

Sermon - What Is the True Gospel?

Almost 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ came to earth to announce a very important message from God. He called it the Good News of the Kingdom of God. He was killed for bringing it! What was that message?

What The Gospel Is Not

Just what is the gospel? Walk in to almost any Sunday-keeping “Christian” church and you might hear a message like, “*Just believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved.*” This is the so-called gospel message of most professing Christian ministers today. But is that what the true gospel really is? Almost nobody seems to know!

Tune in a television set any Sunday morning in the United States to so-called “gospel programs” and you'll hear and see preachers telling you about Christ – urging you to believe on Christ – to accept Christ – telling you what a wonderful person He was. They will talk about “getting out the gospel,” meaning the message about Christ. Thus every Sunday morning, millions of viewers assume they are hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Believe it or not, preaching Christ and belief on Him is not preaching Christ's gospel! Christ was a **messenger**. He brought the gospel – the wonderful message of hope that God sent by Him for all mankind. That message is good news. The very word “**gospel**” is from the old-English word “godspel” which means “**good news**”. But the story about Christ is not the gospel.

True, Jesus Christ, the person, is the most important individual ever to walk this earth. True, He is the Savior of all mankind because He led the Way that we must follow. But Christ, the person, is not the gospel! The miracles He performed are not the gospel.

The things Jesus did are not the gospel. What He preached – the tremendous good news He announced – **that is the “gospel”!** What people have accepted without question as the gospel offers no solution to humanity's sufferings, frustrations and indescribable evils. The true gospel Jesus brought proclaims the solution to the world's troubles. But men rejected that gospel and crucified Jesus for preaching it!

False Gospels Preached Today

In today's professing Christian world, we find a variety of “gospels” being preached. Some designate their gospel as “The Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Others call their gospel “The Gospel of Salvation.” Still others profess “The Gospel of Grace.” There is also a modern “Social Gospel,” while some call their gospel “The Israel Message.”

None of these are the gospel Jesus proclaimed! Jesus Himself prophesied that this very thing would happen.

Matthew 24:4-5, “*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*”

Notice that they would come “in Christ's name”, not in their own name. Over the centuries, untold thousands of ministers have “preached Christ”. They have professed to be His ministers – to represent Him. They have said Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. But they have **withheld** Christ's gospel – the very good news that He brought. Thus the vast majority have been deceived by false gospels! Remember, a deceived person does not know he is deceived. Otherwise he would not be deceived. Millions have been deceived into accepting a false gospel – a false salvation, believe it or not! In this ministry we have read time and time again from **Revelation 12:9** that Satan the Devil

has deceived the whole world! It's in your own Bible; don't take my word for it. You either believe what's in your own Bible or you don't!

The fulfillment of Christ's words did not take long to happen. Just a few decades after Jesus' death, the apostle Paul wrote about these men who came claiming to represent Christ, but **withheld** His very Gospel.

Romans 1:18, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [hold back, suppress] the truth in unrighteousness;"*

Paul had a lot to say about this subtle perversion of the true gospel. Many are surprised to read from their own Bibles that there were indeed other false gospels being preached as early as Paul's day. Let's read his warning to the early NT church at Galatia.

Galatians 1:6-8, *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel** of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."*

About 20 years after Christ's death, Paul pronounced a curse upon anyone who would dare to preach any other gospel than the one true gospel which Jesus preached, and which the apostle Paul continued to preach to the Galatians. Yet, another "gospel" had been preached to the Galatians by false ministers claiming to represent Christ. The true gospel was suppressed not long after Christ completed His ministry. After about A.D. 70 it was no longer proclaimed publicly to the world. History and the Bible show that the true Church of God was forced by persecution to "go underground," holding services secretly, communicating the truth of God privately.

Let's see another, very similar, warning which Paul made to the Corinthian church. This was written in about 60 AD, less than 30 years after our Lord's death.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4, *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, or **another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."*

These false ministers preached about "another Jesus". They preached "another gospel" driven by "another spirit". They preached Jesus all right, and a gospel about him, but Paul goes on to warn the Corinthian Church that these were false messages given by false ministers.

2 Cor. 11:13-15, *"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 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".*

Jesus Christ told us that it is necessary for us to know and believe the true gospel in order to be saved.

Mark 16:15-16, *"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned'."*

Notice Jesus said “He who believes” – believes what? Why the gospel, which He just commanded us – the Church – to go out and preach! But what gospel did He mean when He said “preach The Gospel”? Whatever gospel that is – Jesus said we must believe it in order to be saved – and He said we must go out and preach this good news as well.

Today, we will look at what it was that Jesus really taught, what was the message He was commissioned by His Father to deliver to mankind. We’ll see how vitally important it is that we in the Church really know and understand the gospel and what our part is in continuing Christ’s work of preaching the Gospel to this desperate and deceived world.

This Gospel Of The Kingdom

We saw how Christ warned His fledgling Church to beware of false ministers preaching a false gospel. He went on to tell that as the time for His return to earth approached, world conditions would deteriorate until we would bring ourselves to the point of total destruction.

Matthew 24:21-22, *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”*

But notice the sign that would precede this Great Tribulation at the end of this age.

Matthew 24:14 , *“And **this gospel of the Kingdom** shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.”*

This very gospel that Jesus Christ taught – the Gospel of the Kingdom of God – will be preached by His True Church as a witness to all of the deceived nations of this earth – before His return.

What is The Kingdom of God?

Jesus said we must believe and teach the gospel. He said we must reach out to those people who are suffering from the ignorance of God’s Good News for them. We must equip ourselves to teach them by diligently studying the Bible until we can rightly divide this Word of Truth.

So then, in order to believe the true gospel, in order to preach it to the world and give them hope, we must first come to know everything there is to know about the same gospel Jesus preached. We need to know exactly what we mean by the Gospel of the Kingdom and what we can say to those suffering in this deceived world that will bring them hope.

So let’s backup a bit and take this from the beginning. Before Jesus Christ began preaching the one and only true gospel nineteen and one-half centuries ago, God first sent a special messenger to prepare the way before Him.

The Messenger And His Message

We first read about this messenger in the book of Malachi.

Malachi 3:1 *“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the **messenger of the covenant**, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

Notice that there are two messengers mentioned; one would come first and prepare the way for the messenger of the covenant, here also called the Lord. So who fulfilled this prophecy?

Mark 1:2-4, *“As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”*

John the Baptist did prepare the way for the “messenger of the covenant” And now let’s see exactly what that message was.

Mark 1:14-15, *“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.”*

The New Covenant message is the “gospel” Jesus preached!

The message God sent by Jesus Christ was the “Gospel of the Kingdom of God.” The Kingdom of God is the government of God, which shall rule all nations. But also it is the family of God into which we may be born – the divine family that will become a spiritual nation, ruling all of the nations on earth as a world-ruling government!

Jesus was sent to announce that message – not force men to accept it, believe it, and act upon it. Never did Jesus plead with a single one to be converted. He just announced the good news of the Kingdom of God, and then left it to the Father to call, through that announcement and His Spirit, those whom He would select (John 6:44). Christ did not come then to convert the world! He did not start a “soul-saving” crusade. He came to announce the gospel – the good news – of His coming Kingdom on earth!

Jesus did say it was necessary to repent and believe the gospel He preached. Let’s see the emphasis Jesus placed on the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 4:23, *“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”*

Matthew 5:3-10, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**.
Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**.”*

Note: Because Matthew’s account of Jesus’ ministry was directed to the Jews, he often used the term “Kingdom of Heaven” instead of the “Kingdom of God”. Even to this day, Jewish people avoid writing the word “God” for fear of breaking the commandment to take His name in vain. Both terms refer to the same thing and parallel passages in the other gospel accounts show that they are interchangeable.

Matthew 6:9-13, *“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **Thy kingdom come**. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And*

*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: **For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.***

Matthew 6:33, *“But seek ye first the **kingdom of God**, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

And there are so many more examples of Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God. Many of His parables begin *“The Kingdom of God is like...”* When He sent His disciples out to preach, He instructed them to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, not about Himself.

Luke 9:1-2, *“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach **the kingdom of God**, and to heal the sick.”*

Here in verse 2, we read how Jesus sent the twelve out to “proclaim the Kingdom of God”. And in verse 6, we read that they went out “preaching the gospel”. I hear Protestant ministers quote this passage, but they only mention that the twelve went out and preached the gospel, which they have redefined to only mean “Jesus died for your sins”.

Besides the obvious equating of “proclaiming the Kingdom” with “preaching the gospel”, what those Protestant ministers fail to realize is that the Twelve disciples had no idea about Jesus upcoming death and resurrection, He first mentions it in Luke 9:22, but they still did not understand it, let alone preach it.

Even after His death and resurrection, Jesus had to explain all about this first part of His mission to His disciples. In Luke 24, we find Him meeting two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus and later on, the rest of the disciples at the house in Jerusalem. They still did not understand about His death and resurrection – what the Protestants call “the Gospel”. He had to open their eyes and their minds to understand all the things in the Law and the Writings and the Prophets (what we call the Old Testament) concerning Him.

They knew and preached about the Kingdom of God, but they did **not** teach about Jesus dying for our sins, nor His resurrection. Those things were not known to His disciples at the time they went out preaching the gospel.

But don't we need to believe in the death of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin? Of course! Other scriptures teach that. But at this particular time, Jesus said we must believe Him – believe what He said – believe the gospel message of the Kingdom of God that He proclaimed! The gospel of Jesus Christ is not man's gospel about the person of Christ. It is Christ's gospel – the gospel Jesus preached – the gospel God sent by Him, and therefore it is also called, in Scripture, “The Gospel of God.” The gospel of God is God's gospel – His message – His good news which He sent by Jesus.

John 12:49-50, *“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”*

The Father sent Jesus bearing a special message, which is the good news of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is God's Spokesman – the Word that was made flesh and lived, and taught, on this earth!

John 14:24, *“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.”*

Jesus restated that He was not speaking on His own, but as the Father had instructed Him. This is the Great Plan of God! Of course, the message from God includes the knowledge about our Savior, High Priest and coming King! Of course, it includes the true way of salvation, which the churches of this world do not understand! It also includes knowledge of the location of the territory to be ruled over by the King of the coming Kingdom of God – the fact that this Kingdom will be set up on this earth, NOT in heaven!

But there can be no government without laws, and so the true gospel also must proclaim the law of God, which will bring peace and everything good to those living in the World Tomorrow, and success, happiness and joy to the individual who keeps God's law now.

Matthew 5:17-20, *“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. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*

The true gospel has to do with the nations of today's world, world conditions today, and Christ's reign over all nations in the World Tomorrow!

Before we go on, let's be sure we understand the full meaning of the **Kingdom** of God.

What The Kingdom Of God Really Is

Is the Kingdom of God merely something set up in the hearts and minds of men? In a sense this is true. Consider that a “Kingdom” is simply a “Government.” Since there are few Kings these days perhaps a more modern rendering would read “Government of God” or “Government of Heaven.”

When God calls a person into a relationship with Him, He reveals the necessity for that person to repent (change how they think, not merely feel bad) of his unlawful lifestyle and begin living according to the way God instructs in His Word, the Bible. Once the person is convicted of the fact that his sinful life has him on “death roll,” he will eagerly seek God's forgiveness through His divine grace. He will be baptized as a symbol of his death to his former way of life, have hands laid upon him through which he will receive the holy spirit. God will then govern him through the Holy Spirit, which will empower him to stay a changed person. So in this sense only, the Kingdom of God is set up in his mind and heart.

But even though this changes the person, it does not change the world he lives in. There is still suffering, sickness and death. Notice Jesus' answer when He was asked if He was going to establish the Kingdom during His time as a man on earth. Note also, that the answer He gave was after His crucifixion and resurrection.

Acts 1:6-8, *“And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it AT THIS TIME You are RESTORING THE KINGDOM to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the holy spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

Immediately after saying these things Jesus ascended into heaven as his disciples watched in awe, leaving them with the comfort that He would return again in the future.

Jesus' death and resurrection did not restore the Government of God to the earth. It will not be established in fullness until the King of Kings and Lord of Lords comes in all His glory to take it by force from Satan.

A Satanic Kingdom on Earth

The Bible reveals that Satan and his angels (the demons) attempted to take the very throne of God. They were defeated by Michael, the Archangel and cast down to the Earth (See Revelation 12:7-9). Scripture does not give us the time that this occurred, but it would make sense that Satan rebelled just before or shortly after the Creation, having become jealous of the incredible potential God was offering to mankind.

The angels, including Satan and the demons, are created spiritual beings (Colossians 1:16). They must have been created before the creation of our world and the physical universe, because they sang for joy when they saw it happen (Job 38:4-7).

The Bible also reveals to us that our world leaders are influenced by both angelic and demonic principalities and powers. Even those of us in the Church can be subject to such influence, as Paul warns us about in Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

There is an interesting passage in the book of Daniel that demonstrates this principle of spiritual influence in the worlds governments. Daniel had prayed for understand of a vision he had received earlier. The answer did not come right away and the angel tells Daniel the reason why.

Daniel 10:12-13 (NKJV) Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the **prince of the kingdom of Persia** [a demon] withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the **kings of Persia** [angels].

This brings us to what is surely the most remarkable part of this entire exchange. The Bible here reveals that there are unseen spirit wars going on around us. The "prince of the kingdom of Persia" (verse 13) and the "prince of Greece" (verse 20) are evidently spirit rulers over these empires under the chief of demons, Satan the Devil. Jesus made it clear that Satan is the "prince of this world" (see John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). And within his demonic kingdom are various echelons of power—"forces and authorities and...rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world" (Ephesians 6:12, Contemporary English Version). Mention is even made in Daniel 10:13 of the "kings of Persia" (plural)—evidently demonic sub-kings under the leading prince of Persia, himself subject to Satan. These evil forces were able to impede the divine messenger until he received help from another powerful angel. (Though this was only within the limits that God permitted.)

Expositor's commentary explains it this way: "The powers of evil apparently have the capacity to bring about hindrances and delays [when God allows it], even of the delivery of the answers to believers whose requests God is minded to answer. God's response was immediate, so far as his intention was concerned [as the messenger was dispatched when Daniel's prayerful seeking for help in understanding began]. But 'the prince of the Persian kingdom' (v. 13)—apparently the satanic agent assigned to the sponsorship and control of the Persian realm—put up a determined opposition

to the actual delivery of the divine answer. While God can, of course, override the united resistance of all the forces of [evil] if he chooses to do so, he accords to demons certain limited powers of obstruction and rebellion somewhat like those he allows humans. In both cases the exercise of free will in opposition to the Lord of heaven is permitted by him when he sees fit. But as Job 1:12 and 2:6 indicate, the malignity of Satan is never allowed to go beyond the due limit set by God, who will not allow the believer to be tested beyond his limit (1 Cor 10:13). Verse 13 [of Daniel 10] shows that the angels of God have power to counteract and thwart the agents of the Devil. Here it was the archangel, Michael ('one of the chief princes'), who broke the hindrance put up by the demonic 'king of Persia' and paved the way for the interpreting angel to deliver God's answer to Daniel"

Until Christ returns and puts and end to the Government of Kingdom of Satan, he (Satan) will rule this world from "behind the scenes" using demonic influence. He is now the "Prince" (Greek *Archon*) of this world, controlling the "princes" of Persia, Greece, Russia, China, etc.

Satan's Origin

There are two well-known passages in the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah which we believe describe the origins and fall of Satan. Ezekiel 28 begins by addressing the "Prince of Tyre" (Verse 2). As we read on, it is evident that this is the human ruler of Tyre, because God calls him a man and says he will die (verses 9-10).

However, in Verse 12 the language changes as it begins to describe the "King of Tyre". Ad this is no human being! Notice the description of this angelic being.

Ezekiel 28:12-15 (NKJV) "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the King of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You *were* the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone *was* your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in you."

Even though he was created perfect, at some point Satan became dissatisfied with God and His Plan. He became vain and thought too highly of himself.

Verse 17, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

He began to think he knew better than God and eventually, he sinned by trying to overthrow God and take His throne.

Isaiah 14:12-15 (KJV) "How [Why] art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Hebrew *Heyl*), son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High [He wanted to BE God]. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

This is the only place in scripture where this word **Lucifer** is used. This often-misinterpreted passage has caused much confusion, leading some to conclude that Lucifer is an entirely separate entity from Satan. Others see Jesus referred to as the “*bright and morning star*” in **Revelation 22** and concluded that He and Satan are one and the same being. Some think Lucifer was simply Satan’s name before he sinned and it was changed when he sinned. Actually Satan, while used as a proper name in the Bible, is really more of a title meaning Adversary – the One who opposes God.

The word “Lucifer” is Latin for “Light Bringer”, but a look at the original Hebrew reveals that this is probably not what was intended in this passage. Unfortunately, some Bibles translate the phrase equally as misleadingly by using “O shining star” instead of “Lucifer”. The actual Hebrew word **heyel** does not mean “star” but it can mean “bright or shining”. If the intended meaning was “star”, the common Hebrew word for star, **kochob** {ko-kawb} would more likely have been used. It’s primitive root, **halal** can mean “to praise” (as in singing Hallelujah), but it can also mean “to be boastful.”

This gives us some insight into the character of Satan. Notice the number of times the word “I” is used when speaking of Satan - *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne, I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High*. This guy is pretty stuck on himself.

The phrase, “*son of morning*” should read “*son of the dawning*”, as in “the earliest” or “the first” – God created the angels at the dawn of all of His creation. A more accurate English translation for **Isaiah 14:12** might read, “***O boastful son from the beginning***”, which more accurately describes this rebel angel who opposed God and was cast from the heavens. Satan now reigns on the throne of this earth.

The Two Trees - Two Ways of Life

God made a beautiful garden paradise called Eden for man, made in the very image and likeness of God. In Eden, God placed two significant trees, the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He then gave the first humans the choice of submitting to His Government or taking to themselves the knowledge of good and evil - to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. God-reliance on the one hand and Self-reliance on the other. In effect, in the garden, God set before them Life and Death, but counseled them to choose life. Notice also, that in order that they may be tested, God even allowed the fallen archangel Satan to enter in to tempt them.

Through Adam, man was given the opportunity to unseat Satan from his Earthly throne and restore the Kingdom of God on the Earth. But he would have to refuse the fruit of the forbidden Tree and eat of the Tree of Life. Adam would have to say “No!” to the Devil and “Yes!” to God. Perhaps Satan knew it would be much more difficult for Adam to refuse his wife, Eve, since he first deceived her and used her to entice her husband.

Adam failed, and thus the Kingdom of Satan would prevail upon the Earth until the “promised Seed,” which is Jesus, who will reclaim the throne at His second coming (Genesis 3; Romans 16:20; 1 Cor. 15). Because of this man must die once, endure terrible wars and sufferings from the effects of deciding right and wrong for himself, and see the wonderful blessings removed and replaced by curses – including those on the animal kingdom and the land itself. (Genesis 3)

This is still Satan's kingdom. That is why there are wars and droughts and famines and diseases. That is why we see religious confusion everywhere we look. Satan indeed has deceived the whole world. But when Jesus returns, all of that will change.

The real good news concerning the Kingdom of God is that even though the first man, Adam failed, the second Adam, (Jesus) succeeded, and has qualified to remove Satan from the Earth's throne. Let's see more about this coming Kingdom and its King – Jesus the Christ!

Establishing God's Kingdom

The Bible speaks of successive world-ruling kingdoms. The first was the Chaldean Empire (often called "Babylon"). God inspired the prophet Daniel to say to Nebuchadnezzar, its king, "...the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (Dan. 2:37).

Daniel 2:37, *"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory."*

There also were other kingdoms in the course of history occupying lesser territories. One was the Kingdom of Israel – the family of the patriarch Israel grown into a nation and later ruled by kings. The Kingdom of Israel was actually a type or forerunner of the coming Kingdom of God which will be composed of Spirit-born children of God – the family of God organized into a governing kingdom. The Kingdom of God will be dual:

1) A KINGDOM. As a kingdom it will be composed of **four** things: a) a **king** ruling over b) **subjects** within c) a definite **territory** with d) **laws** and an organized system of administering them.

2) A FAMILY. The family of God into which humans may be born is a governing or ruling family. It will have jurisdiction over all nations of the earth! The prophet Daniel, who lived nearly 600 years before Christ, knew that the Kingdom of God was to be an actual government ruling over literal people on the earth because God revealed this knowledge to him.

Through this dream God was revealing to this world-ruling human king that there is a God in heaven – that God is Supreme Ruler over all nations, governments and kings – that God rules the universe! Although during the past 6,000 years God has left the nations generally to their own devices, God was giving Nebuchadnezzar a special opportunity to accept His rule. The main purpose of this dream, as we shall see, was to reveal God's government – the fact that God rules and the truth of the coming Kingdom of God – the one and only true gospel of Jesus Christ. And, secondly, to reveal – preserved in writing for us today – what is to happen "in the latter days" or end time.

The interpretation of the dream goes on to show that throughout history, there would be a succession of world-ruling empires until the end-time, when a miraculous event would occur.

Daniel 2:44-45, *"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."*

Who or what does this miraculous stone cut out without hands symbolize?

1 Peter 2:6-8, *"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on him shall not be confounded. Unto*

you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.” Peter is quoting from two OT scriptures, Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14, both referring to Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4, *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”*

All of those OT references to the ROCK refer to Christ – “the Rock of Ages”, “the Rock of Israel”, “God is my Rock”, etc.

Ephesians 2:20, *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”* Jesus Christ, who spoke to the prophets of old is the cornerstone of our faith, our Rock.

Matthew 21:42, *“Jesus says unto them, Did you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?”*

Jesus is that rock or stone cut out without hands (not by human efforts). And in Daniel we saw that this stone broke apart all of the other kingdoms that came before. Let's see how Christ fulfills this prophecy exactly.

Revelation 11:15, *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”*

Will Jesus rule alone? Let's notice what we find taught to us in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:1, *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”* **Verses 5-6**, *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

The servants of God are His Church – those who are led by His Holy Spirit. But notice **where** we are to reign...

Revelation 5:10, *“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*

It is on the earth, not in heaven, that the saints of God are to reign. That's where God's Kingdom will be – at least until the rest of the dead are resurrected. You see, the Bible teaches that only the church will be resurrected at Christ's second coming. The rest will not live again until the end of the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ and His saints.

Revelation 20:4-6, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”*

This is the ruling Family of God – the Kingdom of God. Christ will return to earth to set up the Kingdom of God with Headquarters in Jerusalem. He is going to set up an eternal Kingdom that shall break in pieces and utterly consume all of the end-time kingdoms!

The plain truth of the Bible reveals that the “Kingdom of God” is to be a literal government composed of **spirit** rulers who shall rule over all nations on earth. It is to take over the governments of the nations at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Christ will become the “King of kings,” and He will rule by the law of God. This is the very good news or “Gospel of the Kingdom of God” which Jesus preached!

But how does one become a part of that Kingdom? We’ve talked about the Family of God and how those members will be spirit-born rulers along with Jesus Christ. How does that work? When will it occur? Is the Church NOW the Kingdom of God?

To Be “Born” Into God's Kingdom!

Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees occupying an office of authority over the Jews during Jesus' day, came under the cloak of darkness to see Jesus. He admitted that he and the other religious leaders knew Jesus was a teacher sent from God.

John 3:1-2, *“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”*

Jesus proceeded to reveal to Nicodemus a vital truth we need to understand about the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Notice what Jesus told Nicodemus must happen to an individual before he can “see” [realize, inherit] the Kingdom of God.

John 3:3, *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

Now there has been much confusion about the term “born again”. **COMMENT:** The Kingdom of God is something those not born again simply cannot see. Therefore a church on earth could not be the Kingdom of God as some have erroneously assumed, because you can see a church!

A person must be born of the Spirit before he can enter into the Kingdom of God.

Verse 5, *“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

What will he be composed of when “born again”—when we are born of the Spirit of God?

Verse 6, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”*

We will be spirit. Brethren, none of us are now spirit – so none of us are yet “born again.” Notice what it will be like to be born of the Spirit.

John 3:7-8 NKJV, *“Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*

We have been given a down payment – an earnest as the Bible calls it – of the Spirit. We’re not yet composed of Spirit, but we have a portion of God’s Holy Spirit living in us.

2 Corinthians 1:22, *“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [downpayment or deposit] of the Spirit in our hearts.”*

2 Corinthians 5:1-5, *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”*

This earthly “house” is of course our mortal fleshly body. We await our change to an immortal, spirit body – like the one Jesus Christ now has.

Ephesians 1:13-14, *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”*

When will this change take place? At the moment of our death? Or perhaps later...

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, *“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

This resurrection is of the “dead in Christ” that is – the Church. This takes place at the return of Jesus Christ – at the last trumpet. Remember we read in **Revelation 11:15** the seventh angel sounded his trumpet and the announcement that the *kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord* We’ve seen that He and His saints – the Church – will reign on this earth. And we have already seen that a resurrection will not take place for the rest of the dead until that 1000-year reign is complete.

So how does this change take place? How are we to be born again, born from above, or born of the Spirit? What happens to us in the resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:35-54, “*But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*”

The patriarch Job knew about the resurrection. Notice what he wrote here in **Job 14**:

Job 14:14-15, “*If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*”

God will have a desire for the work of His hands. He is not going to let any man die without having the opportunity to know Him and to come into the glorious Kingdom of His Family. But now is not the time that God is trying to save humanity. Right now, God is only working with those few Jesus called “the little flock” – His Church

So we see that the Kingdom of God is something that can be entered into, but only by a resurrection to spirit life. Only those who are thus “born again” can enter into it. We who are born of the flesh are flesh – just mortal flesh and blood. We were born that way. But it is possible for us to be born again – this time not as a mortal, flesh and blood baby, but born of the very Spirit of God. Then we shall be spirit – wholly composed of spirit as God is! Notice!

1 John 3:1-2, “*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*”

We are now, still only flesh and blood, but when we are resurrected, we will have glorified spirit bodies like our elder brother Jesus Christ. We will be like Him and finally be able to see Him as He truly is! Look at these other exciting scriptures:

Psalms 17:15 ^(AFV) As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness.

Isaiah 60:1-2 ^(AFV) Arise, shine; for your light has come, and **the glory of the LORD has risen upon you**, For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness [the] people; but the LORD shall arise upon you, and **His glory shall be seen upon you**.

God's own glory will be seen on us – the Church - by those rebellious peoples and nations of this world who did not submit to the rule and authority of the government of God. Notice how Peter puts it:

2 Peter 1:4 ^(AFV) Through which He has given to us the greatest and [most] precious promises, that through these you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption [that is] in [the] world through lust.

Partakers of the “Divine Nature” – no longer possessing carnal human nature – but now transformed into spirit beings with God's divine nature. The astounding truth of the Bible is that God is reproducing Himself! God created mortal man in His own image so that we may become impregnated – begotten – by the Spirit of God. This earnest of the Spirit then causes us to gradually mature spiritually until, by a resurrection, we may be born of God – “born again” – as immortal, spirit-composed persons in the Kingdom or family of God!

The Kingdom of God is something no human, born of flesh and blood, can enter or inherit. It is through the resurrection of those begotten by the Spirit of God during this mortal life, that this mortal will put on immortality and, like God, become immortal, incorruptible – literally BORN of God's Spirit into the very God family! That is how we shall enter into the Kingdom of God. And that truly is **Good News!**

When God's Kingdom comes, in all of its fullness, then...

Revelation 21:3-4 ^(AFV) ... I heard a great voice from heaven say, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall not be any more death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things have passed away."

Thank you, Father – may Your Kingdom come soon!