

Sovereignty of Deity

**Walking In Submission To The
King & Lord Of The Galaxies**

DICKSON

Sovereignty Of Deity

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Preface

The material of this book was first published in 1987 as a programmed course for the International Bible Institute. Since the first publication, it has been distributed in printed form, through the Internet and dvd formats, to over 700,000 recipients.

Because the material was first written for programmed education, many of the key points were of necessity repeated throughout lessons of the study. This will explain why there is some redundancy of the material in the present format. This present edition was rewritten in order to extract as much of the redundancy as possible, though some repetition of principal thoughts remain in order to emphasize very important concepts. We pray that the reader will not become frustrated with the repetitious style of accentuating key concepts with which we now present the material in this new narrative.

The author has given several years to study and distributing similar themes to that which is set forth in this book. Because of some unfortunate reactionary theology that was born out of many decades of debate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a world view concerning the limited rule and reign of Christ, the Son of God, was adopted. It is the prayer of the author that in some way this book will challenge students of the Bible to research again the present reign of Jesus over all that was created in the beginning. Our understanding of the reign of Christ will determine our world view, and thus, our world view will be the foundation upon which we interpret the present heavenly ministry of Christ.

We live in a world of religionists where Christianity is viewed to be just another religion among many. The unbelieving secular world has considered Christianity to be just another option among many faiths. In an effort to avoid conflict between some faiths, compromises have been made by some to develop a "Christianity" that appeals to a

world that has long forgotten the authority of the word of God. This has happened in some regions in reference to the conflict between Christianity and Islam. The result has been a religion called "Chrislam." Though the dedicated Christian reader will be somewhat startled by such a compromise, the effort to harmonize Christ as an acceptable prophet among Muslims is an effort on the part of some to deny that Christ is not who He now is. Because of the efforts of some to personalize Christ simply as a great prophet of yesteryear, He has been dethroned to a prophet no greater than Muhammad.

It is a general feeling throughout the world to view Jesus as only a great prophet of old with whom one can have a personal relationship. To view this "personal Savior" as God who will eventually judge the unbeliever with a fiery destruction from His presence when He comes again, is repugnant to some who pose themselves to be His disciples. The reason why the subject of this book is so important is that we must exalt the Son of God as He is. The "meek and mild" Jesus with whom some seek to arbitrate and compromise law, is God, the Son, who is now reigning with control over the galaxies of endless space.

It is within the scope of this book to thoroughly exalt Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to who He truly is and what He truly does in reference to His relationship with the universe. This is the God we seek to proclaim to the world. He is the God with whom every person must have an obedient relationship before He comes again. Since Jesus is now who He said He was, then that knowledge should stir fear in the hearts of those who would compromise or weaken His authority over all things. It is our prayer that this book will aid in keeping Jesus on the throne in heaven and in our hearts.

INTRODUCTION

God is eternal and omnipotent. All that exists originates from Him, and thus is under His control. All that exists has come into existence by His power and for the purpose of accomplishing His eternal plan of redemption.

From heavenly dwelling, God, the Father, reigned as king and head over all things until the predestined Son of God accomplished the eternal plan of God while on earth. After the redemption plan was enacted, the Son was seated at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places. He was seated there in order to reign over all those who would make a decision to submit, first to His sovereign rule from heaven, and then to His eternal plan of redemption.

Jesus, the Son of God, presently has sovereignty over all that is in the created physical world. He has sovereignty over all the created spirit world. He will reign until He has abolished the last enemy, physical death. In every way, the epistles of the New Testament magnify the present sovereign reign of Jesus over all things.

Understanding the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom reign of Jesus helps us understand the present ministry of Jesus as

King of kings. When we understand the fulfillment of all prophecies in reference to the reign of Jesus, then we can understand the magnitude of His reign over all things.

It is essential to understand the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah as King of kings and Lord of lords. By accepting the fulfillment of these prophecies as they are explained in the New Testament, we can appreciate the extent of Jesus' present reign. We can also guard ourselves from believing some of the erroneous imaginations of men today who have conjured up a host of fictional beliefs concerning what will happen when Jesus comes again.

If we accept the totality of Jesus' present reign, then we will be better prepared to accept Jesus as He is when He comes again to take us into a new heavens and earth, wherein dwells righteousness. We will not be disappointed by some earthly schemes that men have invented to satisfy their own earthly desires to rule over their fellow man. When Jesus comes again, it will be a time of rejoicing when we witness all things being brought under His control.

Chapter 1

LIMITED DEFINITIONS

In any study of the New Testament, the kingship of Jesus must always be kept clearly in mind. His present sovereignty over all that exists must be magnified through our servanthood to His lordship. The reason for this is that there are too many theories today that minimize the present reign of Jesus over all that exists.

We live in a world of religious people who have conceived numerous “positions” of Jesus in His present state of reign. Most of the unbelieving world simply ignores the fact that Jesus is now king and head over all things. Many in the religious world have simply failed to recognize the totality of His authority in all matters of faith. Regardless of the endless speculations of men, the biblical proclamations of the present universal sovereignty of Jesus over all things is a clearly stated biblical truth. He is over what is seen and what is not seen. Nothing lies outside His control except the totality of God.

Our understanding of the galactic reign of Jesus influences our understanding of many passages in the New Testament. In fact, if one does not understand the extent of the kingdom reign of Jesus, then it is likely he will misunderstand most of the passages concerning Jesus’ authority over all things. Therefore, by way of introduction, the key words that are defined in this chapter are set forth in order

to lay the foundation for our discussion of the nature of Jesus’ present reign.

Words communicate concepts in personal relationships. They also communicate the revelation of God to us through the Bible. The biblical interpreter must be cautious about the use of earthly words that are used to explain those things that are beyond this world. We would certainly not want to limit our understanding of God to the definitions of our words that we use to explain our relationships with one another. In other words, **we would not limit God to the limits of our dictionary.**

When the Holy Spirit used our dictionary in order to reveal to us that which is beyond this world, He knew the limitations of the definitions of the words of our dictionary. We must also understand that our words are limited in defining God and His work. Realizing this is critical when venturing into any study concerning God and His relationship with that which He created

Key words are used in a study of the reign of Deity that must be understood in the context of the kingdom reign of Jesus. Therefore, the Bible must be our final dictionary to define the words that the Spirit used to define the sovereignty of Deity. We will use some words that are commonly used when discussing this subject. However, in using these words, we want to alert the reader that

our understanding of these words is based on our understanding of the sovereignty of Jesus as His sovereignty is defined in the Bible.

Our understanding of the sovereignty of Jesus will always be limited simply because we are seeking to understand His kingdom from the perspective of words that we use in this world. If we were on the other side of the veil of death, then we might have a different understanding. But for now, we must simply caution ourselves to look beyond the confines of this world in order to understand that which is not of this world, that is, the kingdom reign of Jesus.

We must understand, therefore, that it was difficult for the Holy Spirit to communicate heavenly concepts to man by using the earthly words of man. Words are inventions of human communication that find their definition in human relationships of this world, and the material world itself. However, when we are discussing things that are not of this world, the Holy Spirit's use of man's words falls far short of expressing completely that which is beyond this world.

When the Spirit sought to reveal that which is beyond this world, He had to use metaphors. Metaphors are words that express concepts of something that is beyond the literal experience of man. A word or phrase that is used as a metaphor expresses something that is greater than the literal or earthly origin of the metaphor. Cautious students, therefore, must always be on the lookout for metaphors when studying the subject of the kingdom reign of Deity and Deity's rela-

tionship with the material world.

The following concepts are communicated to us through words that are sometimes difficult to understand. They are often difficult because we too often want to place our human understanding on words and phrases when they are used in reference to Deity. Since we are dealing with God and His relationship with that which He created, then we must be cautious about limiting God to our definitions of the words that originate from our dictionary.

A. Kingdom:

The English word "kingdom" is used in the English Bible to translate both Hebrew and Greek words that refer to God's sovereignty over all things. In the context of sovereignty, the English word "kingdom" cannot convey the full reality of the galactic authority of God as the Creator. For example, when we use the word "kingdom" in reference to things of this world, we usually picture in our minds a physical territory that has definite geographical boundaries. We think of nations and governments. We look at a map and see borders drawn that represent the extent of the territory of these world kingdoms.

Unfortunately, we often read this understanding into the Bible when studying the concept of the kingdom of God. Because there is no earthly word that can fully describe the kingdom relationship of God with this world, or His work in this world, then we must assume that the Holy Spirit is using many of our words in a

metaphorical sense when He sought to define the work of God in the material world. In the context of the kingdom of Deity over all things, we must assume that the word “kingdom” is used in a metaphorical sense.

When we speak of the kingdom of God, we are not thinking about physical territories and boundaries. We should be thinking about the universe and all that was created. In other words, the universe, or all creation, is in the realm of the kingdom of God. God does not reign over “territory” as we would literally define this word from our point of view of this world.

It is difficult to use our word “territory” to refer to the outer “limits” of space, if there are any limits. But God is omnipresent, and thus, He is beyond the limits of territory. His realm of reign is not in the sense of a nation here on earth. His territory is not confined to a certain realm of space. His territory is not of this world because His kingdom is not of this world. This was the meaning that Jesus wanted to communicate to Pilate when He said, “*My kingdom is not of this world*” (Jn 18:36). Therefore, when we think of the kingdom of God, **we must think of a spiritual realm, not the limitations of a geographical realm of reign.**

It is crucial in this study, therefore, to understand that the word “kingdom” is used in a **metaphorical** sense in reference to the relationship that God maintains with His creation. This is true because there is no earthly word that can adequately explain the relationship of

Deity with creation.

In the case of Deity’s relationship with creation, we are attempting to define something that is beyond our human experiences of this world. In order to communicate the work and relationship of God with His creation, the Holy Spirit metaphorically used words of our interpersonal relationships in order to give us a **limited** understanding of that which is beyond our experience.

There are five Hebrew words and one Greek word (*basileia*) that are translated with the word “kingdom” in the Bible. Other English translations of the Hebrew and Greek words that are often translated “kingdom” would be “sovereignty,” “kingdom reign,” or simply, “reign.” The Hebrew word *malkuth* emphasizes rank, authority and sovereignty that is exercised by a king. The word “sovereignty” probably best expresses the meaning of both Hebrew and Greek words that are used in contexts where God’s relationship and work with His creation are under consideration. The principle meaning of these contexts is the idea that all physical and spiritual things are subject to the control of the King. This would include control over angels, Satan, demons, world governments, the people of God, and the universe.

B. Sovereignty:

When we use the word “kingdom” we must also be careful not to translate into the Scriptures a limited earthly sense of the rule of Deity. The word “sovereign,” instead of kingdom, would prob-

ably be a better word. However, we realize that any earthly word does not fully interpret the nature of Deity reigning over all things. For example, when we talk of an earthly king we mean that there is a man who controls a group of people in a specific area. The king rules over the territory of his domain. However, when we talk of the kingly reign of Deity, we are discussing something that is far beyond the ability of man to do. God created all things, and thus, it is inherent in the fact that He is Creator that He reigns as sovereign over that which He created (Cl 1:16).

The sovereignty of Deity also includes concepts of creation and upholding all creation by the word of His power (Hb 1:3). No earthly king has such power. Therefore, the word “king,” to some extent, must be understood metaphorically when used in reference to God. God, the Father, and God, the Son, are sovereign kings over all things. But their sovereignty is far greater than that of any earthly king. Their sovereign reign is greater than our earthly understanding and definition of the word “king” as it is used in reference to earthly kings.

C. Kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven:

In the New Testament we often read the phrases “kingdom of heaven” or “kingdom of God.” Matthew seems to emphasize the term “kingdom of heaven.” Mark, on the other hand, uses the phrase “kingdom of God.” Both phrases mean something that is slightly

different. Both phrases refer to **origin**. The kingdom or sovereignty of God **originates** from heaven because the King is in heaven. The **originator** is God who is in heaven. “Kingdom of God,” therefore, emphasizes **from whom** and “kingdom of heaven” originates.

D. Kingship:

Though not a word that is used in the Bible, the word “kingship” is our term that is used in this book to express the governmental reign of Deity in the heavenly realm over all that exists in the created world. Deity reigns by rule of heavenly laws. There are moral laws that are applicable to the heavenly subjects (angels, demons, and Satan). There are physical laws that are applicable only to earthly subjects of the material world. These laws would be included in statements as Deuteronomy 5:1-3 (the law for Israel in the Old Testament), Hebrews 1:1 (the law of the patriarchs and those Gentiles who lived parallel with the nation of Israel), and Hebrews 1:2 (the law for all mankind after Christ). God’s kingship over that which He has created refers to His right to rule through law because He is the Creator. God is not an appointed king. He is not a king by inheritance. The fact that He is Creator assumes that He reigns over that which He created, and thus, as King over all, He has the right to determine law for everything.

E. Headship:

The physical head of a man **controls** his body. The head is the center of reference to all that the body does. In the Bible, the word “head” is used as a metaphor to express the control of Deity over creation because God is the center of reference from which all things are upheld (See Ep 1:20-23; Hb 1:3).

We use the word “headship” to refer to the one who has control over something. Kingship and sovereignty refer to legislative rule by law. Headship refers to control by power and authority. In other words, the things that have been created are under the control of God. God is the center of reference to their continued existence. All things are upheld by the authority of God’s power (Hb 1:3).

F. Lordship:

The term “lordship” refers to a master-servant relationship between God and man (See Rm 6:16-18). Paul expressed this relationship in Galatians 2:20:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Jesus is now the Lord over all men (1 Tm 6:15). When one submits to His lordship, then he has submitted himself to obey the commandments of his Lord (Jn 14:15; 15:14). However, if one does not submit to the lordship of Jesus, this does not mean that Jesus is not his Lord. We must remember that God’s relationship in

the areas of kingship, headship and lordship are not determined by the will of man. God will continue to carry out the function of His work and relationship with the created world regardless of the rebellion of man, angels and Satan.

G. Forever and everlasting

The Hebrew and Greek words that are translated “everlasting” and “forever” are often difficult to define in reference to the work of God, and how they are used in the context of Scripture. Time without end is often assumed in the use of the English words that are used to translate the Hebrew and Greek words. This is one meaning that is conveyed in certain contexts by both Hebrew and Greek words. However, this is a limited understanding of how the words were used in the Scriptures to define some key concepts. This is especially true in reference to the function of Deity over the finite world.

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word *olam* is used many times with emphasis on **quality of existence** rather than time without end. For example, the Passover was an “everlasting” (*olam*) ordinance (Ex 12:24). Aaron’s priesthood (Ex 4:15; 29:9; Lv 3:17), Caleb’s inheritance (Ja 14:9), Solomon’s temple (1 Kg 8:12,13), God’s covenant with Israel (Lv 24:8), and Gehazi’s leprosy (2 Kg 5:27) were all “everlasting.” However, these “everlasting” things were never meant by God to go on without end. Therefore, the meaning of everlasting in reference to the above was not used to convey time

without end. The Passover was not intended to go on without end. Caleb's inheritance was never intended to be in his family without end. Reference in these contexts, and similar contexts, was to **surety** or **certainty** of their existence throughout **their intended time of duration**.

God established an everlasting covenant with Israel. He did not mean that this covenant would exist without end, for He had promised a new covenant to come in the future of Israel (Jr 31:31-34). God simply meant that His Sinai covenant was

sure and steadfast until it fulfilled its purpose. It would not be terminated until its intended time of duration had been completed.

As we study kingdom prophecies, we must keep in mind that the kingdom reign of Deity has existed ever since there was something over which God could reign. However, in reference to man, God wants us to understand that His kingdom relationship is sure and certain. His kingdom is not subject to the terminations that are always in the existence of earthly kingdoms.

Chapter 2

DEFINITIONS OF KINGDOMS

The word "kingdom" in reference to Deity ruling in the affairs of man is used five ways in the Bible. In other words, there were/are five different kingdom relationships or "sovereignities" of God in His relationship with creation.

1. The **universal kingdom of Deity** that existed before the ascension of Jesus over which the Father was King and head.
2. The chosen **Israelite kingdom** before the ascension of Jesus over which the Father was King and head.
3. The **universal kingdom of the Son** that now exists after the ascension over which Jesus is King and head.
4. The chosen **church as a manifestation of kingdom reign** after the ascension over which the Son is now King and head.
5. The **heavenly kingdom** to come when

God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will exercise kingship.

It is necessary to clearly make a distinction concerning these five sovereignties (kingdom reigns) of Deity. Keep in mind that the metaphorical use of the word "kingdom" or "sovereignty" are the best words of our dictionary that the Holy Spirit could use to explain something that is beyond our human experience. Deity's relationship with this material world is far different and beyond anything we have experienced in this world. Human words of communication cannot communicate completely to us that which is beyond our empirical experience.

In the accompanying chart notice that the universal sovereignty of the Father over all created things began when all things were created. His reign began

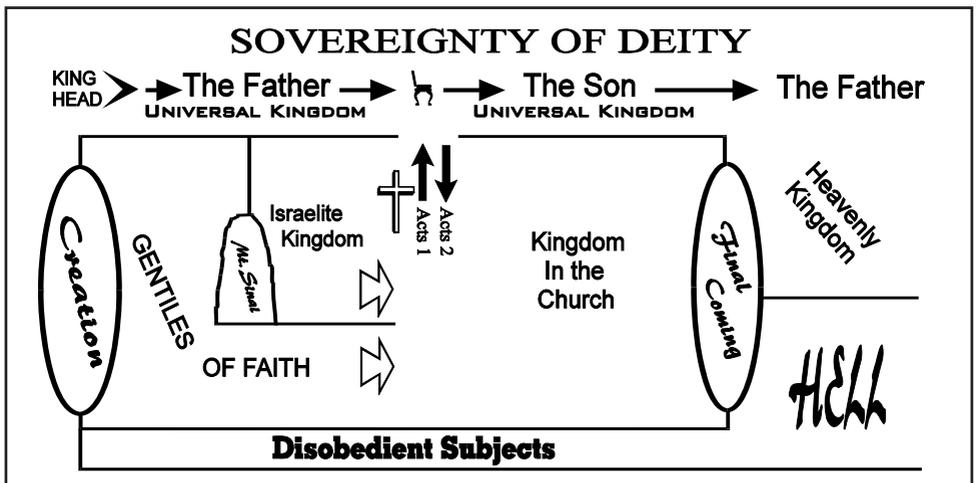
at this time because His sovereignty was inherent in His power to create. His sovereignty over the Israelite kingdom began when He created a covenant relationship with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The universal kingdom of the Son over all creation began when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in Acts 1. The church began in Acts 2 when men and women first responded to the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus. Kingdom reign will be returned to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when Jesus destroys the last enemy, that is, death. This will take place at the final coming of Jesus when Jesus will deliver up to the Father all kingdom reign. The heavenly kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will then begin and continue throughout eternity.

The ascension of the Son to the right hand of the Father to be seated on the throne of David was the time of transition from the Father's universal sovereignty to the universal sovereignty of the Son. This point of change is taken from

Daniel 7:13,14, which prophecy pictures Jesus receiving His dominion, glory and kingdom reign at the time of the ascension. (We will explain in detail all the preceding points throughout the remainder of this book.)

It must be affirmed that the ascension is the transition point between the reign of the Father and Son simply because a king assumes His reign when **officially seated on the throne**. Jesus was seated on the throne when He ascended to the Father (Ep 1:20). The transition of time between the crucifixion and Pentecost have more to do with affairs on earth than affairs in heaven.

The Jewish males were to gather annually in Jerusalem (or, at the altar) on Passover and Pentecost, which were separated by fifty days. Therefore, God was able to have many of the most religious Jews of Israel of the Roman Empire in Jerusalem in order to witness both the crucifixion on Passover and the coming of the Holy Spirit fifty days later on Pentecost. Between the two Jewish feast



days of Passover and Pentecost, Jesus was seated on the throne and began His sovereign rule. The announcement of this fact was made on the last day of the fifty-day celebrations.

The Pentecost of A.D. 30 was the first official announcement of the lordship of Jesus (At 2:36). This was the activation of the new covenant of Christ. It was at this time that the people of God were brought into the new covenant and under the law of Christ (See Hb 9:17,18). In reference to those who were obedient to the gospel, the Sinai law continued until Acts 2. However, as a law only for Israel, it was terminated when the New Testament law of Christ was activated on the day of Pentecost (See Cl 2:14). By their obedience to the gospel, disciples were made dead to the Sinai law by the body of Christ (Rm 7:4).

A. Definition of the foundation of the biblical world view:

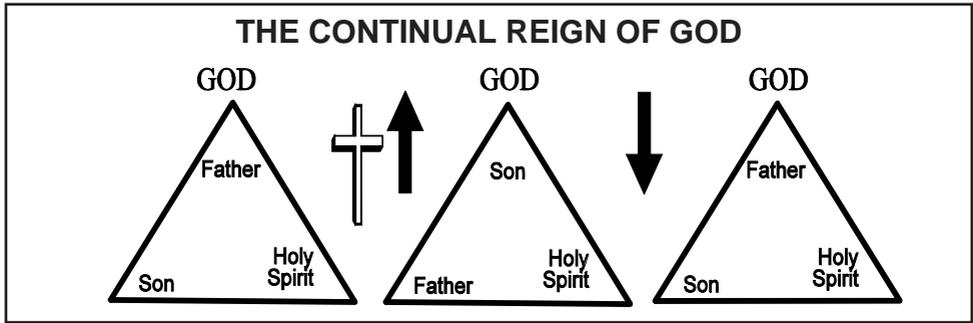
In reference to the sovereignty of Deity, there are five basic biblical propositions that must be understood. In affirming these propositions, we must understand that all of them harmonize with one another. If we accept these propositions to be true, then we must understand all related biblical subjects in the context of their truth. Since these are biblical teachings that affect our general Christian world view, then we must understand that the truth of these teachings affect our understanding of how we view the general teaching of the Bible in reference to God's relationship with His creation.

1. There has always been a universal kingdom or sovereignty of Deity over all creation and always will be.
2. The universal kingdom or sovereignty of the Father over all creation **before** the ascension magnifies the universal kingship or sovereignty of the Son over all creation **after** the ascension.
3. The unique kingdom relationship that Israel had with the Father **before** the ascension illustrates the unique kingdom relationship the disciples of Jesus have with the Son **after** the ascension.
4. The magnitude of the sovereignty of the Father **before** the ascension magnifies the magnitude of the sovereignty of the Son **after** the ascension.
5. **After** the final coming of Jesus, sovereignty will be delivered to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Keep in mind that our central direction in this book is to exalt the present headship and kingship of Jesus. This is accomplished by magnifying the headship and kingship of the Father in the Old Testament because the Son assumed this headship and kingship when He was seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus now has all authority and is head over all things.

B. Definition of the Godhead:

There is a relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that is not possible to communicate fully with human words. This relationship was somewhat revealed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:3. *"But I want you to know that the head*



of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

It is difficult to understand the headship of God in relation to the Son. We often assume that the word “God” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 refers to God, the Father. However, we must understand that such is only an assumption. Throughout the Old Testament we do not make this assumption, for we understand that the word “God” refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we come to the New Testament, biblical interpreters often assume that there must of necessity be a “division” in the Godhead because of the specific manifestations of God through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, this view is challenged in many New Testament contexts where the word “God” is used. The statement of 1 Corinthians 11:3 would be one of those contexts. The head of Christ, therefore, would be God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This would indicate that any manifestation of God does not exist in His work separate or apart from any other “person” of the Godhead. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit work as one, and thus, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit “are” the head

of Christ who was the incarnate manifestation of God on earth.

While in His incarnate state, the Son had a “positional relationship” with the Father in order to receive all things and all authority from the Father (See Mt 28:18; Jn 13:3; 17:2). The Father’s relationship with the Son before the ascension, therefore, had something to do with headship and authority that was to be given to the Son. At the ascension, the Son received all kingdom reign. However, He will return all authority to “God” at or after the final coming (1 Co 15:28). This may indicate that there was permanency in the Son’s incarnation. In other words, the Son will remain forever in eternity with His brethren in the “form” of His resurrected, but changed body. He will do so in order to have a personal relationship with those for whom He was crucified.

From our perspective of a New Testament understanding of the work of the Father in the Old Testament, we would affirm that in reference to the Son’s present reign, the Father maintains a similar relationship with the Son in the history of the world until the ascension. From creation to the ascension, the Father was

on the throne of authority in heavenly places. After the ascension, the Son was placed on this throne of authority over all things. After the final coming, the totality of God will again assume all authority over all things.

God is one. However, the particular personality of Deity who has authority over all things has changed throughout the history of man on the earth. We would make this affirmation based on our understanding of the present reign of the Son that is clearly stated in the New Testament.

Regardless of what happens in Deity's relationship with all created things, the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit within the realm of Deity will always be difficult for us to understand. This is a very important point to remember when studying the change of the sovereignty of Deity over that which was created. Though the divine headship and kingship in relation to Deity's reign over creation changes, the relationship of Deity within the Godhead never changes. God is the Father, Son and Holy

Spirit. This is God being "all in all."

We must make some assumptions concerning the ruling nature of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every interpreter does such, though we must be cautioned not to create a god after our own imagination in order to understand how God upholds all things by the word of His power. Though we may not understand all that is involved in the relationship of the three of God in order to carry out the plan of redemption and control of that which exists, this does not detract from our efforts to understand the revelation of Scripture concerning the kingdom reign of God over all things. We accept what is revealed in the Scriptures concerning the reign of the Father and Son. Regardless of our inability to understand that which is in the realm of Deity, we must accept what is revealed in the Bible concerning the relationship of God with this material world. At the same time, we must not attach undue limitations on the reign of God because of our inability to understand that which is beyond this world.

Chapter 3

KINGSHIP AND HEADSHIP OF THE FATHER

The Father was King and head over all things before the ascension of Christ. A principal point to remember here is that God, the Father, was the King who exercised headship over all nations, angels and Satan before the establishment of the kingdom of Israel. Recognizing this fact is crucial to understanding the extent of

the kingdom reign of the Son at this present time. If we minimize the present kingdom reign of the Son, then we must also minimize the reign of God, the Father, before the ascension because the extent of the kingdom reign of the Father before the ascension was handed over to the Son at the ascension.

The above must be understood in relation to the Son's reign over all that has been created. This reign would not refer to the Son's relationship with the Father. In 1 Corinthians 15:27 Paul explained, "*For 'He has put all things under His feet.' But when He says 'all things are put under Him,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.*" In other words, all things have been presently put under the kingdom reign of the Son by God. However, all things have been put under the reign of the incarnate Son except the Father.

Jesus now has kingdom reign over all things except for God, the Father, who is the head of Christ (1 Co 11:3). In His preexistent state before the incarnation, we would assume that the "positional" relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit did not exist as it did after the incarnation. God was "Us" as expressed in Genesis 1:26,27. However, after the Son gave up being on an equality with God, God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit eternally remained the head of the Son who incarnated into the flesh of man in order to first redeem man, and then, to eternally dwell with His brethren in a new heavens and earth that is yet to come (Ph 2:6,7; 2 Pt 3:13).

In our studies of the Father and Son in relation to all that has been created, we would refer to the work of God, the Father, over all things in the Old Testament in order to understand the work of the Son at this time. We would make this comparison because of the emphasis in the New Testament on the Son's having received kingdom reign from the Father.

The authority that the Father had in Deity's relationship to the created world before the ascension was given to the Son when the Son ascended to the right hand of the Father.

A. The Father was King before the ascension.

An examination of a Bible concordance will reveal many passages that state the universal kingship of the Father over all creation before the ascension. An example of some of these passages would be the following: David wrote, "*The Lord is **King** forever and ever ...*" (Ps 10:16). "*The Lord of hosts, He is the **King** of glory*" (Ps 24:10). "*You are my **King**, O God*" (Ps 44:4). Isaiah wrote, "*The Lord is our **King***" (Is 33:22). Psalm 22:27,28 states, "*All the ends of the world will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. For the **kingdom** is the Lord's, and He **rules over the nations.***"

The preceding statements, clearly affirm the kingship of the Father that was in existence before the ascension. He was King. There was a kingdom. And, He reigned over this kingdom. The Father's kingdom reign existed before the establishment of the nation of Israel. When Israel came into a unique covenant relationship with God, the nation remained under the universal kingdom reign of God that already existed. The kingdom reign of the Father in the Old Testament **did not** begin when Israel was established in a unique covenant relationship with the

Father. The Father was King of all things before Israel existed as a nation.

Before the Sinai law was given, and a covenant was made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, the Father reigned over all things. Exodus 15:18 reads, “*The Lord will reign forever and ever.*” God had given the law of this sovereignty “*to the fathers by the prophets*” (Hb 1:1). The people of Israel were to exist as obedient subjects in the kingdom of God in order that the nation bring forth the Messiah into the world.

Though God was the sovereign King over all things, there were still disobedient subjects, as there are in every kingdom reign. In other words, the fact that disobedient individuals, nations and angels were allowed to exist under His sovereignty does not mean that the Father was not King over them. **Disobedience by man on earth does not negate the sovereign rule of Deity from heaven.** This is a very important point to remember and one that must be considered in reference to the Son’s present reign over all things. Simply because the demons were disobedient subjects did not mean that Jesus, even while in His incarnate state, did not have authority over them (See Lk 8:28).

God’s sovereignty over all things does not violate the free-moral agency of man. Neither does the free-moral agency of man negate the sovereignty of God. **Simply because God allows man the ability to make free-will choices, though often rebellious, does not mean that God is not reigning over the rebellious.** This point must be

clearly established in order to understand that God’s sovereign reign is not controlled by the rebellion of any or many subjects on earth. To think that rebellious free-moral men control the God of the galaxies of all existence is certainly the result of idolatrous thinking. The idol worshiper creates a god in his mind he can comprehend, and sometimes control. But the true God of the galaxies is far beyond the finite comprehension and control of man.

If one would attempt to comprehend and control through our behavior the God of the galaxies, then he should look into a powerful telescope and see the millions of galaxies that exist in space. The earth is simply a speck of dust in only one of these galaxies. It is the ultimate of idolatry to think that the one true and living God is simply the God of a speck of dust, whose residents determine the ability of God to reign.

B. The Father was King of all nations before the ascension.

Before the ascension of the Son, the Father was not only the King of Israel, He was also the King over all that existed. His sovereignty included things on the earth and galaxies throughout space. In 1 Chronicles 29:11,12, David stood before Israel and made the following statement in reference to the sovereignty of the Father beyond the Israelite kingdom.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD,

*and You are exalted as **head over all**. Both riches and honor come from You, and **You reign over all**. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

At the time the above statement was made, the Father had universal sovereignty over all things. The Father was head and King of things both in heaven (the spirit world) and in the earth (the physical world). The passage is saying that the Father reigned over all before the cross and ascension of Jesus. The Psalmist wrote, "*The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His **kingdom** [sovereignty] **rules over all***" (Ps 103:19).

Notice also in 1 Chronicles 29:11,12 that the Father was **head** over all things. In other words, He had control over all that was created. It will be important to remember this when we discuss the authority of Jesus as it is explained in the New Testament (See Mt 28:18).

After His ascension, Jesus was made head over all things for the sake of His obedient subjects, the church. Concerning the nature of the Father's kingship before the ascension, Jeremiah added,

*But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting **King**. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to abide His indignation (Jr 10:10).*

The nature of these statements manifests the universal reign of the Father over all

things before the ascension of Jesus. This headship and kingship, therefore, extended beyond the nation of Israel, as does the kingdom reign of Jesus at this time.

Passages as Isaiah 10:5,6 illustrate the work of the sovereignty of the Father among the nations in the Old Testament. Isaiah wrote,

Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

The emphasis of this passage is that all nations were under the control of the Father before the ascension. They were under His control in order to lead the world to the revelation of the Seed of woman through Israel who would bring redemption to the world. The Father controlled the beginning and ending of nations in order to accomplish His eternal plan. He used the nations to bring judgment against the nation of Israel in order to preserve a remnant for the revelation of the incarnate Redeemer (Gl 4:4). The Father, therefore, was a King who reigned over the nations of the world in order to bring the Messiah into the world.

Some have wrongly assumed that the Father forgot the rest of the nations of the world when He established a covenant relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai. This conclusion is often assumed from the fact that the greater portion of the Old Testament is directed toward the

history of the nation of Israel. However, such a conclusion fails to include the totality of the Father's reign among the nations of the world.

The Father continued to work among the nations through priests such as Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. At times He even sent Israelite prophets to Gentile nations as Nineveh. Nineveh repented, not only because of the message of Jonah, but also because there were evidently other preachers of righteousness in Nineveh who had provoked Nineveh to repentance, and thus paved the way for Jonah's brief message of doom (Jh 3:4). All Jonah did was preach the conclusion to their sermons by pronouncing the judgment.

God worked among the nations,

though Israel was chosen as a nation through whom the Messiah would come. Therefore, we must not assume that God terminated His kingship relationship with other nations when He chose Israel from the nations of the world in order to preserve a segment of society through which to bring the Seed of woman into the world.

Peter's following statement reveals God's concern for all humanity: "*The LORD is ... not willing that any should perish*" (2 Pt 3:9). Deity has always worked to save man. The Lord's plea that all should repent has stood firm since Adam's sin. It will remain until the call of the last great trump.

Chapter 4

THE KING OF ISRAEL

We often form a mental perception of the kingship and headship of the Father before the ascension of Jesus that is sometimes quite limited. We assume that His kingship and headship is limited, because in our studies of the Old Testament, we often lead ourselves to believe that God discontinued His influence among the Gentiles when He established a covenant relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai. This is an easy mistake to make because the greater part of the Old Testament was written primarily to the Jewish nation in order to preserve them until the coming revelation of the Seed of woman who would offer redemption to the world.

We must not lead ourselves to believe that God was idle among the Gen-

tiles throughout the period of history that is recorded in the Old Testament. God, the Father, was the King of Assyria and Babylon as He was the King of Israel, though He did not have a special covenant relationship with any other nation than Israel. Nevertheless, He was also the head over Moab, Egypt, Ammon and other Gentile nations as He was the head of Israel.

A good example of God working among the Gentile nations would be King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was arrogant as the king of Babylon. In order to bring him to his knees before the one true and living God, God worked in his life where he would temporarily lose his kingship. Eventually, Neb-

uchadnezzar was humbled to the point that he confessed,

I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven and my understanding returned to me. And I blessed the Most High and I praised and honored Him who lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom is from generation to generation (Dn 4:34).

The kingdom of Israel was a nation of people set apart from the nations of the world in order to accomplish the eternal plan of God to redeem those of the world who would come to Him through faith. God made a promise to Abraham to create a great nation from his seed (Gn 12:1-3). God also made a promise that of Abraham’s seed, all nations of the world would be blessed. The blessing referred to the Savior who would eventually come into the world through the seed of Abraham (See Gl 3:16). For this reason, God worked to preserve the nation of Israel until the coming of the Savior. The result of this special protection was that the nation of Israel enjoyed a

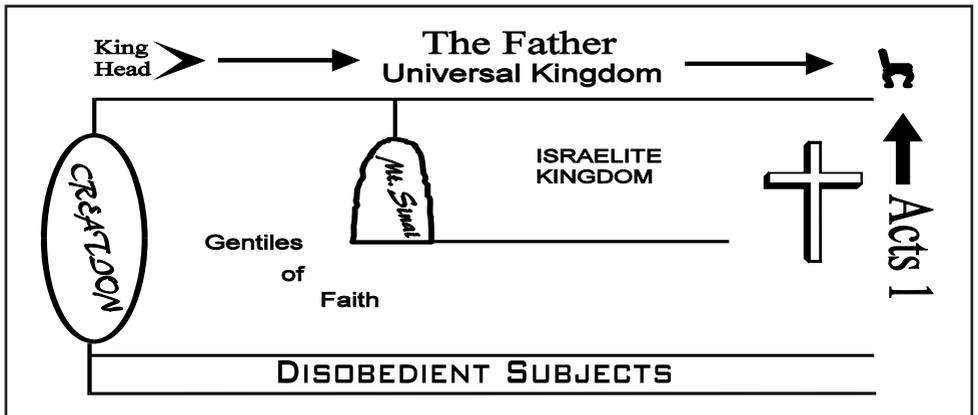
unique kingdom relationship with the Father because the Father had previously made a promise to Abraham, with whom He also established a covenant.

A. The kingdom of national Israel:

The Israelites were separated from the world in their special kingdom relationship with the Father. They were a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Exodus 19:5,6 is a significant statement in reference to the Father’s relationship with Israel. It is a promise that lays the foundation for understanding a future similar relationship the church of God’s people would have with Jesus after Acts 2. God said to Israel,

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

When the Father established this unique sovereign relationship with Israel,



this did not mean that He ceased to reign as King over all other nations. On the contrary, the Father continued to work among other nations in order to discipline Israel to complete their destiny to bring the Savior into the world.

God's promise to Israel that they would be "a special treasure" does exemplify the special relationship the nation of Israel enjoyed with the Father. Because of their covenant relationship with God, the house of Israel was a **kingdom of priests**. They were a kingdom of priests to the world, as the church today is a kingdom of priests who announce the praises of God to the world both verbally and through their obedient life-style (1 Pt 2:9).

At the foot of Mount Sinai, God promised that Israel would be a "**holy nation**." They would be a kingdom of subjects within the universal kingdom of the Father. The Father would be their head, but He would also be the head over all other nations of the world. He would be Israel's King, but He would continue to be the King over all nations. Because of Israel's covenant relationship with the Father, the nation was a special treasure to the Father. Nevertheless, His headship and kingship over all things continued beyond the physical nation of Israel.

B. The earthly throne of David:

It was the Father's original intention that Israel be ruled directly from heaven through the judges and prophets. He entrusted the spiritual care of Israel to the Levitical priests and elders of Is-

rael. However, He knew that Israel would eventually clamor for an earthly king as the nations around them (Dt 17:14-22). When Israel was eventually granted a king, **that king was only an earthly symbol of heavenly authority**.

Israel's rejection of God's original system of rule directly from heaven through the Levitical priesthood did not change His kingship over the nation. This is clearly understood when Solomon succeeded David as king of Israel. David said that the Father "*has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the **throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel***" (1 Ch 28:5). When Solomon assumed his position as king, it was stated, "*Then Solomon sat on the **throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father ...***" (1 Ch 29:23). The throne on which both David and Solomon sat was the **throne of the kingdom of the Lord**. The kingdom was the Father's. The throne was the Father's. David's throne in Jerusalem was only a symbol of heavenly authority on earth. (More on this later.)

C. Sovereignty of God in the records of the gospel:

Both the Father's universal sovereignty over all nations, and over the nation of Israel, continued unto the ascension of Jesus. This fact is especially evident in the parables that Jesus presented in His discussions with the Jewish religious leadership.

When considering references to the kingdom of God in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, it is imperative to understand

that Jesus' ministry was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 10:6). Jesus' message to the Jews was, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel*" (Mk 1:15). **It is very important to remember that when we read of the kingdom in the gospel records, that we understand these references to the kingdom in the context of Jesus' historical work to turn Israel to God in order that they receive His coming kingship.**

Our understanding of Jesus' use of the word "kingdom" must first be interpreted in the historical context in which it was used during His ministry to the Jews. He was appealing to them that they submit to the sovereignty of the Father in order that they accept the changes that were coming in reference to the sovereignty of Deity. And the changes that were coming were in reference to changes of kingship in heaven.

Jesus' ministry was a part of the Old Testament. The new covenant had not yet been established. The new dispensation of the new covenant had not yet begun. Therefore, when studying the ministry and teaching of Jesus, the biblical interpreter must understand that the ministry of Jesus falls under the Old Testament dispensation. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are historical records of Old Testament events, events that pertained to the ministry of Jesus among the Jews. Therefore, when we interpret the teachings of Jesus, we must first interpret them in the context of Jesus' ministry to the Jews that they accept Him

as the Messiah who came to fulfill the promises that were made to the fathers of Israel.

Understanding the preceding helps us understand the ministry of both John the Baptist and Jesus. John the Baptist was under both the universal sovereignty of the Father, as well as the sovereignty of the Father over Israel. Jesus said of John, "... *he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*" (Mt 11:11). Jesus is here stating that **John was in the kingdom**. This statement did not refer to something that was yet in the future. It referred to something that existed at the time the statement was made.

Matthew 11:12 states, "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence.*" This use of the word "kingdom" here does not refer to the church. Those who teach that the church and the kingdom are the same have great difficulty with this statement of Jesus. The church had not yet come into existence at the time this statement was made of John. Nevertheless, John, as well as all Jews, were in a kingdom relationship with the Father. The rest of the nations were also in a kingdom relationship with the Father, for the Father was the sovereign King over all things.

While on earth, Jesus was under the sovereign reign of the Father. He went about preaching the good news "*of the kingdom*" (Mt 4:23). To His Jewish audience He preached, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Mt 5:3). He was not

talking about something in the future. He was preaching to the Jews of His generation. His plea was to stimulate repentance. The kingdom was theirs if they repented. It would be theirs at the time of their repentance. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount when He made the statement, the kingdom would be for all those who repented.

Jesus continued His plea, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt 5:10). Again, we must not assume that Jesus had a future kingdom reign in mind when He made this statement. All those during His ministry who were persecuted for righteousness’ sake were of the kingdom. Those who submitted to the Father’s will by allowing the kingdom to reside within them would suffer from the hands of the religious leaders of Israel who sought to intimidate others into submission to their leadership. If men and women during the ministry of Jesus would willfully suffer the persecution that came with submission to the Father before His ascension, then they would be prepared to accept His sovereignty after His ascension.

What Jesus was emphasizing in the above passages was that **the sovereignty of the Father was in existence at the time of His ministry on earth**. He was calling faithful Jews to a change in kingship of the universal sovereignty of Deity. The sovereignty of divine rule was about to change from the Father to the Son. However, Jesus wanted to emphasize that the Father’s sovereignty and law would continue until that change took

place. For this reason, He made the statement of Matthew 5:19,20:

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments [Sinai law commandments], and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

In the above context Jesus emphasized the fact that if anyone disobeyed and wrongly taught any **Sinai law commandment**, he would be considered “least” in a kingdom relationship with the Father. We would emphasize the fact that this passage is teaching that the kingdom reign of the Father was in existence at the time Jesus was making these statements. He was referring to His Jewish audience, which audience He was trying to restore to God. Reference was to the commandments of the Sinai law, and thus the word “kingdom” was used in reference to a kingdom that was in existence at the time the statement was made.

We must remember that the sovereign reign of the Father in the Old Testament extended beyond the nation of Israel. The Father was King and head over all nations. All nations of the world were under the kingdom reign of God. Since the beginning of time this was the case. It will be the case until the end of the

world (1 Tm 6:15).

This point is illustrated in the fact that God made Israel a kingdom of priests to the world. They were not to be priests to themselves, but to the world. There was certainly a Levitical priesthood within Israel to minister to their needs as a kingdom of priests. However, the nation as a whole was to minister to the nations of the world. Unfortunately, they neglected this responsibility, and subsequently introverted and died as a nation.

When Jesus came, His emphasis was to return apostate Israel to the sovereign law of God, the Sinai law commandments. The Jews had rejected the commandments of God in order to keep

their traditions (Mk 7:1-9). Jesus came to call out of this apostate Israel those who by faith would accept His coming sovereignty. During His ministry He was laying the groundwork for the change of universal kingship and headship of Deity over all things. To lay the groundwork for this change, He called all Jews to submit to the kingdom reign of the Father.

In Jesus' coming to the Jews first, His mission was to revive their responsibility to the world as a kingdom of priests who were to proclaim the praises of God before the world (1 Pt 2:9). He came to restore their ministry as priests to the world through their preaching of the redemption of the gospel.

Chapter 5

CHANGE IN KINGSHIP AND HEADSHIP

The kingship and headship of the sovereignty of Deity changed at the ascension of Jesus in order to restore the priesthood mission of God's people to the world. Before the ascension, the Father prepared mankind, and especially Israel, for a change in the universal kingship and priesthood of Deity. The preparation for this change was made throughout the history of Israel by means of key prophecies. Prophecies were made concerning the priesthood ministry of the Messiah and those who would follow Him. During the ministry of both John and Jesus, the Father prepared Israel for the immediate change in the lifetime of Jesus' disciples (Mk 9:1).

It is exciting to see in His earthly

ministry Jesus' preparation of Israel. We must not forget that during His ministry He was restoring Israel to their priesthood ministry to the world. In view of His coming coronation as King and high priest on the throne of David, Jesus proclaimed the restoration of the kingdom reign of God in the hearts of men in order that all men accept Him as King and high priest.

Throughout the history of Israel, the Father also prepared Israel both for a change in covenant and for a change in sovereign rule. Both changes would necessitate a change in law. Throughout His ministry, therefore, Jesus taught that a new King was coming and a new high priest was going to be established for all

the nations of the world. But in order for this to happen, some changes had to be made, both in heaven and on earth.

A. Change in covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 was a prophecy that the Father would change His covenant relationship with Israel. God said during the days of Jeremiah, *“Behold, the days are coming ... when I will make a new covenant ...”* (Jr 31:31). This new covenant would be different. With the coming of a new covenant would come also a new law. In Jeremiah 33:14 God stated, *“Behold, the days are coming ... that I will perform that good thing which I have promised.”*

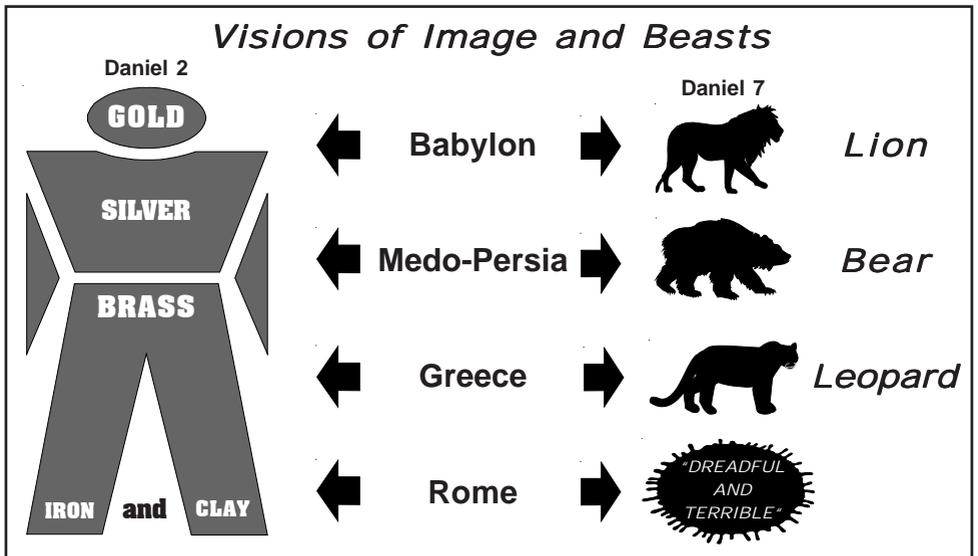
The time would come in Israel when the Father would *“make a covenant of peace with them”* (Is 37:26). This would be an “everlasting covenant” in the sense that it would last throughout its intended time of duration (Is 55:3; see Hs 2:18). It

would also be new in that it would be inclusive, and not exclusive of all nations. What the Father was doing in these prophecies that permeated Israelite history was to prepare the minds of Israel for a change in covenant, law, kingship, headship, sovereignty and high priesthood.

B. Change in King and kingdom:

There would not only be a change in the covenant, there would also be a change in the kingship. This change was the central message of the vision that the Father revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. In Daniel 2:31-45, Daniel interpreted that Nebuchadnezzar’s vision was a prophecy of four world kingdoms, beginning with the earthly kingdom of Babylon and extending into the Roman kingdom.

In Daniel 7, Daniel was also given a vision of the world kingdoms to come. The prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 are par-



allel. Daniel 2 is Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision. Daniel 7 is Daniel's personal vision from God. Daniel saw four beasts in his vision that represented four world kingdoms. As Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel saw the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Babylon was in existence at the time of the visions.

In both visions God was allowing men on earth to know the future change in the kingdom reign of God from heaven, as well as a succession of world kingdoms. These two prophecies of the future are key prophecies that determine the time when God would change history by changing the One who would reign over all things from heaven. It is imperative to understand the nature of these two prophecies in order to understand when God would make kingdom changes in heaven and on earth.

The central purpose of both prophecies was to reveal the message of Daniel 2:44 and Daniel 7:13,14. In the days of the Roman kings, Daniel interpreted that the God of heaven would "set up a kingdom" or sovereignty. This same concept is brought out in the conclusion of Daniel's vision of Daniel 7 (see vs 13,14).

*And in the days of **these kings** the God of heaven will set up **a kingdom** which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, **and it shall stand forever.***

It is significant to notice in the text of Daniel 2:44 that the article "the" is not

present before the Hebrew word that is translated "kingdom." The translators did no wrong by adding the indefinite article. However, the translation "sovereign reign" would probably be more definitive if the indefinite article were left out.

What Daniel was saying is that in the days of the Roman kings God would set up divine sovereignty. He would establish kingdom reign. When speaking of the authority of the omnipresent God over all things, emphasis should be placed on reign and rule, not on territory or location. Daniel's interpretation thus refers to the reign and rule of God as opposed to that which was manifested through the worldly kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

The sovereignty or kingdom reign about which Daniel spoke "*shall not be destroyed*" and "*it shall stand forever.*" As opposed to the earthly kingdoms of the prophecy that were destroyed by greater powers, the heavenly sovereignty would never be destroyed. It could not be destroyed by men because it would not be "left to other people." It is a sovereignty of God, not man. Because it is a sovereignty beyond this world, it cannot be destroyed by that which is of this world. Therefore, its existence is sure and steadfast. It will continue until God says it will discontinue. Its establishment and termination would not be determined by the will of man.

The sovereign reign that God would establish would consume the authority that is displayed by all earthly kingdoms. Men on earth would submit to heavenly authority regardless of the presence of

earthly kingdom reigns under which men currently lived throughout the time the prophecies were being fulfilled. When the final world kingdom came into existence (Rome), those who submitted to the heavenly kingdom reign would be called out of the world by their submission. The stone about which Daniel spoke, which stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, was a prophecy of the church. The church would be the assembly of all those subjects who submitted to the kingdom reign of the Son that came about during the days of the Romans kings.

In the prophecy of Daniel 2, Daniel makes a definite distinction between the “kingdom” and the “stone.” The stone “*that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth*” (Dn 2:35). Kingdom reign from heaven referred to God’s authority that was manifested from heaven in order to consume the kingdoms of this world. The kingdoms were consumed when men and women throughout the whole world submitted to the kingdom reign from heaven. The kingdom reign existed **before** the cutting out of the stone. This is what happened in the first century when the kingdom reign of Jesus was established **before** the church was established.

The power of the stone (the church) was in the power of the One who would reign with dominion over all things. It was not that the kingdom grew into a great institutional mountain. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, He had authority over all things (Mt 28:18). The church was established and grew in numbers as a result of the authority of the

message that proceeded from the power of the King. It was the church of God’s people that filled the earth. The church was able to do this because the King and Head was in control of all things for the sake of God’s people, the church (Ep 1:20,23). The power was in the authority of the King, not in the church.

Daniel 7 is a parallel vision of Daniel 2. Reference is to world kingdoms and the beginning of a divine sovereignty in the days of the fourth kingdom. In Daniel 7, Babylon is represented by the **lion** (Dn 7:4). In the vision, the Medo-Persian Kingdom is represented by the **bear** (Dn 7:5). The Greek Kingdom is represented by the **leopard** (Dn 7:6). The Roman Kingdom is represented by the beast that is “**dreadful and terrible**” (Dn 7:7).

At the conclusion of this prophecy a very significant statement was made in verses 13,14. It is important to remember that in this vision, Daniel is placed **in heaven** in order to see what transpired in heaven. Daniel gives us a heavenly picture of what would happen when the Son of Man ascended to the right hand of the Father in heavenly places.

*I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the **Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.***

The “Ancient of Days” is a reference to God, the Father. In explaining the vision from the viewpoint of heaven, Daniel sees the One “*like the Son of Man*” coming to the Father who is in heaven. Acts 1:9,10 speaks of the ascension of Jesus to the Father in a cloud. Daniel 7:13,14, therefore, is a prophecy of the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father in order to receive dominion, glory and kingdom reign.

We would again point out that the article “the” is not in the Hebrew text before the word “kingdom.” The Son of Man, therefore, would be given dominion, glory and sovereignty. As opposed to any one nation, this sovereignty would be over all nations and peoples.

Notice also in the prophecy that all people **should** serve Him. The passage does not say that they **would** serve Him. The statement is in the subjunctive. What the prophecy is revealing is that **the Son of Man would be given the universal sovereignty, though not all under that sovereignty would be obedient subjects**. Regardless of their lack of submission, however, the King would still reign with universal sovereignty. This prophecy is about the universal kingdom of Jesus, of which the church of submitted subjects would only be a part. “*All peoples, nations, and languages*” would be a part of this kingdom reign. However, not all peoples would be members of the church, for only the submitted would be members of the body of Christ.

The prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14 is clearly in the statement of Paul in Ephesians 1:20-22. Paul wrote,

... which He [the Father] worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.

Notice that the word “principality” refers to individuals or personalities. What Paul here states is the fulfillment of what was prophesied in Daniel 7:13,14. After His ascension, Jesus was seated in a kingship position in the heavenly realm. The Father abdicated all rule to Him. Jesus’ sovereign rule, therefore, is above all principality, power, might, dominion and every name that is named. All things have been put under His feet. Jesus is the King and head over all things, including the church of submissive subjects.

Jesus is the head over all things **for the sake of His people**. The church of the submitted is only one thing in Ephesians 1:20-23 over which Jesus is head. The passage is actually an encouragement for Christians. We should be encouraged because Jesus is head over all things for the benefit of those who are members of His universal body. One thing is very evident in this passage. The sovereign reign of Jesus goes far beyond the members of His body.

A parallel passage to Ephesians 1:20-22 in manifesting the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13,14 in Jesus is Philippians 2:5-

11. Paul wrote in verses 9-11,

*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him [Jesus] and given Him **the name which is above every name**, that at the name of Jesus every knee **should** bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue **should** confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

At the time Paul wrote Philippians 2:5-11, Jesus had already been highly exalted. His authority (name) is now above the authority of every name. This means that Jesus rules over everything and everyone of the material world (“those on earth”). His rule is over all angels in heaven (“those in heaven”). Also, His sovereign rule is over Satan and demons (“those under the earth”). This passage also clearly manifests Jesus’ present kingdom reign that is beyond the church.

Philippians 2:9-11 is not talking about something that is yet in the future. After the final coming of Jesus, the earth and Satan, with his angels, will be eternally destroyed (Mt 25:41). But in the context of Philippians 2, Paul is discussing something that is present; something that was happening at the very moment he was writing and when the forces of Satan were active in this world.

Notice also in the Philippians 2 passage that every tongue **should** confess Jesus. Daniel 7:13,14 also used the subjunctive to express the fact that all should be submissive to the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, all are not submissive.

There are many disobedient subjects in the world today. Satan and his host are continually disobedient. All the disobedient in the realm of the sovereign reign of Jesus should bow down and confess His authority. However, they do not. Nevertheless, the fact that they do not **does not mean that Jesus is not their King**. Jesus is their King and one day they will submit. Unfortunately, it will be too late for their redemption.

The Hebrew writer stated in Hebrews 2:8 that we do not now see everything under Jesus:

You have put all things in subjection under His feet.** For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. **But now we do not yet see all things put under Him.

We will not visibly see everything subjected to Jesus until the end of time. At this time it may seem that things are out of control in reference to the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, when He comes again, it will be clearly manifested that all things are under His control when He brings judgment upon all who have opposed Him (At 17:30,31; 2 Co 5:10).

In Daniel 7:13,14, Daniel stated that the kingdom to come in his future would be “everlasting.” It would “not pass away” or be “destroyed.” It would not be a kingdom that would be subject to the terminating forces that press upon earthly kingdoms. In other words, God’s kingdom reign is not subject to the forces of worldly kingdoms. His kingdom is sure

and steadfast (“everlasting”). It will not pass away as did the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Those kingdoms were destroyed by man. The kingdom that originates from heaven will not be destroyed as earthly kingdoms

are destroyed. It cannot be destroyed because it is a kingdom reign that is manifested from heaven and under the direct control of God. And since it originates from heaven, earthly kingdoms have no influence over it.

Chapter 6

MINISTRY OF CHANGE

Both John the Baptist and Jesus came preaching, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*” (Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). The kingdom reign of Jesus was near unto beginning. Both Jesus and John were speaking to Jews who were living under the kingdom reign of the Father. Both spoke of the sovereignty of God that extended from heaven during the time of their ministries. The Father was both King of the Israelite kingdom and King of the universal kingdom. This is why Jesus made statements to the Jews as, “***The kingdom of God is within you ...***” (Lk 17:20,21). It was within those who had submitted to the kingdom reign of the Father from heaven, regardless of whether one was a Jew, Samaritan or Gentile.

What Jesus was saying was that the sovereign rule of the Father was in the hearts of the submitted to whom He spoke. We must understand the statement of Luke 17:20,21 in the context of the historical situation in which Jesus and John preached. The Jews sought for an earthly, physical reign of the Messiah upon this earth. The disciples even had in mind this nationalistic concept of the Messiah and kingdom unto the day of His ascen-

sion (See At 1:6). However, this was not the nature of the true kingdom of Israel, or the kingdom reign of Jesus that was to come. **The sovereignty (kingdom) of the Father was manifested when the will of the Father ruled in the hearts of men as it ruled in heaven.** The kingdom of God was not of physical things, “*but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*” (Rm 14:17).

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the coming of the “kingdom” (sovereign rule) of the Father in the hearts of men. In Matthew 6:10 He taught, “*Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*” In other words, **the kingdom (sovereign rule) comes when God’s will is done on earth in the hearts of submitted people as it is done in heaven.** When people submit to the sovereignty of Deity in their hearts, then the kingdom of God is within them.

With the preceding understanding of Luke 17:20,21 and Matthew 6:10, one could make the same prayer request of Matthew 6 today concerning any country of the world. We could pray that the “kingdom come” in China. In this prayer we would desire that receptive people in

China allow God to rule in their hearts as His will is obeyed in heaven. Anytime people allow the sovereign will of Deity to reign in their hearts as it is obeyed in heaven, the kingdom reign comes.

Biblical interpreters have struggled with Luke 17:20,21 for years because of the misconception that the church and the kingdom are the same in every New Testament passage where the word “kingdom” is used. This misunderstanding has led to many misinterpretations of passages that discuss the sovereign reign of Jesus. It has also limited the sovereignty of Jesus to the submitted only. For this reason, we must understand that the universal sovereignty (kingdom) of Jesus and the church are not the same thing. To force an interpretation that they are when reading “kingdom passages” leads one to a misunderstanding of the nature and extent of the present sovereign reign of Jesus.

The kingdom reign of Jesus is not limited to the church. The authority of His reign is worldwide; His authority is galactic; it is beyond the realm of the material world in which we live. It extends into the spiritual world. It includes all angels, demons, and even Satan himself. Unless one fully comprehends the totality of His present sovereign reign, he will always be dethroning Jesus in an effort to make Jesus a king only over a few million Christians on earth today. But this understanding fails to recognize that the Father has abdicated to Jesus **all authority over all things in heaven and earth.**

Therefore, during the ministries of John and Jesus, both cried out to Israel to

return to the sovereign reign of the Father in order to accept the coming change in kingship when the Father would hand over kingdom reign to the Son. The kingdom would come into the hearts of the repentant when men turned to the will of God. This was the message of John and Jesus. “*Repent, for the kingdom [sovereignty] of heaven is at hand.*” Great numbers of men were about to accept the will of the Father into their hearts because of the message and power that the Father was revealing through the Son. Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom in order that people submit.

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, He told the Jews that the authority of the sovereignty of the Father was being passed to Him. “*All things,*” He proclaimed, “*have been delivered to Me by My Father ...*” (Mt 11:27). John recorded that Jesus knew that the Father “*had given all things into His hands ...*” (Jn 13:3). Jesus therefore went about convincing men that He was the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. And because He was, their submission to kingdom reign would soon be passed on to Him as the King of kings.

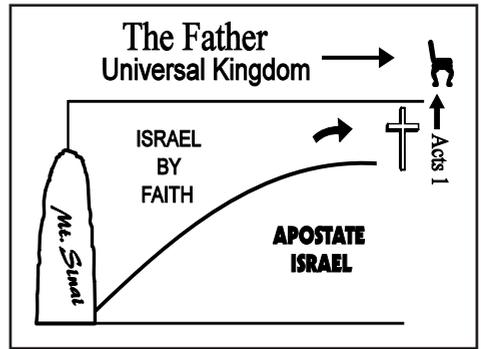
The Father delivered all things into the hands of the Son because of His love for the Son. Jesus stated, “*The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand*” (Jn 3:35). Jesus also said, “*You have given Him [the Son] authority over all flesh*” (Jn 17:2). We must remember that Jesus was proclaiming this message to an apostate Israel. However, in the midst of His audience there were those Jews who were Abraham’s seed

by faith. They willingly allowed the sovereignty of God to rule in their hearts when they heard Jesus. And they willingly allowed their submission to be transferred to the Son (Cl 1:13).

A. Apostate Israel:

As time progressed throughout the history of Israel, a great majority of Israel was led astray by the false religion of the religious leaders of Israel (See Hs 4:6). They created a religion after their own traditions. Many Israelites fell from the Sinai law to a religion that was based on human religious traditions and desires. By the time of the ministry of Jesus, the majority of the Pharisees, chief priests, scribes, and elders of Israel were engrossed in a religion that was based on religious traditions.

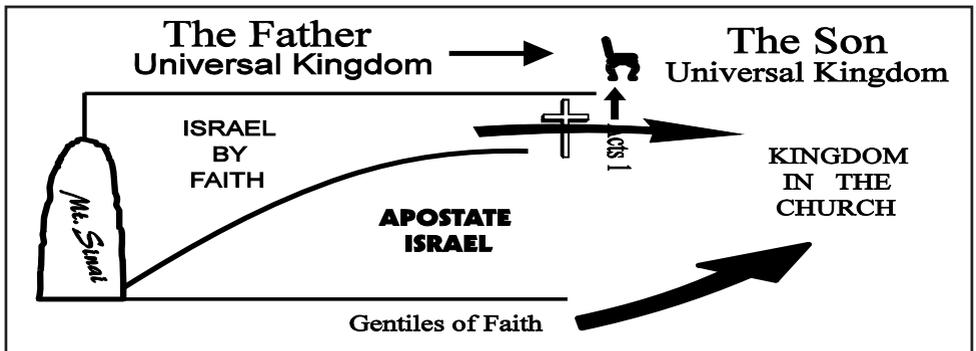
These religious leaders had digressed from the Sinai law of God to a religion that they had created after their own traditions (See Mk 7:1-9). These were those of whom Jesus spoke in Matthew 23:4, *“For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them*



with one of their fingers.”

The religious leaders were those to whom Jesus also said, *“All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition”* (Mk 7:9; see Mk 7:1-9). Jesus referred to their legal system of law and tradition as the *“tradition of the elders”* (Mk 7:3). Paul called their law *“the law of the fathers”* (At 22:3).

By the time Jesus came, it was no longer the law of God. It was a legal system of traditions that had been intermingled with the Sinai law. After Paul was converted, he looked back to the time when he was a Pharisee. He called the Jews’ tradition, *“our religion”* (At 26:5). In other words, it was not God’s revealed



faith of the Sinai law. It was what Paul called it in Galatians 1:13, “*the Jew’s religion*” (KJV). This was what Jesus confronted. Subsequently, this is why the “*children of the kingdom,*” in the statement of Matthew 8:11,12, were cast out.

To His Jewish audience, Jesus stated concerning the transition from the Israelite kingdom to the church,

And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 8:11,12).

The “sons of the kingdom” in this historical context were **apostate Israelites** who had created the “Jews’ religion.” Those who promoted the Jews’ religion did not accept Jesus because they had rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their own religion. Those of this religion were the “natural branches” by Jewish birth whom Paul said God did not spare (Rm 11:21). They were cast off because they did not believe. And they did not believe because they had created a religion after their own desires in which they trusted. We would conclude that the religious leaders had created an institutional religion after their own traditions, which traditions led them away from the commandment of God (Mk 7:1-9).

Whenever adherents in religion consider tradition greater than the commandment of God, then the traditions become

their religion. The adherents are more concerned about keeping the traditions of their religion than the law of the God they presume to serve.

It is also significant to note that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were **in the kingdom**. However, they were not in the church of Christ. Therefore, the church and kingdom in Matthew 8:11,12 are not the same. The Jewish fathers were, as angels, under the sovereign rule of the Father at the time the Father reigned. They are today under the sovereign rule of Jesus, though they are not in the church of our Lord on earth. They are under the kingdom reign of Jesus, but not in the church.

When a saint dies, he does not cease being in the kingdom of Jesus. The dead are simply in another realm of the kingdom wherein they are with Jesus and under His care (Ph 1:23). They are in a disembodied state, and as us, looking for the end of all things. They are looking for the new heavens and earth that is to come (2 Pt 3:13).

B. The true Israel by faith:

Peter, Nathaniel, Simon, and a host of faithful Jews during Jesus’ ministry, were the children of the sovereignty of God about which Jesus spoke in the parable of the Tares in Matthew 13:24-30,36-43. This parable, as well as the other parables of Jesus, must be understood in the context of Jesus’ ministry to the Jews. This is brought out in Matthew 21:45 where Matthew recorded the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders after His par-

able of the Tenants. Matthew stated, *“Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His **parables**, they perceived that **He was speaking of them**”* (Mt 21:45).

The word “parables” in this passage is **plural**. Therefore, Jesus not only spoke of the chief priests and Pharisees in the parable of Matthew 21, He also spoke of them in statements as Matthew 8:11,12 and the other parables. The purpose of His parables was to call out of apostate Israel those who were children of Abraham by faith. It would be these who would accept the coming kingdom reign of Jesus that was about to be announced on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30.

In the parable of the Tares in Matthew 13, the “children of the kingdom” of God that existed before the ascension were those who were **children of Abraham by faith** (See Rm 4:11,12). This would include those Gentiles who walked by faith after the God-ordained law to themselves that Paul discussed in Romans 2:14. **Before the ascension, these children of the kingdom of the Father willingly came into the kingdom of the Son after the ascension.** When Jesus came, the Father gathered *“out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness”* (Mt 21:41). When this was done in the termination of national Israel, the true children by faith shone *“forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”* (Mt 21:43).

The interpretation of the parable of the Tares is significant. During Jesus’ ministry, He was gathering out of the Israelite kingdom those Jews by faith who

accepted Him. Those who accepted Jesus would shine forth in the sovereignty of Deity. These were the obedient, the assembly of believers who would eventually submit to the sovereign reign of Jesus. Kingdom reign originated from the Father, who was at the time of Jesus’ ministry, still the King and head of the Israelite kingdom. Therefore, Jesus refers to it as the “kingdom of their Father.” Kingdom reign over people on earth originated from the Father. It was the Father who set Jesus at His right hand and gave Him all kingdom authority (Ep 1:20-23). When this took place, the submitted of the kingdom reign of the Father before the ascension were transferred to the Kingdom of the Son at the time of the ascension (See Cl 1:13).

In the parable of the Tares, Jesus explained what transpired with Israel. God sowed the faithful (the good seed) in the world (the field). If we apply this to Israel alone, then the lesson is the same. The unrighteous (tares) dwelt among and deceived Israel. God allowed the false religious leaders to remain until the time of Jesus’ ministry. However, Jesus’ ministry was the time of the harvest. It was the end of national Israel, and thus the time for harvesting (Mt 21:39). Jesus was sending out His messengers (angels, from the Greek word, *angelos*). The unrighteous Jews were destroyed in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. They were baptized with the baptism of fire (See Mt 3:10,11). At that time, the church of the obedient were then manifested to be the true Israel of God (Mt 21:43).

C. Changing of the Kings:

When Jesus came to this world, it was time to take the unique kingdom relationship that Israel had enjoyed with the Father away from national Israel and give it to all nations. In the parable of the Tenants, therefore, Jesus explained to the chief priests and Pharisees that the unique kingdom relationship that Israel had with the Father was going to be taken from them and given to all nations. This was a pronouncement of Jesus during His ministry of the unique kingdom relationship that men would have with God through Him.

In the parable of the Tenants in Matthew 21:33-44, Jesus addressed the chief priests and elders who were the supposed spiritual guides of Israel (Mt 21:45). The Father had established a kingdom relationship with national Israel at Mount Sinai. The vineyard was planted. However, apostasy took over. The Father sent His prophets to correct and restore the people to the rule of the Sinai law. However, apostate Israel cast the prophets out of the vineyard. Jesus said, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!”* (Mt 23:37). Apostate Israel eventually crucified Jesus, the heir to the kingdom (Mt 21:37-39).

When Jesus finished giving the parable of the Tenants, He asked the chief priests and elders what they would do with the wicked husbandman. In Matthew 21:40 they answered that the husbandman should be destroyed. In making their judgment, they subsequently pronounced

their own destruction. In verse 43 they eventually realized that Jesus was speaking of them in this and other parables. As He prophesied in Matthew 24, Jesus carried out their self-condemnation in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

At the end of the parable of the Tenants, Jesus told the chief priests and elders, *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it”* (Mt 21:43). Jesus here spoke of His coming kingdom relationship with the obedient whom Peter later referred to as a “holy priesthood,” a “holy nation” (1 Pt 2:5,9). In Exodus 19:5,6 it is stated that the nation of Israel was God’s holy nation and holy priesthood to the world throughout the history of Israel. However, after the establishment of the church, the Father transferred the priesthood to the members of the body of Christ. Peter wrote of the responsibility of all Christians, *“You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, ... you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people”* (1 Pt 2:5,9).

Jesus, therefore, set the stage for the change to His sovereign reign. He also spoke of a visual evidence of the coming of that sovereignty. It would *“come with power”* (Mk 9:1). The apostles, after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, were to wait in Jerusalem until they were *“endued with power from on high”* (Lk 24:49). Jesus promised the apostles, *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon*

you ...” (At 1:8). When the power came, they would know that the kingdom reign of Jesus was established in heaven. The coming power was the manifestation on earth of the reign in heaven.

The kingship and headship of the kingdom had been changed by the time of the events recorded in Acts 2. The official announcement of the new kingship and headship of the sovereignty of Jesus was proclaimed by the apostle Peter on that historic day of Pentecost. At the time of this announcement, Jesus was in heaven at the right hand of the Father. Kingdom reign had been given to Him as prophesied in Daniel 7:13,14.

The events of Acts 2 took place during the days of the Roman kings. Therefore, it would be correct to affirm that the kingdom reign of Jesus was fulfilled

during the days of the Roman Empire and in place when Peter stood before the masses that had gathered in Jerusalem. Jesus had received dominion, glory and sovereign power over all things when He ascended to the Father. All kingdom reign prophecies concerning His kingship were fulfilled at the time of His ascension (See Lk 24:44).

Today, all prophecies concerning the kingdom reign of Jesus have been fulfilled. Any effort to say that these prophecies are yet to be fulfilled in the future, leads one to incorrectly understand the reason why God allowed man to know through prophecy that things would change when the Messiah came into the world. Jesus now reigns, and it is this reign that inspires people to submit to Him as King.

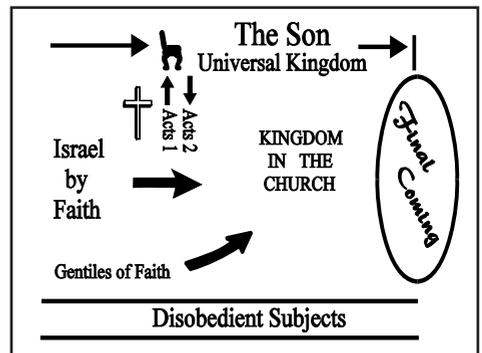
Chapter 7

KINGSHIP AND HEADSHIP OF THE SON

Jesus is now King and head with sovereignty over all things. After the ascension, the Father delivered to the Son all authority over all things. The extent of the Son’s sovereignty is magnified in the New Testament by the extent of the Father’s sovereignty before the ascension. Jesus is not coming again in the future to establish more power and authority than what He already has. He presently has all authority that was prophesied in the Old Testament. If He presently has all kingship authority that was prophesied, then He cannot be coming to

assume more authority in order to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies concerning His sovereign reign over all things.

If we fail to see the extent of the



Son's sovereignty at this present time, then we will minimize all those Old Testament prophecies that speak of the totality of the reign of Jesus. Some have failed to understand the extent of the present reign of Jesus, and thus they assume that He will in the future establish some earthly reign wherein He will militarily submit the world to His rule.

Others have limited the sovereignty of Jesus to the church alone in this age. Those who believe that Jesus will return and reign on this earth often fail to recognize the existing universal sovereignty of Jesus that was prophesied by the prophets. Those who believe this, unfortunately, have a limited view of the present reign of Jesus.

Since it is concluded by some that Jesus does not have universal sovereignty at this time as prophesied in the prophets, then some suppose that He must receive it yet in the future. However, when we understand the extent of Jesus' sovereignty at this time, then we must conclude that He will not receive more authority in the future.

The following points emphasize the extent to which Jesus is presently reigning over all things in the heavens and on earth. This reign will continue until the final coming. At the time when Jesus comes again, He will return all sovereignty to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A. The authority of Jesus over all:

The Son is now in a position where the Father has abdicated all authority to

Him. After His resurrection, and before His ascension, Jesus said, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth**" (Mt 28:18). This is the message that He proclaimed to His disciples (See Mt 11:27; Jn 13:3; 17:2). He possessed all authority in prospect of His heavenly coronation. After His ascension, His authority was activated when He ascended to the throne of David in heaven.

Jesus' sovereignty was brought into force when He was seated on the throne of God. On Pentecost, Peter stated that Jesus is both "*Lord and Christ*" (At 2:36). In Acts 10:36, he also stated that Jesus "*is Lord of all.*" Jesus is now **over all** (Rm 9:5).

Jesus cannot have more authority and power in the future than the "all authority and power" that He presently has. When we thoroughly comprehend the extent of His present authority, then we can understand that His supposed reception of more authority when He comes in the future cannot be true. In fact, in comparison to the extent of Jesus' authority now, **He would be brought down from His present position in the future if He were to come and reign upon this physical earth.** His authority is over the universe at this time. Any reign on this earth would be less than universal authority over all things.

B. The rule of Jesus over all:

In Daniel 7:13,14 God showed Daniel that because a kingdom was given to the Son of Man who ascended unto

the Father, all peoples and nations *“should serve Him.”* As previously stated, Philippians 2:8-11 also uses this same subjunctive mood to explain that all people **should** bow down to Jesus in this present age.

In Philippians 2:8-11 it is stated that God had **highly exalted** Jesus at the time Paul wrote the following words: *“At the name [authority] of Jesus every knee should bow”* (Ph 2:10). This would include things in the spirit world and the world of humanity. *“Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”* (Ph 2:11). Satan, demons, angels, kings and lords should confess the present kingship of Jesus. The fact that they do not does not mean that Jesus is not their Lord and King. The fact that they do not confess Jesus as Lord and King only manifests that they are insubordinate subjects of His kingdom.

Jesus is ruling over all powers. This would include Satan and his host of demons. He is ruling over them whether they like it or not. He rules *“with a rod of iron”* (Rv 2:26,27). Revelation 11:15 reads, *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* When Jesus ascended to assume kingship at the right hand of the Father, the Father gave all authority to Him in order that He rule over all the kingdoms of this world.

In Psalm 8:6 David made a statement in relation to God’s placing man in dominion over things of this earth. This statement is quoted by the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 2:6-8 and applied to the

present reign and authority of Jesus over all things. Hebrews 2:8 states,

***You have put all things in subjection under his feet.** For in that He put all in subjection under him, **He left nothing that is not put under him.** But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*

The phrase “all things” is all inclusive. Everything has been put under Jesus’ authority. Nothing has been left out. However, we look throughout the world and we do not actually **see** everything working in subjection to Him. We see only the saints in subjection to Jesus. Nevertheless, though we do not see men living in subjection to Jesus **this does not mean that He is not reigning over them.** When Jesus comes again, He will literally submit all things to the authority of His name. He will do such in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

We must emphasize the fact that because we do not see everything presently submitted to Jesus, this does not exclude Him from being King and Lord of all. Only the church of the submitted is the **visible** manifestation of the kingdom reign of Jesus. Christians are those who are in a submitted relationship with Jesus as their head. Disobedient subjects do not manifest this submission. Nevertheless, they are still subjects of His kingdom reign.

C. The headship of Jesus over all:

Ephesians 1:20-23 stresses the universal headship of Jesus over all creation.

As the Father was head over all things **before** the ascension (1 Ch 29:11,12), Ephesians 1:20-23 stresses the headship of Jesus over all things **after** the ascension.

Ephesians 1:20-23 teaches that when Jesus was resurrected and ascended to the “Ancient of Days,” the Father set Him “**far above**” the physical world and spiritual world. Jesus was given authority above every name, or authority. The Father “**put all things under His feet.**” Jesus is now the head of Satan and his demons. He is the head of all world governments. He is a universal head over all things “*to the church.*” In other words, He is a universal head over all authorities for the sake or benefit of His submitted subjects. This truth is very encouraging for Christians. We know that regardless of what happens in the world, Jesus is in control. Though we may not see His control in action in all things, we know that He is in control through the power of His sovereignty. We thus walk by faith, not by sight in how He now functions.

D. The kingship of Jesus over all:

Jesus is now King over a universal kingdom that includes all world governments, all demons, all angels, the disobedient of the world, and His body of submitted subjects. He “*is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*” (1 Tm 6:15). He is the “*ruler over the kings of the earth*” (Rv 1:5). John wrote that “*He is Lord of lords and King of kings ...*” (Rv 17:14;

see 19:16).

The statement, “*Lord of lords and King of Kings*” would make no sense if Jesus were King only of a “church kingdom” of the submitted. His kingship and lordship must extend beyond the members of the body simply because passages as 1 Timothy 6:15 and Revelation 17:14 plainly state such.

E. The reign of Jesus over all:

There are several key passages in the New Testament that teach the universal reign of Jesus. The thought of these key passages explains the totality, or extent of Jesus’ kingdom reign.

1. 1 Peter 3:22: Concerning Jesus, Peter stated that He “*has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*” All angels, authorities and powers are now subject to the present reign of Jesus Christ. This passage is not discussing future events. It is discussing the present reign of Jesus. Though the angels and authorities of this passage are not in the church, **they are still under the reign of Jesus.** Therefore, **all who are in the church are under the kingdom reign of Jesus, but not all who are under the kingdom reign of Jesus are in the church.**

2. Revelation 1:5: John stated that Jesus is “*the ruler over the kings of the earth.*” This passage states that Jesus is now reigning over all kings of the earth. As Paul wrote, Jesus is “*King*

of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tm 6:15; Rv 17:14). The passage uses the present tense. Therefore, this is a present reign of Jesus, not something that is yet in the future. Jesus was reigning over all things at the time John made the statement of Revelation 1:5. He is still reigning in the same capacity.

3. Revelation 12:5: In this context John sees a vision that portrays the birth of Jesus. The vision speaks of Jesus' birth and ascension to the right hand of God where He *"was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."* He is now on the throne of authority over all nations (See Rv 19:15). He now rules with divine authority.

4. 2 Timothy 2:11,12: Paul wrote, *"For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."*

Christians died with Jesus when they were crucified with Him on the cross of repentance. They were buried through baptism and resurrected with Him through their obedience to the gospel (Rm 6:3-6). Therefore, Christians are presently enduring with Jesus in the hardships of this life (See At 14:22).

Here is the point of Paul's statement in 2 Timothy 2:10,11: If Christians presently endure with Jesus, then they are **presently reigning with Him**. Paul says that we **reign in life** wherein we

endure the hardships of being the disciples of Jesus (Rm 5:17). Christians reign in life with Jesus who is presently reigning in heaven. In fact, Christians reign in life **because Jesus is reigning**. His reign is their encouragement to continue their endurance. If Jesus were not now on David's throne and reigning, then Christians would also not be reigning. They would have no impetus to endure their bearing of the cross.

There are kings and lords of this earth. Jesus is their King and Lord. One must understand that the church is only one part of Jesus' kingly reign. He is the King of all those in the church. He reigns over the church. He is the King of the members of the church because He is the King over all things. However, He does not reign over the church of disciples alone. He reigns over the members of the body because He is reigning over all things.

The church is defined as the universal body of those who have been called by the gospel out of a world of disobedient subjects. The reign of Jesus is within the members of His body because they have allowed the will of Jesus to be done on earth in their hearts as it is done in heaven. The church, therefore, is the submitted subjects of the universal sovereignty of Jesus.

Chapter 8

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

When Bible students believe that the kingdom of Jesus is no more than the existence of the church, they fail to understand the comprehensive nature and extent of the sovereignty of Jesus over all things. If we would affirm that the kingdom and church are the same realm of Jesus' sovereignty, then we are saying that Jesus has no kingship rule outside the realm of His people, the church.

Many biblical interpreters have failed to understand the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that emphasize the total sovereign reign of Jesus over all things. As a result, some have assumed that Jesus' universal sovereignty in prophecy is something that is yet to be fulfilled in the future. This belief has led to a host of unfortunate speculations concerning what will transpire when Jesus comes again.

Some have even speculated that Jesus will give up His sovereignty over all things that He now has in order to come and reign on this earth. Such a view fails to comprehend the immense realm of the galaxies over which Jesus now has control (Hb 1:3). Since Jesus is part of the Godhead, we would think it inconceivable that He would give up galactic control of the universe in order to come and reign on one speck of dust (the earth) in the midst of billions of heavenly bodies throughout space.

Those who maintain a future earthly reign of the Son of God actually dethrone

Jesus during His supposed one thousand year reign. Such beliefs are the result of removing Jesus from His present universal sovereignty in order to make Him King and head only over one group of people on earth. This is an unfortunate failure to glorify Jesus as He is now. Therefore, we must reconsider some important concepts that clarify the difference between the church and the present kingdom reign of Jesus.

One must remember that the words "church" and "kingdom" in the New Testament refer to different things in reference to God's relationship to that which has been created. Not only are the words different, but that to which reference is made is different.

A. *Ekklesia*:

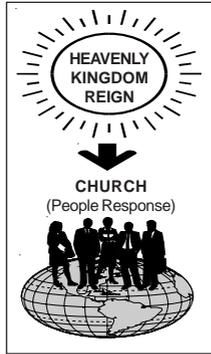
We use the English word "church" to translate the Greek word *ekklēsia*. *Ekklesia* refers to a "called out assembly" **of people**, whether actual in a local setting (At 13:43; 19:30), or universal in reference to membership of the global body of Christ (Cl 1:18). We must always remember that its use in the New Testament is to **people**.

In the New Testament, the church (*ekklēsia*) is a body of the people who have been called out of the world through their obedience to the gospel (2 Th 2:14). They are the church because they have submitted to the lordship of Jesus. The

church of God's people has been called out of the world of disobedient subjects to be a "holy nation" and a "royal priesthood" (1 Pt 2:5,9). Church is the response to the kingdom reign of Jesus.

Since the church refers to the people of God, then our understanding of the word must refer us to those on earth who have believed and obeyed something in order to become the people of God. The church is not a religious social club. It is not a religious institution. It is a group of people who have come into fellowship with one another because all have a common faith (Jd 3). The church is the fellowship of God's people because of what they have believed and obeyed.

The word *ekklesia* (church), as it is used in the New Testament, refers to those on earth who are bound in a relationship with one another because they have bound themselves to a common Savior through their obedience to the gospel. They are not bound to one another because of their common obedience to "church law." They are not bound to one another through any common religious traditions. Neither are they bound to one another because of their perfect keeping of the law mandated by their Head. They are bound to one another because of their common obedience to the gospel whereupon the Father has added them to one another (At 2:47).



B. *Basileia*:

This Greek word has a different meaning than *ekklesia*. Therefore, reference is to something that at least involves people, but is not confined to the response of people on earth. *Basileia* refers to the divine government of Deity over all that exists, including all the people of this world. The church is only a part of the universal *basileia* of Deity. All the church is under the universal *basileia* of Jesus, but not all the *basileia* is *ekklesia*. Jesus said that "many will come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 8:11). These three fathers of faith were dead at the time Jesus made this statement. Nevertheless, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were in the kingdom reign of Deity, even to this day. However, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not in the church. They have long passed on and now are with Jesus. Angels are subjects to the kingdom reign of Jesus (1 Pt 3:22). However, angels are not in the church. All the fathers of faith and angels were in the kingdom of the Father, but now they are in the kingdom of Jesus.

All the church is kingdom, but not all the kingdom is church. In other words, all those who are members of the church are under the kingdom reign of Jesus. On the other hand, all those who are under the kingdom reign of Jesus are not members of the church. Therefore, there is a difference between the kingdom reign of Jesus from heaven and the church of God's people on earth.

Chapter 9

KEY KINGDOM PASSAGES

The New Testament passages that are reviewed here must be interpreted in view of the universal sovereignty of Jesus that was prophesied in the Old Testament. Failing to find in the New Testament fulfillment of these prophecies that refer to the reign of Jesus and His universal sovereignty, stifles our understanding of the present reign of Jesus. Therefore, we must challenge ourselves to rethink those passages that we have failed to understand in reference to the present reign of Jesus. We must reconsider these passages in the context that Jesus is now reigning over all things.

1. Matthew 16:18,19. One of the key passages in the New Testament that separates the concepts “kingdom” and “church” is Matthew 16:18,19. Consider closely what Jesus actually said in this passage. In verse 18 Jesus was talking about **His church** (His people). He was talking about those who would base their faith on the fact that Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (See vs 16). In verse 19, however, He was talking about **sovereignty**. He was discussing the binding and loosing of divine law.

CHURCH (PEOPLE) PASSAGE

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

KINGDOM (REIGN) PASSAGE

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

a. The church passage (vs 18): Jesus said that He would build His body of people upon the “rock” of what Peter, in the context, confessed. That confession was, “*You [Jesus] are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mt 16:16). Jesus was the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecies (Lk 24:44). He was the Messiah (Christ). He was proved to be the Son of God by miraculous works (Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; At 2:22). Therefore, He was sent from God.

When men believe and accept the messiahship and sonship of Jesus, they should submit to His lordship. If they submit, they become the church of the submitted. The church of God’s people exists, therefore, because Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God. If Jesus were not the Messiah and Son of God, then the church would have no greater right to exist than a secular social club. However, because people have based their faith on Jesus as the Christ and Son of God, they are the universal body of God’s people. Matthew 16:18, therefore, is discussing the response of people to the evidence of Jesus’ messiahship and sonship.

b. The kingdom passage (vs 19): The conjunction “and” between verses 18 and 19 turns our attention to another subject. In verse 19 Jesus is discussing the authority (“key”) to bind and loose sovereign law. The kingdom (sovereignty) originates from heaven (“of heaven”). The tense of the verbs that are used here, and translated “will be bound” and “will be loosed,” are future perfect indicative. In other words, whatever Peter and the other apostles would bind as law on earth through inspired words (see Mt 18:18), **would have already been bound in heaven**. This would be true because they spoke under the guidance of the Holy Spirit from heaven (See Jn 16:13; 14:26).

The apostles did not originate divine law. **They simply revealed the already existing law of the kingdom reign of Jesus.** Peter was given the keys, or authority, to make the first official announcement of the sovereignty of Jesus. However, all the apostles spoke by inspiration in revealing to man the authority (law) of the sovereign reign of heaven.

Matthew 16:18 is discussing the individuals (the church) who would submit to the fact of the sovereignty of Jesus. Matthew 16:19 is discussing the fact of the sovereignty of Jesus that was to come, as well as deliverance of the law of that sovereignty. In this context, “church” refers to believers. “Kingdom” refers to that to which they submitted. Law proceeds from the sovereign rule (kingdom reign) in heaven. Church is the body of those on earth who have responded to the kingdom reign.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Peter exercised the authority and privilege that Jesus had given to him in Matthew 16:19. He announced the ascension of Jesus to the throne of David. He preached the gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus), and concluded with the messiahship and lordship of Jesus (See At 2:22-36).

In Acts 2:36 Peter stated, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

Jesus is now Lord over all things. He is the Christ (Messiah). Luke records in Acts 2:37 the response of believing hearts who recognize these two facts. *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart”* When men and women understand that Jesus is Lord over all things, they should submit. Those on Pentecost did not submit to the announcement of some ecclesiastical organization. They recognized and responded to the lordship and sonship of Jesus. They did not submit to the dictates of a religious group of people. They submitted to Jesus, and by their submission they were added to God’s people (At 2:47). They were, by their submission, therefore, the church of Christ.

The two facts of Jesus’ lordship and sonship are the foundation facts upon which men are drawn to submission, and on which the people of Christ stand. Therefore, Matthew 16:18 was fulfilled when men and women first based their faith on the sonship and lordship of Jesus who reigns over all.

In Acts 2:38 Peter stipulated that if anyone would respond to the lordship of Jesus, he or she must submit to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (the gospel) by immersion in water for forgiveness of sins (At 2:38; see Rm 6:3-6). On the occasion of this Pentecost, about three thousand people submitted (At 2:41). Thus, the church came into existence as the assembly of those who submitted to the lordship of Jesus by immersion in water in obedience to the gospel.

This family of believers is controlled by the will of Jesus. Jesus is the *“head of the body, the church”* (Cl 1:18). Paul wrote, *“Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body”* (Ep 5:23). Jesus was recognized as the head of God’s people when men submitted to the fact of His messiahship and lordship. When three thousand obedient believers did this in Acts 2, **the body of Christ began**. Therefore, the church officially began in Acts 2 with Jesus’ headship over those first disciples who obediently submitted to Him as Lord and Christ.

Jesus’ actual headship over His people began when people first submitted. He could not have been head over that which did not exist. Jesus was first made head over all things (Ep 1:22). The headship of Christ over people could only begin after the Head was given control over all things. His body of people began when men and women submitted to the first official announcement that Jesus was Lord in heaven and reigning on David’s throne over all things. In other words, the church is not an institutional organi-

zation that was established before there were any submitted subjects to the kingdom reign of the Son of God.

2. John 3:3-5: Jesus said to Nicodemus, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* The phrase “born again” refers to one submitting to the will of God by obedience to the gospel. This is the conversion of the disobedient subjects of the kingdom reign of Jesus. What Jesus is saying, therefore, is that unless one submits to His sovereign reign (“born again”), he cannot **“understand”** (see), that is, participate in or realize His reign in his heart. Those who do not allow Jesus to reign in their hearts, do not perceive the kingdom reign of Jesus. They do not enjoy the security of His sovereignty.

Those who are obedient can “see” His kingdom reign. The same use of the word “see” is in Luke 9:27: *“But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see [experience or participate in] the kingdom of God.”* Those immediate disciples of Jesus would see the masses of obedient believers submitting to the sovereign reign of Jesus. On the first day of the official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus in A.D. 30, the first disciples saw about three thousand submit to the reign of Jesus.

When people understand that the cross of Jesus was for their sins, and that His resurrection was for their hope, then they respond to this good news by immersion in water for the remission of their

sins (At 2:38,41). Unless one is drawn to the cross for redemption, he will not allow the reign of Jesus in his heart. He will not be crucified with Christ. He will not be buried and resurrected with Christ (Rm 6:3-6). When one does not respond to the cross, then one does not perceive the significance of the cross.

Jesus said in John 8:51, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death”* (See Rv 18:7). To “see” emphasizes the meaning that one either does not perceive or experience the essence of something. In John 3:3 the meaning of “see” refers to one recognizing and participating in the real essence of the kingdom reign of Jesus.

In John 3:5 Jesus further explained to Nicodemus, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”* Unless one submits (“born again,” that is, “born of water and the Spirit”), he cannot “enter” the kingdom. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot participate in the sovereign reign of Jesus, and thus, receive all spiritual blessings from His kingdom reign.

One enters into a submissive relationship with King Jesus at baptism. He thus participates in the kingdom reign as an obedient subject. When one obeys the gospel, he enters into the body of Christ where he participates in all spiritual blessings of the kingdom reign of Jesus (See Ep 1:3).

To “enter” the kingdom is not like entering a house or room. The word “enter” must be understood metaphorically,

for Jesus is discussing something that is spiritual in nature. We would say that at conversion, one is coming (“entering”) into a **relationship** with Deity (Mt 28:19,20). This relationship is based on the will of the Father being done in the heart of a believer as it is done in heaven (See Mt 6:9). Once obedience happens, then the kingdom comes into the heart of the believer. It is within him through his own submission to King Jesus (See Lk 17:20,21). When we are in the presence of one who submits to the gospel by immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins, we **see** the kingdom of God coming (“presence”) into that individual’s life. That person has “entered” into a kingdom relationship with God upon his obedience to the gospel because of his or her voluntary submission.

The same thought is in Matthew 28:19 when Jesus spoke of one being baptized *“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* The Greek word *eis* (“in”) in this statement refers to one being baptized into a relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is metaphorically used in this sense. When one is born again, he enters into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Though one is under the kingdom reign of Jesus before he is born again, he comes into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit only when he obeys the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Rm 6:3-6).

3. Colossians 1:13: The Holy Spirit wrote through Paul, *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness*

and translated us **into** the kingdom of the Son of His love.” This is the same thought as John 3:5. At the time of one’s immersion, he comes into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The context of Colossians 1:13 is crucial in understanding what Paul is saying in this particular verse. This verse begins what is one of the most precious sections of scripture in the Bible concerning the greatness of Jesus. Paul said,

By Him all things were created ... all things were created through Him and for Him ... He is before all things ... in Him all things consist ... who is the beginning ... in all things He may have the preeminence (vss 14-18).

In the context of Colossians 1, Paul is exalting the deity and sovereignty of Jesus.

Verses 12 & 13 are transitional verses in the context of chapter 1. In the first part of the chapter Paul discussed the spiritual situation of the saints. However, when he comes to verses 12 & 13, he turns to the sovereignty of Jesus. It is in verses 12 & 13 that he takes our minds from the Father who “qualified us” to the kingdom reign of Jesus who rules over us. In verse 13 Paul begins an exaltation of Jesus. Emphasis is on Jesus, not the saints. The saints have been transferred unto the kingdom reign of Jesus who is now King and head over all things.

The word “translated” in verse 13, according to *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, means “to transpose, transfer, remove from one place to another.” It would be

better if the meaning of this definition were translated into the verse. This is why the *New American Standard Version* translators placed in the footnote the word “transfer.” Paul is saying that the Father **has transferred the obedient unto the sovereignty of Jesus**. This transfer took place collectively when Jesus ascended to the throne of God in heaven. It happens individually every time someone obeys the gospel and is transferred out of the world of sin into the body of Christ.

The word “into” is from the Greek word *eis*. This word carries with it the meaning “to,” “unto” or “toward.” Paul is saying, therefore, that **the obedient have been transferred unto the sovereignty of the Son**. The *International King James Version* reads, “*He ... has transferred us unto the kingdom ...*”

The Father reigned over all things before the ascension. He was the universal King and head over all things. Jesus is now King and head over all things, for the Father has transferred all authority to the Son. The Father ...

... raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church (Ep 1:20-22).

When the Father had accomplished this with the Son, **He then transferred all the obedient unto the sovereignty of the Son**. This is what Paul is saying in Colossians 1:13. This is the context of the passage. Since we are now under

the sovereignty of Jesus, Paul then explains in verses 14-18 the galactic sovereignty of the One we are serving.

4. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: In the context of verses 24-28 of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is discussing the bodily resurrection. When he comes to verses 24-28, he wants to reassure us that since Jesus now has authority over all things, He has all things under control.

In the context of 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Paul discusses the end of time. Jesus will reign with all authority until after He concludes all events surrounding His final coming. **He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet** (vs 25). The word “till” states two things. First, Jesus is now reigning. All things are now under His control. Second, the reign that He now has will in some way be changed at some time in the future. In the context, the present reign will come to an end at the “end.”

We presently do not actually see all things put under Jesus’ reign. The Hebrew writer stated, *“For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things put under Him”* (Hb 2:8). However, Paul says that there is coming a time when disobedient angels, Satan, and all will be totally subjected to Jesus’ sovereignty. He will put *“an end to all rule and all authority and power”* (1 Co 15:24). Because Jesus now has all authority, He has the power to put an end to all other authority and power. He thus allows things to be as they are at this time in order to accomplish the eternal plan of God.

After the work of Satan is accomplished, there will be no more need for his presence in the environment of the righteous. If Jesus did not possess universal authority and power, then certainly He would not be able to subject all other rule and power. If He did not have such authority, then certainly He would not be reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords (See 1 Tm 6:15). He would not be able to terminate the existence of Satan by casting him into hell (Mt 25:41).

When Jesus has subjected all rule, power and authority, **He will deliver “the kingdom to God the Father”** (1 Co 15:24). This statement is made in the context of the sovereign reign of Deity. The people of God are not under discussion here. **Jesus’ reign and sovereignty are under discussion.** We must also keep in mind that Jesus’ action to subject all things to His authority in the end **will not** be something that will transpire over a great period of time. All the events at the final coming will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (See 1 Th 4:13-18).

When Jesus has completely submitted all rule and destroyed the last enemy, death, then He will return sovereignty to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This will all happen instantly. Paul concluded,

Now when all things are made subject to Him [Jesus], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (vs 28).

That “God may be all in all” refers

us to the Godhead as it was before the incarnation of Jesus. Jesus now has all kingship reign over all things. At the end, however, this will be returned to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Again, reference here is not to the church (people), but to the sovereignty of Jesus that He now has. The church of subjects has no inherent authority to return to God when Jesus comes again.

In 1 Corinthians 15:28 Paul is not discussing handing over the church to the Father as a present. He is discussing handing over kingdom reign in order that “God may be all in all.” And God’s being “all in all” means that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be in control of all that will then exist throughout eternity.

Once we fully understand the difference between church (*ekklesia*) and kingdom (*basileia*), various scriptures take on a more consistent meaning. At the ascension of Jesus, kingship and headship were changed in heaven. Kingdom reign was transferred to Jesus, and thus the reign of Jesus was established.

In the transfer of kingdom reign from the Father to the Son, there was also the transfer of the disciples to the reign of the Son (Cl 1:13). It was in this context that the statement of God’s “adding to them” the newly baptized in Acts 2:47 must be understood.

The Father delivered all sovereign rule in the heavenly realm to the Son. All things were placed under His kingdom reign. Therefore, when one obeys the gospel, as those on the day of Pentecost, he comes into the church of the submitted because he has allowed Jesus to reign in his heart. In his submission, the kingdom is “seen.” One perceives the significance of the reign of Jesus when His life is transformed by the rule of Jesus in his heart. He can see the kingdom because kingdom is now within his heart.

Since the Father has delivered all kingdom reign to the Son, the obedient are transferred to the kingdom reign of Jesus upon their obedience. However, when the end of time comes, kingdom reign will be restored to the One who gave it to Jesus, that God may be all in all.

Chapter 10

CHURCH AND KINGDOM ESTABLISHMENT

Over 2000 years ago, the sovereignty of Jesus over all that exists was announced for the first time on earth on the day of Pentecost and in the city of Jerusalem of Palestine. This historic event took place in A.D. 30. The activities of this event are recorded in Acts 2. On this day when people first submitted to the first official announcement of the

kingdom reign of Jesus, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ began.

There are those, however, who believe that the church was not established in Acts 2. Some have taught that the *ekklesia* of the submitted was established by Jesus during His personal ministry and before His coronation as King. Others have taught that the church was estab-

lished during the days of the apostle Paul. All these teachings ignore the fact that people first submitted to the sovereignty of Jesus in Acts 2, a time when Jesus had finalized His earthly ministry and Saul (Paul) was a stringent adversary to anyone who claimed allegiance to the carpenter from Galilee. Our challenge as biblical interpreters is to determine the time when men and women on earth first submitted to King Jesus. When this is determined, then we can be assured that Jesus was reigning as King of His kingdom before there were those who submitted to His kingship.

A. Principal concepts:

When the Holy Spirit started to edify the early disciples after Acts 2, one of the primary subjects He revealed to them was the nature of who the ascended Jesus was as the King of kings. In order for these disciples to grow in their faith in the midst of a world of idolatry, it was imperative that they fully appreciate the incarnate and ascended Jesus who had authority over all things. He was not just another god among a pantheon of either Greek or Roman gods. He was a reigning King who would come and judge the world according to the authority of His word (Jn 12:48).

As the early evangelists traveled from city to city, they taught “*that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*” that was to come (At 14:22). They taught the disciples, “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer per-*

secution” (2 Tm 3:12). The entire theme of John in Revelation was to reassure the early Christians that they would eventually be victorious even while enduring the persecution of the Roman state (Rv 2:10; 14:18). John reminded the persecuted:

These will make war with the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings. And those who are with Him are called and chosen and faithful (Rv 17:14).

In the heat of persecution, every Christian must remember that Jesus is presently Lord of all lords of this world. He is the ultimate King of all kings. We have already received the victory through Him.

There are some major concepts on which Christians must focus in the New Testament in order that they fully appreciate who Jesus now is and His function as King and Lord of the galaxies. These are fundamental teachings that the Holy Spirit wanted all Christians to know in order that we not be discouraged in a hostile world where our faith is constantly under attack.

In the remaining chapters of this book, we must focus on prophecy and fulfillment in reference to the kingdom reign of Jesus. Once the Old Testament prophecies are understood to have been fulfilled in the present sovereign reign of Jesus, then little problem remains concerning our understanding of the difference between the nature and existence of the church and the kingdom. We can find comfort in the fact that Jesus’ reign

extends far beyond His reign over His people. We could conclude that the body of Christ is the evidence of the kingdom reign of Jesus in heavenly places.

Much of the problem biblical interpreters have in understanding Old Testament prophecy is in the area of understanding the difference between the kingdom reign of Jesus and His body of disciples. A great deal of emphasis of prophecy is placed on the kingdom reign. In fact, we would say that the primary emphasis in prophecy is on the kingdom reign of the Messiah. The reason for this is simple. As a result of the kingdom reign of the Messiah, **men and women would submit to the authority of His kingship**. A new spiritual Israel would be established as a result of this submission. In this sense, therefore, the church is mentioned indirectly in most Old Testament prophecy because the kingdom reign of Jesus is the primary focus of the prophecy that would result in the establishment of the new "Israel" of God.

If Jesus were not King and head over all things, then His church of disciples would never exist. It would not exist simply because there would be no King to which people on earth must submit. The existence of the church of the submitted is the visible evidence of the existence of the kingdom reign of the Messiah. For this reason, there needed to be little direct emphasis in prophecy of the church itself. The church would be the natural result of the reign of King Jesus.

B. The nature of the kingdom of Jesus:

The nature and existence of what the church is and the universal kingdom of Jesus necessitates their existence at and after the ascension of Jesus. The Father reigned until the ascension. He then gave all authority to the Son at the ascension (Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-23). The Son now reigns over all things. The church came into existence when men and women on earth first submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus when it was first announced on earth. Therefore, **the church exists because of the reign of Jesus first existed**. The reign of Jesus came into existence when Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, but was not announced on earth until a week later on the day of Pentecost.

According to Daniel 7:13,14, Jesus activated His kingdom reign **when He ascended to the Father to be seated at His right hand**. However, His body of submitted disciples (church) only began in Acts 2 when men and women first submitted to the first official announcement of Peter that the crucified Jesus had been made Lord and Christ at the right hand of God (At 2:36). When repentant believers submitted to the kingship and lordship of Jesus at the time it was officially announced by Peter, the church came into existence with the baptism of about three thousand submitted people. When men and women recognized the kingdom reign of Jesus from heaven, they submitted to His authority by their compliance to what the King required for remission of all sins that separated them from the King (Is 59:1,2; At 2:38).

1. The nature of the kingdom: Daniel 7:13,14 was a prophecy that when Jesus ascended to the Father, He would at that time be given “dominion, glory, **and sovereignty.**” Ephesians 1:20 also affirms that when God raised Jesus up from the dead, He “... *seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.*” It is in heaven that Jesus was “*seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*” (Hb 8:1).

The ascension took place about seven days before the announcement was made that Jesus had ascended to be seated on the throne of David (See At 1). Daniel’s prophecy, and the declarations of New Testament fulfillments, indicate that Jesus began His sovereign reign over all things when He ascended to the Father. It is because of this that the ascension is the center of reference concerning the change of the kingdom reign and headship of Deity from the Father to the Son. This was the time when those of faith in the Father before the ascension were transferred to the kingdom reign of the Son (Cl 1:13).

Jesus now reigns as **King** of His kingdom (At 17:7; 1 Tm 6:15; Rv 1:6; 17:14). Kingship and kingdom refer to **authority and rule** by law. Before the events of Acts 2, and before His ascension, Jesus had already been given all authority by the Father (Mt 28:18). That authority gave Him the right to rule over all things. Therefore, **the kingship and universal kingdom reign of Jesus refer to Jesus’ government rule over all creation that began when He was coronated as King at the ascension.**

Christians, as well as all mankind, Satan, demons and angels are now under the authority of this kingship (1 Pt 3:22). This kingdom reign was all in place before it was officially announced on earth on the day of Pentecost.

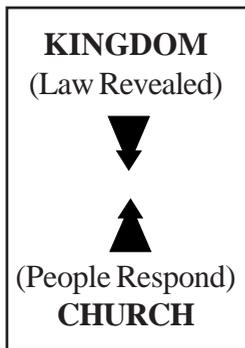
The word “kingdom” refers to the universal authority of Deity over all things. This universal authority of Jesus began at the ascension. This kingdom reign was **officially** introduced to the world in Acts 2. When men submitted to this kingdom reign, the church began.

In Acts 2 Peter stated that Jesus was “*a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him*” (At 2:22). Peter then stated that God had already raised Jesus up and seated Him on David’s throne in order to reign as King (At 2:24,25,29,30). God had already made Jesus **Lord and Christ** by the time of the events of Acts 2. Peter stated, “*God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ*” (At 2:36). The verb in this statement is past tense. **Jesus was already reigning as King and Lord when Peter made the statement.**

If the church and the kingdom are the same, then we would have the church existing before Acts 2 and at the time when Jesus ascended to the Father. Therefore, it is important to understand that **the word “church” refers to people on earth, whereas the word “kingdom” refers to the reign of Deity from heaven.** The people (the church) did not submit to the kingdom announcement of Jesus before it was made

in Acts 2. However, the kingdom reign of Jesus began when He ascended to the right hand of God, which event took place about seven days before the events of Acts 2. This all happened in fulfillment of Daniel 7:13,14.

Acts 2 was the official public announcement of the already established kingship and reign of Jesus. Acts 2 was the official beginning of the kingdom reign of Jesus in the lives of men on earth, though Jesus' heavenly reign over all things began at the ascension. From the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, all men were to listen to Jesus' words and be obedient to His kingdom rule (See Jn 12:48). Those who submitted to His lordship by being immersed in subjection to the authority of His name, were called His people, the church. In other words, the church is the called out assembly of obedient believers of the universal kingdom of Jesus. The church is made up of those



who have allowed the sovereignty of Jesus to rule in their hearts. The church is the assembly of those who recognize and submit to the universal lordship and kingship of Jesus. We would define

church, therefore, as the called out assembly of those who have allowed Jesus to reign "on earth" in their lives (Lk 17:20,21).

This is a spiritual reign. It has nothing to do with guns, bombs and state gov-

ernments. This was something the government official Pilate had a difficult time understanding (See Jn 18:33-40). It is still difficult for many religionists today to understand, for many desire that Jesus return to this earth and set up some state government over which He would reign as King.

2. The nature of the church:

Though Jesus' position and authority as King upon the throne of David in heaven was already in place at the time Peter made the announcement, His church of the submitted subjects had not yet begun. One must first understand the nature of the universal kingdom reign of Jesus before he can understand the nature of the church. Jesus was first King of kings and Lord of lords before there were subjects who had been baptized in response to the authority of His name.

In Acts 2:38 it was announced for the first time that men must be baptized for the remission of sins **in the name of Jesus Christ**. "In the name of Jesus" refers to the authority of Jesus' kingship and lordship. One submits to such by obedience to the gospel in immersion. In Acts 2 about three thousand people initially submitted to the authority of Jesus (At 2:41). They were thus baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." Because Jesus was reigning with all authority, individuals who submitted were baptized under the authority of this name.

The preceding point in reference to the authority of the name of Jesus was emphasized when Paul rebaptized about twelve disciples whom he found in the city of Ephesus. These disciples had pre-

viously been baptized “into John’s baptism” (At 19:3). But Paul revealed to them that John had taught that people “*should believe in Him [Jesus] who would come after him*” (At 19:4). “*When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus*” (At 19:5).

Luke records in Acts 2:47, “*And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved*” (IKJV). Those who were baptized in response to the lordship of Jesus were added to the first disciples who submitted on Pentecost. Therefore, **the church is the assembly of believers who have been called out of the world by their submission to the lordship of Jesus.** By our obedience we are “**receiving the kingdom**” of Jesus that cannot be shaken because we are accepting the kingship and lordship of Jesus (Hb 12:28).

The church resulted from the existence of kingdom reign. It was not the opposite. A group of people on earth who admired Jesus, **did not**, over a period of years come up with the idea to exalt Jesus as their leader, and then make Him their king. This is the natural process of the development of man-made religions. But in reference to the church, it was the opposite. Jesus was first established as the King and Lord, and then people responded. It was kingdom first, and then church. It was not church first, and then kingdom.

Because Kingdom reign was first, then this reign could be accepted into the hearts of men on earth. Hebrews 12:28 states precisely what Jesus meant in Luke

17:20,21 concerning the kingdom of God being within you. The Hebrew writer stated, “***Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.***” At the time this statement was written, there were people who were receiving the kingdom reign of Jesus. “Receiving the kingdom” is a continuous process. Every time the gospel was preached, people received the kingdom reign of Jesus when they obeyed the gospel.

When people receive the kingdom reign of Jesus by submission to His sovereignty, the kingdom comes to them in the sense that Jesus reigns in their hearts through their submission to His sovereignty in heaven. The kingdom came into the hearts of men and women on Pentecost when about three thousand **received** (accepted) the kingdom reign of Jesus that was announced by Peter.

Peter’s audience responded because they were “cut to the heart.” They then asked, “*Men and brethren, what will we do?*” (At 2:37). We must not forget that they responded to the message of the sovereign reign of King Jesus that Peter had just proclaimed. Their obedient response was identified by their baptism. But their initial response was in reference to the fact that God had raised up this Jesus whom they had crucified, and then seated Him on David’s throne. It seems that we today would be more successful in following the example of Peter’s message.

Our misunderstanding has always

been that we confused the time of the beginning of the reign of Jesus in heaven with the time of the beginning of the kingdom reign of Jesus in the hearts of men. Jesus' reign had already begun in heaven by A.D. 30 and the day of Pentecost. When the will of the Son was done on earth as it was done in heaven (Mt 6:10), then the kingdom reign came to earth and was manifested in the obedience of those who revealed their submission to Jesus through baptism. We would say, therefore, **that the church is the serendipity of the kingdom reign of Jesus.** The church is not the kingdom itself, though all those who are in the church live under the kingdom reign of Jesus.

Hebrews 12:28 uses the **present active participle** to convey this meaning at the time the Hebrew letter was written. At the time the letter was written, people were still receiving the kingdom in the sense that men and women were still becoming obedient to the kingdom reign of Jesus. We are still receiving the kingdom today. It is still our prayer that the kingdom come to different areas

of the world through men and women willingly submitting to Jesus' kingship (Mt 6:9,10).

We must change our initial message that we speak to the people. Instead of initially preaching "church" and "doctrine," it would be better to start first with preaching King Jesus. It would be best to remind people that God gave Jesus all authority over all things (Mt 28:18; see Jn 13:3; 17:2), and then seated Jesus as King over all. According to Daniel 7:13,14, Jesus ascended to the Father in order to be seated on the throne of David as King. By the time the prophesied outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred in Acts 2, Jesus' kingship and sovereignty were intact and awaiting official announcement by the inspired apostles. When King Jesus was announced on Pentecost for the first time in history, the world would forever be changed until the time of its end. People respond when they understand that the One who now reigns was crucified for their sins, but was raised and seated at the right hand of God to reign as King and high priest on their behalf.

Chapter 11

PROPHECY OF KINGDOM REIGN

The Old Testament prophets prophesied the beginning of the kingdom reign of Jesus. These prophecies pictured a universal sovereignty of the Messiah that would encompass the Messiah's rule over all things. When Jesus came, His mission was to convince the Jews that He was the prophesied Messiah, and thus the fulfillment of all prophecies related to the

Messiah.

What some biblical students fail to understand is both the extent of the kingdom reign of the Messiah that was prophesied and the fact that these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus. Some have understood the extent of the kingdom reign that was prophesied by the prophets, but they have failed to see their fulfillment in

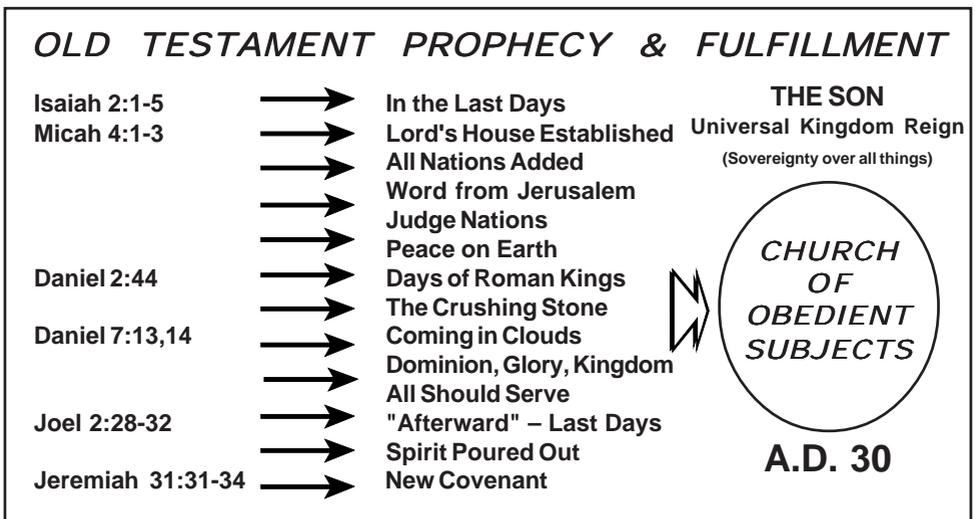
this present dispensation of Jesus' reign. The result of this misunderstanding is the theology that Jesus is coming again in order to complete the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning His kingdom.

The Old Testament prophets pointed the Jewish nation to a new covenant and law that would be established in the days of the Messiah. They prophesied to the Jews concerning a new order that would be revealed from heaven. The new order of God's relationship with mankind would be inaugurated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This new order would be established in the last days of national Israel and in the days of the Roman kings.

We must keep in mind that prophecy must be understood in the context in which it was originally given. In other words, we must first seek to understand prophecies by the terminology in which they were first given to Israel. We say this because prophecy is usually loaded with metaphors.

In order to understand a metaphor, one must first seek to understand the terminology of the prophecy through the eyes of those to whom it was first spoken. In the case of Old Testament prophecy, we must first seek to think like the Israelites who lived during the days of Daniel, Isaiah, Micah and the other prophets.

We must also understand that because prophecy was often spoken with the use of metaphors, **the prophecy could not be fully understood until its fulfillment.** Nevertheless, there was always enough clear information in the prophecy to allow the first hearers to know that something was coming. Because there was enough clear information in the prophecy when it was made, the people who experienced the fulfillment would know when the prophecy was fulfilled. Nevertheless, there was room for interpretation when the prophecy was first made. The Jews had a great deal of discussion about the prophecies through-



out their history before the prophecies were fulfilled.

Because some Jewish leaders had a wrong expectation for Israel during the time of Jesus, they incorrectly understood the reign of the Messiah. Their desire for the restoration of a physical nation of Israel led them to believe that the prophets prophesied that in some way a physical national Israel would be reestablished as it was in the days of King David and Solomon. They misunderstood the prophets, not because the prophecies were misleading, but because their desire for a restored national Israel was wrong. They allowed their overzealous nationalism to distort their understanding of the prophecies. Biblical interpreters make the same mistake today.

The prophecies that are listed in this chapter must first be understood in the context of their original historical terminology. The interpretation of the figurative language of the prophecies is revealed by their fulfillment. It is clearly evident that many Jews had a nationalistic understanding of the prophecies when they were first made, and thus they misunderstood the fulfillment of the prophecies. When the prophecies were eventually fulfilled, some still refused to apply the prophecies to Jesus (See Jn 5:36). Because of their hardness of heart, therefore, they refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah of Israel (Jn 1:11). The same is true of Jews today who do not accept Jesus as their reigning King.

A. Prophecy of Isaiah and Micah:

The prophecies of Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-3 are parallel. Both prophets discussed the same future events. Isaiah and Micah foretold of the coming existence of the new kingdom and the response to this reign. They discussed the effect that the kingdom reign of God would have on men throughout the world. Note carefully the particulars of this unique prophecy:

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Is 2:2-4).

The following are the key points to remember concerning the preceding prophecy of Isaiah, which points will be discussed in detail in the following chapter:

1. In the last days: Isaiah affirmed that the events of his prophecy would

occur in the last days, which days were referred to by other prophets and Peter (Jl 2:28; At 2:16,17). In view of the fact that this prophecy was fulfilled in the days of the Roman kings, then we must conclude that Isaiah referred to the **last days of national Israel that took place in the days of the Romans kings**. Reference is not to the beginning of the “church age,” or to a brief time before the final coming of Jesus.

2. The “mountain” would be established: The passage does not say that the Lord’s house is that which will be established. Isaiah stated that the **mountain** of the Lord’s house would be firmly established above every power. “Mountain” is metaphorical of the power of the reign of the Lord that would be established above all kings and lords of this world. (Daniel said the same thing in Daniel 2.)

“Established” is a word depicting the idea that the Lord’s reign would be firmly implanted in heaven and in the hearts of man. “House” is a metaphor taken from the temple, which to the Jews, signified the presence of God among His people. However, the house to come about which Isaiah spoke was not a physical structure. It would be spiritual in nature. Isaiah was using the word “house” as a metaphor to indicate that the presence of God would be among or in His people as the Jews understood His presence to be among them through the temple.

The result of the establishment of the mountain (kingdom reign) would be that people from all nations would flow unto it. Men and women would respond to the kingdom reign of the Lord that

would be established far above all kings and kingdoms of this world.

3. All nations will flow unto the house of God: The Lord’s house would not be composed of a single nation of people as in the Old Testament. It would go beyond the nation of Israel. Peoples from all nations of the world would come into its shelter because of the overwhelming influence of the mountain. This part of the prophecy explains the evangelistic nature of the people who would flow unto the house of God to come. People from all nations would come unto the house of God because people of the house of God would go into all nations.

4. The word would go from Jerusalem: With the nation of Israel, the law originated at Mount Sinai. However, in the future, the word would originate in and go from the city of Jerusalem in Palestine. Again, here is the evangelistic nature of the new order. The word concerning the existence of the “mountain” would be spread abroad to all nations. It would not be confined to one nation as Israel in the Old Testament. It would not be confined to one culture of people. It would not be confined to a specific location. The going forth of the word would begin in Jerusalem. But once it had gone forth, it would go from any location of the world.

5. He will judge among the nations: God would send judgment among the nations by the spreading of His word. The judgment would go forth with the authority of the word. When men either accepted or rejected the word, judgment would come into their lives.

6. *Peace would supplant war:*

The people who would come unto the mountain, and thus, come into the shelter of the universal kingdom reign of God, would enjoy peace. They would enjoy peace because in God's house there would be no distinction of nationalities. In national Israel, nationhood gave rise to physical conflict. However, in the new order, brotherhood of all people would give rise to peace and harmony among all men. Men would not seek to learn how to destroy their brothers, but learn to have peace on earth among men.

B. Prophecy of Daniel:

The key concepts of this prophecy were discussed in chapter 4. In reference to the subject under discussion here, we need to reemphasize Daniel 2:44,45 and Daniel 7:13,14. These two very important prophecies of the Old Testament mark the time when the kingdom reign of Jesus (according to Isaiah, "the mountain") would be established.

1. Days of the Roman kings: The last kingdom of the prophecy of Daniel 2 was the Roman kingdom. Daniel prophesied in Babylon concerning the coming and going of future kingdoms of the world, even the great Babylonian kingdom, whose existence Daniel prophesied, would be terminated. In this historical context, God revealed through Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2 that it would be during the days of the Roman kings that He would **set up sovereign power that could not be destroyed by**

men on earth (Dn 2:44). In other words, as opposed to those earthly kingdoms that are destroyed in the process of nations in conflict with one another in history, the sovereignty of Deity would go beyond the kingdoms of this world, and thus, be untouched in reference to man on earth affecting its establishment.

2. The stone that would crush the image: In the vision of Daniel 2, a "stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces" (Dn 2:34). Herein is the origin and impact of the people of God who submit to the authority of the kingdom reign of Jesus. The power of the stone to crush was in the strength of the kingdom that was not "made with hands," that is, it did not originate by the invention of men.

The stone (the church) crushed the great image of the vision. "And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dn 2:35). The strength of the stone was not in its own power, but in the power of the kingdom reign. The stone itself had a great impact on all people of the world. It became a mountain of strength because of the commitment of the subjects.

In Daniel 2:44, Daniel interpreted the establishment of the kingdom reign being set up in the days of the Roman kings. However, in Daniel 2:45 he interpreted the impact of the stone. The kingdom of verse 44 is different from the stone of verse 45. The power of the kingdom would be manifested in the crushing impact of the stone.

3. Coming in the clouds of

heaven: The emphasis of Daniel's vision of chapter 7 is the establishment of the kingdom reign. In this vision, Daniel gives us a picture of kingdom reign from heaven's point of view. Daniel views the events as if he were in heaven.

The One who is identified as the "Son of Man" came (ascended) unto the Ancient of Days (the Father). To the Son of Man was given **dominion, glory and sovereignty**. Unto this dominion, glory and sovereignty all peoples **should** submit. They should because His dominion, glory and sovereignty are everlasting, that is, they are sure and will last throughout their intended time of duration. The kingdom reign of the Son would not pass away as the kingdom reigns of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece or the Roman Empire. Neither will His kingdom reign be destroyed as the kingdoms of men on earth.

C. Prophecy of Joel:

Joel turned the Jews' thinking toward a specific time and event that would mark the beginning of a new relationship between God and man. In Joel 2:28-32 Joel prophesied,

And it shall come to pass afterward [last days] that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Jl 2:28,29).

1. It will come to pass afterward:

In Acts 2 when Peter quotes this passage, he defines Joel's statement here to mean "the last days." Therefore, reference would be to the last days of national Israel in the context in which he applied the fulfillment of the prophecy.

The "outpouring" would take place in the last days of something. As will be pointed out in the following chapter, it is necessary to conclude that Joel was speaking of the last days of national Israel. Since the event would take place **in the last days, the last days would already be in existence when the outpouring happened.**

The fact that these things would take place "afterward" indicates that there would be a time when the Spirit would not work in an inspirational manner, or at least, reference was to **a time after God had completed all His ministry through the nation of Israel.** There would be a time when Israel must depend on the revelation of the word of God, and not on their special covenant relationship they had with God at the time the prophecy was made.

From Malachi to the coming of Anna, Simeon and John the Baptist, there was a silence of inspirational work by the Spirit. After this silence, Joel said that something great would happen in reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Israel waited in anticipation for that which was to come. They did not fully understand what God had in mind. However, enough was revealed in the prophecy to stimulate anticipation in their minds and hearts concerning something great that was coming. This anticipation

was what carried Israel through hard times. It also prepared them to accept the coming of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

It would be in times “afterward” that these things about which Joel spoke would take place. Anna, Simeon and John spoke inspired messages at the time of the birth of Jesus. They were inspired by the Spirit to speak these messages **before** the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2. Therefore, the outpouring that Peter identified with the events of Acts 2:1-4 were about things other than the miraculous inspiration of God’s messengers.

2. Outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh: An event and action is here prophesied. The event would be the outpouring of the Spirit. The event would be that the Spirit would be **poured out** upon all flesh. The action of this event, therefore, would leave no question in the minds of the Jews concerning the fulfillment of that which was prophesied.

During the Old Testament times, the Spirit was poured out only upon a select few, and that select few were Jews of Israel. God worked through His servants the prophets in whom He dwelt (Dn 5:11,14; 1 Pt 1:10-12), entered (Ez 2:1,2; 3:24), filled (Ex 31:3), and came upon through the Spirit (1 Sm 10:6,10). However, in the new age to come, **Joel said that the Spirit would be poured out upon all classes of people of Israel.**

But the fulfillment would not stop there. The Spirit would also be poured out upon the Gentiles. Men and women, young and old, maids and servants would receive the Spirit. As opposed to the out-

pouring of the Spirit on the special class and ethnic group of people in the Old Testament (the Jewish prophets), the Spirit would come upon all classes of all ethnic groups in the New Testament era (See At 10,11).

D. Prophecy of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah pointed Israel to a new covenant relationship that God would establish with the houses of Israel and Judah. This would be a new covenant because it would include all nations. It would be a contract based upon a new law.

1. The new covenant: At Mount Sinai, God established a covenant relationship with the nation of Israel. However, many years later Jeremiah prophesied concerning a new covenant. It would be a covenant with different laws. This new covenant would extend beyond the people of national Israel. The conditions for entry into this covenant relationship with God would be different than the old Jewish covenant. Read carefully what Jeremiah stated:

*Behold, the days are coming, says 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 that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with*

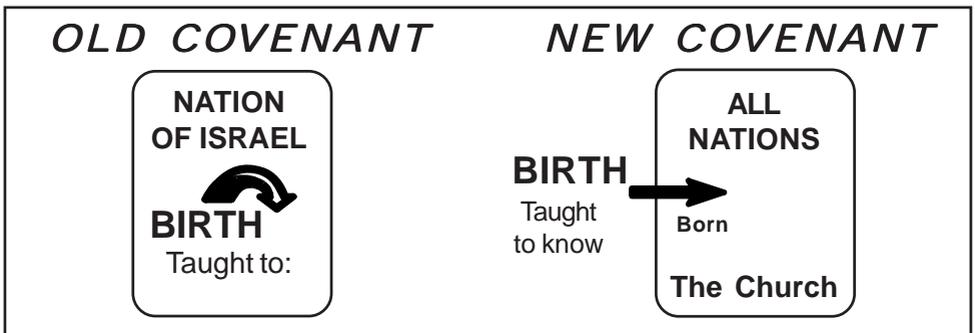
the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jr 31:31-34).

Under the old covenant one was physically born into an immediate covenant relationship with God because God had established a covenant with the nation of Israel. When a baby was born to a Jewish family, the newborn infant was in a covenant relationship with God simply because he was born of Jewish parents. This covenant had been established with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai.

As the Jewish children grew up, they had to be taught to know God and to know His laws that He had given for the Jews as conditions for keeping the covenant.

Under the new covenant, however, things would be different. One would be taught to know God and His laws **before he came into a covenant relationship with God**. One would be taught of God, and then the covenant would be established. As we will see in the following chapter, one would be taught the gospel, and then, he would come into covenant relationship with God.

All of the prophecies that have been listed in this chapter have their fulfillment in the kingdom reign of Jesus. All these prophecies pointed to a time when God would set up the kingdom of the Son. There are also details as to what would transpire at the beginning of the kingdom reign. As a result of this kingdom reign, men and women would respond with obedience to the sovereignty of Jesus. A new covenant would be established with the obedient. Their new King would reign through the authority of His sovereignty. All of this would take place in the last days of national Israel that took place in the days of the Roman Empire.



Chapter 12

PROPHECY FULFILLED

The Old Testament prophecies concerning the new kingdom reign of Jesus and the new covenant were fulfilled on the Pentecost of A.D. 30 with the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus. The church of subjects was born when men and women first submitted to the announced kingdom reign of Jesus.

A. Preparation for fulfillment:

The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are histories of events surrounding the Jews prior to the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The principal themes of these books are “Jesus, the Messiah” and “Jesus, the Son of God.” Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give a history of Jesus’ coming and how He preached the good news of the kingdom in order to turn the Jews to God and prepare them to accept the coming sovereign reign of the new

King.

John the Baptist was the voice of one crying in the wilderness in order to prepare the Jews for the coming Messiah. God had revealed to John that a sovereignty of Deity was near unto being established. He preached, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is **at hand***” (Mt 3:2; see Mk 1:1-8). The phrase “at hand” meant that it was near unto being manifested from heaven at the time the announcement was made. It was close. John was not speaking about something that would happen over two thousand years later. He was speaking of something that would transpire in his generation, though he would not be alive to experience it.

Jesus soon followed John with the same message by saying, “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel*” (Mk 1:15). Jesus taught His dis-



ciples that “*the kingdom of God has come near to you*” (Lk 10:9; see 11:20). In other words, the kingdom was at hand in the sense that Jesus’ sovereignty was close to them. In order to emphasize the fact that the manifestation of the sovereignty of Jesus was nigh unto being established and realized, Jesus said to the disciples, “*Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power*” (Mk 9:1 - ASV; see Lk 9:27).

In the preceding statement of Mark 9:1, Jesus clearly meant that the kingdom was not something that would be established hundreds of years after His ministry. Some of His immediate disciples would witness the existence of His sovereignty when it was revealed with power from heaven. They would see multitudes submit to the kingdom reign of God. Thousands would be obedient to Jesus’ kingship and lordship. The power of the gospel would be manifested in the lives of those who submitted to Jesus as Lord and Christ.

John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod in Matthew 14. Two chapters later in Matthew 16:18, Jesus said that He would build His body of people in the near future. The church of His people was not established in the days of John the Baptist, for the kingdom reign of Jesus was not established during John’s ministry or Jesus’ earthly ministry. John was dead when Jesus said that He would yet build His body of people through the authority of His kingdom reign.

After Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, He said to His apostles in Luke 24:49, “*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.*” A parallel statement is made in Acts 1:8. Immediately before Jesus’ ascension to the right hand of God, Jesus said to the disciples, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.*”

Both Jesus and John the Baptist built anticipation in their audiences for the revelation of the coming kingdom reign of Jesus and the subsequent establishment of His universal body of those who would respond to His reign. The kingdom would be manifested with power. The apostles would be endued with power. His power would be manifested in the lifetime of some of Jesus’ immediate disciples.

Jesus told His disciples that the prophecies must all be fulfilled.

These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me (Lk 24:44).

Jesus had prepared the disciples’ minds for the coming change of sovereign reign in heaven by the time He made the preceding statement. The One who was standing before them at the time, and making the above statements, would be the One who would have all authority and be head over all things. All prophecies concerning Him would be and were ful-

filled in just a few days after Jesus made this statement.

B. Fulfillment of Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-3:

Each prophecy that was discussed in the preceding chapter, and is listed here in the chart, was fulfilled in Acts 2. The following points explain the fulfillment of these prophecies in their historical setting on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem in A.D. 30.

1. Events of the last days: Hebrews 1:1,2 states that God spoke to the fathers through the prophets before the coming of Jesus. However, He “*has in these last days spoken to us by His Son ...*” (Hb 1:2). When Peter quoted Joel 2:28 in Acts 2:16,17, he said, “*But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days*” Therefore, **the last days of Israel were in existence when God poured out the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4.**

The phrase “last days” in the context of Acts 2 does not refer to the time of the “church age,” that is, an age that began with the establishment of the church in A.D. 30 and will extend to the end of time. The terminology of the statement emphasizes the fact that the last days were **in existence** at the time the Spirit was poured out.

Joel had said that **in the last days** God would pour out the Spirit. Therefore, Peter and the first disciples were in the last days at the time or moment the Spirit was poured out. If we say that the

phrase “last days” refers to the “church age,” then we must affirm that the church was in existence before Jesus ascended to the right hand of God to reign over all things. But the church of those who would respond to the kingdom reign of Jesus could not have been established before that to which the members submitted, that is, the kingdom reign of Jesus.

National Israel was eventually destroyed in A.D. 70. Hebrews 1:1,2 was written before that date. The Hebrew writer stated, “*God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.*” Therefore, God was speaking to men through Jesus during Jesus’ personal ministry. He was speaking through Jesus before Jesus’ death on the cross. He continued to speak through the inspired apostles and prophets after Jesus’ death and before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Though God continues to speak today through the inspired written word, this does not mean that Hebrews 1:1,2 refers to these times, though this is the last dispensation of God’s work on earth. Acts 2:16,17 refers to the last days of national Israel through which God poured out the Spirit and in which Jesus spoke to humanity. When Hebrews 1:1,2 was written, He was still speaking, for the last days of national Israel had not yet been completed.

2. The mountain of the house of God is established: In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said during His earthly ministry that His church of submitted subjects was yet in the future. However, in Acts 2:47 men and women were added to those who had submitted to the sovereignty of Jesus. In

Acts 5:11 the church is stated to be in existence. The church, therefore, was established sometime after Matthew 16:18, but before Acts 5:11.

Between Matthew 16 and Acts 5, Jesus ascended to the right hand of God (Ep 1:20-22). He was given dominion, glory and sovereignty (Dn 7:13,14). He was reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). To this "mountain" of sovereignty, men and women of all nations have responded. The church came into existence when people responded positively to the sovereign reign of Jesus. In the prophecy of Isaiah, "the mountain" is the sovereignty of the Son upon which the faith of the submitted (the church) is built.

Paul linked the phrase "house of God" with the "church of the living God" in 1 Timothy 3:15. "*But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the **house of God, which is the church of the living God.***" Since the church of the sovereign Christ is composed of those who are obedient to the word of Christ, then we must affirm that **the church began when people first submitted to the sovereignty of Jesus.**

Jesus ascended to the throne of David about seven days before Acts 2. Peter announced the ascension and reign in Acts 2. People heard this message and were subsequently obedient unto Jesus as the Christ and Lord (At 2:41). Thus, the church of submitted subjects began when people first submitted to the sovereign reign of Jesus. In Acts 2 about three thousand people first submitted to the king-

dom reign of Jesus. It was at this time, therefore, that the *ekklesia* of Christ was established.

3. All nations flow unto the house of God: In Mark 16:15 Jesus commanded His disciples, "*Go into **all the world** and preach the gospel to every creature.*" In Matthew 28:19, He likewise commanded, "*Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations***" Jesus died for the sins **of the world** (Jn 3:16). Therefore, His plea is "*whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*"

All people are invited through the preaching of the gospel to respond to the sovereign reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is "*not willing that any should perish but **that all** should come to repentance*" (2 Pt 3:9). Obedient believers from all nations of the world flow to the body of God's people through their obedient response to the gospel. The church, therefore, comes into existence wherever people respond to the gospel of King Jesus.

4. The word would go forth from Jerusalem: Jesus explained to His apostles in Luke 24:47 that the message of the gospel "*should be preached in His name to all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem.***" In Acts 1:8 He stated that the apostles would be His witnesses "*in **Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.***"

The preaching of the gospel event was first proclaimed by Peter in Jerusalem. From Jerusalem the members of the body were scattered throughout the world (At 8:4). As a result, disciples went

everywhere preaching the gospel of the kingdom (See At 8:4; Cl 1:23). Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled. The word did go from Jerusalem. The disciples fulfilled the prophecy by going forth to preach the good news of Jesus' death for our sins and resurrection for our hope.

5. He will judge among the nations: In John 12:48 Jesus said, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."*

One brings the judgment of Jesus upon himself according to his reaction to the word of Jesus. Jesus said, *"For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind"* (Jn 9:39). When one hears the word and rejects it because of unbelief, he judges himself, for it is the word of Jesus that he rejects that will judge him in the last day. This is why Paul stated the following to the Jews who rejected his message: *"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life ..."* (At 13:46).

God judges among the nations today through the authoritative word of His Son (See Hb 1:1,2). He will judge the world at the final judgment through Jesus and His word (At 17:31; Rm 2:16). Therefore, Jesus' right to judge among the nations of this present world by the preaching of His word is the fulfillment of the prophecies of both Isaiah and Micah.

6. They will learn war no more:

As opposed to physical warfare in the history of Israel, in the kingdom of Jesus there would be no physical warfare among men. In the kingdom, **Jesus brings peace among races**, *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us"* (Ep 2:14). In the church, Jesus gives peace of mind. Paul wrote, *"... and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Ph 4:7). Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* (Jn 14:27; see 16:33). Paul wrote, *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful"* (Cl 3:15). Through the sanctification of Jesus' blood, Christians have peace with God (Rm 5:1; Cl 1:20). In every sense of the word peace, therefore, Jesus is what Paul said of Him in 2 Thessalonians 3:16: *"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way."*

C. Fulfillment of Daniel 2:44,45 and 7:13,14:

Keep in mind that the prophecies of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are parallel. Both prophecies depict the establishment of the reign of Jesus in the days of the Roman kings.

1. Days of these kings: Paul wrote, *"But when the fullness of the*

time had come, God sent forth His Son ..." (Gl 4:4). When the time for the prophecies concerning the Messianic age were fulfilled, Jesus was born to set in motion God's eternal plan of redemption. Jesus was born when Palestine was a province of the fourth kingdom of the vision of Daniel 2. The fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire. According to Luke 3:1-4,23, it was during the rule of this kingdom, "*in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,*" that John the Baptist came forth preparing the way for Jesus. Six months after John began his ministry, Jesus began His ministry. Therefore, it was in the days of the Roman kings that God set up both the preparation and existence of the universal kingdom of Jesus.

2. The stone: In the vision of Daniel 2, the consummate power and glory of the three previous kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece were collectively represented through the Roman Empire. However, the "stone" that was cut out of the mountain of God's strength crushed the image by smashing the feet of iron and clay.

The church of God's people (the stone) permeated the great Roman Empire. Christianity went from a persecuted and illegal religion to the "official" religion of the Empire. What Rome could not destroy, it eventually joined. Nebuchadnezzar's vision of Daniel 2 was fulfilled. The people of God were established and their influence permeated, not only the Roman Empire, but also the entire world.

3. Coming in the clouds: When

Jesus had spoken His last words to the disciples on earth, "*a cloud received Him out of their sight*" (At 1:9). He "*ascended on high*" (Ep 4:8). He is now at the right hand of God—the place of sovereignty—in heaven (Ep 1:20).

In Daniel 7:13,14, Daniel prophesied that Jesus would receive dominion, glory and sovereignty. When Jesus did ascend, "*all principality and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named*" was made subject to Him (Ep 1:21). He is now King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). He "*has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him*" (1 Pt 3:22).

The prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14 was fulfilled in Jesus who ascended to reign on the throne of David. He is presently at the right hand of God, ruling as King of all things. Those who have submitted to this reign have received the kingdom reign of Jesus into their hearts (Lk 17:20,21). These are those who are now the people of God, for they have submitted to the One to whom was given dominion, glory and sovereignty over the galaxies.

D. Fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32:

This very significant prophecy pinpoints the time when God intended to start the new world order of His Son. What was prophesied by Joel began to unfold with the event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30.

1. “It shall come to pass afterward”: Peter stood up in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and boldly affirmed that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 was prophesied by Joel. This event took place **after** God’s 1500 years of historical work with the nation of Israel. In fact, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit represented the end of the old covenant with Israel. That covenant was annulled when the announcement was made of the new covenant that God had with all those who submitted to King Jesus (Hb 10:9).

The outpouring of the Spirit happened after the long years of inspirational silence that existed between Malachi, the last prophet of Israel, and the prophets Anna and Simeon at the time of the birth of John the Baptist. The Spirit was poured out after God had accomplished His work through national Israel. Peter identified the time in which the outpouring took place as the “last days” (At 2:16,17). He and the other disciples were in the last days of national Israel when the Spirit was poured out.

2. “Pour out My Spirit upon all flesh”: In verse 16 of Acts 2, Peter referred to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that had just taken place on that day (At 2:1-4). He said to the people, “*But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.*” He then quoted Joel 2:28-32.

This was an inspired interpretation that affirmed that Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled. Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem in A.D. 30. When men and women submitted to the first official announcement of the king-

dom reign of Jesus, the assembly of God’s people came into existence.

Some have wondered why God poured forth the Spirit in a visible manner as He did in Acts 2. He could have simply inspired the apostles to preach the gospel message. However, God knew that the disciples needed a new beginning. Everyone needed an objective statement that something new had just begun. Christians since Pentecost needed an objective point of reference to know that King Jesus was on the throne. Both inspiration and miraculous power were in the life of the disciples before Pentecost (See Lk 10:1-17). However, on Pentecost all truth was revealed to the apostles through the outpouring of the Spirit upon them (See Jn 14:26; 16:13). They were invested with the authority of the Spirit to lay hands on others so that they might receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (See At 8:18).

E. Fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31-34:

Jeremiah had prepared Israel for Pentecost and a change in covenants. The Hebrew writer identified the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah by quoting Jeremiah 31 and applying the statements of the prophecy to the dispensation of the new covenant. The fulfillment was in the new covenant of Jesus.

1. “A new covenant”: Jesus became the “*Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises*” (Hb 8:6). God has established a better covenant with His people,

a covenant that was established by the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. Because the blood of Jesus completely cleanses us of sin, then our eternal life is guaranteed by the blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:7). This is the better promise than that which was offered by the Sinai covenant.

The Hebrew writer stated in Hebrews 8:7, *“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.”* The first covenant and law was perfect for their purpose. Paul said of the Sinai law, *“Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good”* (Rm 7:12).

The problem with the first covenant was with the subjects. No one could keep the law of the covenant perfectly in order to justify himself before God. The Sinai covenant, therefore, was never meant to be God’s final covenant. It was a contract with Israel through law that the Israelites could not keep perfectly. The second covenant, therefore, had to be established in order to bring in the application of the blood of Jesus into the lives of men and the manifestation of the grace of God. It was said of Jesus, therefore, *“He takes away the first that He may establish the second”* (Hb 10:9). Jesus took away the first covenant in order to establish the second, and the second was based on grace (See Ep 2:4-10).

In Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16, the Hebrew writer quoted Jeremiah 31:31-34. His reference was to Jesus’ taking away the first covenant in order to es-

tablish the second. Jesus established the second covenant when He ascended to the right hand of God in order to function as our high priest (Hb 8:1-4). All today who have obeyed the gospel are now in a new covenant relationship with God.

One comes into this new covenant relationship with Jesus when he submits to Peter’s command of Acts 2:38. By immersion in water for the remission of sins (obedience to the gospel), one is washed of sins by the blood of Jesus. That which separates one from God—sin—is washed away in the waters of baptism (At 22:16). Therefore, the new covenant relationship that was prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34 was fulfilled in Acts 2 when about three thousand people joined in a new covenant relationship with God through their baptism in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins.

All of the specifics of the prophecies of Isaiah 2, Micah 4, Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Joel 2 and Jeremiah 31 concerning the kingdom reign, and the resulting church of Christ, have been fulfilled. These prophecies were officially fulfilled in Acts 2. Therefore, the sovereignty of Jesus was established at the ascension of Jesus, and was manifested on earth through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The reign of the Son was manifested through people on earth when there was a response to the first official announcement of the reigning King Jesus. This all happened on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30.

Chapter 13

ASCENSION TO THE THRONE

The sovereignty of Jesus over all things began when He began to reign as King upon David’s throne. When we determine when this reign began, then we discover when the Old Testament prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah upon the throne of David were fulfilled.

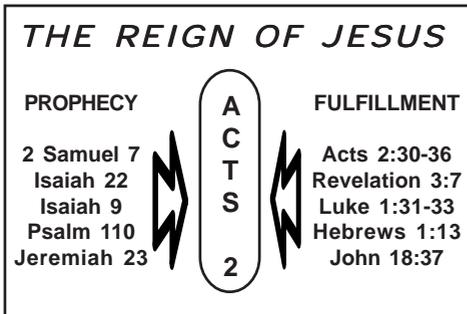
As previously stated, **David’s throne is God’s throne.** During the reign of Davidic kings, the emphasis on David’s throne was not the exaltation of a literal throne in Jerusalem of Palestine. **Emphasis was on God’s authority in heaven as it was represented on earth through the ruling power of the Davidic kings.** David’s throne was only an earthly symbol of God’s rule over Israel through an earthly king. In this sense, therefore, the terms “God’s throne,” “David’s throne,” and “Solomon’s throne” refer to the same thing, **the sovereign reign of Deity in Israel through a God-ordained king.**

In reference to God, the term

“throne,” or “David’s throne,” is used metaphorically. The literal earthly throne of a king that is on earth signifies the authority of that king over his kingdom. When the earthly king sat upon his throne, he exercised the power of judgment of the kingdom over which he ruled. This figure, therefore, was used in the Old Testament to refer to the rule of Deity over the affairs of Israel.

God does not have a literal throne in heaven as an earthly king would have on earth in a palace. We must remember that the word “throne” is simply used as a metaphor to symbolize the reign of God in the affairs of Israel. One must not confuse the metaphor with the literal throne from which the metaphor was taken. Those who have confused this matter have led themselves to believe some outlandish teachings. Primarily, there are those who believe that Jesus is coming again in order to sit on an earthly, literal throne as David did in the Old Testament. Such beliefs arise from a failure to understand the metaphor of the throne of David. But to assume that Jesus cannot reign among the affairs of men unless He is literally on earth on a literal throne is an attack against His present authority.

The following concepts will help to better understand what the Bible teaches concerning the authority of God being exercised on earth:



A. Solomon sat on David's throne.

Solomon, David's son, was appointed to succeed David upon the throne in Israel. In 1 Kings 1 this transition of power is discussed. David said of Solomon that he "*shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah*" (vs 35). Therefore, Solomon was actually going to sit upon what was called David's throne.

Benaiah answered David by saying, "*As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David*" (vs 37). Benaiah referred to David's throne as Solomon's throne. 1 Kings 2:12 concludes, "*Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.*" In 1 Kings 1:48 David said that Solomon was sitting upon this throne. The conclusion is that **David's throne and Solomon's throne are the same throne.**

B. David's throne is God's throne.

Both David's and Solomon's thrones were God's throne of authority on earth. David, Solomon, and their kingly descendants, simply represented God's authority on earth over Israel. The term "David's throne" was an earthly figure of divine authority that was manifested through kingly rule on earth in the nation of Israel. 1 Chronicles 29:23 states, "*Then Solomon sat on the throne of the*

Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him." Therefore, the throne of David upon which Solomon sat was only the manifestation of God's rule over Israel through earthly kings. David's throne was the "throne of the Lord," and thus Solomon sat on the "throne of the Lord" when he sat on David's throne.

In 1 Samuel 8, it is stated that Israel had clamored that "*we will have a king over us*" (1 Sm 8:19). As a result, God allowed Samuel to anoint Saul as king over Israel. However, this did not terminate the Father's kingship over Israel. All God allowed in this insurrection of Israel was that rebellious Israel have an earthly symbol of His heavenly authority. David, the successor of Saul to the throne, was only carrying out the Father's sovereignty over the earthly kingdom of Israel.

C. The Lord's throne is in heaven.

David wrote, "*The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven ...*" (Ps 11:4; see Hb 8:1). Not only is the Lord's throne (authority) in heaven, Isaiah said that heaven is His throne. "*Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool'*" (Is 66:1). Jesus said, "*But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne ...*" (Mt 5:34). Jesus also stated, "*And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it*" (Mt 23:22; see At 7:49). David's throne was actually the throne of God. However, God's throne at the time of

David, and during the earthly ministry of Jesus, was in heaven.

The authority of God originates from a heavenly realm. We must understand, therefore, that David's throne should always be viewed as God's throne in heaven. David's throne received its authority from heaven as opposed to receiving any authority from an earthly kingdom.

When the Bible speaks of authority in matters of faith, the emphasis is always on authority that originates from God. Every effort in the Scriptures is made to emphasize this fact in order that there be no misunderstanding concerning the foundation of our faith. It is simply a fact that *"it is not in man who walks to direct his steps"* (Jr 10:23). This is true because men on earth always desire to create their own religious practices that conform to their traditions, or their desire to rule over one another (See Mk 7:1-9).

D. The authority of the throne is in heaven.

In reference to David's throne, the principles of Romans 13:1,2 are certainly true. Paul said,

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Though this statement does not refer to God directly appointing governments today, the existence of government authority in Israel was directly appointed by God. All kings of Israel were to be anointed (appointed) by God, for Israel was a theocracy that was established at Mount Sinai.

The authority of David's throne in the Old Testament, however, was always with God in heaven, for God never gave up His kingship over to Israel. David was only delegated the authority from the Father to reign on earth in the affairs of Israel and to maintain the authority of the Sinai law.

When the terms "David's throne," "Solomon's throne," and "God's throne" are used in Scripture, our thoughts must always be driven to heaven where the authority of the throne has always existed. The metaphor of "David's throne" points to something greater than the literal throne of David in Jerusalem of Palestine. The metaphor points us to the divine authority of heaven that is manifested among men on earth through the symbol of a ruling king.

Those who believe that Jesus can exercise His authority as King only by returning and reigning on earth have a difficult time understanding the metaphor of David's throne which symbolized the heavenly authority of God that was manifested on earth through the Davidic kings. They want to make the throne literal when Jesus comes again. Fortunately, such a limited view of the reign of Jesus attacks the extent of the reign of Jesus that was prophesied.

Chapter 14

OCCUPATION OF THE THRONE

The key prophecies in the Old Testament in reference to David and his throne often had their primary fulfillment in Solomon's succession to David as the king of Israel. Nevertheless, there is a secondary fulfillment of these prophecies concerning the One who would eventually sit on the throne of David. This One who would be the final Davidic king to sit on the throne of David was Jesus.

The Father made an oath to David. In this oath, He promised that He would sit someone upon His throne that would reign over an everlasting kingdom (See At 2:29-31). The accompanying chart lists some of the key prophecies concerning the throne of David. All these prophecies prepared Israel for a coming King who would sit on David's throne. They not only motivated an expectation in the minds of faithful Israelites, but they also developed a theology in Israel concerning the nature of the sovereign reign of the Messiah who would come.

This Messiah would be a priest and king while He ruled upon the throne of David. He would reign over a kingdom that would be firmly established. As we study the fulfillment of these prophecies in the New Testament, we discover that

these prophecies find their complete fulfillment in the kingdom reign of Jesus.

All Old Testament prophecies concerning the King who would reign upon David's throne in Jerusalem have been fulfilled in Christ. Jesus assumed this kingship when He ascended to the right hand of the Father. There is no future earthly reign as is supposed by some biblical interpreters who have failed to see the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning the following prophecies:

A. Prophecy of 2 Samuel 7:

God promised David, "*When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom*" (2 Sm 7:12).

God would set up David's descendants upon his throne. However, the singular pronoun "his" refers us to an individual. This individual would be Solomon in its first fulfillment. However, reference would also be to the Messiah who would come in the future.

In His promise to David, God de-

FULFILLMENT OF 2 SAMUEL 7 IN CHRIST

Born of David's Seed -- Jesus of David's Seed (Lk 2:1-7)

"Everlasting" Reign -- Jesus' Reign is "Everlasting" (Lk 1:32)

"Everlasting" Kingdom -- "Everlasting" Kingdom (Lk 1:33)

Build God's House -- Church is God's House (1 Tm 3:15)

scribed what He would do through this One whom He would raise up after David. **“He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever”** (2 Sm 7:13). God continued, **“And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever”** (2 Sm 7:16). There are four key points in this prophecy and promise to David:

1. One from David’s seed would sit upon his throne.
2. The One who would sit on the throne of David would build a house for the Lord.
3. The descendants of David’s house would have an everlasting reign.
4. The throne and kingdom would be established forever.

2 Samuel 7 is a specific statement that Solomon would be the one who would reign on David’s throne after David. In the context, however, God was also addressing David concerning “One” who would eventually sit on his throne and rule after him. The immediate fulfillment of the prophecy refers to Solomon. However, even David knew that God was referring to someone who was beyond Solomon, for David said, **“You have also spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come”** (2 Sm 7:19). David realized that God was promising something far in the future concerning the One who would eventually sit on his throne.

Parallel prophecies to these promises are the statements of the Father in Psalm 89:34-37.

My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; It shall be established forever

The first fulfillment of the above prophecies is found in the reign of Solomon. Solomon, David’s son, did reign upon his father’s throne. Solomon did build a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem. Solomon’s reign was sure in that it was “forever.” The word “forever” is used in this context, as in many other Old Testament contexts, to refer to God firmly establishing His reign through kings on earth. The reign would not be terminated until its intended time of duration had been completed. In Solomon’s case, this was a forty-year reign. Solomon’s personal reign ceased when he died, but the reign of God through anointed kings would continue through David’s descendants.

The Davidic kings **on earth** did cease, as well as the nation of Israel. When Israel disobeyed the will of God, she was taken from Palestine into both Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. With the final captivity of 586 B.C., the earthly reign of God-anointed kings upon David’s throne in Israel was terminated. Jeremiah wrote of this in the following statement in Jeremiah 22:30 concerning the reign of Jehoiachin (Coniah), the last earthly king of the Davidic line to reign on earth:

Thus says the Lord: Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; for none of his descen-

dants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.

Fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7: In Acts 2 Peter stated that David was a prophet and that he knew *“that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, ... He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne”* (At 2:30). This one inspired statement clearly affirms that Jesus was the final fulfillment of God’s promise to David, that He would set One upon his throne.

Peter also stated that David did not ascend to heaven. However, David did prophesy of Jesus by saying, *“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand ...’”* (At 2:34). Jesus ascended to the right hand of God in order to receive sovereign rule. He is there now ruling all nations by the authority that the Father gave to Him when He was seated at the right hand of the Father (Ep 1:20-22). Therefore, God kept His oath to David that he swore in 2 Samuel 7. He raised up Jesus and seated Him at His right hand in heaven, not on earth.

Every statement of 2 Samuel 7:12,13,16 finds its final fulfillment in Christ. Jesus was of the seed of David. Jesus established His people, which is the house of God. The kingdom reign of Jesus is everlasting in the sense of being sure and steadfast until its intended time of duration is complete.

In the context of 2 Samuel 7, God was emphasizing the surety of the establishment of David’s kingly heritage. The words “everlasting” and “forever” are from a Hebrew word that emphasizes this

surety. Emphasis is not upon duration of time, but on the fact that what God promised David He would certainly bring about and continue until He determined that it come to a close.

The above refers to the present kingdom reign of Jesus at the right hand of the Father. However, if we emphasized the time element of the words “everlasting” and “forever,” it could be stated that the kingdom reign of Deity among men has always existed in the hearts of men. Adam, Abraham, and John the Baptist were all in the eternal kingdom of Deity because the kingdom of God was within them (Lk 17:20,21). God’s will was done on earth in their hearts as it was done in heaven (Mt 6:9,10). In this sense, therefore, those today who have submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus in their lives will continue throughout eternity. John wrote, *“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son”* (1 Jn 5:11). *“These things I have written to you ... that you may know that you have eternal life”* (1 Jn 5:13).

Those who have submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus will exist for eternity. In this sense, therefore, the kingdom reign of Jesus is without end. It is eternal without end through those who have submitted to Jesus’ word. It is not eternal in the sense that Jesus will maintain kingly reign with all authority at the right hand of the Father throughout eternity. He will eventually return all authority to the Godhead at the end of this world (1 Co 15:24-28).

B. Prophecy of Isaiah 22:

Isaiah prophesied, “*The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open*” (See vs 20-25). In this prophecy the “key,” or authority of the house of David, would be given to One who had the authority to open and shut. The word “key” in this prophecy is used as a metaphor to represent authority. A literal key is something that unlocks. The one who possesses a literal key has the authority to literally unlock that which is concealed. As a metaphor in the prophecy, the One with the key has the authority to unlock what is concealed from men.

Isaiah 22:22 was first fulfilled in Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah. However, Isaiah had something greater in mind as he pointed Israel to another era. The One coming would be given the authority to “unlock” revelation from God. The One who would be coming would have “all authority” of things in heaven and on earth.

Fulfillment of Isaiah 22: Isaiah prophesied that the key of the house of David would be given to the King to come. The angel of Revelation 3:7 stated that Jesus presently has this key of authority. “*These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.*”

The Greek present tense in this statement indicates that at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation, Jesus had the key of David. The key was not

something He was yet to receive in the future. Jesus had received the key by the time Revelation 3:7 was written. He received this key when He ascended to the throne in heaven to receive dominion, glory and kingdom reign (Dn 7:13,14).

C. Prophecy of Isaiah 9:

This was a significant prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah to come in the history of Israel. Isaiah prophesied,

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (vss 6,7).

Isaiah prophesied that the “Prince of Peace” would sit upon the throne of David. This Prince would exercise sovereign rule. He would establish the sovereignty with judgment and justice.

Fulfillment of Isaiah 9: Luke 1:31-33 is a record of the angel’s proclamation to Mary concerning the child to whom she would give birth. Her child Jesus would reign on the throne of David. “*He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father*

David.” Heavenly authority would be given to Jesus. With this authority He “*will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.*” Jesus’ kingdom reign would be certain, and the “gates of hades” would not prevail against it (Mt 16:18).

The Hebrew writer quoted Psalm 45:6,7 in Hebrews 1:8: “***Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.***” This was prophesied in Psalm 45. The prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus when He sat upon the throne of David in the heavenly places after His ascension to the Father (Ep 1:20-23). The Hebrew writer declared, “*Now this is the main point of the thing we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*” (Hb 8:1).

Jesus has fulfilled Isaiah 9. He is now ruling with all kingly authority as head over all things and as King of kings.

D. Prophecy of Psalm 110:

In this Psalm, David prophesied that the “Lord” (the Son) should sit at the right hand of His “Lord” (the Father) until all His (the Son’s) enemies be subjected to His power. David had prophesied, “*The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’*” (Ps 110:1).

The Lord of which reference was made in Psalm 110:1 would be a priest **after the order of Melchizedek** (Ps 110:4). This Lord would judge among the nations (Ps 110:6). This astonishing

Psalm pictures the function of the coming King in the history of Israel. One cannot overestimate the importance of this prophecy concerning the present kingdom reign of Jesus.

Fulfillment of Psalm 110: Hebrews 1:13 is a quotation of Psalm 110:1. The Hebrew writer, as well as other New Testament writers, applied the prophecy of Psalm 110 to Jesus (See Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42). In Acts 2:34,35 Peter stated that the prophecy was fulfilled in the ascension of Jesus.

At the time of Peter’s statement in Acts 2, Jesus was at the right hand of God. Paul affirmed that Jesus would reign there until the last enemy, which is death, is destroyed (1 Co 15:25). All emphasis of kingdom reign that is interpreted from Psalm 110 is now characteristic of the present reign of Jesus. He has been exalted to the right hand of the Father. He has been given all kingly reign, and He will reign until the last enemy is subjected to His authority.

In Psalm 110:4 David prophesied that the Lord would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 7 states that Jesus is now a priest. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. All details of the prophecy of Psalm 110 were fulfilled in Christ.

E. Prophecy of Zechariah 6:

Zechariah prophesied of the “Branch” that was to come. The Branch would be the Messiah who would come from the seed of David. Zechariah proclaimed,

Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (vss 12,13).

The One who is called the “Branch” would build the temple of the Lord. This Branch would originate from the seedline of Jesse, David’s father. Isaiah 11:1 also affirmed, “*There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*” The Branch would **rule**, or be a King upon His throne. At the same time He ruled, He would also be a priest upon His throne.

Fulfillment of Zechariah 6: Zechariah prophesied that the Branch would build the temple. We must not miss the metaphor here concerning a spiritual house that God would build. In the Old Testament there was a physical structure to the temple. However, in the prophecy of Zechariah there would be a **spiritual** temple “constructed” in which God would dwell.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said that He would build His house of obedient subjects. This church is the **house of God** according to 1 Timothy 3:15. In 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 it is also called the temple of God in which God dwells through the Holy Spirit. The logical conclusion here is that Jesus built the temple of God, which is the church of God. He

dwells in the hearts of those who are His temple.

Zechariah prophesied that the Branch would **rule upon His throne**. Jesus received authority from the Father to rule among the nations (Rv 2:27; 3:21). Jesus is now upon the throne of David in heaven ruling among the nations. He is King and head over all things for the sake of those who allow His reign in their hearts (Ep 1:20-22).

Zechariah prophesied that the Branch would be a **priest on his throne**. Hebrews 8:1 states of Jesus, “*We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*” (See Hb 10:12). Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 6. He is a high priest upon the throne. He rules over all nations as King of kings.

F. Prophecy of Jeremiah 23:

Jeremiah prophesied the following,

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jr 23:5,6).

Jeremiah prophesied that this righteous King will reign and prosper. He would execute judgment and justice on the earth (Jr 23:5; see 33:15). In con-

junction with this prophecy, Zechariah prophesied of the inhabitants of Jerusalem: *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you ...”* (Zc 9:9; see Ps 2:6; 72:1-4).

Hosea related these events to the time of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy of Joel 2:28: *“Afterward the children of Israel shall return, seek the Lord their God and David their king, and fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days”* (Hs 3:5). The time when Israel would seek their king again would be in the last days of national Israel.

Fulfillment of Jeremiah 23: Jeremiah prophesied of a King that would reign. Zechariah reaffirmed the reign of this King (Zc 9:9). Jesus is the blessed *“King that comes in the name of the Lord”* (Lk 19:38). Matthew applied this prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 to the coming of Jesus to Jerusalem (See Mt 21:5-9). Jesus is now the *“King of kings”* (1 Tm 6:15). It was for this purpose that Jesus said He was born. He declared to Pilate, *“For this cause I have come into the world ...”* (Jn 18:37).

Jesus is the King that was prophesied to come and reign upon the throne of David. All Old Testament prophecies concerning His kingship upon the throne have been fulfilled. There is no time in

the future when He will assume a kingdom and reign upon a literal throne here on this earth. All Old Testament prophecies concerning His personal work among men on earth have been fulfilled. Jesus stated this in Luke 24:44:

These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me.

Paul affirmed that all the promises that were *“given to the fathers”* were fulfilled in Jesus (Rm 15:8,12). He was the fulfillment of all the promises God made concerning His kingdom reign from the throne of David. Paul stated, *“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us”* (2 Co 1:20).

Jesus truly received that which God had promised to Him. *“I will give you the sure mercies of David”* (At 13:34). Any teaching, therefore, that does not place Jesus on the throne of David at this time cannot be true. Such teachings are a denial of the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the greatness of Jesus’ kingship and headship. It is imperative, therefore, that the biblical interpreter see in Jesus’ present reign and priesthood the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning such.

Chapter 15

BEGINNING OF THE BODY

The church is the assembly of God's people who have been called out of the world in response to the sovereignty of Jesus. The members of the body have submitted to the sovereignty of Jesus through their obedience to the gospel (2 Th 2:14). Those who first responded to the first official announcement of Jesus' reign submitted to the authority of King Jesus by baptism "in His name." The church, therefore, is the assembly of those who have submitted to King Jesus.

1 Chronicles 29:11,12 teaches that the Father was head and King over all things before He gave all authority to the Son. Ephesians 1:20-23 teaches that Jesus is now head over all things. The Father's headship in the Old Testament included a special headship over the nation of Israel. This began when He established a covenant relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai. This special relationship with the chosen people of Israel, who were a kingdom of priests, would illustrate the Son's relationship with the spiritual body of His people called the

church.

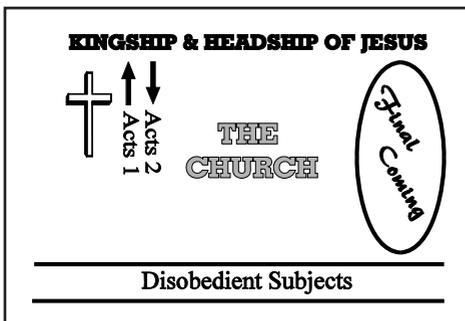
Jesus received this galactic headship when He ascended to the right hand of God. He is also head over His people because He is their reigning King. Because He reigns over all things, Jesus calls all people of the realm of His reign into a covenant relationship with Him. One's obedient response to the gospel is how one can come into a covenant relationship with the King.

The members of King's universal body of obedient subjects are a spiritual assembly of priests and kings. Their ministry is to the world. They are to proclaim Jesus' kingship and high priesthood to the nations in order to "recruit" obedient subjects out of His universal kingdom in order that they come into His special covenant relationship in the universal body of obedient subjects, the church (1 Pt 2:9).

A. The universal headship of Jesus:

In Ephesians 1:20 Paul stated that the Father raised Jesus up and "*seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.*" Jesus is now "*far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named*" (Ep 1:21). Paul declared that the Father "*put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church*" (Ep 1:22).

Jesus now has universal control over all things for the benefit of His people.



The Ephesians 1:22 passage is not the passage to use to teach that Jesus is the head of His body. Ephesians 1:22 emphasizes the fact that **Jesus is head over all things, which includes those who have submitted to His headship.**

Headship refers to being the controlling center of reference. Jesus took control of all things when He was seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places. This constituted the beginning of His **universal headship** over all creation. He is now the center of reference to the galaxies of space, but specifically the center of reference to His body of submitted believers on earth.

We must not confuse Jesus' headship over all things with His headship over the church. The word "head" in Ephesians 1:22 is used as a metaphor that means a controlling center of reference. Jesus controls the universe. He upholds "*all things by the word of His power*" (Hb 1:3).

In conjunction with His headship of the material world, Colossians 1:18 states that "*He is the head of the body, the church.*" Jesus controls His body by the authority of His word to which the members have voluntarily submitted. His headship over all things means that all things are under His control for the sake of His body. He is both head over all things and the church.

B. First official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus:

The church is a body of believers who have been called out of the world

because of their obedient response to the kingdom reign of Jesus. By submission to the lordship of Jesus, and their obedience to the gospel, the members of the universal body of Christ have accepted the control of Jesus in their lives through His word.

C. The fact of Jesus' reign:

During His earthly ministry, Jesus promised to eat the Lord's Supper with His disciples when His sovereignty came into existence. We would conclude, therefore, that the universal sovereignty of Jesus is now in existence because of the fulfillment of the disciples' eating the Supper with Him in His kingdom.

1. *Promise of the Supper:* The following promise to the disciples in Luke 22:29,30 was made during the last days of Jesus' personal ministry on earth:

*And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table **in My kingdom**, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

In the above context, Jesus was talking with the twelve apostles. Their eating/drinking at the table of Jesus, and their judging of the twelve tribes of Israel, would exist parallel with the existence of His kingdom. The disciples would eat and drink **in the kingdom**. In other words, the kingdom would be in existence at the time they would begin the eating and drinking of the Supper. This is

the meaning of the prepositional phrase, “in My kingdom.” In other words, the body of the submitted ate and drank the Supper of the Lord during the kingdom reign of the Son.

2. Eating the Supper in the kingdom: After the promise of Luke 22:29,30, Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected on the third day. The Holy Spirit was later poured out on the day of Pentecost (At 2:1-4). Three thousand were baptized in response to Peter’s appeal that they submit to the lordship of Jesus. Acts 2:42 states what these first members of the body did for the first time

in history: “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” This “breaking of bread” refers to the love feast/Lord’s Supper fellowship meal of the disciples (See At 20:7). Jesus’ kingdom reign began at the ascension. Here the disciples begin eating and drinking at the table of the Lord after Pentecost as He reigned from heaven. As the church of His people, the disciples were eating and drinking in celebration of His sovereign reign over all things. They celebrated the reign of their King who died for them

Chapter 16

KINGSHIP AND PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS

It is important to understand the reign of Jesus because there are numerous theories that have been propagated in the religious world concerning a supposed future one-thousand-year reign of Jesus on earth when He comes again. Some have taught that because Jesus was rejected by the Jews during His personal ministry, the supposed “earthly kingdom reign” that Jesus was supposed to establish was postponed until His final coming. It will be then that He is supposed to subdue all nations by force, and then reign over a physical kingdom here on earth.

The implication of the above theory is that Jesus is not now reigning over all things as prophesied in the Old Testament. He is not now reigning with all authority. His reign is thus limited to those who have submitted, that is, the church. Those who

assume that the church and the kingdom of Christ are the same encourage this belief. They too limit the kingdom reign of Jesus to the church alone, and thus, they fail to see the universal kingship of Jesus over all things as was prophesied by the prophets.

Some biblical interpreters have made two unfortunate misinterpretations concerning the reign of Christ. First, because some have failed to recognize the extent of Jesus’ present reign over all things, they have assumed that He will receive His universal reign in the future. Secondly, because some have failed to see the metaphor in the terms referring to the kingship and headship of Deity, they have assigned Jesus’ universal sovereignty to a literal kingdom here on earth. Both of these erroneous concepts have led to the

misunderstanding of many New Testament statements concerning the present reign of Jesus.

It is necessary that we first see the present kingship and priesthood of Jesus through the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets. It is then imperative to see Jesus presently upon the throne of David and ruling over all things as it is explained throughout the New Testament. When we understand the extent of the prophesied reign of Jesus, and the extent of the fulfillment of His reign as explained in the New Testament, only then can we fully appreciate who Jesus now is as our high priest. An understanding of the present extensive reign of Jesus thoroughly disposes any concepts concerning a future supposed earthly reign of Jesus. Consider the following points concerning the function of Jesus as He now reigns on the throne of God:

1. According to the Old Testament prophets, the Messiah was to be a priest and king upon His throne in heaven.
2. According to the Old Testament prophets, no one was ever to reign again on David's throne on earth after the captivity of Jehoiachin.
3. According to the New Testament writers, Jesus is presently reigning and will never set foot on this physical earth again.

A. Prophecy of Jesus' priesthood and kingship:

According to the Old Testament prophets, Jesus was to be a **priest** and a

king upon His throne in heaven at the same time.

As stated in the previous chapter, it is necessary to understand the fact that the throne of David in the Old Testament was an **earthly symbol of heavenly authority**. The authority of this throne was in heaven. David, and his lineage after him, were only exercising divine authority from heaven on earth. Therefore, the following points are important concerning the present reign of Christ upon David's throne:

1. The throne is in heaven. In Luke 1:32,33 Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be given the throne of David. He also told her that Jesus would **reign** over the house of Jacob while seated on the throne. This text refers us to the throne of David in the Old Testament and reminds us of those passages that affirm that the authority of the throne of David was with God in heaven. Solomon sat upon this throne that was also called the "throne of the Lord" (1 Ch 28:5; 29:23). Since heaven is the throne of God (Mt 5:34), **then David's throne is in heaven.**

Some have thought that Jerusalem must be totally under the control of the present state of Israel in order that the Messiah return in order to reign on David's throne in Jerusalem. This thinking is contrary to the New Testament teaching that national Israel was terminated in the first century when she fulfilled her purpose of bringing the Messiah into the world. This was the meaning behind what Paul taught in Galatians

3:28: *“There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither bondservant nor free. There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

2. Jesus would be a priest and king on the throne of David. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would be both a priest and king **at the same time** while He reigned upon His throne. In Zechariah 6:12,13, he prophesied that the **Branch** would come. Zechariah also stated that the Branch would *“sit and rule upon His throne.”* Zechariah proclaimed that at the same time the Branch would rule, He would also be a priest.

This is a very important prophecy in view of its New Testament fulfillment in Jesus. Notice carefully what the Hebrew writer stated in Hebrews 4:14: *“Seeing then that we have a great **High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our confession.”* In this statement, the Hebrew writer clearly affirmed the **present priesthood of Jesus, who is now in heaven.** The function of the priesthood of Jesus, therefore, takes place in heaven.

Since Zechariah 6:12,13 states that Jesus would be a priest at the same time He would rule upon His throne, then we would logically conclude that Jesus is now ruling upon His throne. This is not all. Hebrews 4:14 teaches that Jesus is a priest **in heaven.** Therefore, Jesus is now **ruling in heaven.** The Old Testament prophecies of Jesus’ reign point to His present reign in heaven upon David’s throne where He also functions as our high priest.

3. Jesus cannot be a priest on this earth. The above point emphasizes that Jesus is both a priest and king upon His throne in heaven. Hebrews 8:4 adds an interesting note to this truth. Carefully read what the Hebrew writer stated: *“For if He [Jesus] were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are **priests who offer the gifts according to the law.**”*

According to Hebrews 7:11-14, the law had to change because of a change in the priesthood. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah. However, under the Old Testament law **only those who were of the tribe of Levi could be priests.** Therefore, Hebrews 8:4 is saying that **if Jesus were on earth He could not be a priest after the order of Old Testament priests.** This fact reaffirms the statement of Zechariah 6:12,13.

Jesus must be a priest in heaven. He was to be a priest and reign as a king. Therefore, **His reign must be in heaven.** His kingship can never be exercised on this earth. If He came to this earth in order to reign, He would have to give up His priesthood.

Some have affirmed the present priesthood of Jesus, but have not recognized the totality of His kingship. The fact that He is now functioning as our high priest is hardly disputed. The point of disagreement comes when biblical interpreters refuse to recognize that His kingship is inseparably connected with His priesthood.

When Jesus comes again, His kingship will be returned to Him who did sub-

mit all things to Him: *“And when all things are subjected to Him, then will the Son also Himself be subject to Him who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all”* (1 Co 15:28). This will happen because the Son of God will have destroyed the last enemy, death. Once the last enemy is destroyed, then the Son will subject Himself to God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. We would assume that there will be no reason for His continued kingdom reign once the last enemy is destroyed and Satan is gone.

When Jesus destroys this world, and the works therein, including Satan, his angels, death and hades, He will have accomplished His work as sovereign King over all things. The fulfillment of His king-

ship, therefore, will be accomplished in His conquest over all enemies, especially the enemy of death. Once all His enemies are destroyed, there will be no more need for His personal reign. He will have accomplished His redemptive mission.

When Jesus comes again, Satan and his host of demons will be cast into the destruction of hell (Mt 24:41; see Rv 20:11-15). We can only imagine what the function of Jesus will be in His relationship with His family in eternity. It will be then that His disciples will have a truly personal relationship with Him as the disciples enjoyed with Him during His earthly ministry. It is for this personal relationship with Him in a heavenly environment that we all seek to have.

Chapter 17

TERMINATION OF DAVIDIC KINGS

According to the Old Testament prophets, no one was ever to reign again on David’s throne on earth after the captivity of Jehoiachin who was the last officially anointed Davidic king of Israel. There is both a historical and doctrinal relevance to this point. The points of this chapter are a discussion of the historical and doctrinal implications of Jesus being the fulfillment of all prophecies that are related to His reign on the throne of David. Jesus’ ascension to the right hand of the Father fulfilled all prophecies concerning the kingdom reign of the Messiah. There are no more prophecies to be fulfilled concerning His reign over all

things. The only prophecy yet to be fulfilled concerning His kingdom reign is the New Testament prophecy that He will return all reign to God when He comes again in order that God be all in all (1 Co 15:28).

A. **The earthly lineage of Davidic kings:**

The lineage of God-anointed kings terminated with Jehoiachin. In order for one to be a rightful king of Israel after the will of God, he had to first be of the lineage of David, and second, **he must officially be anointed king by God.**

Saul was anointed by God as the first king of Israel (1 Sm 9:16; 15:1). David was then anointed king of Israel because God rejected the seed of Saul to be the future kings of Israel (1 Sm 16:1-13). Therefore, only those who were of **David's seed**, and **who had been anointed by God**, could rightfully reign as kings of Israel.

Josiah was of the seed of David, and the anointed king of Israel. However, in 609 B.C. Pharaoh-necho of Egypt killed him at the battle of Megiddo (2 Kg 23:29). After Josiah's death, *"the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place"* (2 Kg 23:30). It appears, however, that this was an anointing by the people, and not the official anointing of God. At least this is indicated when Matthew left Jehoahaz out of the "official lineage" of Jesus in Matthew 1:11. This emphasizes the fact that one could officially reign as king in Israel **only if he were officially anointed by God to be king**.

Pharaoh-necho rejected the choice of the people of Israel, and subsequently took Jehoahaz to Egypt. In his place, he appointed Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, as king of Judah (2 Kg 23:34). Evidently, this was God's choice as the right-

ful king of Israel. At least, through Jehoiakim the Davidic kings continued.

When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin, reigned after him as king of Judah. However, in 597 B.C. he and his family were taken into Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. This was the end of the Davidic reign of kings in Jerusalem. God intended that this earthly lineage of Davidic kings cease on earth, and that Israel return to God's original plan that He established at Mount Sinai. God would reign over Israel directly through His Sinai law until the coming of the Messiah.

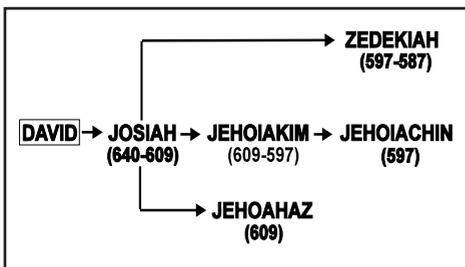
Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, on the throne in Judah. However, Zedekiah was only a puppet king of Babylon who later rebelled. He was subsequently dethroned by Babylon for his insurrection.

B. Termination of the earthly reign of Davidic kings:

When Jehoiachin was taken into captivity in 597 B.C., Jeremiah said of his seedline,

Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah (Jr 22:30).

It is evident that God intended to terminate the Davidic kings on earth with Jehoiachin. **No one of Jehoiachin's seed would ever prosper as a king on earth in Jerusalem.** However, Israel would not accept this fact. When



Jehoiachin was taken into captivity, Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah (1 Ch 3:15), was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. However, God said of Zedekiah,

Remove the turban [diadem], and take off the crown Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him (Ez 21:26,27).

God declared that Zedekiah did not have a right to reign. He was to get off the throne in Jerusalem because God had terminated the earthly reign of Davidic kings. **Of the Davidic kings, no one would rightfully reign until the appointed One would come who was the Messiah.** To Him the crown and kingship would be given. He would prosper on David's throne, but He would prosper because He would reign from heaven.

There would be only one "son of David" after Jehoiachin who would prosper in the seedline of Davidic kings. His prospering would be **in** the earth through the authority of His word, not **on** the earth by the force of sword. Jeremiah also speaks of this One in Jeremiah 23:5,

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

Jesus is now exercising judgment "in the earth" through the preaching of the gospel. Those who reject the gospel judge

themselves "*unworthy of eternal life*" (At 13:46).

The Davidic kingship on earth was terminated with Jehoiachin. However, the Davidic throne continues through Jesus. The righteous Branch, Jesus, rules from David's throne as priest and King in heaven. He rules in the earth through the authority of His word that has been delivered to the saints (Jn 12:48).

C. God's oath:

In Acts 2:30 Peter reminded the Jews that God had sworn to David "*that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne.*" This oath was recorded in 2 Samuel 7:12,13 when the Father said to David, "*I will set up your seed after you, ... and I will establish his kingdom ... I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*" The psalmist referred to this oath in Psalm 132:11: "*The Lord has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.*" According to Gabriel's promise of Luke 1:31-33, Jesus was to be the fulfillment of this oath. Gabriel stated to Mary, "... *the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*" (Lk 1:32,33).

After the ascension of Jesus, Peter revealed to the Jews in Acts 2 that God raised Jesus up to seat Him on the throne of David in order to fulfill His oath to

David (At 2:30-36). Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father and is now “Lord and Christ.” He is now on the throne of David and ruling from heaven. All prophecies concerning His reign have been fulfilled in His present reign.

The Davidic kings were only established in Israel because Israel clamored for an earthly king. It was always God’s intention to rule Israel from heaven by the authority of the law that was given through Moses. However, Israel sought for a king as the nations around them.

When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father to assume His sovereign reign over His kingdom, there would be no king on earth. Though God accommodated the foolish desires of earthly-minded Israelites, who wanted an earthly king, He never intended that Jesus reign on this earth as the Israelites’ kings for which the Jews had clamored. Those today who seek for an earthly king and kingdom as in the days of Israel are as those earthly-minded Jews in the Old Testament who sought for an earthly king they could see. However, any of our

materialistic inclinations to walk by sight and not by faith will not influence the sovereign King Jesus. We must put away any desires that Jesus establish some earthly rule in order that we may carry out our carnal desires to rule over others. When Jesus does come again, He is coming to destroy the earth. He is coming to fulfill our desires to dwell in the presence of God (See 2 Th 1:6-9).

The comfort of the Christian is to realize that Jesus now has control over all things. Though the world may seem to have all gone wrong, we must keep in mind that Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power (Hb 1:3). He is head over all powers, both seen and unseen (Ep 1:20-22). God is working an eternal purpose that will eventually be finalized when Jesus comes again. Therefore, we need not worry concerning any events that may seem to be working against God’s will. God has all things under control through the reign of the Son of God. There is nothing outside the control of the reigning King Jesus. For this reason, we will seek to walk in submission to the King and Lord of the galaxies.

For more study on the reign of Christ,
see www.africainternational.org
Biblical Research Library
Book 9, *The Reign of Christ*