-20).

In these two passages, Paul states that he was presently imprisoned because he preached about the hope of Israel. It was on account of the fact that he preached the truth on the hope of Israel that the Jewish religious authorities pressed the Roman governor to execute the apostle. It is most obvious that what Paul preached was not to the liking of the Jewish religious leaders. Their idea of Israel's hope was in direct conflict with what the inspired apostle affirmed.

If Paul had preached what the Jews wanted to hear on this subject, he would not have been in his present trouble. If he had preached what they wanted to hear on this matter, they would see him as a compatriot. But what Paul preached about Israel's hope was not what national Israel wanted. They were looking for an earthly Messiah who would take the reins of government, throw off the Roman yoke, and subdue the other nations around them. Their greatest hope was to regain the power and prestige and grandeur that prevailed under the reigns of David and Solomon.

"David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates" (Samuel 8:3).

"Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. 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" (1 Kings 4:20-21).

"And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt" (2 Chronicles 9:26).

Millennialists today are preaching the same doctrine the Jews wanted during the time of Paul. It is abundantly clear, therefore, that they are not preaching the same doctrine Paul preached. What the millennialists teach is what the Jews of the first century wanted and expected. Both the Jews and the millennialists are wrong. Before the temple could be restored, national Israel would have to be restored, with all of its Old Testament features intact. Without those features, it would not be *Israel*.

In order for the temple to be restored, there are certain other items that must also be restored. For the Old Testament nation of Israel to be restored, the Old Testament kingdom must be revived, with Christ (the Messiah) reigning over it. Will the Old Testament kingdom be restored? We will allow the Scriptures to answer.

First, remember that there was no king in Israel until the nation rebelled against God. God

gave them a king, but it was not his will that they have a king; he allowed them to obtain their demanded king as a means of showing them their folly and bringing upon them the just punishment for their rebellion against God's rule over them.

"Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them" (Samuel 8:4-9).

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath" (Hosea 13:9-11).

God had warned them centuries earlier (through Moses) that the time would come when they would demand a king; he gave them ample warning to avoid that grievous error (Deut. 17:14-20).

It was never God's plan for them to have a king. The theory of the millennialists is built on the same foundation that ancient Israel used in making a demand for an earthly king. An earthly king was never a part of God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). It is contrary to both common sense and the Scriptures to assert that God will restore the earthly kingdom of Israel which he opposed being established in the first place!

Also, God foretold and promised that not a single descendant of Jechoniah [also known as Coniah and Jehoiachin] would ever have a prosperous reign:

"Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not

prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:28-30).

Matthew 1:11-16 shows that Jesus is a descendant of Jechoniah [Coniah, Jehoiachin].

Holman's PC Bible Dictionary says of Jehoiachin:

"In 2 Kings 24:6, the son and successor of Jehoiakim as king of Judah. He was eighteen years old when he came to the throne late in 598 B.C., and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem before being taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon....Jehoiachin evidently was a throne name taken at the time of accession to the kingship. Jehoiachin's original name seems to have been Jeconiah or Coniah. He retained the title 'king of Judah' even in Exile..."

His uncle Zedekiah was the last king to reign over the Jews, but he was not of the lineage of Jechoniah; Zedekiah was a vassal king, appointed to the throne by his master, the king of Babylon (2 Kings 24:17-20).

Since God is always true to his word and cannot lie (Heb. 6:18), it is impossible for any descendant of Jechoniah to ever rule on earth with God's approval and blessing. Therefore, Jesus Christ cannot and will not ever rule on earth! Hence, the earthly kingdom of Israel will never be restored; and since that kingdom is forever gone from the earth, the temple worship it had at its core will never be restored.

For the Old Testament nation of Israel to be restored, the Old Testament Law of Moses must be revived and given its former authority as God's exclusive law.

Millennialists, as is true with sectarians generally, fail to make the proper distinction between the Mosaic Law and the Gospel of Christ. They want to restore the inferior and displace the superior. In effect, they want to exalt Moses to a superior position and relegate Christ to a lesser role. *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). To understand the Bible, we must rightly divide its truth. The Book of Hebrews and other New Testament passages, demonstrate the vast superiority of the Gospel of Christ to the Law of Moses:

#### CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

##### OLD COVENANT

First: Heb. 10:9

One Nation: Deut. 5:2f

##### NEW COVENANT

Second: Heb. 10:9

All Nations: Matt. 28:19

Dedicated by Animal Blood: Heb. 9:19	Dedicated by Christ's Blood: Heb. 9:15f
Moses the Mediator: Ex. 20:19	Christ the Mediator: Heb. 12:24
Faulty: Heb. 8:7	Better; Perfect: Heb. 8:6; Jas. 1:25
Shadow: Heb. 9:24; 10:1	Reality: Heb. 10:1; 8:1f
Blood of Animals: Heb. 9:19f; 10:4	Blood of Christ: Heb. 9:12
Carnal Ordinances: Heb. 9:10	Spiritual Sacrifices: 1 Pet. 2:5
Purify Flesh: Heb. 9:13	Purify Soul: 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:21; Heb. 10:22
Natural Birth: Gen. 17:1ff	Spiritual Birth: John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:22f
Infants Included: Gen. 17:1ff	Responsible Persons: Mark 16:15f
Temporal Rewards: Ps. 105:10f	Eternal Rewards: 1 Pet. 1:4
Glorious: 2 Cor. 3:9f	Exceeding in Glory: 2 Cor. 3:10f
Yearly Atoning Sacrifice: Heb. 10:1ff	One Sacrifice: Heb. 9:26-28
Bondwoman: Gal. 4:30f	Free Woman: Heb. 4:30f
High Priests Had Sins: Heb. 7:28	High Priest Perfect: Heb. 7:27
Ministration of Death: 2 Cor. 3:9	Ministration of Righteousness: 2 Cor. 3:9
Priests Without Oath: Heb. 7:21	With Oath: Heb. 7:21
Priests by Carnal Commandment: Heb. 7:16	Priest by Endless Life: Heb. 7:16
Priests from Tribe of Levi: Heb. 7:11	High Priest from Judah: Heb. 7:14
Priests Died: Heb. 7:23	High Priest Eternal: Heb. 7:24
Sins Remembered: Heb. 10:1-4	Sins Removed: Heb. 10:1-4; 8:12
Written in Stone: 2 Cor. 3	Written in Heart: Heb. 8:10
Servitude: Rom. 8:15	Sonship: Rom. 8:15
Letter: 2 Cor. 3:6	Spirit: 2 Cor. 3:6
Not remove Sins: Heb. 10:11; Acts 13:38f	Saved to Uttermost: Heb. 7:25; 8:12
Passed Away: 2 Cor. 3:11	Remains: 2 Cor. 3:11; Jude 3

God foretold and promised to replace the Law of Moses:

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 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, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith 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. 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, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:31-34).

One of the purposes served by Christ's first advent was to replace the Law of Moses with the Gospel of Christ. *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to*

*destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18). "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).*

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:6-13).

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. *He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.* By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:5-10).

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the

letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:6-18).

In view of the undeniable fact that the gospel of Christ has replaced inferior law of Moses, it is inconceivable that God would ever restore Moses' law.

For the Old Testament nation of Israel to be restored, the Old Testament temple must be rebuilt at Jerusalem, inclusive of the high priest, the priesthood, animal sacrifices, feast days, and all the other ceremonies and rites associated with it during the Mosaic Age.

Christ is to serve as priest at the same time he serves as king.

"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:12-13).



If the millennial theory is right, and Christ will sit on a literal throne as king over the earthly kingdom at Jerusalem, to fulfill the prophecy that he would serve as high priest simultaneously, he will be a priest on earth.

But the Bible states clearly that he cannot be a priest on earth: *"For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law"* (Heb. 8:4). He is from the wrong tribe to be a priest; the tribe of Judah was to be the source of the kings (Gen. 49:10) and the tribe of Levi was to furnish all the priests.

"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Hebrews 7:9-19).

"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:6-15).

The bloody sacrifices offered under the Mosaic Law were from animals, which the gospel shows to be ineffectual in removing guilt of sin (Heb. 9:22; 10:1-4). Only the blood of Christ has the efficacy to take away guilt: *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

For the Old Testament nation of Israel to be restored, the land of Canaan must be parceled out to the Israelites according to the Old Testament plan.

"It would mean a re-allotment of the various estates and inheritances given to Israel in the conquest and settlement of the land under Joshua. It would mean to restore the borders of what was once 'the Lord's land,' mentioned in Gen. 12:7, when the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, 'Unto thee will I give all this land'; and later in Gen. 13:15 when he said, 'For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it'; and again in Gen. 15:18 where God told Abram that the whole sweep of the land would be 'from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphra-tes'; that vast stretch of land in which in Gen. 17:8 God told Abram that he was a stranger, all the land of Canaan; that he would give it to 'thy seed after thee'; which Moses said in

Ex. 6:4-8 was 'the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers;' and the land which Joshua said in Josh. 21:43-45 that God gave them when they entered Canaan, 'all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers,' which he said they possessed, in which they dwelt, 'according to all that he sware unto their fathers,' of which 'there failed not ought' of anything because 'all came to pass'"(Wallace, pp.109f).

The millennialists assert that ancient Israel never received possession of the land God had promised them. But this claim clearly denies the plain declarations of the Scriptures: *"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 21:43). *"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof"* (Joshua 23:14). This was stated as an accomplished fact about fourteen hundred years before the coming of Christ.

"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" (Nehemiah 9:7-8).

This was stated as an accomplished fact about five hundred years before the coming of Christ. Israel had possessed the land for hundreds of years before losing it after the Babylonian invasion; here, during the time of Nehemiah, they had been restored to that land.

The promise of the land of Canaan was conditioned on their faithfulness. The warnings issued to them showed that they would forfeit their claim to the land if they rebelled against God.

"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 8:19-20).

"Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you: but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you" (Joshua 23:13-16).

See also Deuteronomy 29-30 and Jeremiah 18-19.

Since the giving of the New Covenant, there is no "holy land" where one may worship God more acceptably than some other place. *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:23-24). *"Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things"* (Acts 7:48-50)?

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things....That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain

also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:24-28).

For the Old Testament nation of Israel to be restored, the tribal identities of the Israelites must be re-established and proved. The Messiah was to spring from the kingly tribe of Judah, through the family of David, which was the very tribe of which Jesus was a member. *"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be"* (Genesis 49:10). *"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood"* (Hebrews 7:14).

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:29-30).

After the Roman invasion of Palestine in 70 A.D., the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was utterly devastated, and the vast genealogical tables were forevermore obliterated. So complete was the destruction of these genealogical records, that no Jew today has any way to determine his tribal identity. The surviving Jews from the various tribes have been so mingled that it would be impossible for any pure lineage ever to be established again, even by miraculous act. The destruction of the tables of genealogy shows that God did not intend ever to restore an earthly kingdom.

The significance of this is devastating to the millennial theory. There is no way for tribal identities to be determined so as to parcel out the land; and there is no way for the Messiah to prove his tribal identity. The millennialist might argue that the Messiah could supernaturally re-create the genealogical records, but he did not depend on miraculous action to prove that he was of the tribe of Judah during his first advent; there was no need, since the records were there to be checked.

The physical relationship to Abraham has absolutely no bearing on anyone's standing with God anymore. *"And think 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"* (Matthew 3:9). *"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" (Romans 2:28-29). "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. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28-29).*

In short, the very things which Jesus nailed to his cross must be restored, if the millennial theory is true. Why then did he die? It is certain that he died for entirely good purposes, including the aim of replacing the Mosaic system with a completely different and better system, the New Covenant. *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18). "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Ephesians 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" (Colossians 2:14). "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21). "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Hebrews 10:9).*

### **The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel 9:24-27**

This passage is abused by the millennialists, and needs to be studied. Read Daniel 9:24-27.

"Because of Israel's apostasy, Jeremiah had foretold that the Jews would be captives in Babylon for 70 years (Jer. 25:12; 29:10). The prophet's warnings proved accurate. The general period of the Baby-lonian detention was 70 years (Dan. 9:2; II Chron. 36:21; Zech. 1:12; 7:5). In the first year of Darius (c.538 B.C.), Daniel, reflecting upon the time-span suggested by Jeremiah's prophecies, calculated that the captivity period was almost over (9:1-2). He approached God in prayer. The prophet confessed his sins and those of the nation. He petitioned Jehovah to turn away his wrath from Jerusalem. and permit the temple to be rebuilt (9:16-17). The Lord sent a message via the angel Gabriel (9:24-27). The house of God would be rebuilt. A more significant blessing would come, however, in the Person of the Anointed One

(Christ), who is greater than the temple (cf. Matt. 12:6). This prophecy was a consolation to the despondent Hebrews in Captivity" (Wayne Jackson, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel," *The Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1999, p.14).

The prophecy is sorely abused by millennialists, its fulfillment being twisted to fit their preconceived ideas. A study of the passage and its New Testament fulfillment will set forth the truth and expose these errors. The passage also beautifully sets forth the reality of Old Testament prophecy. It is essential to a proper understanding of the passage (1) to see the historical background of the prophecy, (2) to see the purpose of Christ's mission to earth, and (3) to see the significance of the numbers given in the prophecy.

The historical background includes the following information. Israel had fallen away from God, and had been promised a 70-year banishment from their beloved land as punishment (Jer. 25:11f; 29:10).

Their deportation to Babylonia was in three parts: Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 606 B.C., at which time part of Israel was deported (2 Kings 24:1; Dan. 1:1-6). In 597 B.C., another group was carried away (2 Kings 24:10; Ezek. 1:2). Then in 586 B.C., the final deportation was made (2 Kings 25:8). As we shall see later, their return was also in three parts.

Seventy years was established for a purpose: to make up for the many Sabbatical years Israel had ignored (Lev. 25:1-7; 2 Chron. 36:21). They were to suffer the rigors of captivity in Babylon (2 Chron. 36:21; cf. Deut.30:1-3). At the time of the text, the end of their captivity was in sight (Zech. 1:12; 7:5; Dan. 9:1f).

Belshazzar was king (co-regent with his father, Nabonidus) in Babylon. In 538 B.C. he made a great feast in which the vessels of the Jewish temple were used in the drunken revelries; this was the wicked king's method of gloating over the God of Israel. The miraculous scene of the handwriting on the wall occurred, which terrified the king. Daniel 5:1-9.

The widow of Nebuchadnezzar told Belshazzar about Daniel (Dan. 5:10-12). Daniel spoke before the king, reminding the king that his grandfather had been lifted up in pride and was deposed (5:13-20); he accused Belshazzar of pride (5:22f), and gave the interpretation of the writing on the wall (5:23-29). Daniel 5:30f reports the overthrow of Belshazzar that very night at the hand of

Darius the Mede.

Darius was able to conquer mighty Babylon by diverting the river which flowed underneath the walls of the city; his army entered by means of the riverbed. The new regime exalted Daniel to the second position in the land, next to the king.

Daniel calculated the times, deducing that the end of the captivity was approaching. (Dan. 9:1f; cf. Zech. 1:12; 7:5). This was about the year 538 B.C. Daniel prayed to God, confessing his own sins and those of the nation (9:3ff), and asked that God return Israel to their land. At the time, there was no outward indications that any return was in the offing, or even possible.

But God was not unaware of what needed to be done. Darius died in 536 B.C., and was replaced as king by his nephew, Cyrus. Cyrus has been predicted by Isaiah, about 165 years before these events (Isa. 44:28; 45:1-7; Ezra 1:1-4). God stirred up Cyrus to bring about the restoration of Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36:22f). The likely means God used in stirring Cyrus up was by having someone show him in Isaiah's writing what had been said about him in prophecy.

In direct response to Daniel's prayers, Gabriel was sent to speak to Daniel (9:21-23). The arch-angel revealed to Daniel some information that unfolded the future of Israel (9:24-27).

### **The Seventy Weeks**

The events foretold had application to Daniel's people, i.e., the Jews, and to his holy city (Jerusalem). Daniel 9:24. This period of time was "determined" (decreed - ASV). God had determined for this to be, thus it was certain.

There would be no significance if a literal 70 weeks (490 days) is meant. In view of the fact that Daniel had been praying in regards to the 70 years of captivity, it appears that a period of years is meant. Virtually all Bible expositors view this period of 70 weeks as 490 years ( $7 \times 70 = 490$ ). This conclusion is verified by the fact that the time factor between the two events cited were almost exactly 490 years apart.

From the time the commandment to restore Jerusalem was given to the coming of the Messiah, the time factor would be 69 weeks (which translates to 483 years). Two divisions of these 69 weeks are given: seven weeks (49 years) and 63 weeks (434 years). The first period matches with the time necessary for the restoration of the city to be accomplished following the initial order. The return from Babylonian captivity was accomplished in three stages. The initial return was under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. The second return was under Ezra in 457 B.C. The third return was under



Nehemiah in 445 B.C.

If we reckon the time when the order was given for Jerusalem to be rebuilt on the occasion of Ezra's return, the 490 years would end at 33 A.D. Based on this same beginning point, the 483 years (69 weeks) would be over in 26 A.D. The coming of the Messiah would be at the end of 69 weeks, with the extra week following week number 69.

In the midst of the 70th week (a 7-year span of time), the Messiah would cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease (vs. 27). Thus, after 483 years the Messiah would come (that is, he would begin his ministry); after half of the seven year span was over, he would cancel out the sacrifices. This he did when he died on the cross (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15). He was "cut off" (vs. 26) and ended the sacrifices at the same time.

This would place his death in 30 A.D. (which is 486.5 years after the order to Ezra in 457 B.C. (483 years + 3.5 years of the final 7 year period = 486.5). Wayne Jackson states that *"the commonly accepted date of Jesus' death as 33 A.D. incorporates the 3 year error of the Dionysian calendar"* ("Christian Courier," Vol. XV, No. 6, p.22). This would put the end of the 490 years at a date (3.5 years after Christ's death) which could allow enough time for the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and the first Gentiles, Cornelius and his family.

Some scholars measure the time from Nehemiah's commission (445 B.C.) and "round off" the extra years, saying that the ancient method of counting years was indefinite since they counted a part of a year as a whole year. This places the end of 490 years at 45 A.D.

Daniel 9:24 shows that the following items were included in God's plans for the events being described. To finish (restrain, margin) the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity. The purpose of Christ's mission was to this very end: namely, to take care of the problem of sin (Matt. 1:21; 20:28; 26:28; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13f, 20; 1 Pet. 1:18, 23; 2:24; Rev. 1:5). *"...Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself...So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"* (Hebrews 9:26-28).

Christ established a system by which actual forgiveness of sins is possible; and as long as a saved person continues to walk in the light of the gospel, he enjoys the continual cleansing of sins by the blood of Christ. Walking in the light includes repentance whenever sin is committed, keeping

one's self unspotted from the world, and doing those things taught in the gospel (1 John 1:7-10; Jas. 1:27; Tit. 2:11f; Heb. 5:8f). Under the Law of Moses, a remembrance of sin was made each year (Heb. 10:1-4).

To bring in everlasting righteousness. Jesus did all that was required of him by his Heavenly Father, he fulfilled all righteousness (Matt. 3:15; Ps. 119:172). He made provision by which the world could be convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). His gospel is God's plan by which men can be made righteous (Rom. 1:16f; cf. Rom. 3:21-26).

To seal up the vision and prophecy. Christ fulfilled all the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27,44). He did not come to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17f). Another aspect of this same point is that visions and prophecies would no longer be given to men after Christ completed his great work (that is, after the apostles and other inspired people of the first century had accomplished their part of the process). When the message of the gospel had been committed (by inspiration) to written form, visions and prophecies ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:8,11-13; Jude 3; Jas. 1:25).

To anoint the most Holy. Millennial theory applies this to the rebuilding of the Jewish temple at the Lord's return. The grammar of the statement is not exact: the form can be neuter or masculine gender. Since *Messiah* (Christ) means "*the anointed One*," it follows that he is the one receiving the anointing mentioned here. All of the affairs being consummated in the verse took place at the Lord's first coming. Christ received God's official consecration and authority when he accomplished his great work. He is prophet (Acts 3:22f), priest (Heb. 3:1), and king (Matt. 21:5). Old Testament men filling these roles were consecrated to these offices; likewise, Christ. Cf. Isaiah 61:1; Daniel 7:13f; Hebrews 12:1f.

Daniel 9:25 breaks down the time factors we have already considered. But it shows that the rebuilding of Jerusalem would be accompanied with difficulties. The enemies of the Jews caused them many troubles, both in the work of Ezra and that of Nehemiah. Ezra 4; Nehemiah 1:3; 2:17-20; 4:1-23; 6:1-9. Doing God's work is seldom accomplished without the opposition of unbelievers.

Dispensational theology tries to place almost 2000 years between the 69th and the 70th week. There was historical continuity between the first 7-week period and the 62 week period which followed, and there was historical continuity between the 69th and 70th weeks as well. Using the day-year system of Daniel 9, there were only 70 weeks of the great time-span described; since the

crucifixion of Christ, there have been almost 280 "weeks." *"How in the name of common sense can we still be waiting for the 70th?"* (Jackson, *ibid.*, p.24).

Daniel 9:26 shows that after the 69 weeks had transpired, Messiah would be cut off, and the people of "the prince" would come and destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (the temple) with a flood. The events described would occur after the 62 weeks (plus the preceding 7 weeks). The Messiah would be *cut off*. This is tantamount to saying that he would be slain in some unspecified manner. The Hebrew word is used in reference to the death penalty in Leviticus 7:20; it is used in Psalm 37:9 in reference to the fate of the ungodly. In the present case, it speaks of the death of the Messiah.

The cutting off of the Messiah will not be for himself. Another rendering of this phrase is, *"and shall have nothing"* (ASV). The KJV suggests that his death was not for his own benefit; that is, he was guiltless of any wrongdoing, or that he did not derive blessings from his death. The ASV resembles a thought in Isaiah 53:8, that his death would leave him without any apparent progeny or inheritance: his efforts would appear to be fruitless. This was the attitude of the disciples in Luke 24:21. The Messiah is clearly Jesus Christ. The Jews rejected him (Jn. 19:15); God withdrew from him (Mt. 27:46); the twelve had left him (Mt. 26:56).

The *"people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."* The city is Jerusalem; the sanctuary is the temple. The people who would destroy Jerusalem are not the Jews. The prince is not Christ for he will have been put to death prior to the destruction of the city; and neither the Jews nor the Christians would destroy Jerusalem. It is not likely that some heathen nation would be classified as people belonging to Christ. Since Jesus connected the *"abomination of desolation"* which Daniel introduced (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:26; 11:31), it follows that the prince and his people are the Roman general and his army.

The destruction by which the city and temple would be made desolate is described as a "flood." In plainer words, Daniel says it will be a war, the desolations of which are *determined*. The end result is "irrevocably determined by God" (Keil). The destruction of the city and the sanctuary would occur after the 69th week, but not during the 70th week. The perceptive Jew could know that after the death of the Messiah, the destruction foretold would surely take place.

Daniel 9:27 furnishes additional information. A covenant will be confirmed with many for one week. The general subject of this whole passage is the Messiah. It is not the prince (of verse 26) for

it is not the prince who destroys the city, but the people which pertain to him; and it is not "they" who will confirm the covenant, but "he." Christ is the only logical person for the subject of this verse.

The millennial theory holds that the covenant is the so-called 7-year "treaty" which Antichrist will make with Israel, but will break at the midpoint of its term. That is a mere assumption without any justifying evidence. There is no mention of Antichrist in the passage. In fact, "antichrist" is a term used in the Bible in reference to false teachers, not to some political figure. There were many antichrists in John's day (1 John 2:18).

What covenant is meant and who is to confirm it? As indicated above, the Messiah is the subject of these remarks; it is he, therefore, who confirms the covenant. The covenant could be nothing other than the New Testament (the New Covenant). The ASV stresses the firmness of the covenant: "*He shall make a firm covenant with many.*" Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24f; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 14:6.

"But this question naturally arises: if Christ was cut off in 'the midst' of that final week, why does the text state that the Lord would make a covenant with many for 'one week'? In other words, what is the significance of the full seventy weeks? Possibly the termination of that full final week extends down to the time of the conversion of Paul, at which point the gospel accelerated predominately among the Gentiles. Paul's conversion is generally dated 3 to 4 years after the death of Christ (Zondervan's Encyclopedia, I, 822)" (Wayne Jackson, "Christian Courier," Vol. XV, No. 7, p.25).

The Messiah would cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease in the midst of the 70th week. The subject of the verb ("shall cause") is still the Messiah. By his sacrificial death, Christ put the Old Testament system of sacrifices out of date. Animal sacrifices could never solve the sin problem (Heb. 10:1-4; 9:22, 1 Pet. 1:18f; Rev. 1:5).

The terms *sacrifice* and *oblation* represent the bloody and non-bloody offerings of the Law of Moses. Thus, the entire system was fulfilled by Christ and replaced by his new and better program. Galatians 3:24f; Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15. The Law has been removed and will never be restored. That would be like going back to the horse and buggy after changing to the automobile.

Some would object to this conclusion by arguing that when Christ died, the sacrifices continued at the temple until it was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. But the whole Mosaic system was dismantled and became null and void at the death of Christ. Unbelieving Jews continued

to practice the voided procedures of the Law for about 40 years. But officially, from God's view, it was no longer in effect (Heb. 7:11; 8:13; 9:15-17; 9:25f; 10:8f). At the death of Christ, the veil (between the holy and most holy places) in the temple was rent, signifying that the Old was no longer in vogue. Matthew 27:50f.

The abomination that would bring the full desolation was determined. The ASV renders this part of the verse in these words: *"And upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate."*

Josephus provides some remarkable details of the fulfillment of Daniel's prediction: *"Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them"* (Antiquities, X,XI,7, p.227). When the Romans burned the temple, they *"brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there they did offer sacrifices to them..."* (Wars, VI, VI,1, p.583). This was an abomination (1 Kg. 11:5; 2 Kg. 23:13; Dan. 11:31; 12:11) and was connected with the desolation of the city and temple.

"One may wonder how the destruction of Jerusalem can be a part of the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks, since that event occurred 40 years after the death of Christ. It must be noted, however, that Daniel does not affirm that the actual desolation of the city would occur within the 70 weeks. Rather, the text suggests that Jerusalem's fate would be determined within that span (26b; 27b). When the Jews reached the epitome of their rebellion and crucified their own Messiah, the decree or determination was made that they be destroyed. By killing Christ, they had filled up the measure of wickedness characteristic of their rebellious ancestors (cf. Mt. 23:32). And Jesus indicated that accumulative rebellion would be required of 'this generation' (Lk. 11:50,51). And so, this marked the 'full end' of Judaism, both religiously and politically, from the divine vantage point" (Wayne Jackson, *ibid.*, p.27).

Matthew 22:7; 23:37f..

### **Israel Is Not God's Special People Today**

Various millennial views assert that Israel remains God's special people even in the Christian Age. It is claimed that *"the promises to Abraham and his seed were given unconditionally and*

*eternally; they did not depend upon Abraham's faith or obedience for their fulfillment (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:7-8; 16:6-8)" (David Levy, "Israel My Glory," Vol. 48, No. 3, p.27). Thus, the millennial view teaches that Israel has a perpetual title to Palestine. [We will let the Bible decide this matter]. The same millennial writer asserts, "...Nowhere in the Bible is it said that Israel has forfeited her right to enjoy the promises given in the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants" (ibid.).*

Again:

"What an exciting day in which to be living as we witness God beginning to fulfill His promises to Israel! He is breaking the chains of Israel's captivity as Jews are being gathered from worldwide dispersion, as predicted centuries ago by the prophets of Israel (Dt. 30:3-5; Isa. 11:11-12; Ezek. 36:24; 37:4-14)" (ibid., p.27).

Millennialists believe all the Jews will be gathered back to Palestine, the temple will be rebuilt, and the Old Testament system of religion will be reinstated. To support this view, Amos 9:11 is cited. But Acts 15:14-20 shows that the prophecy is fulfilled in the church.

They assert that the land promises issued to Abraham have never been realized, that these will be fulfilled in the so-called "Millennial Reign" of Christ. It is claimed that only the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) returned from Babylonian Captivity, and that the ten northern tribes remain scattered throughout the world today. Some of them think that the Anglo-Saxons are part of the ten "lost tribes." We shall see from the Scriptures that a remnant of all the tribes were restored to Palestine in ancient days.

During the *millennium*, theorists assert that Palestine will become unusually productive, citing Amos 9:13 (but see Num. 13:23). Spiritual Israel would be fertile.

Many brethren have the notion that somehow Israel remains in special standing with God. It is true that God promised that they would retain their identity as Jews down through the ages (Jer. 30:11), but that is a far cry from saying they are still God's special people. Romans 11:26 is also interpreted to teach that all of Israel will be saved. We will examine the verse and its context to see what Paul actually taught.

Some far-reaching promises were made to Abraham [Gen. 12:1-7; 22:15-18; 26:1-5; 28:13-15; 49:8-12]. This included a promise of a land which the descendants of Abraham would possess. The only part of Palestine Abraham owned was a cemetery which he purchased. The promise included God's intention of making the descendants of Abraham to be as numerous as the

stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore. The blessings of the Messiah were included in the great promise: "*And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice*" (Gen. 22:18). Paul showed in Galatians [3:8f,14-16,18f, 26-29] that this promise found its fulfillment in the blessings of the gospel of Christ.

Concerning the nation itself, God promised that their number would be great, comparable to the sands of the seashore and stars of the sky, and that they would be his chosen people. Genesis. 22:15-18. They were his special people for a period of time, but it was never in God's plans to keep Israel as his special people to the end of the world.

There is no spiritual profit today by being a fleshly descendant of Abraham. John rebuked the Jews who placed significance in their kinship to that great man: Matthew 3:9f; cf. Galatians 5:6. He warned the Jews about the wrath which was to come upon them (Matt. 3:7); this wrath was poured out upon them in 70 A.D., and is parallel to the axe laid against the root of the tree. If a stump is left, there is the chance the tree will sprout out again, but when the axe is applied to the root, there is no such hope.

Christ used the barren fig tree near Jerusalem as a fitting illustration of the emptiness of Israel (Matt. 21:19). He stated in verse 43 (on the same day) that, "*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [Israel], and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*" Fleshly Israel would be replaced in God's approval by "*spiritual Israel,*" the church (Rom. 2:28f; Gal. 6:16; 1 Pt. 2:9).

Matthew 22:1-8. In this parable, the son of the king represents Christ; those who rejected the invitation to attend the marriage feast represent the Jews. The king (God) would send his armies (the Roman legions) against them as punishment. In Matthew 23:38, Jesus plainly announced to Israel that "*your house is left unto you desolate,*" meaning that the temple and the whole house of Israel was renounced and cursed by the God of Abraham.

God's chosen people today are those who are in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 1 Peter 2:5-10; Romans 2:28f; Colossians 2:11f; Titus 2:11-14; Galatians 3:26-29. This spiritual nation includes both Jew and Gentile. Ephesians 2:11-22. God rejected Old Testament Israel because of their unfaithfulness (Rom. 11:21f). The hope of Israel today is not a national restoration, but is in Christ, for only in him is there any hope for any person: Acts 26:6f; 28:20; 4:11f; Romans 1:16f.

Millennialism claims that the Old Testament prophecies predicting the restoration of Israel to Palestine have not been fulfilled. Deuteronomy 30:3-5; Isaiah 11:11-12; Ezekiel 36:24; 37:4-14 are

among those they think are still future from our time. They admit that some from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned, but deny that the 10 northern tribes came back.

The Northern Kingdom, called "Israel" and consisting of 10 tribes, was conquered by Assyria, and many of the inhabitants were carried into that heathen land as slaves (721 B.C.). The Assyrian Empire was later overcome by the Babylonian Empire, which also conquered the Southern Kingdom (Judah, consisting of two tribes) in 606 B.C. Thus, all of the Israelites were in captivity to the Babylonians. Later, when the Babylonians were conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire, all of the Jewish people were under the dominion of this new world power.

Thus, when Cyrus began allowing the Jews to return to their own land in 536 B.C., elements of all of the twelve tribes were among those who returned. Ezra 1:2f shows that the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-13; 2 Chron. 36:22), which foretold the return of Israel to Palestine, were fulfilled. All of the Jews through out his empire were included in the proclamation (Ezra 1:4).

Biblical history reveals that men of all of the tribes returned to the land. Ezra 6:16f shows that after coming back to the land, sacrifices were offered at the restored temple for the 12 tribes of Israel. Why were 12 he-goats offered if only 2 tribes had returned? Ezekiel 47:13f predicted that 12 he-goats would be offered when the return was effected; Ezra 6:16f shows that the prophecy was fulfilled. See also Ezra 8:35.

When the tribes returned to the land, they occupied the places assigned to them in the original division. Ezra 2:70; Jeremiah 12:14f; Ezekiel 47:13; cf. Leviticus 25:13-18. Ezekiel 37:1-14 predicted the return of Israel from captivity under the figure of a valley full of dry bones being resurrected to life. Verse 11 says plainly that the whole house of Israel (the 10 northern tribes, the 2 southern tribes, and the Levites) is included. The prophecy would not have been accurate without some from each of the tribes being included in the restoration.

Ezekiel 37:15-23 predicted the restoration of the 12 tribes under the figure of the 2 sticks; one stick represented Judah and the other stick represented Israel. As the two sticks were joined together, so the 10 northern tribes and the 2 southern tribes would be joined together again. Cf. Jeremiah 3:18. This happened in 536 B.C.

Jeremiah 31:31-36 predicted that God would make a new covenant with the house of Judah and with the house of Israel (all of the tribes are included). This new covenant is the New Testament, hence all of the tribes were in evidence in the land when the gospel was given.



In the 1st century, those Jews who were of the tribe of Judah knew their lineage (Heb. 7:14; Mt. 1:1-17); those of the tribe of Benjamin knew it (Ph. 3:5); Levites were identifiable as such (Acts 4:36); and Luke 1:36 says that Anna was of the tribe of Aser (Ashur).

Those Old Testament prophecies which promised that the Israelites would be brought back to Palestine have been fulfilled, as the above information indicates.

What is the meaning of Paul's statement in Romans 11:26: "*And so all Israel shall be saved*"? Millennialism says that this verse supports their contention that all (or nearly all) of the Israelites will be saved after the Second Coming of Christ. That this is an erroneous conclusion is seen from the following considerations: Notice that the verse does not merely say, "*all Israel shall be saved*," but "so *all Israel shall be saved*." The word "so" is an adverb of manner, thus Paul is saying, "After this manner shall all Israel be saved." But after what manner? The inspired apostle showed in Romans 1:16f that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation; he affirms that this salvation applies both to the Jew and to the Gentile. Romans 2:11 states that there is no respect of persons with God.

Paul taught in Romans 1:18-3:23 that all men, Jew and Gentile alike, are guilty of sin, and in that condition, stand under the condemnation of God (6:23). It is only by means of saving faith in the gospel that salvation can be obtained, either by Jew or by Gentile. Cf. Romans 1:5; 16:26. Paul reveals in Romans 10:12-18 and 6:1-18 that men are saved from their sins when they obey the gospel, from the heart. The apostle prayed in 10:1-3 for his fellow-Israelites, that they might be saved; they had tried to establish their own righteousness and had not submitted themselves to the plan by which God makes men to be righteous.

He says in Romans 11:21 that the natural branches (the Jews) were broken off because of their unbelief, and the Gentiles (the unnatural branches) had been grafted in (11:17-20). Paul warns the Gentile Christians against pride lest "thou also" be cut off (11:22). He shows that if the Jews will give up their unbelief (thus, if they will believe and obey the gospel), they will be grafted into the Lord's tree (11:23f). "Grafted in" is a figure of speech which pictures "obeying the gospel."

Every Israelite would be saved if each one personally obeyed the gospel. It is only by this method that anyone (Jew or Gentile) can be saved: Mark 16:15f; Acts 2:36-38. It is only when an individual accepts the Deliverer who has come out of Jacob (through the lineage of Judah) that salvation can be obtained.

Paul does not say that "all Israel shall be saved." He says, "*And so all Israel shall be saved.*" Only a remnant of Israel returned to Palestine; only a remnant of Israel obeyed the gospel; only a remnant of the Gentiles obeyed the gospel; only a remnant of mankind will go to heaven. In the Christian Age, only those who obey the gospel are made citizens in Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13f); and only those who live faithful Christian lives will enter heaven (Rev. 2:10; Mt. 10:22).

What is the meaning of the phrase, "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25; Luke 21:24)? Millennialism says that the first reference is to what they term "the church age," that period of time in which the church does its work in the world, preparatory to the establishment of the millennium kingdom. Since the Jews rejected Christ, they assert that the Lord established the church instead of the kingdom, and that the Gentiles are those who are the primary members of the church. When the millennium begins, all the Jews will be converted (according to their view).

Regarding Luke 21:24, millennialism teaches that Jerusalem will be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles until near the end of the "church age," when Israel will be gathered back into their land. They lay great stress to the word "until" in these verses, claiming that it implies some other earthly activities will take place subsequent to the "times of the Gentiles." In regards to Luke 21:24, they teach that the Jews will take over Jerusalem again; and in regards to Romans 11:25, they say the time for Israel's salvation will follow the fulness of the Gentiles.

The word "until" (Greek, *achri*) does not necessarily have a temporary thrust. It is a baseless assumption that something is always implied which follows the point being specified. The same word is used in other passages which obviously carry no implied event following the primary point. Jesus told the saints in Thyatira, "*But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.*" The Lord did not mean that they could cease being faithful after he came!

Ephesians 3:1-11 discusses the great plan which God kept secret from the world through many ages, but which was revealed by the apostles and prophets of Christ. This mystery was, "*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*" (3:5). Unbelief on the part of Israel would be the occasion for the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles (see Acts 28:28). T. Pierce Brown gave this paraphrase of Romans 11:25f:

"God had hidden in many prophetic references that a part of Israel would be hardened and would reject Christ, and that he would therefore turn and offer salvation to the Gentiles so that they too could be 'filled with all the fulness

of God' and be fellow-heirs and fellow partakers of the promise of the gospel. When the Gentiles accepted the gospel and obeyed it, their fulness had come in. And this is the exact way that all Israel that is saved will be saved" ("Firm Foundation," March, 1989, p.5).

The "times of the Gentiles" and the "fulness of the Gentiles" are used to express a parallel to the "times of the Israelites." "For fifteen centuries the Hebrews had been Jehovah's special people - a era which might be appropriately termed "the times of the Jews." With their rejection of the Messiah, however, that reign (cf. Mt. 21:43) had ended. It was superseded by "*the times of the Gentiles*" or *the Christian Age*" (Wayne Jackson, "Christian Courier," Vol. XX, No. 6, p.22).

If the millennial view of Israel is correct, there are some awful consequences: 1) Jesus would be denied the right to serve as our High Priest. Only certain men of the tribe of Levi could be priests, but Jesus came from Judah: Hebrews 7:14; 8:4. 2) It would mean a reversion to an inferior law: Hebrews 10:1-4; Acts 15:10. 3) It would require giving up the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). 4) It would be an assault on the impartiality and benevolence of God: Psalm 145:9; Acts 10:34f. The Jews had a special standing with him, but such was essential in order for the proper background and preparation to be laid for the gospel system. God overlooked certain foolish things of men during that era: Acts 17:30f.

Jews now in Palestine depend on political and military power to retain their foothold in the land. Their religion is neither true Judaism nor Christianity. "*Most of them hold to a modified and liberalized Judaism, and some are atheists. Very few accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah or look for God literally to fulfill Old Testament scriptures sometime in the future*" (Tom Holland, Premillennialism, True or False?, Wendell Winkler, Editor, p.86). "*Judaism died as a religious movement at Calvary and the political corpse was buried forever at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70*" (Robert Taylor, Jr.). God's people today are those who love and obey and reverence his Son, Christ Jesus!

### **Some Consequences Of Premillennialism**

If the millennial theory is true, then the crucifixion of Christ was not in God's original plan. The theory alleges that if God's original plan had met with Jewish approval, Jesus would have established an earthly kingdom, and would not have been required to go to the cross. If it can be

shown that God intended for his Son to die for the sins of the world, millennialism will have been exposed as human error. Revelation 13:8 speaks of the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" It appears definite from this passage that God intended, from the beginning of the world, for Christ to be slain.

All of the Old Testament animal sacrifices prefigured the ultimate sacrifice - the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Christ). Each of these Old Testament sacrifices would have been meaningless without the sacrifice of God's Son. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). But the blood of animals cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4). Only the blood of Christ has the power to remove the guilt of sin (1 Pet. 1:18f; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 10:16-19; Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13f). If Christ had not died, there would be no available means for the salvation of our souls! God intended to offer salvation to men.

Isaiah 53 predicted the death of Christ. The Jews were unable to identify the "man of sorrows" of this passage. Their conception of the Messiah precluded believing it was he. The man of Ethiopia, a Jew by religion, if not also by race, did not understand Isaiah 53. He asked Philip the evangelist, "*I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?*" (Acts 8:28-34). Philip "*began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus*" (Acts 8:35). Philip taught the Ethiopian that Isaiah 53 was in reference to Jesus Christ! Isaiah did his work more than 700 years before the coming of Christ. He showed that Christ would die for the sins of the world. Since Isaiah showed beforehand that Christ was to die, his crucifixion was not an unintended, unexpected, and spontaneous event!

Jesus himself taught that he came into the world to die. John 3:14-17; 8:28; 12:32f; Luke 19:10; cf. 1 Timothy 1:15. How did he save sinners? By means of the gospel (Rom. 1:16f). What is the gospel? It is that God-given message containing facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, promises to be enjoyed, and warnings to be heeded. Its basic facts are: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Thus, sinners are saved by the gospel. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ constitute the heart of the gospel; Christ came into the world to save sinners by the gospel; therefore, Christ came into the world to die on the cross, to be buried, and to rise from the dead on the third day.

The death of Jesus was mandated from the beginning of the world. Beginning in Genesis 3:15, God gave to man a long series of promises that ultimately would be fulfilled in the crucifixion

of Christ. His death lay at the heart of God's eternal plan. It was planned for and prophesied of for hundreds and even thousands of years before his coming. But if the millennial theory is correct, Christ's death was a mere accident, unplanned and unintended. But the theory is false!

Millennialism denies that the gospel is the culmination of God's purpose and plan. If the millennial assertions are correct, God intended to establish an earthly kingdom, and have Christ sitting on David's throne and ruling the world from Jerusalem. The gospel, according to the theory, was not in the original plan, but when the Jews rejected Jesus as king, the gospel system was given in lieu of the kingdom.

But the gospel was promised beforehand by the prophets, therefore was not a last minute substitution. Romans 1:1f: *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)." God knew that Christ would die and the gospel system would be inaugurated - he knew it because he had planned it that way!*

If millennialism is true, the Great Commission is nullified. Matthew 28:18-20 states that all authority is given unto Christ, and based on that truth, he commands his people to teach all nations. There are only three branches of authority: legislative, executive, and judicial. Our government is divided into these three branches: congress (legislative); the President (executive); and the Supreme Court (judicial). Christ possesses all the legislative, executive, and judicial authority in his kingdom; this he taught in Matthew 28:18.

Millennialism denies that Christ is reigning as King now, thus denying him this authority. In their view, he is merely the *"crown prince."* Jesus commanded that his followers teach all nations, including Jew and Gentile, black and white, rich and poor, and the educated and the uneducated. Mark 16:15f says the gospel is to be preached to *"every creature."*

Millennialism believes that the nations here mentioned are the Gentile nations only, and thus they teach the gospel (their version of it) only to Gentiles. In their view, the gospel is intended for the Gentiles, and this age is the "time of the Gentiles." The Bible says that the gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles: Romans 1:16; Acts 10:34f; Romans 1:18-3:23.

If millennialism is true, God is made to be false to his promises. Mark 1:14f: *"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."*

But millennialism claims that the kingdom was postponed. Christ said the time for the kingdom had come and the kingdom was at hand. God had promised the kingdom in the Old Testament prophets, and now was promising it through the preaching of both John and Jesus. If the kingdom did not then come, it makes God false to his promise.

Think about the multitudes who flocked to hear and accept the preaching of John and Jesus. The people of Jerusalem, Judea, and the regions round about Jordan believed their message; they were baptized, believing that the kingdom was at hand. But millennialists say that after these honest, sincere souls obeyed, they did not get the kingdom. They make God false to his promise. They say that because all the Jews did not accept Christ, God withdrew his offer of the kingdom. The multitudes believed the Lord and acted in good faith, but the millennialists would have God canceling his promise!

The integrity of God and the reliability of Jesus were involved in the promise of the kingdom. Suppose a man offers work to a group of men and stipulates the conditions and the wages. Suppose that half of these men accept the offer, meet all the conditions and do the work. But because all of the group did not accept his offer, the man cancels the contract and refuses to pay those who did the work. We would not likely ever believe that man again. His integrity would be compromised. The millennialists would have us believe that because some of the Jews rejected God's deal, that God did not fulfill the promise to those who did accept it. Millennialism makes false prophets out of the Old Testament prophets from Moses to Malachi; it makes false teachers out of Jesus and John; and it makes God false to his promise, and his integrity suspect.

If God did not know the kingdom was going to be postponed, it denies his omniscience. If God did know it, yet had it announced anyway, it destroys his integrity. And if God could not be trusted in one matter, how could we trust him in any other matter? Because of these and other consequences, the theory of millennialism is false and ought to be rejected. God is dependable. He never intended to establish an earthly, worldly kingdom. He intended and planned from the beginning for Christ to die on the cross, and purchase his church. He purposed beforehand that the gospel was to be published to every person.

If millennialism is true, the church is of little importance. Their view is that God gave the church as a last minute substitution, an inferior replacement for the promised kingdom. Again in their view, if the kingdom had been established, there would have been no need for the church.

This position requires, of course, that the church and the kingdom be viewed as two completely different and distinct institutions. But the Bible makes no such distinction. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promised to build his church. In verse 19, still speaking of the church, the Lord called this institution "*the kingdom of heaven.*" Jesus did not make any distinction between the church and the kingdom.

Jesus promised to partake of the loaf and the fruit of the vine with his disciples in the kingdom (Matt. 26:29). His disciples partook of this communion in the church (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:21-30). It follows, therefore, that the church and the kingdom are identical, or else we have no authority to partake of the Lord's Supper today!

The church is the kingdom; the kingdom is the church. The church (the kingdom) was in God's mind from the beginning, as Ephesians 3:1-11 plainly teaches. Verse 10 states that "*by the church the manifold wisdom of God*" is made manifest. If you want to see God's wisdom, look at the church. The church displays the wisdom of God, "*according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (verse 11). But millennialism makes the church out to be the merest accident. Such an idea borders on blasphemy!

Acts 20:28 declares that Christ purchased the church with his own blood. No one would accuse him of making a "bad bargain." The item bought is generally worth the purchase price. Since the blood of Christ is precious (1 Pet. 1:18f), then the church must also be precious! Ephesians 5:25 further affirms that Christ "gave himself" for the church.

If millennialism is true, we are not living in the "last days" as the Bible affirms. Thus, it denies plain Bible statements! The "last days" according to the millennial view are the days when Christ comes and reigns on earth. Peter quoted Joel 2 in his sermon in Acts 2, saying, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days...*" (Acts 2:16f). Peter told those people that those things which were then happening were taking place in the last days. The last days were in progress 1,966 years ago! That was nearly 2,000 years ago, yet he called this time period "the last days." The last days, then, is a reference to the last dispensation (or Age) of time. This Age began when the Lord died and will continue until he returns. Hebrews 1:1f states that God has spoken to us by his Son "*in these last days.*" The term "last days" is the Christian Age, the time in which you and I and all people are amenable to the words of God given through his Son, Christ Jesus.

If there were to be another period of time following the Christian Age, our age, then the New

Testament was wrong in saying these are the last days. But the New Testament is not wrong; these are the last days. Millennialism, with its theory about the fictitious 1000-year reign of Christ on earth following the age, is false to the core; it is misleading and deceiving millions of precious souls. This is just another of the many pernicious consequences of the man-made doctrine of millennialism.

Premillennialism demotes Christ from his throne in heaven and puts him on a puny throne on earth. Christ is now reigning on his heavenly throne, a fact denied by millennialism, but still taught by the Bible. The following passages establish the important fact that Christ is now, today, seated on the throne, reigning over his kingdom from heaven.

Hebrews 1:3. Christ *"sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"* after he purged our sins, i.e., after he had sacrificed himself on the cross, was buried, raised to life, and ascended to Glory. Hebrews 1:8. God said to Christ, *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."* The inspired writer penned these words to show that Christ was even then occupying his throne and wielding the scepter of his kingdom! Revelation 3:21. Jesus said about himself: *"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."* Speaking to John on the Isle of Patmos, Christ affirmed that he had taken his seat on the throne, hence was reigning in his kingdom. Zechariah 6:13: *"Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."* This prophecy showed that Christ was to be a king and priest at the same time, as he sat on his throne. His priestly duties pertain to his work of saving sinners; his kingly duties pertain to his rule over those who are saved. Colossians 1:13f. If he is not reigning as king now, then he is not serving as priest now! The two works are contemporary to each other, and both are done while he sits on his throne. And both are being done today.

Hebrews 1:13. The Father invited him to *"sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."* Christ is now on his throne, and will reign there until his last enemy (death) is finally subdued (1 Cor. 15:25f). He shall reign until the resurrection which is to take place on the last day. There is not enough room in God's scheme of things for any 1000-year reign on earth. And contrary to millennialism, Christ is now on his throne, ruling his kingdom, thus the promise of the kingdom has been fulfilled.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with



the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 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. 7:13f).

If premillennialism is true, salvation is denied to Gentile people. Inasmuch as the advocates of the theory are virtually all Gentiles, their theory denies salvation to themselves - a most curious and damaging consequence! That this consequence pertains is seen by applying their own interpretation of Acts 15:13-17. Here the Holy Spirit affirms the right of the Gentiles to the blessings of God which are given through the gospel. A question had arisen in the church among the Jewish saints regarding the new Gentile converts: should they be required to be circumcised? Peter showed the brethren that God had guided him in being the first to preach to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas showed that God had wrought many miracles by them before the Gentiles. These reports established the fact that God had vouchsafed the gospel to the Gentiles.

James quoted from Amos 9, and showed from that prophecy that God would rebuild "*the tabernacle of David*" so "*that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles.*" His use of the passage shows that its fulfillment was being accomplished by their preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Therefore, the rebuilding of David's tabernacle which Amos had predicted had been accomplished.

The "residue of men" mentioned in the passage refers to the Gentiles, those who were not included in God's fellowship under the Mosaic Law. The word that is fatal to the millennial scheme. They tell us that David's tabernacle will not be restored until the millennium. But Acts 15 quotes God as saying through Amos that he would build again the tabernacle of David ("David's house," his royal line) and set it up **that the Gentiles might seek after the Lord**. If the tabernacle of David has not been rebuilt, *then the Gentiles cannot now seek after the Lord!* But people of all nations and races are proper subjects of the gospel (Mark 16:15f; Matt. 28:19f; Acts 10:34f; Tit. 2:11f; 1 Tim. 2:4f).

But premillennialism denies that Amos 9:11-15 (Acts 15:16f) has been fulfilled; in their view, this will not be done until the 1000-year earthly reign. Thus, they deny salvation to the Gentiles.

If premillennialism is true, than Christ failed in his mission to earth. "*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were*

*under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal. 4:3-5). Did Christ succeed or fail in his great mission?

Just prior to his crucifixion Jesus prayed a lengthy prayer, part of which was this: *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"* (John 17:4). He had accomplished everything God had expected of him. At the moment of his death he could say, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). What was finished? His great mission.

Men say that Christ did not complete his mission, that he failed to establish his kingdom. But Jesus said he had succeeded. Which are we to believe? The Lord did exactly what he came to do; he did all that he came to accomplish. He failed in nothing. Because he successfully finished his Father's work, he was given the privilege of sitting on God's right hand, to rule his kingdom until the end of time, when he will deliver up the kingdom into the hands of the Father

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1f).

"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. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15:24-25).

### Conclusion

The Parable of the Pounds illustrates the successful mission of Christ: Luke 19:11-27. Christ came to earth for the purpose of saving the lost (Luke 19:10; Gal. 4:4f; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). In accomplishing this great mission, he established the kingdom, which he also called the church. The kingdom was always intended to be spiritual in nature. Those Jews who thought it was to be a literal, earthly kingdom were just as mistaken about that as are their modern-day counterparts who look for a worldly kingdom to be established by Christ on earth.

The parable of the pounds shows that Christ was to return to heaven, at which time he would receive the kingdom. At some future, unspecified date, he would return. The nobleman is Christ. The journey into a far country is Christ's return to heaven. The kingdom he received is his spiritual

kingdom, the church. The people who rejected him are the unbelieving Jews (vs 14; cf. John 19:15,21). The ten servants are followers of Christ. The command for the servants to use the pounds properly is his command for them to be faithful. The ten pounds represents the duties and opportunities he gives his servants. The one who gained ten pounds is a faithful Christian; the one who gained five pounds is a faithful Christian of less ability and opportunity; the servant who was given one pound, which he did not use, is an unfaithful Christian. The ten cities and five cities represent rewards in heaven, perhaps corresponding to the individual's fitness for, and ability to enjoy, the blessing given. The loss of the one pound by the unfaithful servant represents punishment. The slaying of the enemies represents the punishment of those who reject him. The absence of the nobleman is the time between Christ's ascension and Second Coming. The return of the nobleman is the Second Coming of Christ.

*"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return"* (Luke 19:12). Acts 1:9-11 reports the ascension of Christ back to heaven. The view presented is from the stand-point of the apostles who were still on earth. Psalm 24:7-10 gives a prophetic picture of the Lord's arrival at the gates of Glory. Daniel 7:13f records a prophetic vision describing the Lord's entrance into heaven after his ascension. It plainly states that it was then that he received his kingdom:

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 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."

Our Lord returned to heaven at his ascension; he was given the kingdom; it came into being on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2. At the Lord's second coming: 1) He will raise the dead (1 Thess. 4:16; John 5:28f). 2) He will change those who are alive on earth instantly into immortal bodies (1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20f; 1 John 3:1-3). 3) The righteous will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). 4) All who have ever lived on earth will be assembled before his Judgment Seat (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12; Rev. 20:11-15), at which time the eternal destinies of all mankind will be assigned officially.

The Second Coming will end all earthly affairs, not begin a new earthly episode.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, 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 with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

"New heavens and new earth" is a figurative description of the eternal realm of heaven. The passage plainly declares that the earth and all things associated with it will be utterly destroyed at the Lord's coming. There is no room in the apostle's statement to permit a reconstructed earth.

The reward of the righteous is in heaven: John 14:1-4; Philippians 3:20f; Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:23. Christ went into heaven to prepare a place for his people there.

The word *new* which Peter used is from *kainos*, which means new in quality, not necessarily new in age. The idea in the word is that the place described had not been used. The Greek word *neos* means new in respect to age. The tomb in which the Lord's body was buried is called "*kainos*," meaning that it had never been used (Matt. 27:60). The statement does not tell us that it had been freshly hewn out. Had this been the meaning of "new," the Holy Spirit would have used "neos."

Peter uses the expression to depict the fresh, unused place to which the redeemed will be taken in eternity. We ought not think of this old sin-scarred, corrupted earth with its uncouth memories, to be the eternal home of our immortal spirits. Another earth, or this old earth renewed, would be no improvement on the original. But the place of eternal glory is heaven, constructed and prepared for those who are holy, who have faithfully endured, and who love God with all their hearts, minds, souls and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. We will have no use for this old earth.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; 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. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put

under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians 15:23-28).

We must reject and denounce the theories of men which deny the truth of God's Word. Ephesians 5:11; 2 John 9-11. The salvation of our souls depends on our believing and obeying the truth. John 8:32; 17:17. We must seek to teach those in error "*the way of God more perfectly*" (Acts 18:26).

God "*hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*" (Col. 1:13f).

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## Chapter Eleven

# THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

*Bobby Liddell*

### **Introduction**

Through twenty-six centuries, this question rings, "Can these bones live?" Our purpose, in this study, will be fulfilled when we understand the answer to this question posed by God to Ezekiel (Eze. 37:3). Several approaches to this text on the valley of dry bones, and applications of it, have been proposed by men. Many have the idea this passage promises a national restoration of Israel in our day, or, at least, soon to come. Some have said prophecy is being fulfilled right before our eyes in anticipation of the "coming millennial kingdom." Is there any substance to their claims? We shall see.

Our intention is not to learn what men think, but what God revealed. In our quest, we are persuaded, we can learn and understand what is the meaning of Ezekiel 37:1-14. Our learning and understanding will be enhanced by avoiding the confusion of many voices, closing our ears to them, and listening to God as He speaks through His Word. However, we shall, in refuting false ideas concerning this passage, note what men say, and show, from the text, the error of any treatment of the passage which is not in harmony with what God intended.

When I was a child, I would hear singing groups of the day sing about "Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones." I never quite remembered how the song went, and I surely did not have a clue as to what the song meant, nor did I know anything about its supposed connection with Ezekiel 37, but I did like the tune. So, I would go around singing about a jumbled up bone concoction: "The leg bone's connected to the arm bone, the arm bone's connected to the toe bone," and so on. It did not seem to me to be a matter of much importance as to which way they were connected. Sadly, some have no clearer understanding of Ezekiel 37:1-14, than I had of the "bones" song, and their application of the message of the text is just as jumbled.

Our interest is to understand better about "dem bones," not anatomically, but spiritually, and to know just what message of eternal importance Ezekiel 37:1-14 contains. To this end, we shall study some background information, consider an exegesis of the text, and make an application of what we learn. In accomplishing this, we shall look at these main points: (1) The Lord's Punishment of His People; (2) The Lord's Prophet to His People; (3) The Lord's Promise to His People; and (4) Some Concluding Observations.

### **The Lord's Punishment Of His People**

A study of the books of the Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel) and Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi) reveals God's message of impending doom to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, respectively, followed by their punishment in captivities, and the restoration of a righteous remnant in their returns to the promised land. Originally, in the beginning of the era of the kings, God's people were one nation as the twelve tribes of Israel. Under the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, they continued united for one hundred twenty years. However, due to Solomon's sins of marrying foreign women and going after their idol gods, God promised to rend from his son Rehoboam ten of the twelve tribes (1 Kings 11:1-13; 29-37). Consequently, Rehoboam ruled over Judah, the Southern Kingdom, and Jeroboam was king over Israel, the Northern Kingdom.

Jeroboam instituted idolatry with the setting of golden calves for worship at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-29). Following his lead, the subsequent kings of Israel led the people deeper and deeper into sin, cleaving *"unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin"* (2 Kings 3:3). Though God pleaded with them, through the prophets, and defeated them at the hands of their enemies, in an effort to bring them back, they refused in stubborn rebellion and disobedience. Thus, Israel finally was given into the hands of the Assyrians, going into captivity in 721 B.C.

Judah followed in the footsteps of Israel, going after idol gods, turning her back upon God, refusing His ways, while enjoying the blessings of the good land to which He had brought her. Though God pleaded with her, and offered her peace, if she would repent and return unto Him, she sought after the alliances with foreign nations which God had so plainly condemned. In 606 B.C., Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity with the first carrying away (which included Daniel). The second came in 597 B.C., and the third, and last, in 586 B.C., when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. Thus, both the Northern and Southern kingdoms were taken from the land because of their sins.



### The Lord's Prophet To His People

Ezekiel, whose name means "God strengthens," was God's watchman (Eze. 3:17-ff). His purpose was twofold: to watch and to warn; and, his message was twofold: doom and hope. For the people of God, there would be an awful doom as punishment for their sins. Suffering and anguish would be their lot. Destruction and death from the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beast were promised to them. For the ones who escaped these, there was a humiliating captivity before them. Yet, doom was only half his message. There was also hope that God would bring back a few, after the sin of idolatry had been removed forever from their national practice. Ezekiel 37 is part of his message of hope.

From Babylon, by the river Chebar (1:1), Ezekiel prophesied of then both current and future events concerning the destruction and captivity of Judah and Jerusalem (as well as other prophecies beyond the scope of our discussion), and the return of a righteous remnant to the promised land. His prophecies came to pass, just as they had been given, for he spoke not of himself, but the Word from the Lord (2:1-7). Through vivid portrayals of the visions and signs, and through faithful presentation of the symbols, allegories, and parables given him by God, Ezekiel accurately communicated God's prophecies to the people.

Through Ezekiel, prophet of the countryside, and himself a captive taken from Judah, with king Jehoiachin, to Babylon in 597 B.C., God presented the capital cities of Israel (Samaria) and Judah (Jerusalem) as two sisters. *"And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah"* (Eze. 23:4). Both committed whoredom, doting on their lovers. *"And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours"* (v. 5). Because Aholah (Samaria, Israel) had left God for another, God said, *"Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted. These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her"* (vv. 9-10).

Aholibah (Jerusalem, Judah) should have learned from the punishment meted upon her elder sister. Instead, she followed the same way, becoming even more corrupt than her sister (vv. 11-14). She doted upon the Chaldeans (Babylonians) and sent messengers unto them, calling them to her bed

(vv. 14-21). God decreed punishment in raising up her lovers against her in a dreadful, terrible destruction (vv. 22-29). He reminded her of the reason for her demise: *"I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols"* (v. 30). As prophesied, Judah who went into Babylonian captivity beginning in 606 B.C., remained captive until 536 B.C., a period of seventy years (Jer. 25:11).

The reasons for the removal of both Israel and Judah from the pleasant land were the same: idolatry and murder (Eze. 23:37). Likewise, the punishment was the same, destruction at the hands of their former allies, and captivity in their enemies' lands: *"And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord God"* (v. 49). In addition, the purpose was the same, and this statement accurately presents the theme of the book: *"and ye shall know that I am the Lord."* History proves captivity broke them of their idolatry forever.

### **The Lord's Promise To His People**

As noted earlier, God, through Ezekiel, sent a message of doom and hope. At the time of the events recorded as our chapter 37, God's people were ready for some good news. Ezekiel presents this good news as he tells of a vision of astounding significance--a vision that would, at once, amaze with startling surprise and inspire with deep gratitude. To understand it, one must look back to chapter 36, whose main points we shall list.

1. God was against the heathen who had "appointed my land into their possession" (36:1-7).
2. The mountains of Israel would bring forth fruit "to my people of Israel: for they are at hand to come" (v. 8).
3. God would multiply men and beasts, and the cities would be inhabited (vv. 9-10).
4. The wastes would be builded (v. 10).
5. The people would obtain their old inheritances (vv. 11-12).
6. The land would no longer devour men nor bereave nations (vv. 13-14).
7. The shame and reproach would be taken away (v. 15).
8. God would bring back His people for His holy name's sake (vv. 16-24).
9. He would cleanse them from filthiness and idolatry (v. 25; Num. 19:17-21).

10. God would give them a new heart and a new spirit--to walk in His judgments, and do them (vv. 26-27).

11. This is a key point. "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God" (v. 28).

12. God would bless them so that people would say, "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited" (v. 35).

13. Finally, as a result, the heathen would know how God dealt with His people, and, God said, "and they shall know that I am the Lord" (vv. 36-38).

Chapter 37 follows this great pronouncement recorded in 36, and is a conclusion to it. Please take careful notice of these four important points.

First, God portrays to Ezekiel a valley of very dry bones. The location of the valley in the vision is not of importance. What is important is what was portrayed there--a valley full of bones, long dead and scattered. God caused Ezekiel to "*pass by them round about*"; that is, to view them from every side. Ezekiel noted they were "*very dry*," which means the bodies had been dead for such a long time all the moisture was gone from the bones. In such a state, as far as human wisdom and ability go, there was absolutely no hope of their ever living again. In response to man's estimation, God questions: "*Can these bones live?*" No, not according to man, nor to human reasoning. However, Ezekiel, understanding God's power above man's, responded, "*O Lord God, thou knowest.*" Then, in a remarkable statement, God commands Ezekiel to prophesy to these long dead bones, and to tell them to "*Hear the word of the Lord.*" This is the power of their living again, and of their living anew.

Second, God proclaims a way of life for these dispersed, desiccated, dead bones. Ezekiel, in his prophetic office, as an agent of God, had pronounced doom upon His wayward people, but now sounds forth a message of new life. Their situation is not hopeless, as they supposed, if they will hear the Word of the Lord (Rom. 10:17). God, through His Word, can bring them back to life. So, God gives instructions to cause breath to enter into the bones again. When Ezekiel prophesied, there was a noise, and a shaking, and "*the bones came together, bone to his bone.*" Then, came upon the bones sinews, and flesh, and skin covered them. Next, Ezekiel prophesied to the wind to "*breathe upon these slain, that they may live,*" and they lived. Finally, they "*stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army,*" alive, united, and strong!

Third, God pronounces what these bones represent. He interprets the vision for us, thus there is no mistaking what is the true meaning. *"These bones are the whole house of Israel"* (Eze. 37:11). As noted earlier, the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom had gone into Assyrian Captivity, and the two tribes of the Southern Kingdom had gone into Babylonian Captivity. Their lands had been decimated, their capitals demolished, and their temple destroyed, resulting in their crying: *"Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost."* In their captivity, away from the promised land, punished for their sins, they had given up hope. No one could restore them, nor bring life again to the defeated, destroyed, dead nation of Israel--they thought. The vision of dry bones is to show them what God can do.

Fourth, God promises restoration of the people to the land of Israel. He does so by using the figure of a resurrection. As they were, by their own estimation, dead in their graves, so God would open their graves of captivity, cause them to come up out of their graves, and bring them into the land of Israel. Key to this point is the statement, *"And ye shall know that I am the Lord"* (v. 13). Thus, God explains the vision of their resurrection from the death of captivity to live again in their promised land, concluding with these words of hope and comfort: *"And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord"* (v. 14). This was literally fulfilled in 536 B.C. when Cyrus, king of Persia, allowed the Jews who so desired to return to their homeland (see Ezra and Nehemiah), and, with Zerubbabel, 49,897 returned in the first of three returns.

### **Some Concluding Observations**

#### CONCERNING GOD AND MAN

God communicates to man, His creation, through His Word (Heb. 1:1-2; John 12:48; Rom. 10:13-ff). and expects all men to hear, believe, and obey His will. God is just and merciful, and will bless the faithful, obedient believer, but God will punish those who do not obey Him. The people of Judah forsook God's Word, and refused to hear Him. As then, so now, God demands obedience to His will. Christ is *"the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Heb. 5:9). Thus, we must hear Him, believe Him, and obey Him.

*"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our*

Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

In view of the above, man should be impressed with this undeniable fact: God means what He says. *"I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it"* (Eze. 36:36). Though Israel seemed deader than the dried out bones, God would bring them back to life, resurrecting them from captivity, and burned this idea into their minds with the vision of the valley.

#### CONCERNING FALSE IDEAS ABOUT THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

There are many false theories concerning the meaning and application of this vision. Generally, they fall into three categories. 1. Some believe the vision refers to the general resurrection of the physically dead. 2. Some believe the vision refers to the modern state of Israel being "resurrected" to life in 1948. 3. Some believe the vision refers to a millennial kingdom of Christ upon earth.

There will be a general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15); however, Ezekiel 37 does not deal with it. Rather, Ezekiel's message is that *"these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts"* (v. 11). It is just as obvious that they were not physically dead, as it is that the resurrection pictured in this passage was not from physical death. Their hope was dead, but God showed them a reason for their hope to live, as He promised to them a restoration to their homeland (cf. Deu. 30; Neh. 9:7-ff).

The fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel was not in A.D. 1948, but in 536 B.C. The comfort God offered to the dispersed Jews was not to be two thousand years in coming, but some of those very Jews to whom God spoke through Ezekiel would return to their homeland, and did, as Ezra recorded.

Finally, rather than belabor the points against a materialistic millennialism, which points other brethren on this program shall present, let us consider briefly and as simply as possible the truth as shown in this passage. First, there is no hint of millennialism in Ezekiel 37:1-14. It simply is not there. Second, God plainly states the meaning of the vision:

"Then he said unto me. Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them. Thus saith the Lord

God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord (Eze. 37:11-14).

God blessed His people with comfort and hope in this marvelous vision of a restoration from captivity under the figure of a resurrection of the very dry dead bones. How great is our God, how powerful, and loving, and how blessed are we to be His people!

## Chapter Twelve

**ATTACKING THE KINGDOM FROM WITHIN**

Gary Grizzell

**Introduction**

*"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise"* (Proverbs 11:30). *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). The physical body of Christ when upon the earth sought lost souls. Today, his spiritual body, the church, is doing what his physical body did, it is seeking and saving the lost. This fact is good news for the spiritually lost souls of the world.

**To Seek And Save The Lost The Christian Must Recognize****The Ongoing Spiritual War**

Satan lied to Eve with two lies and Satan has been lying to men about what God has said and is doing ever since (Gen. 3:1-6). There is a great war ongoing and it has been ongoing since the beginning of time. It is the war between God and Satan for men's souls. It is the war between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error. Note Paul's statements to the church at Rome from Romans 7:14-25. *"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"* (Rom. 7:23; boldface mine, GLG).

*"I am carnal, sold under sin."* This refers to the fact that one cannot overcome the power of sin and influence of Satan if he does not place his trust in the gospel of Christ. *"For that which I do I allow not"* (Rom. 7:15). This describes the sin of commission and the fact that one may chose to commit a sin while knowing that it is a violation of the will of God. *"For what I would, that do I not"* (Rom. 7:15). This describes the sin of omission and the fact that one may chose to go against his conscience by refusing to do what he knows is right. James said it this way, *"Therefore to him that*

*knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).*

Paul further described the nature of his sincere battle against Satan and sin by saying,

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do ... For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:19: 22-24).

His means of victory over sin is then given in these words: *"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom. 7:25).

Additional evidence of a spiritual war is seen in the following: *"I have fought a good fight,"* said Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:7). This statement implies the recognition of a present war. Paul explicitly states his involvement with it. Paul wrote to a younger preacher instructing him with reference to the words of God, *"that by them thou mayest war the good warfare"* (1 Tim. 1:18).

James mentions *"lusts that war in your members"* (James 4:1). When men refuse to fight in the battle for spiritual self-control over their own appetites and desires, the consequence of physical war is inevitable. Peter wrote, *"Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against your souls"* (1 Pet. 2:11). *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh,"* wrote the inspired apostle Paul (2 Cor. 10:3). The Christian was at war in Paul's day and he is still at war today. The war is a spiritual one. Therefore, our weapons are spiritual ones and not guns, tanks, or war ships. *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal"* (meaning, not of the flesh) (2 Cor. 10:4). Our weapons are mightier than guns, tanks, warships and even atomic bombs, *"But mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds"* (1 Cor. 10:4). Our weapons of prayer, godly living and the sword of the Spirit are able to dissipate the strongholds of humanism, evolutionism and a world of amorality.

The existence of physical wars in our present time is well known and reported almost daily by way of television on the evening news, but few today are willing to recognize the most damaging and crucial war — that which defiles, corrupts and destroys the inner man! This war between God and Satan with reference to man's soul was begun by the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). He lied to Eve saying, *"Ye shall not surely die"* (Gen. 3:4). God then prophesied that the seed of woman would come into the world and bruise the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15). This was fulfilled in Christ coming into the world by being born of the woman, Mary (Gal. 4:4). The saviour of men, Jesus Christ, stated



that men may know the truth and the truth would set them free from sin (Jn. 8:32). What Should Be The Christian's Response To This Ongoing Spiritual War?

First, the Christian should appreciate that he is a soldier in the army of King Jesus.

Paul told Timothy to "*endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*" (2 Tim. 2:3). Those who refuse to see this aspect of the requirements for the Christian are those who inevitably refuse to fight. It seems that the one exception they will make in their effort to avoid scriptural, required fighting of error is that they will fight those who are willing to fulfill their duty to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered. Such ought not to be! Let us all determine (according to one's ability, opportunity and in harmony with scriptural guidelines for males and females) to fight the good fight of the faith. It is a "*good*" fight, so says God's inspired word! (I Tim. 6:12; Jude 3; I Pet. 3:15; Phil. 1:17 - "*I am set for the defense of the gospel*").

Secondly, the Christian should put on the whole armour of God.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer" (Eph. 6:10-18:a).

The Christian soldier is to put on his 1) helmet of salvation, which is having a knowledge of being in a saved relationship with God. He is to throw on his 2) breastplate of righteousness, which is a life of right doing. 3) The loins are to be girt about with truth, which means he is to be firmly convicted by the truth of the gospel. He is to be wholeheartedly committed to the doctrine of Christ. 4) His feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel, which means that he is to know those things which are necessary to salvation and to be able to help another to see these truths in the Bible.

No soldier should go into battle without his boots. "... *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*" (I Pet. 3:15). 5) The shield of faith is one's belief in promises of the gospel with reference to fighting the good fight of the faith. When one believes in God's special providence as he goes about seeking and saving the lost with the gospel, he has his shield up (Rom. 8:28). When he believes God will not suffer him to be tempted above that which he is able to bear, he will have his protective shield up (I Cor. 10:12-13). One historian reports that the Roman soldier had a shield which was four feet high and two feet wide, made of thick wood with a coat of leather on the outside to quench the fiery arrow of the enemy. The Christian's shield is a shield which one sees by faith, that is, belief of God's word (Rom. 10:17 - "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*"). The soldier then takes up 6) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This is the offensive weapon. Thus far, all other parts of the Christian's armour mentioned are defensive in nature. This sword is mentioned by the Hebrew writer: "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*" (Heb. 4:12). This is an invisible sword which cuts coming and going since it is twoedged. The use of the sword is serious business. This is true since it is a symbol of death, not a symbol of torture. So it is capable of killing out error in a sin troubled soul or an error filled church. Next, Paul mentions prayer. When the Christian soldier goes forth to teach a lost soul the gospel, be it in the lost person's home or under a shade tree, praying brings divine help in on the battle for his soul. Eph. 6:10-18a; Rom. 8:28.

The armour is referred to by the Holy Spirit as "*the armour of righteousness*" (2 Cor. 6:7). The Christian soldier should put on the armour of light (Rom. 13:12). "*Light*" denotes truth while "*darkness*" designates walking in sin (includes being in religious and/or philosophical error, I Jn. 1:6-7). "*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation*" (I Thess. 5:8).

### Third, recognize that the fight is not against flesh and blood.

"*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (Eph. 6:11-12). Satan will usually work through deceitful tricks (2 Cor. 2:11). A foolish friend may do more harm

than a wise enemy, someone once said. Remember Judas with Jesus? Would you not agree that Satan was behind the scenes pulling Judas' strings in his betrayal of his "friend"? *"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve"* (Luke 22:3). This does not excuse Judas but reminds us that the battle is in the spiritual realm, not in the physical realm!

Understanding this fact (how Satan works and deceives) will go far in helping the Christian soldier in his determination to love the sinner, while hating the sin. Jesus, our example, loved the sinner while at the same time hating the adulterous woman's sin (Jn.8:1-11). Even realizing that a false teacher is in the grip of Satan and is but his pitiful manipulative tool will help to view the primary enemy of men's souls. *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"* (2 Cor. 11:14-15; see also 2 Cor. 2:11).

#### Fourth, It Means We Need To Wake Up!

*"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"* (Rom. 13:11). Those we are trying to reach with the gospel are captives of the most wicked, tyrannical leader in human history, Satan! His name means *"an adversary."* He is described as a roaring lion who walks about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). This is characteristic of a lion in seeking his prey. Hell is prepared for him and his angels and *"he is filled with great wrath because he knows that he has only a short time"* to deceive the world to go to hell with him. (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:12).

Satan corrupts divine institutions. God has ordained (appointed) three divine institutions: 1) The Home [Gen. 2:25], 2) The Government [Rom. 13:1-7], and 3) The Church [Mt. 16:18]. Satan has done a superb job for the most part in corrupting each of these divine institutions in every age. He wishes to manipulate and corrupt the very elect of God, the church. He desires to do this in three ways: 1) Morally, 2) Doctrinally, and 3) Evangelistically. These are the very three ways he sought to defile Christ in the wilderness [Mt. 4:1-11]. Why does Satan desire to destroy the Lord's church? Because he knows that the church is the salt and light to an unbelieving world (Mt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:14-16). If he can corrupt the church the world doesn't stand a chance! The malicious disposition of Satan toward God's people is seen in a statement Jesus made concerning Satan's sending forth of false Christs: *" . . . insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect"* (Mt. 24:24).

#### Fifth, be strong and fight the battle.

The armour of the spiritual combatant consists of six parts for the front of the body but no parts for the back (Eph. 6:10-18). Jesus never intended for the Christian soldier to turn and run from the enemy of truth. To run is to expose the vulnerable part of the soldier and would mean sure death. Paul exhorted young Timothy to ". . . *endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*" (2 Tim. 2:3). Paul wrote, "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*" (I Cor. 16:13). "*Fast*" here means "*to stand firm, to persevere, to persist, to keep one's standing.*" "*Quit*" here means "*to show one's self a man, be brave*" (Strong's). Paul is saying to be watchful, to stand firm in your faith, be courageous and strong spiritually!

The child of God who would fight sin in his own life and in the lives of others must put eternal affairs before temporal ones. "*No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier*" (2 Tim. 2:4). "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,*" said Paul (I Tim. 6:12). Lay hold here refers to: "*take possession of, overtake, attain, to seize upon*" (Strong's). Members of the church simply must study the word of truth that they might be able to rightly divide it in order to teach those who are ignorant of those proper divisions and interpretations (2 Tim. 2:15).

The purpose in fighting the good fight of the faith is for one's own soul, the souls of one's family, friends and fellowman (I Tim. 4:16). It is a fight to the finish to develop character and to live a holy, pure life (Tit. 2:11-12). It is a fight to the finish to remain sanctified (Jn. 17:17; Rev. 2:10). It is a fight to the finish to present one's body as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2). It is a fight to the finish to overcome the three avenues of Satan's temptations, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (I Jn. 2:15-17). It is a fight to the finish to protect our families from the evil which is in the world (Gal. 1:2). It is a fight to the finish to complete the Christian life, but it is possible. Paul set the example and wrote: "*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*" (2 Tim. 4:6-7).

### **Dangers From Without**

#### **Satan Is Alive, Real and Working On Planet Earth**

The God Breathed, infallible and inspired word of God tell us that Satan exists (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Gen. 3:1; I Pet. 5:8). Though he is not visible to the eye, his effects are visible! When one sees a drunkard unconscious in an alley, the drug addict, gambling casinos, bars, immorality, strife,

covetousness, fornication, adultery, unfaithfulness, the teaching of religious lies, then one may know that Satan is alive and well on planet earth!

The work of Satan is seen all around us. Consider the attempts made by Satan through willing so-called scholars who seek to pervert the written text of the Bible. The Reader's Digest Condensed Bible is a case in point. I once read that in condensing they have subtracted about 50% of God's words. The 23rd psalm is now the 18th psalm. 50% of the Old Testament is omitted. 68 of the 150 psalms are now gone and 25% of the New Testament is missing. They did all this in the name of readability but the fact remains that "*all scripture*" is inspired of God, not just some of it! It is a sin to either add to or subtract from the words of Bible. (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

### Is Sin Real?

The person who says that sin is not real or that there's no such thing as sin needs to think twice. Better yet, he needs to read Genesis 3:1-6 and see the beginning of sin. He should read I John 3:4 and see that sin is the transgression of God's law. Sin is the greatest problem facing man (death is the result of sin). The person who says sin is not real by making such a statement is guilty of a sin, the sin of ignorance. Sin can be seen in the very lives of those who deny its existence! The wages of sin may well be above minimum wage but the bottom line is that fear, guilt and worry are the by-products of sin. Worse than these is the fact that physical and spiritual death is the result of sin (Rom. 6:23). Paul teaches that those who practice the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (see Gal. 5:19-21).

### There Are Dangers From Within

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:17-19:

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.")

Brother Rubel Shelly once wrote:

"The liberal is careful to appear humble, pious and genuinely concerned about the welfare of the church. He speaks in his special vocabulary and wins people to his false way of thinking. He compromises the truth and undermines the gospel. How appropriate is our Lord's warning found in

Matthew 7:15. 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.' "One of the great dangers of liberalism is its inherent dishonesty. False teachers in generations past would exclude themselves from the fellowship of the faithful people of God and seek to destroy the truth by a frontal assault. But not so with the liberals. They go about their insidious work of overthrow from within. They use pulpits, magazines, lectureships, and published materials to win people to themselves and their false ways" (Liberalism's Threat To The Faith, page 11. Boldface mine, GLG).

### **Rubel Shelly and The Question Are The Church And The Kingdom One And The Same?**

Jesus Christ the Son of the living God teaches us to beware of false teachers. He says they are like wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). The following statement is a statement of error by such a wolf that men must reject.

"The church is important in the divine scheme of things. There is a close relationship between the church and the kingdom of God. But they are not one and the same thing...Because the church is the immediate arena of kingdom-seeking on Earth, many passages in the New Testament affirm their close link with each other. But they are not the same. As the church, we resist the arrogant claim that we are the kingdom of God." - Rubel Shelly, The Messiah's kingdom, LoveLines, Weekly newsletter of the Woodmont Hills Church of Christ, Vol. 24, No. 23, June 10, 1998.

The church and the kingdom are the same! Rubel Shelly tells those who are members of Woodmont Hills church and all who receive his group's newsletter that the "*church*" and the "*kingdom*" are NOT the same. In stark contrast, Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God (the one upon men's eternal salvation hinges), taught the exact opposite (Matt. 16:13-19)! The Lord prophesied to the apostle Peter that he (Peter) would receive the keys of the "*kingdom*." What Jesus was telling Peter was that he would be given the inspired words of the Holy Spirit, and would be able to tell men what to do to enter the kingdom of God (become Christians). This took place as Jesus had prophesied (Acts 2). Yet, in the same conversation Jesus had previously stated that He would build His "*church*" (Matt. 16:18). So, Jesus informed Peter and the other apostles that He intended

to build His CHURCH upon the truth that He was/is the Son of God and that He was giving Peter the keys to open the door to that spiritual church or KINGDOM in its beginning.

### **Is Rubel A Premillennialist?**

If the church and the kingdom that Jesus spoke about are not the same, then Jesus was illogical. Was Jesus an irrational idiot as premillennialists imply? No! Is Rubel a premillennialist? If not, why is he making one of their stock arguments?

### Strange Bible Interpretation

Rubel Shelly must tell us (don't expect him to, however) by what rule of Bible interpretation Jesus our Lord is to be understood as, (1) Having informed Peter of the construction of one spiritual institution (the church) and, (2) Yet in the next breath having told Peter that the giving of the keys was to be directed toward a different spiritual institution (the kingdom). Why would Jesus tell Peter He was going to build A and give Peter the keys to B? Making Jesus out to be inconsistent in His teaching matters little to those who have an axe to grind, an opinion to teach or a crowd to impress.

### Rubel Implies The Holy Spirit Is Arrogant

The truth is, the church of Christ and the kingdom of Christ are one and the same!! Therefore, brother Shelly has taught damnable error AGAIN. This is error which, if believed will damn a person's soul to hell. Why? Because among other things Shelly tells us we cannot claim to be the kingdom of God today. Shelly wrote: *"As the church, then, we resist the arrogant claim that we are the kingdom of God."*

Shelly tells us that it is *"arrogant"* to make the claim that Christians (those he admits are in the *"church"*) make up the *"kingdom of God."* Guess what that makes the inspired writer, Paul? Remember, it was Paul who wrote to the members of the Lord's church in Colossae, saying, *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Col. 1:13). Whom shall we believe, Rubel Shelly or The Inspired Apostle Paul? Dear reader, you take your pick but remember that your soul's eternal destiny depends on your choice.

Rubel — will you repent of such blasphemy? Neither the Lord nor the true Church of Christ today teaches the garbage you are now spewing forth. Gullible brethren, will you continue to follow Rubel? Or, will this possibly be the point that will finally convince you to let the false teacher alone (Matt. 15:13-14). Do you likewise believe as Shelly that you may hold a doctrine which implies that the Holy Spirit is arrogant? Do you believe the words of the Spirit are arrogant words, or truthful

words? Jesus complimented God's words in prayer to the Father saying, "*thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). Paul warned that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . . "*Speaking lies in hypocrisy*" (I Timothy 4:1-2). Do you believe this is possible? You must, if you would choose to avoid false teaching and save your soul. Your family and friends must, if they would save their souls and enter heaven (Matt. 7:21-23).

### **Other Quotes From Wayward Brother Shelly**

Other quotes from Shelly reveal when he began spouting such foolishness. Consider the following as documented by faithful brother Lester Kamp from a paper he wrote entitled: HERESY AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE—HERESY ON THE CHURCH/KINGDOM; (Lester Kamp 13605 E. Alameda Ave., Aurora, CO 80012-1302).

#### Statements Made By Rubel Shelly In The July 1991 Jubilee In Nashville

"I want to talk with you about the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God. The thesis of this speech is going to be that the church is a body of redeemed people in pursuit of an ideal which the New Testament calls the kingdom of God, or alternately the kingdom of heaven. I'm going to insist that the two do not have an identity relationship. That it is theologically incorrect to say church equals kingdom...we have been taught, many of us at least, that they have a relationship of identity that wherever the church is the kingdom of God is. Everything that speaks of the kingdom of God is somehow a description of the church."

"The church is not to be understood in some static sense, that the church is something that has arrived, or once did arrive. It was once the way it should have been; it was once right. And our notion of restoration should not be conceived, and Biblically cannot be conceived, as recapturing something that was once in place . . . The Church is not a static accomplishment, complete on Pentecost and maybe for 50 to 100 years then some great apostasy and the goal is the recapturing of whatever it was there briefly. The church, even on Pentecost, was not where God ideally wanted people to be, because the church never arrives . . . the church is never a perfect revelation of God's ideal. Never has been at any time in its history, and certainly isn't today. But, it always strives to move toward that ideal which is expressed in the Bible by the term 'kingdom of God.'"



Rubel described the church in derogatory terms as *"a rag-tag bunch of folk."* He said, *"The church is the body of Christ. It's pretty asthmatic! It's sunken-chested, skinny, and bony-kneed. Christ in His full radiance is the head. He is triumphant Lord, but the body over which He is head is a pretty scrawny, frail body."* Speaking of Matthew 6:10 where Jesus said, *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,"* Rubel said:

"But the church is not everything that the Bible anticipates the kingdom being because the fully revealed kingdom is identified in the following way in the Bible. 'Our father who art in heaven hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'...The kingdom of God is realized only when you see the will of God being done even as it is being done in heaven...Now what will the kingdom look like if it is ever realized on earth? Your kingdom come, Your will being done on earth just like it is being done in heaven with every member of Christ's spiritual body as responsive to You, as non-resistant to You, as the very angels in heaven are to Your will. Now, I'd like to see the kingdom come, and I pray for the kingdom to come."

He went on to say in the same Jubilee sermon:

"You know I was taught not to pray the Lord's prayer growing up. I pray the Lord's prayer because that prayer is not a prayer that became moot on Pentecost. What happened at Pentecost was an instantiation of the church as that body of people in process toward the kingdom of God. What happened on Pentecost was not the full realization of the kingdom of God. I have no hesitation in praying, and leading whole churches and groups of people to pray, 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come.' That's still my prayer. That's my goal as a church goer. That is my goal as a Christian. That's my goal as a preacher to call people in the church, as well as those on the outside who would respond to the gospel call, to call those who are already in the church to the ideal laid before the church, which is to realize in our experience the kingdom of God. And you see that is part of our problem. It's vocabulary . . . The kingdom of God is nothing more or less than the sovereign rule and reign of God over his people."

### **The Old Rubel Answers The New Rubel**

After citing Matthew 16:18-19, Rubel makes the following observations,

"This important passage teaches us that the church and the kingdom are the same. For while many religious teachers today attempt to distinguish between the two, Jesus clearly used the words 'church' and 'kingdom' interchangeably, thereby showing that the two terms refer to one and the same thing." (Simple Studies About Christ's Church. copyright. 1973. p. 4)

"But the most fundamental error of the premillennial theory is the distinction which it attempts to make between the church and the kingdom....In Matthew 16:18-19, as well as other places in the New Testament, the words 'church' and 'kingdom' are used interchangeably. This shows that the church and the kingdom are not two, but one. The church is the kingdom of God! The kingdom of God is the church! (cf. Matt. 3:2; 4:7; Luke 22:18) . . . The church is Christ's kingdom and he is reigning over it right now!... No, the church is neither an earthly kingdom nor the forerunner to an earthly kingdom! The church is Christ's spiritual kingdom over which he is presently reigning!" (Simple Studies About Christ's Church. copyright. 1973. pgs. 9-10)

### **An Exhortation**

Brethren, if we would teach lost souls, we must recognize the ongoing spiritual war, appreciate that we are soldiers in the army of King Jesus, put on the whole armour of God, recognize that the fight is not against flesh and blood, courageously fight the battle and free the captives with the gospel of Christ. We, as the army of Christ, must be constantly aware that Satan has manipulated some among our ranks to fit the description Paul gave to the Philippian church, namely, "*enemies of the cross of Christ*" (Phil. 3:18-19). There are disciples of the cross and then there are disciples of the double-cross!

The good news for those in sin is that all spiritual blessings from God may be enjoyed to one who obeys the gospel of Christ. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" (Eph. 1:3). In Christ we have fellowship with God, fellowship with Christ, fellowship with the Lord's church (the greatest institution upon the face of the earth), remission of sins at baptism, continual remission of sins as we live the faithful Christian life, heard and answered prayers, the peace that passeth all understanding, the

special providence of God in our lives and last but not least, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us! (Acts 2:38; I Jn. 1:7; I Pet. 3:12; Phil. 4:6-7; Rom. 8:28; Rom. 8:37).

## Chapter Thirteen

## 84 LIARS?

*Timothy L. Dooley***Introduction**

It is a special honor for me to have a chapter included in this book and specifically to address the subject at hand. What a great privilege it is to have been given, in this earthen vessel, the ability and opportunity to extend, defend, and abide in the Way of our Father. I shall lay forth in this chapter irrefutable and unequivocal proof that the words spoken by John the Baptizer, Jesus Christ, the seventy, and the twelve, concerning the kingdom, were true; that the kingdom is the church; it was established on the first Pentecost following Christ's ascension into heaven; it exists today and you can be a part of that kingdom. In doing this we will answer the question, "Does the Bible describe for us 84 liars?"

The Bible is the Book of books, the verbal, plenary, inspired word of God. Every jot and every word is God breathed. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (II Timothy 3:16). How fortunate we are that our heavenly Father has made known his mind and will to His creation. Some 30-40 men over a period of time that spanned almost sixteen hundred years wrote sixty-six books, containing proof of stated and fulfilled prophecy, accurate historical evidence, and not one error or contradiction. Why? Because as Peter wrote, *"... the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"* (II Peter 1:21).

We know that it is not in harmony with God's nature for Him to lie, mislead, or stretch the truth (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). Therefore, since the Bible is the word of God and God cannot lie, every word of the Bible must be true and we must believe it in order to be saved. Note the words of John 14:6, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the*

*Father, but by me."* Earlier Jesus had said, *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). Inevitably every man must decide whether to choose righteousness or unrighteousness, living in obedience to Christ or in opposition to Him. This will be, without a doubt, the greatest decision you and I will ever make. For Christ said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48).

A simple truth that God has always demanded of His creation is that a man not add to nor take away from His word (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19). To be true to God's word one must *"study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (II Timothy 2:15). We need to pattern ourselves after the noble Bereans who *". . . searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

How sad but true that thousands of millions will be lost eternally for failing to search the scriptures and rightly divide them concerning the "kingdom of God's dear Son."

### **John the Baptizer**

We first read of John the Baptizer as part of a prophecy of old in 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."* This passage teaches us several things: 1) He that crieth in the wilderness would pave the way for the Messiah. 2) At such a time the Messiah would come and, as we will see later, establish the kingdom of God. 3) Christ was God made manifest in the flesh. Notice just here two passages John 1:1, *"IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Phil 2:6, *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:"*

Then the prophet Malachi spoke of him thusly, *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord"* (Malachi 4:5). This prophecy indeed speaks of John the Baptizer preceding the Messiah and it is confirmed and established by Christ Himself. The Jews were well acquainted with this prophecy, yet their desire for an earthly kingdom blinded them to a proper understanding of the scripture.

Notice in Matthew 17 beginning in verse one that when Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: they saw Moses and Elias talking with him, and they asked him saying, *"Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come"*

*for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matthew 25:34) will see him in glory. Then we must conclude that Matthew 11:11 and Luke 7:28 are not speaking of heaven itself but something else.

In Mark 6:18 we notice that John was faithful in his preaching regardless of the circumstances and it cost him his life. As we will notice later on in this chapter and has been so well documented in previous ones Christ had not yet established His kingdom, the church. So John the Baptizer never knew the great privileges of the kingdom of God's dear Son. The way for which he paved. ". . . *let God be true, but every man a liar*" (Romans 3:4).

### **The Teachings of Jesus of Nazareth**

As we continue on from the events of Matthew three and John's preparation for Christ and His kingdom (vss. 1-12); after Christ's example of immersion at the hands of John and the Father's declaration that Christ was indeed His Son (vss. 13-17); we have recorded for us in chapter four the temptation of Christ by the devil himself (vss. 1-11). Then, "*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 4:17). Mark recounts this period of time by saying:

"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" (Mk. 1:14-15).

Who would dare call God and His dear Son liars? The premillennialists do! If they don't, they at least accuse him of failing to establish the earthly kingdom they desire so much and teach so vehemently. They catalog the Son of God as nothing more than a mere man and they steal away His deity, not to mention that they attack the very nature of the Father with regard to His omniscience. How could God have sent His only begotten Son to establish a kingdom and not know that it could not be accomplished? He couldn't!

Just here let us notice some of Christ teachings:

"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" (Matt. 4:23).

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and *preaching the gospel of the kingdom*, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matthew 9:35).

"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: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then *the kingdom of God is come unto you.*" (Matt. 12:25-28).

"And he said unto them, I must *preach the kingdom of God* to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43).

"And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and *spake unto them of the kingdom of God*, and healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9:11).

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

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Fathers good pleasure to *give you the kingdom*" (Luke 12:32).

"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 13:29).

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time *the kingdom of God* is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Lu.16:16).

Was Jesus lying when he said these things? Surely these verses show us that Christ believed, understood, and taught that the kingdom was about to be established. To teach anything contrary to this is a direct slap in the face of the inspired word as well as at the deity of the only begotten Son of God.

### **More Teachings from Christ Concerning the Kingdom**

Thus far we have seen that both John the Baptizer and Jesus Christ came preaching that the kingdom was at hand. It has also been proven that God and His word are true and neither Christ nor Baptizer could have been lying. Christ was God with us (Matt. 1:23), he was Deity on earth and had all of the attributes of Deity, therefore he could not have lied and he, being omniscient knew what he was doing at what he was teaching. He knew that the kingdom which He came to established as planned, whether the Jews would understand and accept it or not.

Jesus Christ did not just come and preach that the kingdom was at hand. He taught many

things concerning the kingdom in detail. Jesus went into every city and village and preached the "glad tidings" of the kingdom, and the twelve journeyed with him (Luke 8:1). What would be so joyous about something that would not occur? Nothing. But we have joy in knowing that we have salvation from sin and death in the church of Christ. That my friends is the glad tidings that Jesus preached.

He told them to "seek first" this kingdom (Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31). They were to give themselves in abiding in this kingdom that was nigh at hand. Many in the first century failed to seek the kingdom that Christ established. They rejected him and waited on their heart's desire, an earthly, physical kingdom. They died lost. Many today continue to reject Christ. Waiting for a second chance at his coming to set up an earthly kingdom, surely they have plenty of time and opportunity. Yet many today die lost, outside of the body (kingdom) of Christ.

Many false teachers have gone out into the world offering a salvation not found within the pages of inspiration. Teaching the doctrines of men and nullifying both their worship and service. Friends, simply praying Jesus into your heart will not save you. There is not one instance in the scriptures that provides this as an avenue to the Father. Accepting Jesus into your heart will not save you nor will it put you into the kingdom He died for. Jesus told His disciples, "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*" (John 15:16a). But those who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ will be saved (I Thess. 1:8; I Peter 4:17). Notice the teaching of Christ, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21).

I suppose that those who refuse to believe will never understand the truth of Christ and His kingdom. Jesus spoke many parables concerning the kingdom and when the disciples inquired as to why he spoke thusly, He answer,

"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given . . . When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matt. 13:11, 19).

Jesus then told Peter and the Apostles that he would give them the keys to unlock and open this kingdom.



"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. 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" (Matt. 16:18-19).

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

He even promised that the kingdom would come, being established, in their lifetime. *"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom"* (Matt. 16:28). *"AND he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power"* (Mk. 9:1). *"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God"* (Lu. 9:27).

All this was done and recorded for us on the first Pentecost following the resurrection in Acts chapter two. Did Jesus lie to His followers then and is he lying to us now? No! He said, *"But I tell you of a truth."* Was He mistaken? No! Thus he would not be the only begotten Son of God.

After institution of His memorial feast Christ told his followers, *"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Fathers kingdom"* (Matt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Lu. 22:18; Lu. 22:16; Lu. 14:15). Was Jesus lying? We know he was not. But was He able to accomplish what He had planned? The premillennialist says no. But Christ fulfilled His promise. We read of Him eating with the disciples in Luke 24 and John 21. So then we may infer from these passages alone that Jesus had already done what He said He was going to do. He established His kingdom!

He then gave the kingdom unto all who will obey Him and renounce all others serving Him alone as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. *"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me"* (Luke 22:29). He had made it clear that His kingdom was not one of a physical nature, but it was a spiritual kingdom that would never be destroyed, *"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence"* (Jn. 18:36).

Christ showed himself alive and proved that he was the Messiah. He continued to speak many things concerning the kingdom even after His resurrection before ascending into heaven to take His place upon the ruler's throne. ". . . He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

### **The Twelve and the Seventy**

Briefly here we want to notice others who went teaching that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand. First of all Christ sent the chosen twelve, including Judas who would later betray his Lord, to preach that the kingdom of heaven (or God) was at hand. "*And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt. 10:7). "*And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick*" (Luke 9:2). These verses teach two very clear truths. One Not only did John and Christ teach that the kingdom was at hand but so did the chosen twelve. Do the premillennialists truly believe that God would allow these obviously inspired men (remember they had healing powers as well from God) to go about preaching a lie?

There is the case of what is commonly referred to as the limited commission. Jesus sent an additional seventy souls out into the world and said, "*And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you . . . Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*" (Luke 10:9, 11). Could Christ have sent these men out to preach a lie?

The answer to our question then, "Does the Bible describe for us 84 liars?" is a resounding NO! John the Baptizer + Jesus Christ + the twelve + the seventy = 84 inspired men, one being God Himself, that preached that the kingdom was nigh at hand.

### **But Yet There Were More**

A study of this topic would not be complete without considering two other biblical figures. First of all we would notice Philip the evangelist. This is not the apostle but one of the chosen men found in Acts 6:5. In Acts 8:12 we read of Philip preaching to the Samaritans and the result, "*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.*" This would make 85 who were either lying or telling the truth.

Then we come to the apostle Paul. Remember he was the one who did many things contrary

to the name of Christ but after his conversion he became the boldest of proclaimers concerning the kingdom of Christ. *"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 19:8). *"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 20:25). *"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 28:23). *"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him"* (Acts 28:31).

Paul, an inspired man, one chosen to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, preached the kingdom. And he also preached to those dwelling in the kingdom. To the Corinthians he wrote, *"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"* (I Cor. 15:24). He told the Colossian brethren that God had, *"... delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Col. 1:13). Now friends, if premillennialism is correct and these 86 are merely lying, or were mistaken, please tell me what those believers in Colossae had been translated into.

He told the Thessalonians that they must be counted worthy of the kingdom for which they suffered (II Thess. 1:5). In writing the Hebrew letter he said, *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"* (Heb. 12:28).

Friends, I believe that I, as have others in this book, have showed irrefutable proof that the kingdom of God was both nigh in the days of the first century and that it was established upon the first Pentecost following the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour.

### **The Kingdom Is The Church And You Can Be A Part Of It Today**

From the very beginning of time God had the church, a physical kingdom, not an earthly one in mind. Paul wrote by inspiration, *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Eph. 3:10, 11). The plan was implemented and completed by the act of God upon Calvary. The greatest sacrifice ever given was the blood of Christ and it was shed to purchase this kingdom.

All those who will humbly submit themselves in obedience to the Son will contact that blood and will enjoy the same translation into the kingdom as did the brethren in Colossae.

Notice what Paul wrote to the Ephesians,

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:23-25).

The Greek words translated in this passage as "church" and "body" are "ἐκκλησίας" and "σώματος". Someone says, "See, Christ is the head of one thing right now, but he is going to save something else later." But then we notice Colossians 1:18 and we find, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence." It just so happens that Paul says Christ is the head of the σώματος the ἐκκλησίας. You see friends the church, body, and kingdom are all synonymous with one another. They are one and the same thing. Was Paul lying when he wrote these things? If he were then God is lying because all scripture is inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21).

The church of Christ and the body of Christ are one and the same. The kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven are the body and church, and Christ will only save those who are found in the body. Is that arrogant? No, it's Bible! Only those who are faithful members of Christ's body (i.e. church of Christ) will be saved when he returns again.

What must one do in order to be found abiding in the body? One must first hear the glad tidings of the kingdom in order to develop a working belief called "faith" (Rom. 10:17). This belief must manifest itself in obedience; believing that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, that he lowered Himself to take on the form of a man, being born of a virgin, being tempted in every way as we are yet without sin, only to suffer death upon the cruel cross of Calvary, shedding his precious blood for the sins of all mankind. Yet believing that he rose victorious over death the third day and confirming those things ascended back to the Father where he now rules His kingdom on God's right hand. Realizing that he is coming again someday to take the obedient and faithful to a heavenly home. This will then move you to repent of sin and turn to God (Luke 13:3,5), confessing the sweet name of Christ (Matt. 10:32-33), and submitting to being baptized in the waters of baptism for the

remission of your sins (Acts 2:38) in order to have salvation (I Peter 3:21) being then added to the kingdom by Christ Himself (Acts 2:47).

## Chapter Fourteen

**THE HOPE OF ISRAEL***Darrell Broking***Introduction**

Is the hope of Israel to be literally fulfilled by the establishment of an earthly kingdom in Judea sometime in the near future? Many in Christendom believe this to be Biblical truth. These thoughts are not new thoughts with men in our generation. Right before Jesus ascended back to the right hand of his Father, the apostles were still looking for a physical hope for Israel (Acts 1:6). After feeding a multitude through miraculous power, the Jews saw in Jesus the power to be a great physical king. In fact they sought to take Jesus and make him king by force (John 6:15). But, as Jesus told the cowardly Pilate, the kingdom *"is not of this world"* (John 18:36).

The "millennial" view so popular in our day can be traced back to Papias (AD 125-150). Eusebius quoted Papias as saying that *"there will be a millennium after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in a material form on this earth."* John Darby of the Plymouth Brethren, was one of the first to espouse the Dispensational view of Premillennialism (1830). Closer to home, R. H. Boll who served as the front page editor of the Gospel Advocate, presented this error in the early 1900's.

Boll began studying C. T. Russel's work in the early 1900's. Between 1910 and 1915 Boll began to inject his Premillennial views into his articles. After allowing Boll to infect his readership with this error for too many years, the Advocate's editors finally dismissed him. But not before tremendous damage had been done. West's material covers a broad range of church history. Consequently, his material dealing with R. H. Boll's work with the Advocate and the Advocate's tolerance of Boll, lacks some of the finer details of the day.

G. C. Brewer wrote a series of articles for the Advocate in the 1937 entitled *"I Sat Where*

*They Sat.*" These articles were a review of the past. When he wrote about the year 1915, Brewer revealed two critical observations. First of all as West observed, *"Brewer was right that as of 1915 no one could possibly know how tragically the brotherhood would be disrupted over this speculation."* Secondly, Brewer charged some men with using this situation to their advantage. Reviewing other papers of that day gives the student of history a better understanding of the seriousness of the Advocate's tolerance of Boll. In an article entitled *"Dignified Religious Journalism,"* Cecil B. Douthitt wrote:

"Even if we should grant that the questions brother Brewer answered were satisfactory, what in the wide, wide world has that to do with questions which neither he nor any other Boll sympathizer has ever answered thought the Advocate? These questions under consideration are vital; that much discussed matter of "fellowship" is involved in them; they relate to Christian conduct and practice. Is it a breach of "dignified religious journalism" to ask and answer questions based on fellowship, Christian conduct and practice?"

Brewer clearly miscalculated the dangers of Boll's Premillennial error. He and others associated with the Advocate waited too long to pray for Boll's Premillennial crop failure.

Men like M. C. Kurfes knew the extreme danger of Premillennialism and would not fellowship those teaching it. N. B. Hardeman, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., John T. Lewis, E. R. Harper, R.L. Whiteside and C. R. Nichol worked many long hours combating this error, and were considered too harsh by some for so doing. Hugo McCord was writing about this criticism when he penned the following: *"Some of us are criticized for engaging in 'personalities'. Those who condemn me for it likewise engage in personalities -- behind backs and in private talks; we do it in the papers, when we think a brother needs rebuked before all that others may fear. I still think the latter way in [sic] much more meaningful."*

Would to God that my brethren would learn from history. Brotherhood journals plant seeds far and wide. When a paper like the Firm Foundation and her editor H. A. Dobbs plant the seed of error, it will produce a crop. Brethren who assume that this is a little unimportant issue, and that those who speak against this digression are too harsh, should take a lesson from brother Brewer's miscalculation and that of the Advocate.

R. H. Boll went on in the 1920's to espouse his error in a series of articles which appeared in

Word and Work . He also put his pen to work and wrote a book entitled The Kingdom of God. For thirty years after World War I, the brotherhood was plagued with Boll's Premillennial crop. H. Leo Boles debated R. H. Boll on this subject, and W. L. Oliphant debated John Rice on this subject in Dallas. The Neal-Wallace debate was the clear turning point for the truth. After this debate Foy E. Wallace Jr. was recognized as the leader in the fight against Boll's doctrine. The church of Christ has been blessed by those who stood valiantly and defended the truth against Boll's error. This is especially true in the case of Foy. E. Wallace Jr., who through debate, The Bible Banner and God's Prophetic Word, rose to do battle against the Satan's damnable doctrine and never backed down from his Christian duty.

Sadly, this view is extremely popular today. An estimated 70% of those who profess belief in Jesus adhere to some form of Premillennialism. No wonder so many today have little or no desire to learn about the church of the New Testament. After all, if Jesus came establish his kingdom but had to postpone it and set up the church as a secondary plan, then the church must not be that important. What is important to the Premillennialist? Being rapture ready, or living it up until the tribulation and then professing belief in Jesus. Until this error is removed from the Premillennialist's mind, he will see no value in the church for which Jesus died.

The assumption that Jesus did not fulfill his goal and establish his kingdom makes God a liar (Titus 1:2). There is a great deal of difference between the hope some have for Israel and the hope of Israel.

### **The Hope Of Israel Can Be Found Only In The Mountain Of The Lord's House**

The church of Christ is commissioned to make disciples by teaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and by baptizing those who gladly receive the word (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44ff; Acts 2:41). This task is not possible without instructing alien sinners about the kingdom for which Jesus died (Acts 8:12). Alien sinners need to be taken on a journey from the gutter level of sin, up to the Mountain of the Lord's house. This morning a journey will be taken back in time as consideration is given to the prophecies dealing with the great hope of Israel. The hope about which the Christian lives to tell others!

### **Daniel Saw The Mountain Of The Lord's House**

Daniel was a great man of God. Being of the seed royal, Daniel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar when Jerusalem was first taken in 606 B.C.. Daniel was trained to work with



Nebuchadnezzar's wisest men. When Nebuchadnezzar's terrible dream could not be recalled to him by his wise men, he was determined to cut all of them in pieces and make their houses dung heaps (Dan. 2:5, 12). However, there was one man who knew that the Great God in heaven could give the dream and its interpretation. One of the greatest virtues of a man of God is seen in Daniel's words to the king: *"But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightiest know the thoughts of thy heart"* (Daniel 2:30). A true servant of God will promote the kingdom rather than himself (see: Ephesians 3:21).

Daniel gave the king his dream and its interpretation (Daniel 2:31-45). This image's head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar's world empire (Daniel 2:38). Three other world empires were also represented in this vision. Imagine the pomp and splendor of Nebuchadnezzar as he rules the world. The hanging gardens of Babylon are a testimony to the greatness of Babylon. Babylon's glory was short lived. The very night that Belshazzar paraded his magnificence by making a feast to a thousand of his lords and allowing them to drink wine from the Temple's vessels, Darius the Mede took the kingdom from Babylon (Daniel 5:31). The Medo-Persian empire would eventually give way to Alexander the Great's Grecian empire. Later the Romans ruled the world with an iron fist. In the days of these Roman kings the kingdom was established (Daniel 2:44).

Notice four important elements of Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. . . . 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. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the

interpretation thereof sure" (Daniel 2:34-25, 44-45).

First of all, the Lord reveals that no kingdom will ever be as great as the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Secondly, do you recognize the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Matthew 13:31-33) above? The import of these parables is the same as the import of the stone becoming a great mountain and filling the whole earth. In the third place, this stone was cut "*without hands.*" Friends, the kingdom is God's doing and man may not, can not interfere with those plans. Where some get the idea that the Jews rejected Jesus Christ so that he had to postpone the coming of his kingdom, I will never know! It certainly does not come from the Bible. You see, the church/kingdom is the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3:10-11). In the fourth place, please make a mental note here, the Lord equates the kingdom (Daniel 2:44) with the mountain (Daniel 2:34-35, 45).

### **Isaiah Saw The Mountain Of The Lord's House**

Daniel's prophetic view of the kingdom is broader than Isaiah's in as much as Daniel saw the growth and development of the kingdom, and Isaiah focuses upon its institution:

"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" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

No one is left to wonder about the beginning of the last days. Daniel said that the kingdom would come in the days of the Roman empire. While Rome was ruling the world Peter and the apostles announced the arrival of the kingdom and the beginning of the last days (Acts 2:17). What a privilege it was for Isaiah to be allowed to set his prophetic scope upon the kingdom of Christ. Notice several observations from Isaiah 2:2-3.

First of all Isaiah discusses the "*mountain,*" and Daniel said that this mountain is the kingdom of God. There is no doubt that Isaiah was also looking at this kingdom. In fact he mentions the "*law*" going forth from Jerusalem. Wait a minute! Is not the gospel just a "*love letter*"? Why then did Isaiah call the gospel a law? Because Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John

14:15). John expounded further about the law of the gospel when he wrote:

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:3-5).

Friends, where a kingdom exists there is a king and a sovereign law.

Secondly, the prophet mentions all nations going up to the mountain of the house of the Lord. These nations are recorded in Acts 2:9-11. Of significance importance is the statement, *"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD."* Anything as wonderful as the mountain of the Lord's house is going to be counterfeited. Judaism's Temple was counterfeited by the Samaritans (John 4:20). Jesus told the Samaritan woman, *"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father"* (John 4:21). Rather than asserting that all of the Christian life except sin is worship, Jesus was referring to the spiritual nature of the kingdom (John 18:36). You see anywhere one finds himself, he can go up to the mountain of the Lord's house. It does not matter if one is in Pantego, North Carolina or Panama; Murmansk, Russia, or Mesa, Arizona; friends, one can even go up to the mountain of the Lord's house from San Francisco, California!

In the third place, learning is involved in going up to the mountain of the Lord's house. God will teach but men must say, *"let us go up and learn of his ways."* Teaching is always a two way street involving a teacher and a student. The Lord said: *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."* (John 6:45). God will use the gospel only to show men the way up to the mountain of the Lord's house (II Thessalonians 2:14). No person can be taught wrong and still come up to the mountain of the Lord's house. Counterfeit mountains of the Lord's house are not making Christians any more than the Samaritan's Temple made Jews!

### **Joel Saw The Mountain Of The Lord's House**

The kingdom was ushered in with power (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). Because unrighteous men can not answer true doctrine, they often engage in character assignation. That is exactly what they did to the apostles who were preaching the first gospel sermon (Acts 2:13). Peter immediately took their minds back to Joel 2:28-32 and informed them that they were seeing the

fulfillment of that passage (Acts 2:17).

Joel 2:32 is crucial to our discussion: *"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."* Isaiah mentions the word and law of the Lord coming forth from the mountain of the Lord's house, and Joel connects deliverance to that mountain and law. Joel also saw this about the kingdom: *"The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel"* (Joel 3:16). Maybe you were wondering how I was going to tie the *"hope of Israel"* into a discussion about the mountain of the Lord's house? I don't have to tie it into this discussion because the Lord already did that for us.

The giving of the law on Sinai must have been an awesome event. Imagine the mountain shaking, smoking, the lightening and thunder. Moses was no coward but at this sight even he trembled. Paul reminded the Hebrew brethren that if they were to go back into Judaism, they would leave a far greater covenant than the one given on Sinai:

*"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, 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"* (Heb. 12:18-23).

You see, these brethren had already come up to the mountain of the Lord's house. This is the mountain from which the Lord uttered his voice and shook the heavens. And this is the mountain wherein lies the hope of Israel!

### Conclusion

How can the Bible student be confident that the church of Christ is the kingdom, and the true

hope of Israel? Simply by comparing those great two chapters. Daniel two connects the mountain to the kingdom. Isaiah two connects the mountain to the Lord's house and Joel two connects deliverance to this great mountain and calls it the hope of Israel. It is no accident that Paul wrote the following: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). The mountain of the Lord's house, according to the Bible, is the church of Christ only!

Why is this the true hope of Israel? Because of deliverance (Joel 2:32). When the word which is the law of the Lord was proclaimed by the apostles, those who gladly received the word were baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins. Three thousand souls went up to the mountain of the Lord's house when the kingdom came with power (Acts 2:41). In other words, they were added to the church (Acts 2:47) or translated into the kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14). Furthermore, that call Joel mentioned always begins in baptism (Acts 22:16). No one can find deliverance before Scriptural baptism.

This law is the gospel which Paul carried to lost people throughout the world. Paul was beaten, tortured, persecuted, hated and arrested because he preached the gospel in its simplicity and purity. When on trial for preaching the word of the Lord, Paul said: "*For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.*" (Acts 28:20). You see Paul preached the hope of Israel by showing men the way up to the mountain of the Lord's house.

When men go up to the mountain of the Lord's house and walk according to the King's law or rule, they are "spiritual Israel." "*And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*" (Gal. 6:16). Spiritual Israel has that great hope longed for by many:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

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. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).

That promise is nothing less than eternal life, friends eternal life is the hope! "*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*" (Titus 1:2). The promise is as eternal as the church, just as one would expect it to be (Eph. 3:10-11). The Bible teaches one hope (Eph.

4:4). This hope is not a Premillennial hope, but a hope which can only be enjoyed in the church. Are you an alien sinner, having never obeyed the gospel of Christ? Then why does thou tarry? Come on up to the mountain of the Lord's house! Be baptized and call upon the Lord!

#### End Notes

- 1The Holy Bible. King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1982). All references are to this version unless otherwise stated.
- 2F. W. Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom*, (Delight, AR.: Gospel Light Pub. Co., 1961), 63.
- 3Billy Bland, "Premillennialism" in *Dangerous 'Isms*, ed. B. J. Clarke, (Southaven, MS.: Power Pub., 1997), 493.
- 4Earl Irvin West, *Search For The Ancient Order*, vol. 4, (Germantown, TN.: Religious Book Service, 1987). 179.
- 5Ibid., 182.
- 6Ibid.
- 7Cecil B. Douthitt, "Dignified Religious Journalism" in *The Bible Banner*, ed. Foy E. Wallace Jr., vol. 1 no. 12 (Oklahoma City, OK.: Foy E. Wallace Jr. Pub., Joul 1939), 15.
- 8Ibid.
- 9Hugo McCord, "There And Here" in *The Bible Banner*, ed. Foy E. Wallace Jr., vol. 1 no. 10 (Oklahoma City, OK.: Foy E. Wallace Jr. Pub., Joul 1939), 20.
- 10Earl Irvin West, *Search For The Ancient Order*, 182.
- 11Ibid., 185.
- 12Billy Bland, "Premillennialism" in *Dangerous 'Isms*, 489.









