

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

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There are hundreds of Christian denominations that all claim to preach the gospel. However, what is the message that they preach? Is it the same message that Christ proclaimed regarding the Kingdom of God? The answer is a resounding—no! In fact, few venture to preach the profound truth. As a result, millions do not understand this central subject of the Bible.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God reveals an astounding plan for humanity. It is no less than the revelation of mankind's ultimate destiny. It is a story more awesome and exciting than anything the mind of man could imagine. But—exactly what is the gospel of the Kingdom? You need to know!

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you.

~ Matthew 6:33 ~

The gospel is among the most widely celebrated themes in all Christianity. The subject is so popular that it is often used as a catch phrase among believers. Ironically, differing gospel messages are printed in literature, broadcast on television, preached from the pulpit, and solicited door to door. In our modern age, competing denominations have advanced a gospel of grace, a gospel of salvation, a gospel of peace, a health and wealth gospel, a social gospel, and even gospel music.

However, while enormous attention has been focused on what various religious leaders have proclaimed, few have truly understood Christ's gospel of the Kingdom of God. In fact, religious leaders have deceived millions of sincere men and women regarding Christ's message to mankind. Certainly, they talk about His life and His death, but they ignore the profound message that He preached.

Ministers lure members into their congregations by teaching that by professing belief in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, one gains an almost effortless and automatic ticket to salvation. By this, they lead followers to believe in the Savior, but they don't teach them to believe the message that Christ preached—a soon coming Kingdom of God on this earth!

The Gospel Christ Preached

During His ministry, Christ powerfully and passionately preached a message about the Kingdom of God. This gospel was to be the motivating hope of true Christians. It was to be their reason for being. But tragically, few have understood it. What was this gospel that Christ preached?

After years of preparation, Christ launched His ministry in Galilee. There, speaking with urgency and authority, the Savior taught that the Kingdom of God was coming. As Mark wrote:

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15).

This profound message affected people in different ways. Some were inspired by His words, others were bewildered, and many actually felt threatened. Nevertheless, His declaration of the Kingdom was relentlessly consistent. As Matthew recorded Christ to say:

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...
And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:17-23).

When the crucifixion of Christ drew near, He entrusted the gospel of the Kingdom to His disciples. They were to continue to preach His vital message of hope. In fact, He explained, that this gospel of the Kingdom was to continue to be preached right up to the very end of the age. As Matthew wrote:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

After Christ's resurrection, the apostles were deeply convicted of the reality of the Kingdom of God. Facing persecution and even fearing for their lives, they traveled to local cities and faraway nations, passionately preaching Christ's message. They taught that we must have faith that He is the promised Messiah. We must believe that His Kingdom will reign on earth, and that to be a part of that Kingdom, we must repent of breaking God's commandments, be baptized, and strive to overcome our human nature and live a Godly life.

The Original Corruption of the Gospel

The disciples faithfully preached Christ's gospel, but it was not long until Satan began his work of corrupting this unparalleled message. A mere twenty years after Christ's crucifixion, the Apostle Paul found himself forced to battle false teachers who had infected new gentile converts with the idea that, to become a Christian and inherit the Kingdom of God, they must first become Jews by being circumcised. Combating this, Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth, warning them:

For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Some members in Corinth seemed to accept this heresy, and a false gospel began to spread. Soon, the Apostle Paul was also forced to deal with this same apostasy in Galatia. As a result, He wrote to them saying:

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-7).

These false teachers were beginning to misconstrue the truth. As a result, Paul gave them a warning and then repeated it for emphasis. He rebuked any who would preach a different gospel with these strong words:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8-9).

A Modern Counterfeit

Paul confronted a growing perversion of the gospel in his day. It was one which required gentiles to be circumcised and keep Jewish ceremonial laws. While few would ever be fooled by such a message, many must now combat another perversion of the gospel.

In the heresy widely preached today, thousands of false ministers propagate a gospel in which the focus is only about the life of Christ. This teaching purports that He lived a perfect life for us, and died to pay the penalty for our sins. While this may be true, they then add a heretical twist by teaching that all one must do is believe on Him and they will live forever in heaven.

In their theology, there is no longer a need to keep any of God's laws. They promote the idea that belief in the life and death of Christ as our Savior alone grants people eternal life. *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* is an example of this common belief. The Editors wrote:

One may conclude that the facts of Jesus' life constituted the Gospel, which was interpreted and applied to suit the occasion on which it was preached (p. 319).

Certainly the facts of His life are part of the Gospel. Christ's life has deep and profound importance. The

behavior He displayed and the events surrounding His life are essential to understanding the example we are to follow. Further, His death and resurrection make eternal life possible for believers, but the facts of His life are not the complete gospel. They certainly were not the focus of Christ's ministry. They were only a part—only the beginning of the gospel of the Kingdom of God that the Messiah and His disciples preached!

Believing in the facts of Christ's life, death and resurrection is a prerequisite to the Kingdom. However, those who preach that this is all that is required are giving individuals a false sense of comfort. They teach followers that by accepting these facts, they will go to heaven when they die, but such a message is actually damnable! The consequence of such belief is that many mainstream Christians are left with only a sentimental concept of Christ as a God that exists primarily for their comfort. Vast numbers trust that if they give their heart to the Lord, He accepts them just as they are. They think that since Christ's death paid for their sins, all they have to do is profess belief and this makes them "born again." They imagine that the kingdom is set up in their hearts and that eternal life in heaven is guaranteed, but this is far from the truth.

Is Belief in Christ all that is required?

Promoting the belief that Christians only need faith in Christ's sacrifice does an enormous disservice to believers. It creates a false sense of security that can never be realized. Belief in Christ's atonement is absolutely essential, but it is only the foundation of what is required.

Consider that the devil recognizes the power and the majesty of God. He understands and believes in the life and sacrifice of Christ, but he has chosen the side of darkness, and purposely violates God's law. In that context, the Apostle James reminded us of this vital truth, stating:

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:19-20).

Belief in Christ is essential, but truly believing must be reflected in a conviction to change our way of life! It will result in subjecting our will to God so that we can harmoniously live forever in His Kingdom. Genuine faith will function as a catalyst, promoting change in our character and producing the lasting fruit of obedience to God's law. No matter what your local minister, pastor, or priest might say, the Almighty is the one we should listen to and He is perfectly clear on this point. Certain "works" are a prerequisite to attaining God's Kingdom. Absolutely nothing in His holy Word ever contradicts this truth!

Without this kind of life-altering faith, our religion is in vain. It is empty of substance and useless! Christ warned that some would profess just such a belief in Him, but their faith was unacceptable. He warned:

These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9).

The gospel of the Kingdom demands much more of us than mere lip service! It requires repentance—a change in the way we live. It requires that we overcome sin and our own human nature. This gospel of Christ insists that we quit behaving in ways that continue to break God's law. We must begin to actually keep the Ten Commandments (Mat. 5:17-19; 19:16-19).

The gospel Christ preached demands that believers prepare for the Kingdom of God by actively practicing the way of life that will be taught and lived in His Kingdom in the world to come.

The Gospel of the Kingdom Changes Lives

The gospel of Christ captivated and motivated His followers to such an extent that they became dramatically changed people. They grew to become individuals totally committed to obeying God. They were willing to give up everything if necessary for Christ and many of them did. They felt honored to suffer persecution, torture, and even the loss of their lives to preach this message of God's Kingdom to others! Why would they be so willing to endure such pain, suffering, and even death?

The answer is that after Christ was resurrected, He visited His disciples and taught them about the Kingdom of God. Then, after the day of Pentecost, they received the Holy Spirit. Finally they had a clear picture of His message. They now grasped what the Kingdom was all about. The disciples became radically changed by what they saw and what Christ taught them after He was raised from the dead. It is this that made such a tremendous difference in their lives. Luke recorded that of Christ:

He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:2-3).

The disciples saw Christ in His resurrected state. They then realized the reality of the resurrection. They witnessed His glory, the majesty that they would one day inherit. Very likely, Christ taught them intimate details of the Kingdom, and it finally began to make perfect sense.

They now understood what Christ meant when He said, "seek first the Kingdom of God" (Mat. 6:33). They were filled with a profound hope that deeply motivated them. They became totally convinced that the entire world would one day come under God's rule, and that man would

experience all the joy and happiness that God intended for us to have from the beginning. Armed with their faith in a far better and glorious world to come, the disciples went forth into a hostile world and they preached the gospel of the Kingdom with enormous hope and joy.

We Need the Kingdom of God

In the history of mankind we have seen very few years of peace. Since 3,600 B.C. the earth has seen 14,000 large and small wars that have resulted in the death over more than 3.5 billion people.

Today, our world is far worse than the one in which the disciples lived. Our planet is filled with enormous evil. As Christ said, men would wax worse and worse—and they have (2Tim. 3:13). During this last decade we have witnessed attempts at ethnic cleansing, genocide, hideous terrorist acts, and massive killing in racial wars.

Everyday man is faced with the terrifying threat of a suicidal nuclear war. As Jonathan Schell wrote in his book, *The Fate of the Earth*, should nuclear war break out, there would be no way to contain it. The escalation would be instantaneous and irreversible, destroying civilization and most of the environment. In his words, America would become “a republic of insects and grass.”

The world today also suffers from rampant diseases. According to a leading Swedish pathologist, “Infectious diseases have been the most dangerous enemies of mankind, much more so than war.” Disease epidemics are increasing around the globe, and in the U.S. alone, over 28 million Americans are afflicted by some form of heart and blood vessel disease. One in six Americans is affected by hypertension. Four million Americans have heart attacks, forty million arthritis, while another four million are diabetic. Today, more than one million U.S. citizens contract cancer every year, and the number is rising.

Pollution is out of control in most industrialized countries. Children and families have developed cancers and

birth defects from tainted food and water supplies. Oceans are waning in the bounty of healthy fish they once produced. The air many are forced to breathe has resulted in hundreds of thousands of asthma sufferers. In our greed we have allowed pollution to turn the sun into our enemy. Ozone depletion has resulted in sunburns within 20 minutes and extended exposure leads to thousands of cases of skin cancer every year.

In addition to this destruction that man inflicts upon himself, our planet is currently experiencing convulsions in the form of natural disasters. In the last few decades we have seen terrifying earthquakes throughout the world. There have been a series of devastating hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and wildfires that have plagued various portions of the earth.

We need to face this brutal reality. Our leaders are telling us that our world is filled with problems for which we have no real answers. Further, it is clear the solutions to these monumental difficulties will not come from more government intervention, regulation or legislation! More tax money will not solve our social and human grief! There is only one real and lasting solution—a superhuman solution. That solution is the message that Christ came and preached to this world. It is the coming Kingdom of God!

There is Good News

As the proverb states, “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” (Pro. 25:25). The gospel of the Kingdom of God is truly “good news” from afar. The word gospel comes from an ancient Anglo Saxon word “Godspell.” This term means “glad tidings,” or in more modern terms, “good news.”

For this reason, the first four books of the New Testament are called gospels because they are the disciple’s account of Christ preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to mankind! His gospel is the wonderful solution to a world that is hopelessly off track.

This fantastic message of hope began long ago and is documented by literally hundreds of prophecies throughout the Old Covenant. Throughout these writings, intimate details are shared about the coming Messiah and the Kingdom that He will eventually establish on earth.

Just before the Savior would be born, the angel Gabriel came to the priest Zacharias with exciting news. This righteous spirit being informed him that he would have a son whose name would be John, and that he would be a precursor to the prophesied Messiah:

And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings” (Luke 1:19).

Later, this same angel came to Mary, who was espoused to Joseph, and revealed additional details of the coming Messiah:

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 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. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **of His kingdom there will be no end**” (Luke 1:30-33).

The amazing good news is that Christ was born for this magnificent purpose: to be a King over a literal Kingdom. One day very soon, He will return with power, glory, and magnificent majesty to rule the world in righteousness. As the Almighty God, He will set His hand to correct every problem man has created on this globe.

Christ’s Good News is the Kingdom of God

The prophet Isaiah foretold that a Son would be given, and that God's government would be conferred upon His shoulders (Isa. 9:6). This is the good news that the angel proclaimed to Mary. She would bear the Messiah, and her child would one day sit on the throne of David to rule over a Kingdom which would never end. He will bring peace, harmony, happiness and prosperity to all. It will be a virtual utopia for all of mankind.

Most of those holding to the Jewish faith realize that the Messiah was to rule over Israel, but the full truth is that His heavenly government will expand to include the earth and eventually the entire universe. One of the most wonderful aspects of this good news is that Christ's divine rule will bring heavenly counsel that will be able to solve all of mankind's overwhelming problems and difficulties.

This message of hope originated with God the Father (John 8:28). It was the prime subject that Christ preached throughout His ministry. It is directly referred to over one hundred times throughout the New Testament and is indirectly referred to in nearly every sentence uttered by the Savior. Regarding all of the necessities we as mortal beings need in life, Christ said:

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33).

Christ's message did not emphasize His life, and death. His gospel primarily consisted of God's communication to mankind of an amazing divine government that would be established on earth—**THE KINGDOM OF GOD!**

Christ spoke of a future government. But this new establishment will be composed of leaders that are resurrected saints. They will be spirit beings who will possess the very character and integrity of God. Such leaders will be capable of discerning the hearts of men, and posses

the ability to judge righteously. They will always act in love and they will serve in the best interests of all concerned.

This is the good news! It is the gospel of the glorious Kingdom to come. It is the core of God's message to man, and one of the primary reasons Christ was sent. As the Savior said:

I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent (Luke 4:43).

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom... (Matthew 9:35)

The prophesied Kingdom of God is the common thread woven throughout all that Christ taught. For example, when He gave the Sermon on the Mount, He openly spoke of it. Christ reminded His followers that the poor in spirit were blessed "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He taught that the meek "shall inherit the earth." He explained that those who are persecuted for righteousness sake will ultimately receive the Kingdom (Mat. 5:3-10).

Then again, when the disciples asked Christ to teach them to pray, the Savior taught them that the Kingdom was to be an integral part of their daily thoughts and communion with God. Christ trained them to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven." He also told them that they should pray, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Mat. 6:10-13).

The Kingdom consumed Christ's thoughts. It was His magnificent obsession. He lived and died in order to bring the children of God into that coming Kingdom. His divine rule is the most glorious hope that mankind will ever envision. It was this good news that inspired His followers to continue preaching that same gospel message throughout every age.

The Apostles Preached the Gospel of the Kingdom

Christ commanded His disciples to preach the same gospel that He powerfully proclaimed. That proclamation was the Kingdom of God to come. Luke recorded Christ's words, saying:

Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. **He sent them to preach the kingdom of God** and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-2).

At a later point, Christ sent out another group, this time seventy strong. They were sent forth in pairs to serve a specific purpose and to perform miraculous acts. Luke explained:

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go (Luke 10:1).

Christ told these seventy to go out and spread the good news of His coming Kingdom. They were to do so, not only by words, but by divine healing which was to be a reflection of what that Kingdom will bring. Christ instructed them:

And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you' (Luke 10:9).

Christ told His disciples to say to those people that the Kingdom had come near to them for several reasons. First, Christ is the King of that Kingdom, and His disciples were representatives of it. Second, the miraculous healing of men, women, and children that the Messiah and His disciples performed pictured the very nature of the Kingdom of God. Christ's reign will usher in a new era of restoration. He will reclaim the earth and fashion it to conform to the way God originally intended. In so doing, He will demonstrate His awesome power to restore,

comfort, and heal mankind. The blind shall see, the lame walk, the dumb speak. Water will flow in arid lands and the desert will blossom like a rose (Isa. 35:1, 5-6).

Later in His ministry, Christ commanded His disciples to go into the world preaching the gospel to every creature (Mat. 24:14). His disciples obeyed these orders and went forth bringing His message of enormous hope to various nations.

From Christ's day down to ours, this message has been preached and it will be proclaimed right to the end. In fact, Christ said that before He would return and establish the Kingdom on earth, this gospel message must be announced to the entire world. Matthew records Him to say:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

As the early Church faithfully fulfilled their commission to preach the gospel, they encountered enormous opposition. Persecution first broke out in Jerusalem, and in order to escape, many fled the area. Philip, one of the newly ordained deacons, fled into Samaria. There he preached the gospel of the Kingdom and many were converted:

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized (Acts 8:12).

The Apostle Paul said that he was one born out of due season. By this, he meant that he was converted after Christ was resurrected and Paul was taught personally through revelation of the Messiah (Gal. 1:11-12). Even so, Paul continued to preach the same gospel of the Kingdom. This is demonstrated by one occasion when he was forced to leave the brethren he had faithfully served. He wrote:

And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more (Acts 20:25).

Finally, the apostle ended up chained to a Roman guard, imprisoned, and waiting to face the Roman emperor. Even while enduring such hardship, Paul could not, and would not, stop preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. As Luke recorded:

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him (Acts 28:30-31).

Thus we see that Christ preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God. His disciples continued to preach about the Kingdom of God. The twelve apostles preached about the Kingdom and Paul preached this same message of hope. But what exactly is the Kingdom? What will it be like? When will it come? How will it come? And—how vast will it be?

We need to know the answers to these questions. However, In order to answer them, we must first understand what the Kingdom is not!

Is the Kingdom in the Hearts of Men?

Some believe that the Kingdom Christ spoke of is not a literal Kingdom, but it is more a feeling that God places in people's hearts. Is such a teaching true? Is God's kingdom no more than an emotional feeling? Those who teach this support their belief by a statement Christ made to the Pharisees. These religious leaders demanded that Christ tell them when the Kingdom of God would come. He answered them saying:

The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20-21).

What does this verse really mean? Did these Pharisees somehow have the kingdom within them? Consider that Christ could not possibly be saying that the Kingdom of God was in the hearts of these men! Christ said that these religious leaders were hypocrites. He called them the blind leading the blind. In fact, this group of men literally wanted to kill Christ (Mat. 23:15-19; John 8:37). They were enemies of God's Kingdom! Would Christ tell these heretical religious leaders that the Kingdom of God was in their hearts? The obvious answer is no.

In addition to that fact, the Bible refers to man's heart over 900 times. Upon careful examination of each scripture, there is no evidence supporting the view that God's Kingdom dwells in the heart. Christ Himself spoke about the heart of man and he most certainly did not teach that the Kingdom was in the heart of sinners. Instead, Christ clearly said:

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies (Matthew 15:19).

When Christ spoke to these religious leaders they certainly did not have the Kingdom in their hearts. Instead, they wanted to put a stop to the message that Christ preached. Their desire was to entrap Him, and not long after this conversation, they would plot His death.

Since the Kingdom of God does not dwell within the hearts of men, what exactly did Christ mean? The answer is that the word "within" is a term used to convey various aspects of inclusion. A person may dwell "within" the walls of a building. One sits "within" a car while

driving to work. While standing together, each person is “within” a group of people.

With this in mind, it is easy to understand what Christ meant by His statement. Christ is the King of the coming Kingdom, and He was “among” or in the midst of these men who inquired about His Kingdom. *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of the New Testament* explains the meaning as follows:

The RV margin (has) “in the midst of,” (and this) is to be preferred; the kingdom of God was not in the hearts of the Pharisees (p. 680).

As *Vines* illustrates, Christ was stating that the Kingdom was “in the midst of” this crowd of Pharisees. Since Christ is the vital part of that Kingdom, His statement was true. Most Bibles with marginal notes also indicate that the word “within” should be “among,” and therefore the point Christ made was that He was the earthly representative of the Kingdom of God. He is the King of that Kingdom. He was right there in their midst, and yet they did not recognize Him. Of course, they could not see this truth. Christ’s true identity could only be spiritually discerned, and Christ had said that these supposed spiritual leaders were blind!

The Kingdom is not within the hearts of individuals. Christ’s very next words were directed to His disciples, and He explained to them that the Kingdom would come externally—visibly:

Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day” (Luke 17:22-24).

The Apostle John also wrote of the visual start of God's Kingdom stating:

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1:7).

Christ revealed that His return to establish the Kingdom would be visible, like the rising of the sun which cannot be hidden. Christ will come with myriad angels and tens of thousands of His saints (Jude 14). Every eye on earth will see Him. He will literally descend to the Mount of Olives, and begin His rule from Jerusalem (Acts 1:9-11; Zec. 14:4-16).

Rather than telling the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God was in their hearts, Christ warned these men, who were His antagonists, that their hearts and minds were so spiritually darkened that they could not comprehend what was right before their very eyes. The Messiah that they claimed to seek, the one they wanted to deliver them, the King of God's Kingdom, was standing right there. He was among them. He was in their midst—and they knew Him not.

The Kingdom will be on Earth

Heaven is the place of God's realm at this time. Therefore, God's Kingdom is in heaven. However, Christ is going to bring that Kingdom to this earth. As He said:

Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven... Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:3-5).

In some cases, believers read the term "kingdom of heaven" and think that the Kingdom will remain in heaven. This is not the case. Christ said the Kingdom OF Heaven. By this He meant that heaven is the source of that Kingdom, and He will bring it to the earth. Yes, the Kingdom is presently in

heaven. Christ rules with the Father from Heaven right now. However, the Savior will return with power, majesty, laws, statutes and judgments and He will rule on this earth. For this reason, the Scripture clearly states that faithful Christians are going to inherit the earth. The saints will rule with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-4).

In other Scriptures, Christ plainly said that no man has ascended up to heaven (John 3:13). Further, before He ascended to the Father, Christ told His disciples they could not come where He was going (John 13:33). The Scriptures also state that David will be a lesser king and rule over all Israel when Christ returns. However, Luke wrote that “David is not ascended into the heavens” (Acts 2:34).

There is absolutely no Scripture in the entire holy Bible that promises heaven as the reward of the saved. Yet, most people have blinded their minds to these plain statements from God Almighty. Instead of focusing on the truth, they have carelessly accepted the unsubstantiated claims of preachers that teach them that they will go to heaven when they die. For more on this topic please read our booklet titled *The Truth about Heaven*.

Heaven is not the reward of the saved. Christ repeatedly said that He would leave this earth and that at the end of the age He will return to set up His Kingdom and rule over the earth. The Scriptures also state that the faithful saints will rule with Him for 1,000 years. But where exactly will they rule? Notice the prophecy in which the saints who have inherited the Kingdom sing to Christ, saying:

You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and **we shall reign on the earth** (Revelation 5:9-10).

The resurrected saints will rule on this earth. Christ will bring them with Him when He takes over the kingdoms of the world. He will rule in righteousness, restore His law, and bring peace to this world. This is the good news. This is the message of enormous hope that Christ preached during His ministry. It is the message that His apostles preached after His resurrection, and is the message His Church still preaches today. It is no less than the gospel of the Kingdom of God!

What will the Kingdom of God be like?

Christ is a majestic and all-powerful King ruling the vast limitless universe. Magnificent angels come before His throne. They come for counsel and for judgment. There He administers all that occurs in the physical and spiritual Kingdom. Upon hearing His judgments, these angelic beings willingly give their full attention and submission to the Most High God. This is evident by a prophetic vision of a future event where great angelic beings and a counsel of spiritual elders fall down before Him in unabashed worship, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created” (Revelation 4:8-11).

These beings, who are far superior to humans, witness the day to day ruling administration that occurs at God’s throne. They are so impressed that they are moved spontaneously to worship and praise the Almighty God. These great beings are voluntarily subject to His majesty.

They understand that it is He who sustains the entire universe by His Word. As the psalmist exclaimed:

The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. Your throne *is* established from of old; You *are* from everlasting (Psalm 93:1-2).

The holy government which is now in heaven will soon come to this earth. The Kingdom of God will bring the majesty, power, and righteousness of God to a world that is filled with iniquity and virtually spinning out of moral control. Christ is going to bring His vast knowledge and perfect judgment to correct the problems created by mankind. His unchallenged authority will ultimately extend over every single nation.

At the sound of the seventh trumpet, Christ will take control of the earth. He will replace the empires of this world with His Kingdom. The Apostle John records this astounding truth with these words:

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).

Christ is going to return and take over the United States, South America, Europe, Russia, Asia, and Africa. He is going to eventually rule over New York City, Leningrad, London, Montreal, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, and Johannesburg. All the kingdoms of this world will be His!

Prior to Christ taking over these kingdoms, He will resurrect His faithful saints from the dead. They will be changed into spirit. They will be like Him and as such they will see Him as He is (1John 3:1-3). In this glorified state they will be used by Christ in the new Government of God.

They will assist Him in ruling over this earth. The Apostle John explained:

Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Revelation 20:6).

The prophet Daniel was also given a vision of the Kingdom. He records his vision stating:

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 (Daniel 7:13-14).

Four Aspects to the Kingdom

There are always four aspects to any kingdom—a king, territory, subjects and laws. Christ’s gospel clearly shows that the Kingdom of God will include each of these vital requirements.

First, there must be a ruler of the Kingdom. Christ is the King who will come and reign over the nations of this earth (Rev. 11:15). In fact, when Pilate asked Christ if He were a king, the Savior replied “to this end was I born” (John 18:37).

Secondarily, a kingdom must have a territory over which the King rules. Christ explained that His Kingdom was not of this age (John 18:36). However, He promised to one day return to this earth, and brings all nations under His rule. From the instant that Christ returns, He will begin to set up the

Kingdom on earth. His Kingdom will continue to expand until it covers the entire universe (Rev. 5:10; Isa. 9:7).

Third, any kingdom must have subjects. Once Christ returns, He will establish Jerusalem as His headquarters. He will gather the scattered tribes of Israel from all over the world (Eze. 11:17). Then, He will begin to require representatives from other nations to come up to Jerusalem and keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zec. 14:16-18). As Christ expands the influence of the Kingdom throughout the world, nation after nation will eventually submit to His rule until all mankind become citizens of that Kingdom.

Fourth, a kingdom must have laws. When Christ returns, He will begin a vast educational program that will teach God's laws to the entire world. Everyone will have the same Ten Commandments as a standard upon which all legislation will be founded and upon which each individual person will make their personal decisions in life.

Christ promises that when He returns, He will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). This means He will be unbending in administering His great moral code, the Ten Commandments, and will reign without ever compromising the law. While judging with mercy and love, He will not allow concessions to be negotiated with criminals. He will not overlook His ordinances to benefit the rich. God's law will go out from Jerusalem, (Mic. 4:2) and the Ten Commandments, the statutes, and the judgments will become the civil code for all the earth.

Offices in the Kingdom

God's government will consist of many offices. Those chosen few who attain the first resurrection, will be given positions of authority in a hierarchical form of rule. The patriarchs will be among those who will fill important roles. For example, when Christ was transfigured, He showed himself next to two individuals who will likely be His leading assistants:

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him (Matthew 17:1-3).

From this verse, it has been speculated that Moses might be a leader over the civil administration of the Government under Christ, while Elijah rules over the religious side. Beyond this vision, given for the apostle's sake, the Scriptures also show that when Christ returns, He will bring back the ten lost tribes of Israel to the land of Palestine. He will unite them with Judah and resurrect King David to rule over them. Ezekiel recorded this future event with these words:

Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them" (Ezekiel 37:21-24).

David will be made the king over the twelve tribes of Israel after Christ's triumphant return. The twelve apostles

will be given authority to assist in governing Christ's Kingdom under David's rule. Christ made this clear when the disciples asked Him what they would have in the Kingdom. He promised that they would, one day, have responsibilities that included each one ruling over a specific tribe of Israel. The Savior declared:

But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 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 (Luke 22:28-30).

As the earth is restored to its intended beauty and productivity (Acts 3:21), the population will mature and grow over the centuries. The resurrected saints will have key positions in governing communities of the various nations. They will play an intricate part in instructing mankind how to live and work together in peace, harmony, and unity. Functioning as both Kings and Priests, they will assist Christ in ruling over a world that will eventually be filled with the knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9; Rev. 5:10).

Satan Will Be Bound

The first thing Christ will do before taking control of the earth will be to put away the false god who now rules the world. He will eliminate Satan and his corrupting influence that has deceived mankind for thousands of years. John records this awesome event stating:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive

the nations no more till the thousand years were finished... (Revelation 20:1-3).

With Satan restrained, the world will be poised for an entirely new civilization. Everything that this wicked being's hand has touched, and all he has tainted will be removed. Christ will take over the leadership of both the Church and state. There will be no more religious deception, no more elections with its mudslinging, no more lying politicians, and no more corrupt, back room lobbying.

Think what it will be like with no more corruption in government, and with true freedom and sincere honesty. The leadership will be comprised of beings that will be part of the spiritual family of God. They will always act out of love, seeking the well being of all mankind. They will make righteous judgments—establishing justice throughout the earth.

Crime Will Not Be Tolerated

The saints will be raised and changed to spirit. These powerful beings will consist of individuals who have overcome sin and their corrupt human nature in this life. They will then work to put away the crime that now occurs on this earth. They will know when sin is about to occur at any point in the world, and at any time. At the very thought of such activity, they will have the power to intervene. Erring humans will actually hear them speak, correcting them before evil can occur. As Isaiah prophesied:

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This *is* the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left (Isaiah 30:21).

Unlike the world today, the Kingdom of God will be a safe place for people to live. There will no longer be a need for security guards in every store. No longer will people imprison themselves with bars covering the windows and deadbolts on the doors of their homes. No one will fear to go

out at night alone. There will be genuine peace and safety in our cities.

Instead of judges who trivialize criminal acts, and often penalize the victims, judgment in the courts of God's Kingdom will be fair and just. The resurrected saints will be the judges making faithful and just decisions. They will be supernatural spirit beings who will be able to look upon the heart and make decisions tempered with mercy as they deal with the weakness, problems, and conflicts that occur between human beings. Any necessary punishment will be executed swiftly and will not be drawn out in courtrooms for years in endless appeals and litigation.

True Religion Will Be Taught

Christ will take over the religious teaching of the entire world. He will institute His true faith for all mankind. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Satanism, and false Christianity will be completely eliminated. His law contained in the Ten Commandments will be taught and enforced. His holy days will be observed and pagan holidays that masquerade as if they are Christian will be abolished. Every false idol man has devised will be cast out like the filthy trash that it is. As Isaiah continued to explain:

You will also defile the covering of your images of silver, and the ornament of your molded images of gold. You will throw them away as an unclean thing; You will say to them, "Get away!" (Isaiah 30:22).

Rather than being misled by chocolate rabbits and Easter eggs which reflect fertility rites, people will keep the Passover, and by doing so, they will come to realize the transcendent love God has shown toward us by His sacrifice. Instead of singing chants of praise to a Xmas tree, and admiring a fat Santa dressed in a red suit coming down the chimney which pictures a god of fire, people will finally

come to understand God's truth and His plan for mankind as they celebrate His Feast of Tabernacles. As the prophet Habakkuk wrote:

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

When you see a shadow of a man, you know a man is coming. The Apostle Paul explained that God's holy days are a shadow of things to come (Col. 2:16-17). As people start to observe God's holy days, they will begin to understand what God has purposed for mankind and what part of His plan is coming next in this astounding blueprint for salvation. For more on this subject please read our booklet titled *Understanding God's Holy Days*.

God's law, contained in the Ten Commandments, and prayer to the Creator, will no longer be kept out of the school room and business place. They will be an intimate part of an entirely new and holy system of government and commerce. The Law of God, and the way of true Christianity, will be the single most important subjects taught and practiced in the new world.

An End to Overcrowded Cities and War

Christ will outlaw war. No longer will a mother or father have to watch their offspring go off to kill other human beings with the terrifying fear that their children might be forever disfigured or killed. The prophet Micah foretold of that wonderful time:

He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; 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 (Micah 4:3).

The resources of the various countries will no longer be exploited by wealthy and powerful men to make weapons of war. Instead, they will be used for constructive purposes. Imagine the prosperity the nations will enjoy then. Think of the magnificent building projects, libraries, inventions, and cultural events that will be able to be sponsored. The Kingdom of God on earth will bring with it a time of amazing personal development and growth for every human being on the planet. There will be peace and tranquility as every man, woman, and family will be able to enjoy their own homes and fruitful piece of land. Micah continues:

But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken (Micah 4:4).

Healing For the Nations

One of the most wonderful aspects of God's Kingdom is reflected in the mercy Christ demonstrated in His healing ministry. When Christ returns to this earth, it will be after the four horsemen of the apocalypse have ridden long and hard (Rev. 6:1-8). The earth will literally be filled with illnesses of every conceivable kind. The people who survive the tribulation will have suffered the ravages of starvation, pestilence, dehydration, squalor, biological and chemical warfare. Massive numbers of the population will have suffered terrible disfiguring burns. Explosions will have deafened many, while the flash and shrapnel will have blinded and handicapped vast numbers of people. Epidemics of mutated viruses will be rampant.

When Christ walked this earth as a man, He looked out over Jerusalem and longed to comfort the people and heal their pain (Luke 19:41; Mat. 23:37). When He returns as King of Kings, He will function in the role of "God our Healer." Christ will apply His sacrifice to heal the sick just as He did when He was on earth 2,000 years ago. He will mend a

broken humanity and His government will reeducate mankind in the ways of proper health. As the prophet Isaiah wrote:

Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *with* the recompense of God; He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing... (Isaiah 35:4-6).

Prosperity Will Abound

In addition to youthful and vibrant health, certainly one of the most joyful aspects of God’s Kingdom will be the elimination of hunger. There will no longer be television programs such as “feed the children.” No longer will we see people with horribly disfigured and distended stomachs. The famines that now rage on our planet will come to an end.

God’s way of life will be taught to all peoples, and those families who once lived in third world countries and experienced famine will begin to obey God. As they submit to His loving rule, He will send them bountiful rich blessings. There will ultimately be plenty for all. The return of the Messiah will bring about tremendous prosperity! There will be honesty in business, and such things as planned obsolescence will be eliminated. There will be quality and longevity in the products of every craftsman.

Christ will also remove the curse from the land (Gen. 3:17). Mankind will no longer have to toil to merely eke out a living on the earth. God will open the underground springs and they will begin to water the arid deserts so that they bloom. The land will begin to produce as never before. Isaiah spoke of this time saying:

Behold, I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and beat *them* small, and make the hills like chaff. You shall winnow them, the wind shall

carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; you shall rejoice in the LORD, *and* glory in the Holy One of Israel. The poor and needy seek water, but *there is* none, their tongues fail for thirst. I, the LORD, will hear them; *I*, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree *and* the pine and the box tree together, that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it (Isaiah 41:15-20).

In the Kingdom of God, the whole world will respond to Christ's loving rule. Even the nature of the animals will be changed so that they no longer fiercely rip and tear at each other. Survival of the fittest will no longer be the premise by which the animals live. They will not rip and tear at each other anymore. As the prophet Isaiah tells us:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6-9).

In the Kingdom, Christ will restore all things to the state that He intended from the beginning. For this reason, in

the Bible, the time of the Kingdom is called the “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21). One of the most important restorations will be that of God’s government. Through that holy institution, every single aspect of life will be turned around. Hope, happiness and joy will abound. But—there will be much more! Christ will rule in such a way that the Kingdom will expand forever. Life will always continue to improve throughout all eternity. As the prophet Isaiah explained:

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 (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The Kingdom of God will expand from Jerusalem to cover the entire planet, but its growth will not stop there. After 1,000 years of Christ’s rule on the earth, there will be a resurrection of all the men, women and children that have ever lived and died since the creation of Adam and Eve. This resurrection will include billions of people that never had the true knowledge of Christ. These countless numbers will have their first real opportunity for salvation (Rev. 20:5-6).

Those who are raised at that time, along with those who are still alive during the Millennium, will finally be judged in the white throne judgment. After this, all that is physical, along with every single shred of the evidence of sin, will be burned up.

Still, the government of God will continue to expand! It will increase until it extends to fill the totality of the universe and eventually the entire spiritual creation. Then, there will be an entirely new phase of the Kingdom of God—the New Heavens and Earth. The Apostle John gave us a

small glimpse of the majesty, the magnitude and glory of all that God has ultimately planned for those in His Kingdom:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful" (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-5).

Christ said that He would go away to prepare a place for His followers. He also stated that He would return and receive them to Himself (John 14:2-3). Right now Christ is preparing the holy city, the New Jerusalem, for us! This great dazzling city will be over 1400 miles high, and extending a

length nearly 3 times the size of France. It will descend from heaven to the new earth and accompanying it will be God—the Father! Only then will we be able to plumb the depths of the Almighty and fully understand and comprehend what God has ultimately planned for us (1Cor. 2:9).

You can believe this gospel with absolute confidence. It will be an absolutely magnificent future beyond human comprehension. This is the gospel of the Kingdom of God. It is our immense hope. It is an expectation so grand that it cannot be contained. In fact, this good news is so important, and so sure, that it was written right into each day and every week that mankind experiences.

The Weekly Cycle Preaches the Gospel

So paramount is this gospel of the Kingdom to God's plan of salvation that our Creator literally engraved it into the astronomical creation itself. We first get a glimpse of this in the book of Genesis. There we see that when God was forming the earth and setting in motion the astronomical bodies in the heavens, He said:

Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years (Genesis 1:14).

The lights of the sun and moon were to be for “signs.” This word “signs” is the word, *oth* in the Hebrew, and it means a flag, beacon, token, or mark. *Oth* is the same word that God uses when stating that His Sabbaths are a “sign” (Exo. 31:13). The word “seasons” is *moed* in Hebrew. This word means appointed days of assembly, or holy day observance.

So we see that God set the great heavenly bodies spinning in space for the purpose of setting the times to observe His weekly Sabbath and holy days. The Sabbath is His sign between Him and His people. A sign is to direct one to something, and certainly God's appointed seven day

week, concluding with the 7th day Sabbath, is a sign to continually direct man toward the millennial time of rest in the Kingdom. Therefore, Man was given six days to work and do all his labor. The seventh day was to be set aside for man to stop all his work. He was to rest and convoke with the Creator God and completely focus His mind towards his ultimate purpose in life. The prophetic significance of this is enormous and can be understood by comparing this concept to the words of Peter as he wrote:

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8).

The patriarch Moses also spoke of this prophetic principle. The prayer of Moses was recorded so that we may comprehend this transcendent concept:

For a thousand years in Your sight *are* like yesterday when it is past, and *like* a watch in the night (Psalms 90:4).

Since a day pictures 1,000 years, we understand that the seven day week reflects a seven thousand year plan God has for mankind. The seventh day pictures a millennial rest for man after Christ returns. At the end of 6,000 years, Christ promises to come to this earth again, but this time to set up God's government. By doing so, He will establish His laws—bringing about happiness, joy, and prosperity for 1,000 years. As the Apostle John wrote:

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their

hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4).

Belief that there would be a seventh, one thousand year millennial rest of God was taught for centuries before our time. It was recorded in the epistle of Barnabas, the works of Irenaeus, and by the secular historian Hippolytus. It is even found in the Talmud, written before Christ was ever born. This truth was also commonly preached in all the churches of God up until the fourth century when Augustine began to propagate the false belief that the Catholic Church was the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth. This heretical doctrine brought with it enormous persecution upon those who did not agree. As the *Encyclopedia Americana* explains:

These views were, at least very common in the ancient church. The belief was generally founded on Psalm 90:4, according to which 1,000 years are before the Lord as 1 day, compared with the account of creation as given by Moses. The 6 days of creation are taken as designating 6,000 years of toil, and the subsequent Sabbath as designation 1,000 years of rest and happiness. The millennium was the Sabbath rest (Vol. XIX, 1919 Edition, p. 116).

Thus, we see that God's weekly cycle is prophetic. Just as the Scriptures describe, God's plan is foreshadowed in His unique sequence of time. This consists of seven, 24 hour, days in which the seventh day is a day of rest. It is a sign pointing to the destiny of mankind.

The six days in which man is to do all his labor portrays 6,000 years of man striving to do things his own way. During this period of time humanity has chosen its own governments, its own religions, and its own ethics.

However, the seventh day Sabbath pictures the 7th thousand year period. At this time, the Kingdom of God will be established on the earth. Mankind will finally be able to

rest from his toil which has led him to experience untold suffering and appalling tragedy throughout the course of human history.

The sun and moon, day and night, trumpet a message to every human being on earth every week. However, they also send this remarkable message every single day.

The Heavens Preach the Gospel

So vital is the gospel message that God went even further in declaring it to us. He inscribed the gospel of the Kingdom in every single day that we live! To provide light for both day and night, God set the sun and moon in their respective positions in the heavens. That message which they silently communicate is the same gospel of the Kingdom that Christ preached when on earth.

The sun which gives its wonderful life giving light and warmth to our earth actually does so in a way that foreshadows of the wonderful prophesied seventh thousand year reign of Christ. It preaches its gospel message silently while billions go about the business of their lives without understanding. Thankfully, we can understand.

Consider what the Scriptures actually say regarding what the heavens reveal to us. In the epistle of Romans, Paul helps us understand when he wrote:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them (Romans 1:18-19).

These verses make it clear. Christ is going to execute His wrath against the ungodly with a vengeance! And Paul states that this is witnessed in the heavens. The Apostle continued to explain:

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:20).

By the statement above, we realize that we can understand what is not yet visible when we behold God's creation. Those things which He has made are showing us something of enormous importance. The earth and all of its plants, animals, and natural functions not only reveal that there is in fact one true God, the heavens above actually reveal what He is doing! There, each day as the sun rises, they picture Christ's return to restore the life giving light of God's truth to this darkened world. The heavens have preached, and they continue to preach a silent gospel every day, every week, every month, and every year throughout all of human history.

In addition, as each of us sleeps throughout the night, we awake to a new day with a chance to begin anew and start fresh; figuratively turning over a new leaf. This process pictures our death and a resurrection. Ultimately, everyone's mortal bodies will die. But death is not something we should fear. When Lazarus had died, Christ spoke of this symbolism referring to death as sleep. As He told His disciples:

“Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” These things He said, and after that He said to them, “**Our friend Lazarus sleeps**, but I go that I may wake him up.” Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” However, **Jesus spoke of his death**, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead” (John 11:9-14).

Consider the astounding implications of Christ's statement! His words make the truth plain. God created life knowing full well that death would be a part of His creation. It too would reflect the invisible things of God. Sleep is something that we experience every day of our lives, but it has a spiritual implication.

When we become tired, and can no longer continue our activities, we go to sleep. The night passes and we rise to the sun's light. This act that we perform each day pictures our resurrection at Christ's return. This truth is foreshadowed each day of the week as we lay down to sleep, awaken, and rise again. As Paul pointed out:

Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14).

The understanding of this communication from God is further revealed in Psalm 19. There David wrote:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge (Psalm 19:1-2).

The heavens show us God's creative ability and His awesome power. Both the day and the night are speaking to us. This verse proclaims that every day is communicating a message to us. Every night is showing mankind something of extreme importance. It does not matter what language you speak because the message is not audible, but it is visible:

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard (Psalms 19:3).

The writer tells us that the message is silent. It is unvoiced, yet it is extremely clear. God placed the gospel message in the astronomical creation so that men would not

need to speak a particular language to understand it. It is a visible message, one that goes out every day with the rising of the sun. As the Palmist continued:

Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising *is* from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat (Psalms 19:4-6).

When stating that “Their line has gone out through all the earth,” a “line” is likened to the words that an actor may speak. It means their message goes out to the entire planet.

The verse continues to explain that God created the heavens to picture a tent, or a tabernacle. The sun is then likened to a bridegroom that comes out of this tabernacle to shine upon the whole earth. The bridegroom is pictured as a strong man, an athlete who is starting out to run a race. Then, as the sun’s light races across the earth during the day, nothing is hid from its illumination.

This symbolism is extremely enlightening. The Church is Christ’s wife (Rev. 19:7). He is known as the bridegroom, and His disciples are called friends of the bridegroom (Mat. 9:15; John 3:29). Thus, it is clear that the Bridegroom is Christ and the Psalm tells us that the Messiah leaves His tabernacle. Just as the early Tabernacle and later Temple with its Holy of Holies was a type of God’s throne, these verses actually tell of Christ leaving His throne in heaven to come to the earth.

Further, when Christ returns, the Bridegroom will come as the sun—from one end of the earth to the other. As John stated:

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him... (Revelation 1:7).

For this reason Christ is likened to the sun in the scriptures. And when He comes to this earth He will bring His awesome, brilliant light. Malachi refers to this when he stated:

But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves (Malachi 4:2).

From this, we see that the sun is a type, a symbol of Christ. It pictures God's perfect light, His truth, holiness, and righteousness. John again stated:

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).

The Entire Bible Preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom

The gospel is such a preeminent part of what God is doing with man that its message was preached long before Christ was born. Its theme literally permeates the entire Bible. For this reason, God's message to man is called the "everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6). The gospel of God's Kingdom has always been and always will be preached.

Throughout history, each of God's servants have contributed to that gospel message until we have a prophetic, and practical, instruction manual for mankind—the Bible. This unique volume is a compilation of sixty six books written to prepare us for an absolutely certain future. The Bible was penned by varying authors over thousands of years, and yet the theme of God's Word is the same. Every one of its books clearly bears the impress of its divine author, and each one carries the same gospel message of the Kingdom of God.

When Christ began His ministry, He preached the gospel of the Kingdom, but His announcement of this message was not the first. His declaration followed that of the

prophets, and their proclamation was recorded throughout the books of the Old Covenant. As Christ pointed out:

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me (John 5:39).

The pages of the Old Testament speak of Christ hundreds of times. Further, the vast majority of those places speak of Him in terms of the coming Kingdom of God. The first record foreshadowing the Kingdom takes place shortly after man's first sin. At this time, God told Adam and Eve:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel (Genesis 3:15).

God foretold that, even though Adam and Eve had failed, the game was not over. Christ would have to be bruised by Satan because of man's transgression. It would now be necessary for Him to come to earth as a man, be brutally beaten, suffer excruciating pain, and then be crucified as a sacrifice for our sins. However, this would not destroy Him. Ultimately, He will destroy the head of Satan and remove Him as the present ruler of this world (Mat. 4:9; Rev. 20:3).

Enoch was also a preacher of the coming Kingdom. Jude makes note of Enoch's message stating:

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14).

Enoch declared Christ's coming with the resurrected saints. Later, God preached the gospel to Abraham revealing that the Messiah would be born through His seed. Paul wrote:

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed"* (Galatians 3:8).

The gospel was also preached to ancient Israel. The author of Hebrews wrote:

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it* (Hebrews 4:2).

Miraculously, the entire book of Exodus preaches the gospel of the coming Kingdom. The ancient Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and they were delivered by awesome plagues foreshadowing the end time destruction of modern Babylon. The Israelites were saved and brought into the promised-land, a land that flowed with milk and honey. This foreshadows the promise to again deliver God's people into a future world that will flow abundantly with the sweetness of life and great physical and spiritual nourishment. This truth is made clear by Paul when he said:

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Joshua led the people to the Promised Land. The name "Joshua" in the Hebrew language literally means "Savior," and it is the actual Hebrew form of the name "Jesus." Thus, Joshua was a forerunner, picturing Christ who would one day lead the resurrected saints to take over the earth.

Jericho fell as the people shouted and the priests blew the trumpet a seventh time. This pictured the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and the Kingdoms becoming Christ's (Rev.

11:15; 18:2). The books of Ruth and Song of Solomon show us the love Christ has for the Church, His future bride.

The Psalms also repeatedly discuss the gospel of the Kingdom. Notice the writer's words, as he speaks of Christ's return to judge the world:

For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity (Psalm 98:9).

In another example from the Psalms, the writer reveals the greatness and power of the coming Kingdom. He shows the enduring nature of Christ's ruling government to come. He recorded:

All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations (Psalm 145:10-13).

The book of Isaiah is filled with prophecy about specific details of the Kingdom of God. In one place the prophet stated:

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. O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD (Isaiah 2:2-5).

Later, God gave Daniel the interpretation of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The prophet explained to the king that several great nations would rise and fall for thousands of years. The first would be Babylon, followed by Persia, then Greece, and finally Rome. Daniel then stated that in the last days, during the rule of the fourth kingdom, Christ would come to this earth. He would destroy all the other kingdoms, and set up His eternal government replacing all those in existence then.

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 (Daniel 2:44).

The prophet Amos also speaks of God's future Kingdom. He first wrote of a terrible indictment against the house of Israel, and he foretells awful calamity to follow for their wickedness. Then Amos wrote of God's promises of a wonderful Kingdom on this earth that will follow His wrath. Notice how Amos preached the gospel with the following words:

“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” says the LORD who does this thing. “Behold, the days are coming,” says the

LORD, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow *with it*. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them*; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God (Amos 9:11-15).

Zechariah also speaks volumes regarding the Kingdom of God. The prophet tells us of the time of Christ’s rule over all the people of the earth:

And in that day it shall be—*that* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be “The LORD *is* one,” and His name one (Zechariah 14:8-9).

All the prophets gave witness to Christ’s message of the Kingdom of God to come. In fact, the whole Bible can be likened to a tapestry in which the message of the gospel is woven into place to make a beautiful picture. Each faithful servant is like the various threads of the tapestry. Each thread has its own color and texture and God added each of their parts until the picture was complete. Each strand reveals a little more, and when the picture is finished, it is a portrait that is absolutely invaluable. It gives to us a vision that stirs the highest hope in the heart of man.

The image which the Bible’s tapestry displays is the Kingdom of God. It is a message sent by the Father to mankind. It was spoken of by the ancient prophets, and then at exactly the right time, Christ came to this earth and

preached it Himself. He declared God's coming Kingdom, and taught His disciples to preach the same message. The Church was instructed to preach the message of the Kingdom until Christ returns (Mark 16:15). God's people will be unable to finish this commission however, for Christ said:

I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes (Matthew 10:23).

Christ tells us in advance that we will not be able to finish the work, but that does not mean we should leave off doing this job. When He returns, we are to be found "so doing" (Mat. 24:46). This means we are to continue preaching the gospel to the world until He returns!

The Gospel of the Kingdom will always be Preached

The scriptures reveal that the true Church of God will be rocked by apostasy at the end of the age (2Ths. 2:3). This defection from the truth will make it difficult to continue doing an evangelistic work. Pastors will scatter the sheep, and lay members will tread down the spiritual feeding ground of God's people (Eze. 34; Jer. 23). The Church's strength to preach the gospel will be weakened. Finally, the beast will smash the power of God's people, greatly limiting their ability to preach the gospel (Dan. 12:7). The great tribulation will come, and there will be a famine of hearing God's Word (Amos 8:11).

However, this will not stop the gospel! The Church will continue to preach God's message during the tribulation, even giving their lives to do so. God will also send two witnesses who will be granted supernatural power with which they will work miracles. These two witnesses will receive free media attention all around the world as they thunder God's message to all the earth. All of humanity will be witness to the gospel as they see and hear these men warning mankind of their evil ways, and admonishing them

to repent because Christ's is coming to establish the Kingdom of God.

These courageous prophets of God will eventually be killed by the beast. However, even their death does not stop the gospel from being preached! Shortly after their demise, God sends an angel who will circle the earth announcing the powerful, never-ending message of the gospel. As the Apostle John stated:

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6).

After this, Christ will unleash the final plagues before returning to this earth. Once the Kingdom has been established, He will then require other nations to come up to celebrate His holy days and they will be taught the gospel in Jerusalem (Zec. 14:16).

As people are educated, the Kingdom of God will spread all around the world as the resurrected saints continue to preach to every nation, city and race until the knowledge of God covers the earth (Hab. 2:14). Long before the end of the millennial age, all will know Christ. But even these wonderful events will not spell the end of preaching the "everlasting gospel!" After the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, God will raise all those who ever lived and died. The apostle wrote:

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:5).

Multiple billions of people, from every tribe and nation around the world throughout time, will be raised from the dead. Many of these will have never even heard the name of Christ, but all will finally have the gospel of the Kingdom preached to them.

All those who will be resurrected after Christ's thousand year rule on earth will witness the most magnificent civilization and culture the world has ever seen, and untold numbers of people will have their chance to come to Christ. It is the "everlasting gospel" and "of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Rev. 14:6; Luke 1:33).

You Have a Part

For 6,000 years man has formed his own governments in an attempt to bring peace to the earth, but has utterly failed. However, there is coming a time when there will be a literal utopia on earth. It will not come through the efforts of men. It will come from the miraculous, supernatural, intervention of Almighty God! This is the gospel of the Kingdom of God!

This gospel was to be preached in every age—even ours today. You now know the truth about the message Christ preached. This is precious knowledge indeed. Once we come to understand this wonderful truth, we have a responsibility to further the advancement of that good news. We must turn to God, and ask Him to forgive our sins. We must then shift our sights from seeking the pleasures of this world to seeking God's Kingdom with all our might. As Matthew related:

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

We are living in the last days. Christ is coming soon. If you are convicted by this truth, you are obligated to prepare for Christ's return and to help spread the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, video, and audio to help people better understand God's Word and His plan for humanity. Some of the printed material available includes:

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The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday!

Is This the Only Time of Salvation?

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