

## The Kingdom of God

No. 171

### Introduction.

- I. One of the most significant subjects of the Bible, but one of the least understood is the kingdom of God.
- II. I would like for us to make a study of "The Kingdom of God."
  - A. This is a subject that every person needs to understand.
  - B. In this lesson there are six facts I would like to emphasize about God's kingdom.
    - I. **Kingdom Of God Is The Church** - The first fact is that the kingdom of God is the church.
      - A. They are not two distinct entities or organizations as is thought by many religious people. Both the "church" and the "kingdom" refer to God's people - the saved.
      - B. This is proven by Jesus' statement at Caesarea Philippi. (Matt. 16:18, 19).
        1. Observe Jesus said to Peter, "I will build my church" and "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."
        2. He used the words "church" and "kingdom of heaven" interchangeably to refer to the people of God.
      - C. That the "kingdom" and the "church" are the same is proven by **the Lord's supper**.
        1. After Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said He would not eat the Lord's supper again until He ate it with His disciples in the kingdom. (Matt. 26:29).
        2. Since the Lord's supper was later observed in the worship of the church (1 Cor. 11:20-26; Acts 20:7), we know they are the same.
      - D. We know they are the same since Christ is **King of the kingdom** and the **head of the church**. (Rev. 19:16; Matt. 28:18; Col.1:13, 18).
      - E. We also know them to be the same since Christ is the Savior of the church and the kingdom. (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor.15:24).
    - II. **Time Kingdom Was Established** - The second fact I would like to emphasize is the time the kingdom was established.
      - A. In the world today there is a great deal of misunderstanding concerning the establishment of the kingdom.
        1. There are some who maintain the kingdom was **established in 1914**.
        2. There are still others who maintain the **kingdom is to come in the future**.

3. Let's carefully study the scriptures to see what they say on this subject.

B. In Daniel the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter we find that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, commanded the wise men be brought to him. He wanted them to reveal his dream and the meaning of it. When the wise men were unable to do this, he commanded that they be destroyed. Daniel, hearing about this, made an appointment with the king to show him the dream and the interpretation.

1. At the appointed time Daniel came to the king and revealed his dream. (Dan. 2:31-35).

**DAN 2:31 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

2. After Daniel revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he proceeded to give him the interpretation of it. (Dan. 2:37-40, 44).

**DAN 2:37 "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. 39 "And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. 40 "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. 44 "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.**

a. Daniel affirmed **the image** Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream represented 4 world empires and the "stone" represented the kingdom of God that would be established during the days of the 4<sup>th</sup> empire. (Dan. 2:44).

b. Daniel also affirmed that the Babylonian kingdom was the first of these 4 empires.

1) In **Daniel 8:20, 21** Daniel identified the second kingdom as the Medo-Persian empire and the third kingdom as the Grecian empire.

2) History records that the fourth kingdom was the Roman empire which lasted from 63 B.C. to 476 A.D.. Since the Roman empire was destroyed in 476 A.D., it means that the kingdom of God would be established no later than that time.

C. **During the days of the Roman empire**, a little more than 600 years after Daniel made this prophecy, John the Baptist and Christ began to preach the kingdom of God (the kingdom of heaven) was drawing near.

1. **John** cried out in the wilderness. (Matt. 3:2).
2. **Jesus** also preached this message. He said shortly after He began His ministry. (Matt. 4:17).
3. Jesus selected 12 apostles and He command them to preach. (Matt. 10:7). John, Christ and the apostles all said the kingdom was nigh. They did not say the kingdom would come in the distant future.
4. **Christ** also declared. (Mk. 9:1).
  - a. Christ revealed two important facts in this verse about the establishment of the kingdom. There would be some of them standing by who would see the kingdom come they would see it come with power.
  - b. Unless we are ready to contend there are 2,000 year old men walking around, we must admit that the kingdom has already been established.
4. Just before Christ's ascension into heaven, His disciples asked Him. (Acts 1:6).
  - a. Christ replied. (Acts 1:7, 8).
  - b. Again Jesus affirmed the disciples would receive power when the kingdom was come.
- D. These promises were fulfilled a few days later on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:4).
  1. Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, began to preach to the Jews and charged them with putting Christ to death. After he made this charge, he said. (Acts 2:32-36).

**ACT 2:32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord,' Sit at My right hand, 35 Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet. "' 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified."**

- a. Peter declared that Jesus was then both Lord and Christ and that He was exalted at the right hand of God.
- b. The kingdom was then established on the 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. This was approximately 33 A.D..
2. From this day forward the kingdom is always preached as being present. (Acts 8:1, 12; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9).
3. Another passage that proves the kingdom has been established is **1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.**
  - a. Paul affirmed in these verses that Christ must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. This means that as long as death exists in the world that Christ is reigning at the right hand of God.

- b. This passage is indisputable, undeniable proof that the kingdom of God has already been established. The only way one could possibly say the kingdom has not been established is to deny the reality of death in the world! No intelligent person would do that! No intelligent person would believe such! There is real and so is the presence of the kingdom.

III. **The Nature Of The Kingdom** - The third fact I would like to emphasize in the nature of the kingdom.

- A. The kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom as the Jews of Christ's day falsely supposed. They thought the Messiah would re-establish David's kingdom and reign in Jerusalem on his throne. Even the apostles were under this erroneous impression while Jesus was on the earth. (Acts 1:6).
- B. Jesus did not come, however, to establish a material, physical kingdom.
  - 1. He came to **establish a spiritual kingdom**. (Jn. 18:36a; Lk. 17:21b).
  - 2. Jesus emphasized the kingdom is spiritual and cannot be seen with the naked eye. The kingdom is the rule of God in the hearts of men.
  - 3. The kingdom grows when men are converted to Christ and let Him rule in their hearts.

IV. **The Growth Of The Kingdom** - The fourth fact I would like to emphasize is the growth of the kingdom.

- A. Daniel, prophesied that **the stone**, the kingdom of God, would grow and become "a great mountain" that would fill the whole earth. (Dan. 2:35).
- B. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is **like a grain of mustard seed**. Even though it is a very small seed, it becomes a tree and the birds lodge in its branches. (Matt. 13:31, 32).
- C. Both Daniel and Christ were emphasizing that the church would have a small beginning but would experience phenomenal growth. This prophecy has certainly come true. The kingdom of heaven has grown from a few to millions, and is still growing.

V. **Duration And Future Of The Kingdom** - The fifth fact I would like to emphasize is the duration and future of the kingdom.

- A. Daniel said that in the days of those kings the God of heaven would set up an eternal kingdom that would never be destroyed. (Dan. 2:44).
  - 1. Also Matt. 16:18; Luke 1:33; 2 Peter 1:11.
  - 2. These scriptures and many others declare that the kingdom of God is eternal. It shall never be destroyed. It shall exist until Jesus comes again and even then shall not cease. At that time Jesus shall turn the kingdom back to the Father and its citizens shall reign forever in heaven with God. (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

**1CO 15:24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in**

**subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.**

B. Some object to the eternity of the kingdom by saying there are over 1500 years since the time of Christ that the kingdom is not recorded in the annals of history. It is true that there are over 1500 years in which we cannot find the kingdom in history, but this does not prove the kingdom is not eternal for three reasons.

1. First, historians only record the **things they deem significant**. It is possible the kingdom could have existed during this time and historians did not deem it significant enough to write about it.

2. Second, it is possible that historians **did not know about it**.

a. The church of kingdom experienced much persecution and went into hiding.

b. Historians may not have known about it or **suppressed knowledge of it** for a variety of reason.

3. Third, the **kingdom includes both the living and the dead**. Even if it could be proven that the kingdom did not exist on earth (which it cannot), it would not mean the kingdom had ceased to exist. Christ would still be reigning over the millions of departed Christians who exist in Paradise. The kingdom is composed of both the living and the dead.

VI. **How To Enter The Great Kingdom Of God** - The sixth fact I would like to emphasize is how to enter the great kingdom of God.

A. **Jesus** said. (Jn. 3:5).

B. Jesus affirmed that one must be born of water and the Spirit to enter God's kingdom. This means that one must believe the message of the Spirit (the gospel) and be baptized in order to be born again and to become a part of God's great and wonderful kingdom.

## **Conclusion.**

I. Would you like to be a part of God's kingdom? Would you like to enjoy God's bountiful blessings?

II. If so, you are invited to come and give your life to Jesus as we stand and sing the song of invitation.

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