

What Is the
**KINGDOM
OF GOD?**

by David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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Just what is the KINGDOM OF GOD—and when does it appear? Is it *in heaven*? Is it the *British Empire*? Is it the *universal church*? Is it the *Millennium*? Is it “in the *hearts of men*” or merely the “*good within each person*”?

Millions believe these popular ideas—yet they are ALL wrong! Unnecessary confusion and disagreement reign. Here is the Bible explanation made plain!

In 1966, as God began to call me into His truth, I had the opportunity to meet with my United States Congressman from Ohio. I had applied to attend the United States Naval Academy and all applicants were required to have a personal interview with their Congressman in the final stages prior to acceptance. At the end of the interview, he asked me if I wished to ask him any questions. Here was a highly respected, long-time member of Congress giving me the opportunity to ask him any question on my mind.

I had only one.

I was learning about the soon-coming, world-ruling, supernatural government to be established at the Return of Jesus Christ. With this on my mind, I asked the Congressman his opinion of one world government, if it were in the hands of men. His answer was immediate and emphatic, "I do not believe it would work, but if I did, I would shout it from the housetops." He went on to express various concerns.

This made a lasting impression. I have never forgotten my conversation with this congressman of over thirty years' experience in the federal government.

Since that time, many have suggested that *one world government* is the only way to save civilization. But many questions arise. *Who* would bring it? *How* would it be phased in? *What laws* would it administer? How would they be *enforced*? Would sovereign nations relinquish their authority to it? Would it succeed, or would it eventually oppress and enslave all mankind? These questions always stop thinkers, planners, leaders and scientists in their tracks!

What Is the Gospel?

Jesus stated, “Repent you, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). But just what *is* the gospel? Most never concern themselves with this question. The truth of the gospel has remained hidden from view to the vast majority of professing Christians. Ever since the first century there has been a conspiracy to deceive would-be Christians about the meaning of the gospel. Shocking as it seems, this has happened.

Most believe that the gospel is about the *Person* of Jesus Christ. Certainly, Christ’s role *is* enormous, but He *is not* the gospel. The Bible shows that Jesus Christ is preached in conjunction *with* the gospel.

Others proclaim a “gospel of salvation” or “gospel of grace.” Still others believe a “gospel of miracles” or a “social gospel” or a “gospel of foods” or of “healing” or “faith.” There are also those who merely think of “gospel *music*” when the word *gospel* comes to mind. These are all manmade ideas that are not what the BIBLE says!

Notice Mark’s account once again! “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the *kingdom of God*” (1:14). That is the gospel Jesus preached. It was in this context that He had said, “Repent you, and *believe the gospel.*” What gospel?—of the “KINGDOM OF GOD.” Verse one refers to this very message when it says, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” The gospel of Jesus Christ was about the KINGDOM OF GOD—not something else! One must believe and understand *that* gospel to be saved—not a counterfeit or substitute.

Strong Warning Not to Pervert Gospel

The truth of this subject is so important that God inspired the apostle Paul to warn the Galatians then—and us today: “I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto *another gospel*: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would *pervert* the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach *any other gospel* unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be *accursed*. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach *any other gospel* unto you than that you have received, let him be *accursed*” (Gal. 1:6-9).

This is a very strong statement! In the next chapter (2:5), Paul went on to stress the hope “that the *truth* of the gospel might continue with you.” So there is the *true* gospel, with all others false.

Plainly, Paul never taught a different or additional gospel, as some allege. Ironically, God used him to be the one to warn against ever allowing such false teaching. He even pronounces a curse (1:8) on any man, angel or even apostle—“But though *we* [apostles]...preach any other gospel”—who chooses to violate this command. What a powerful scripture!

Paul further explained that the apostles were *entrusted* by God to preserve the true gospel. Notice I Thessalonians 2:4: “But as *we* were allowed of God to be *put in trust with the gospel*, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which tries our hearts.” This is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. True ministers always teach what God commands, not what “pleases men” or Bible “scholars.” So any idea that Paul taught another gospel (usually thought to be *about Christ*) is silly. He would have been literally pronouncing a curse on *himself*!

All who preach a false gospel automatically pronounce a curse on themselves. Why do men not fear to do this? Why are so many willing to teach any one of a variety of false gospels? The churches of mainstream Christianity cannot agree on what the gospel is.

Why?

Since Christ said the gospel was about the kingdom of God, and men do not know what the kingdom of God is, they have concluded that the kingdom may be a particular church denomination or Christianity collectively. Others reduce it to a “warm feeling” in the “hearts of people.” Still others believe that it is the “millennium” or even the “British Empire.” Some have even concluded that the gospel of the kingdom of God is not for mankind today!

What incredible ignorance!

The masses are deceived (Rev. 12:9) by the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), who uses his ministers as instruments to spread the most popular false gospel, about the Person of Christ, instead of the message of the kingdom of God, which Christ brought.

Notice II Corinthians 11:13-15, where Paul wrote, “For such are *false* apostles, *deceitful* workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed as the *ministers* of righteousness...”

This is a blunt, shocking scripture. Yet it is true that Satan has ministers who *appear* to be the ministers of God.

The following verses continue Paul’s description of the work of false ministers. Notice: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that comes [speaking of false preachers] preaches *another Jesus...or if you receive another spirit...or another gospel*, which you have not accepted...” (vs. 3-4). If Christ IS the gospel, then why are “another *Jesus*” and “another *gospel*” listed as *two* separate problems?

People need to wake up to the deception—the mass delusion—of a supposed Christianity that denies virtually all the PLAIN TRUTHS of the Bible! God’s plan for mankind is staggering—incomparable to anything human beings have devised to replace what He says. The world ignores plain, clear, unmistakable scriptures found throughout the Bible about the kingdom of God.

This booklet explains the astonishing truth that so many ignore!

Christ's Message—An Advance Announcement

Like a newscaster far ahead of his time, Christ came to make an announcement about a complete change in the way the world would one day be governed. With this change would come unprecedented world peace, happiness, harmony, universal health and prosperity.

Everywhere He went, Christ spoke about the kingdom of God. It was the subject of most of His parables. When He commissioned His twelve apostles and sent them to preach, the instruction was to preach about the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-2). When He later sent out His seventy disciples (Luke 10:1), He also commanded them to preach the kingdom of God (vs. 9). Paul preached this same “kingdom of God” message everywhere he went (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). The terms *kingdom* and *kingdom of God* are found scores of times throughout the New Testament. Yet, it is absolutely astonishing how nearly everyone has lost the knowledge and true meaning of what this kingdom *is*!

The word “gospel” is an old English word meaning “god spell” or *good news*. The word “kingdom” is also an old English term simply meaning *government*. In other words, Christ preached “the good news of the *government* of God.” The coming of world peace, happiness, health and abundance *will* certainly be good news for a mankind that has not known it for 6,000 years.

Christ's disciples asked Him what the SIGN of His Coming and the end of the age would be (Matt. 24:3). He warned the disciples of deception from many who would come “in His Name,” saying, “Christ was Christ” (vs. 5). He meant that they would put an emphasis on the PERSON of Christ instead of the MESSAGE He brought. But, He also prophesied that “this gospel of the *kingdom* shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the END come” (vs. 14).

We are NOW in the time of the end. Remember, if the kingdom of God had been preached through the centuries, from the time of Christ to the present, proclaiming it today could not be a sign that the world has reached the end of the age. Impostors and false leaders suppressed the preaching of the true gospel to the world until the 20th century. Starting in 1934, Herbert W. Armstrong began the fulfillment of this prophecy. It continues today—The Restored Church of God is preaching *this* gospel.

Life After Death?

But when Christ spoke of the “kingdom,” what did He mean? The gospel of the kingdom of God has two separate aspects.

Many speak of salvation—the belief in an afterlife. Some have supposed that the gospel is exclusively about “receiving eternal life” or the popular idea of “going to heaven” upon death. Of course, the Bible has a tremendous

amount to say about salvation. Actually, salvation is directly related to—is one aspect of—the gospel of the kingdom of God. (Read our booklets *Is There Life After Death?* and *What Is Your Reward in the Next Life?*)

Most assume that God is trying to save the world now—that *today* is the only opportunity for salvation for all mankind. (A third booklet, *Does the Bible Teach Predestination?*, explains that God is not trying to save everyone now and *why*. It outlines His entire plan and purpose for humanity.) Most people have no idea *why* they were born—*why* they were put on Earth. They also do not understand why man cannot find peace, happiness, health and abundance on his own. The whole world has been deceived about salvation and the most important questions and answers of life. This booklet asks and answers many of those questions.

The other aspect of the kingdom of God is GOVERNMENT. As mentioned, the word kingdom means *government*. When the kingdom of God arrives, it will grow from a tiny “mustard seed” (Matt. 13:31-32) into a world-ruling SUPERGOVERNMENT. The Bible describes this government in detail. (To learn the stunning details of the Kingdom’s arrival, read our free booklet *How God’s Kingdom Will Come – The Untold Story!*)

Message About Government

The rest of this booklet will explain the “government” aspect of the kingdom. The above-recommended booklets primarily address the “salvation” aspect.

Prior to the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to His mother, Mary. These verses describe this encounter and what she was told: “...the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto...Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, you that are highly favoured... you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the *throne of His father David*: and He shall REIGN over the house of Jacob *forever*; and of His KINGDOM there shall be *no end*” (Luke 1:26-33).

In John 18:36, Jesus stated to Pilate, “My *kingdom* [government] is not of this world.” Pilate asked, “Are you a king then?” Christ responded, “You say that I am a king. *To this end was I born*, and for this cause came I into the world” (vs. 37).

Jesus Christ was born to be a KING!

Here is what was prophesied in Isaiah about Christ: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Of the increase of His GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end, upon the *throne of David*, and upon HIS KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even *forever*” (9:6-7).

When Christ establishes God's government on Earth, it will ultimately usher in peace for all nations!

All God's Prophets Preached the Gospel

During a sermon in the book of Acts, the apostle Peter stated an amazing but almost entirely unknown fact of Bible history. He spoke of a time "...when the *times of refreshing* shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of *restitution* [restoration] *of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth *of all His holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3:19-21). Of course, heaven *has* received Christ "*until*" the restoration of all things. But this restitution has not yet happened—hence, the word "until."

Imagine! Every one ("all") of God's true servants has preached that the time is coming when Christ will return and "all things" shall be "restored." Prior to Satan's rebellion, God's government was present on Earth. (Read our booklet *Who Is the Devil?* to learn about this rebellion.) For thousands of years, God's servants have foretold the details of its restoration to Earth. You may wish to examine all of the Old Testament prophets to see if each of them announced, in one fashion or another, the coming of the kingdom of God and the restitution of all things. I have studied the verses many times, and you will find that they all did. (Our booklet *Which Is the True Gospel?* examines this in detail.)

Here is an account in the *New Testament*, referencing just one of God's Old Testament spokesmen.

The book of Jude records the preaching of Noah's great-grandfather Enoch. It is a record of what was spoken over 4,500 years ago—even before the Flood. Consider the incredible scope of the following verses: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, *the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints*, To execute judgment upon *all*, and to convince all that are ungodly...of all their ungodly deeds which they have... committed, and of all their hard speeches...sinners have spoken against Him" (vs. 14-15). Get the clear meaning of this passage. It reveals that the saints (true Christians) are coming with Christ to judge the world—to judge "all" according to their conduct.

The Bible has much more to say about the kingdom of God than you have supposed. Once again, the truth is absolutely astonishing—even *shocking*—and you need not be ignorant of it.

Daniel Understood

Just as Enoch understood that the kingdom of God was a literal government that would one day rule over *real* people and *real* nations on Earth, so did the

prophet Daniel. He held no illusion that the kingdom was merely some kind of “sentimental fluff” or “warm feeling” set up in the “hearts of men.” Through a series of dreams and visions (1:17), God used him to explain much special understanding about *how* and when His kingdom would come to Earth.

All that Daniel was shown was to be “*closed up and sealed* till the time of the end” (12:9). We are NOW in the time of the end—and there are many proofs of this. (Read our booklet *Are These the Last Days?* to understand more about how Daniel’s prophecy was written to be understood IN OUR TIME.) His message is for us, today! Daniel reported big—TREMENDOUS!—news that will affect you in your lifetime! We will see that Daniel also understood and spoke the same gospel that Christ preached—and it is critical that we understand what he said.

Daniel recognized that he was simply a mouthpiece through whom GOD was revealing His Master Plan. In chapter two, he was speaking to the Chaldean (Babylonian) King Nebuchadnezzar about matters that had come to the king in a dream. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of a vast empire that he had ruled approximately six hundred years prior to the time of Christ.

The king’s court magicians were not able to reveal what God *could* reveal through His prophet Daniel. It was God’s purpose to reveal, through that worldly human king, that there is an Almighty living God who *rules the entire universe* and all *kings, governments and nations* on Earth are ultimately subject to Him. The humanly-wise King Nebuchadnezzar had no knowledge beyond the existence of other human kings and their many false gods. It was the *true* God’s intention to reveal the existence of *HIS* government and that it rules the entire universe. He also intended to make plain His SUPREME PURPOSE of bringing that government to the Earth “in the latter days.”

Take time to carefully read Daniel 2:28-44. This astonishing and detailed prophecy reveals many things about God’s intention to restore His government to Earth—including the time sequence in which this will happen.

The first several verses describe the image of a giant man. Verses 32-33 state, “This image’s head was of fine *gold*, his breast and his arms of *silver*, his belly and his thighs of *brass*, His legs of iron, his feet part of *iron and part of clay*.”

This is obviously an image of a man, but one that is constructed of four distinct parts. Verses 34-35 then describe a supernatural “*stone that smote the image [and] became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth*” (vs. 35). Note that verse 34 states that this stone “was cut out *without hands*,” because God, not men, had formed it.

The “stone” shattered the image and replaced it, going on to eventually encompass all nations—“the whole Earth.” This can only be a description of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD coming to Earth. Daniel is merely announcing the same message of the gospel of the kingdom that Christ preached.

You do not need to believe me, because this is precisely what your Bible states. No one needs to interpret this series of verses for you.

Just notice verse 37. It plainly states, “*You*, O king, are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given *you* a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.” Verse 38 clarifies, “*You* are this head of gold.” We must always let the Bible interpret the Bible.

Verses 39-40 go on to describe *three successive kingdoms* that would follow the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. This is amazing knowledge that almost no one understands today.

These verses show an historic succession of WORLD EMPIRES depicted by different metals of which the giant image (statue) was made. These were literal kingdoms: (1) The Chaldean-Babylonian Empire of gold, (2) the Medo-Persian Empire of silver, (3) the Greco-Macedonian Empire of brass, and (4) the Roman Empire, made of iron mixed with clay in its final appearance. The message from history is that these four kingdoms (empires) ruled, and the fourth kingdom will again rule and influence the world, but will ultimately be ended by the kingdom of God on Earth.

God expressly reveals to us *now* that He is the One who establishes and removes—and establishes and removes, again and again—earthly governments (kingdoms).

Defining a Kingdom

Many ask, “But exactly what is the Bible definition of a *kingdom*?” Preachers and theologians have tried to spiritualize away the meaning, because they have not carefully examined *God’s* definition.

This is found at the end of verse 39, which refers to these kingdoms “which shall bear rule over all the Earth.” This cannot be a reference to a nebulous idea about a kingdom in the “hearts of men.” There is also no way to make this definition fit any particular church or churches. It speaks of rulership by governments with authority over *literal* nations on Earth—and over *literal* people. Will you let someone tell you otherwise or will you believe the *Bible* definition of a kingdom? Remember, these kingdoms “bear rule over all the Earth”!

Take note of two important aspects of the towering metallic image described here. First, the metal *decreases* in VALUE as we descend from the head to the legs and feet of the image. This means that the quality of each succeeding kingdom/empire is *less* in value than the one preceding it. Second, the metal *increases* in STRENGTH as we descend the statue’s body. In other words, the power and scope of each succeeding kingdom/empire is *greater* than the one preceding it.

Finally, notice that the two legs of iron represent a kingdom that is divided. The Roman Empire was indeed divided, with capitals at both Rome and Constantinople. The feet are part of iron and part of clay. Iron does not and cannot mix with clay, so this is a picture of final instability. When the feet break apart, the entire man will collapse. Careful study must be made of three chapters in order to fully understand the succession of these four kingdoms.

Compare Revelation 13 and 17 with Daniel 7. Together, they present a sobering and powerful prophecy about latter-day events—events that will affect *you and me in our lifetime!* Revelation 17:8 describes a “beast” that ascends out of a “bottomless pit” and is ridden by a “woman.” Verse 12 shows that this beast involves TEN KINGS who shall receive power and unite under a charismatic leader who will take the role of the “beast.” Many think this leader is the one the world awaits today. But he will be the eighth, and last, short-lived resurrection of the Babylonian system—preceded by the seventh, which will arise in Europe during the mustard seed phase of God’s Kingdom.

This dominant power in Europe is coming and lies just ahead of us. It is vital that you understand what these prophecies mean! (Read our extensive booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?*)

Something incredible happens “in the days of these kings” (Dan. 2:44). Christ’s arrival removes all doubt about exactly WHAT the kingdom of God is. Daniel 2:44 states, “And in the days of these kings *shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people [God will never allow people to seize control], but *it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand forever.” This of course is well *after* the previously described mustard seed phase. This dramatic takeover cannot be the same as the Kingdom’s Matthew 13 beginning.

That’s right! God—not men—will establish the final and greatest world-ruling empire of all time. And He tells us that He will never allow the opinions of men to intervene and disrupt it, for it will “stand forever.” This promise is SURE. It *will* happen—whether men believe it or not!

Matthew 6:33 states, “But seek you FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...” If you are to seek something as your *first* goal and focus in life, you must know exactly what it is!

This chapter contains what many call “The Lord’s Prayer” (vs. 9-13). Christ instructs Christians to pray “after this manner,” and then continues by adding the phrase, “Thy kingdom come.” Knowing what you are praying for will make your prayers far more meaningful!

There are FOUR necessary components of *any* kingdom: (1) Land, property or territory—however large or small. In other words, one must have a specific and definite set of boundaries establishing the size of the kingdom, (2) a ruler, king, monarch or governor leading the government, (3) people or subjects living within the territory governed, and (4) a system of laws and rules and a basic structure of government.

No kingdom is complete without all these basic elements.

The Woman of Revelation 17

By comparing Daniel 7 with Revelation 13 and 17, it becomes clear that there are seven revivals of the Holy Roman Empire, with an eighth “diverse” head

to emerge at the time foretold in Revelation. Six have come and gone—and the seventh is now forming! The eighth revival will last exactly three-and-a-half years (Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:14; 13:5), with the fifth seal also involving the Tribulation and God’s Wrath.

Understand another important connection to these resurrections of the Roman system. Revelation 17 describes each as having “a woman sit[ting] upon [the] scarlet colored BEAST, full of names of blasphemy, having *seven heads and ten horns*” (vs. 3). The seven heads are seven separate revivals, with a *ten-horn final revival* (composed of ten kings around a central figure—the Beast), constituting the eighth.

Of this woman, verses 5-6 state, “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the *saints*, and with the blood of the *martyrs* of Jesus.” Verse 1 calls her a “great whore that sits upon *many waters*...”

Let’s pause and ask: What are the “many waters”?

This is a classic example of allowing the Bible to interpret itself. Fourteen verses later, the term is explained: “And he said unto me, The *waters* which you saw, where the whore sits, are *peoples*, and *multitudes*, and *nations*, and *tongues*” (vs. 15). This shows that the whore’s influence encompasses the Earth.

In this case, the term was not *immediately* explained, but simply continuing to read on revealed what it means. The Bible interpreted itself!

Verses 5-6 are a graphic description of what is today’s great *Gentile church* that is a modern-day descendant of Babylon. She is a “mother” of many “harlot” daughters, who came out of her in protest because they disagreed with a few of her abominations. This is not a small church, but rather a “great” church ruling *many* peoples. Revelation 17 shows the return of this system but not the exact same church that of course will have disappeared long before when God’s Kingdom first arrived. Verse 2 speaks of her “fornication” with the “kings of the earth.” And verse 18 speaks of the woman as “that *great city*, which reigns over the kings of the earth.” This is a huge system that has sought to influence nations and world events. Only one city fits this description over the last 3,000 years—Jerusalem—even though this system is *today* centered in another city.

A very *different* woman, as we saw described in Revelation 12 as God’s Church, has been persecuted by this great *false* church for almost 2,000 years (17:6).

Little time remains before the seventh revival of our time appears, with the wonderful Kingdom of God to appear starting as a mustard seed.

Entering the Kingdom

The Bible teaches that the kingdom of God rules OVER the people and nations of the earth. The nations are not actually part of the kingdom, any more than

the average citizens of any country are part of the government that rules over them. One must ENTER the kingdom of God to be in it. Therefore, we must ask: As distinct from those who are governed by it, who is actually IN the kingdom?

In I Corinthians 15:50-51, Paul stated, “Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom* of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a *mystery...*” Certainly, this *is* a mystery to almost everyone—that flesh and blood human beings cannot enter the kingdom of God. It would be helpful to read the entirety of this “resurrection chapter” of I Corinthians 15. Only at the resurrection are human beings (true Christians) changed (born again) from flesh to spirit.

Do you see, then, how no *church* can possibly be the kingdom of God? Churches are physical. Flesh and blood physical people are able to enter and exit a church building. So, this rules out all churches (or, for that matter, the British Empire) from being the kingdom of God. Just believe the plain truth of the Bible!

The kingdom of God cannot include flesh and blood people!

A series of verses in John 3 is commonly misunderstood by those who believe that they can be “born again” in this life (while they are still composed of flesh and blood) and see the kingdom of God.

In this account, Nicodemus, a Pharisee, approached Christ and acknowledged in verse 2: “Rabbi, *we know* that you are a teacher *come from God.*” He plainly admitted that they knew who Christ was and who had sent Him to Earth. Notice that Nicodemus spoke for more than himself when he stated, “*we know.*” He was referring to himself and the other Pharisees who recognized who and what Jesus Christ was. They could not deny the power of God evident in the miracles that Christ was performing.

The religious leaders, the Pharisees, well understood that He was a “teacher come from God” bringing the truth. They still called Him a blasphemer, drunkard, heretic, seditious, bastard, ignorant, demon-possessed, false prophet and more—and crucified Him!

Many people see the plain truth of the Bible, yet *choose* to ignore it in order to hold to their own traditions (Mark 7:7) and ideas!

Christ told Nicodemus, “Except a man be *born again*, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God” (vs. 3). He explained that only by being born again can one actually “see” God’s kingdom. So, there is a *limitation* on who can see the kingdom. But there is no limitation on physical people seeing either a church or an empire. Anyone of any religion or belief can *see* any other physical item.

Grasp these critical points that Christ is making!

In verse 5, Christ states that unless one is “born of water and of the Spirit,” he “cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God.” Yes, the kingdom is something that can be “entered into”—but Christ explains His “born of water [baptism] and of the Spirit” phrase in verse 6: “That which is born of the flesh IS flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit IS spirit.”

Flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God—but *spirit can!* Because Christ wanted to allow no room for misunderstanding, He likened

SEVEN PROOFS God's Kingdom Is Not on Earth Now!

Many professing Christians misread Luke 17:21 and Colossians 1:13 and conclude that the kingdom is here now, either in the form of the Church or “in the hearts of men.” They then conclude that it is their “Christian duty” to spread it through brotherly love, tolerance, etc.

As sincere as this belief may be, it is not biblical. Then how did men jump to this false conclusion?

Here are two major reasons:

First, they don't let the Bible interpret the Bible. Instead of heeding II Peter 1:20, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,” they assign their own preconceived notions to Bible verses. Also, they do not allow the Bible to teach, reprove, correct or instruct them (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Second, they limit their understanding on a subject by reading only one or two passages, and taking them out of context. They also ignore many other verses that would give the “big picture” of what the Bible actually teaches. To understand the Bible on any doctrine, you must search *all* the scriptures on the subject. No single verse captures the entire meaning and understanding of any subject.

Isaiah 28:9-10 states, “Whom will He teach knowledge? And...make to understand the message?...For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.” In a sense, God designed the Bible to be like a jigsaw puzzle: Always piece together *all* related verses found throughout the Bible.

Now let's examine *seven proofs* God's kingdom is not on Earth now.

ONE: The Kingdom of God Is Within You?

In Luke 17:20-21 Christ said, “The kingdom of God comes not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! Or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Many read this verse and conclude, “Aha! God's kingdom is within me.” But is that what the verse *really* says?

To whom was Christ speaking? The first part of verse 20 gives the answer: “And when He was demanded of the *Pharisees*, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said...” Christ was talking to the Pharisees—not His disciples! They asked Him, “When will Your kingdom come?”

Here is Christ's answer: “The kingdom of God is within you.” Could Christ have meant that His kingdom was within the Pharisees—men He

called “hypocrites” and “blind guides,” who “omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith,” who were “full of extortion and excess,” who were like “whited [tombs], which appeared beautiful outward, but...within [were] full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:21, 23-27)?

Emphatically, NO! More study shows that the phrase “within you” is a mistranslation. The New King James margin says, “in your midst.” The New English Bible reads, “is *among* you.” The Revised Standard Version says, “in the *midst* of you.” Christ was telling these carnal men that His kingdom was in their *presence*. How?

Christ was referring to *Himself*. He represented God’s kingdom. While Jesus was a flesh and blood man, He was also the Messiah. Born to become a king, He never sinned or went against His Father’s will. He was, quite literally, the perfect representative of God’s government.

TWO: Defining a Kingdom

All kingdoms consist of four parts: Territory, a king (or ruler), subjects, and laws.

If God’s kingdom is already here, whether as the Church or in the “hearts of men,” then the entire Earth would be under its rule (Zech. 14:9).

If God’s kingdom is already here, Christ, its King, would be sitting on David’s throne (Isa. 9:6-7) and then, ruling from Jerusalem (Zech. 8:3). Note: *Jerusalem* means “City of Peace.” Yet today it is one of the most chaotic, terrorized, war-torn cities on Earth! Obviously, Christ is not ruling from *there now*.

If God’s kingdom is already here, His subjects (all mankind) would live under Christ’s rule. Even Gentile nations such as Egypt will be required to obey Him—or suffer the consequences (Zech. 14:16-19) once the kingdom moves to Zion (Mic. 4:8). That is not the case today.

If God’s kingdom is already here, His laws would be known by every man, woman and child throughout the Earth. All people would at least be moving toward obedience. No one would be able to claim ignorance of these laws (Isa. 30:21; Jer. 31:34). This has not yet happened.

THREE: Seeing the Kingdom

In John 3:3, Christ told Nicodemus, a Pharisee, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Confused, Nicodemus replied, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (vs. 4-5).

To see and enter God’s kingdom, you must become like spirit. Paul wrote, “Flesh and blood *cannot* inherit the kingdom of God” (I Cor. 15:50)!

Christ further explained that Spirit is like wind. It is invisible. You cannot see it. But human beings are flesh and blood, and can be seen.

Those who are “born again” shall resemble Christ (I John 3:2). No physical man looks like Him as He is in heaven today: “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters...and His countenance was as the sun shines in [its] strength” (Rev. 1:13-17).

Do you know of anyone who looks and sounds like this *now*?

We should also consider that the resurrection (when God’s servants are “born again”) won’t happen until Christ returns (I Cor. 15:50-54). If this had already occurred, the whole world would know it. No one could possibly miss such an event (Matt. 24:23-27).

FOUR: World Peace Now?

Isaiah 9:6-7 says of Christ, “The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.”

Watch the networks, read national news magazines and newspapers. Is this world enjoying peace? Do you believe Christ would allow murders, rapes, child molestation, riots, terrorism and wars under His divine rulership?

No! Obviously, Christ—the Prince of Peace—is not yet ruling His kingdom on Earth.

FIVE: What About Colossians 1:13?

To “prove” that God’s kingdom is here, many cite this verse: “Who [the Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

Let’s carefully examine this verse and let the Bible interpret itself.

What is the “power of darkness” that God delivers His people from? Acts 26:17-18 states, “...delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God...” Satan and his demons rule the nations today. This is why Paul wrote that Christians do not “wrestle...against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world” (Eph. 6:12), and it is also why Christ said, “My kingdom [government] is not of this world: if [it] were...then would My servants fight...but now is My kingdom not from here” (John 18:36).

When God delivers His people from the “powers of darkness,” He calls them out of this world (Rev. 18:4), out of its Satan-inspired (Eph. 2:2-3) system and ways of life—*its governments*. And He “has translated [margin: *transferred*] us into the kingdom [government] of His dear

Son.” God delivers His servants from the government, laws and ways of Satan to *HIS GOVERNMENT* at conversion.

Christians are citizens of God’s kingdom, though it is not here. For example: You are an American traveling abroad. Though you are not in the U.S., you are still an American citizen. Your citizenship is in America. In the same way, a Christian’s citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), though he does not live there.

Now consider Romans 4:17 as it speaks of Abraham: “God, who quickens [gives life to] the dead, and calls those things which be not [do not exist] as though they were...” When God said to Abraham, “A father of many nations have I made you” (Gen. 17:5), Isaac would not even be born until a year later (compare 17:1-5 with 21:5). His offspring did not grow into a *single* nation until hundreds of years later in Egypt! God knew that their descendants would become prosperous nations many centuries later. Since nothing can stop God from fulfilling His plans, to Him they are as good as done. Though His people are not *yet* born into His kingdom, He knows that they *will* be. Nothing can prevent this from occurring. In His mind, it is certain.

SIX: Thy Kingdom Come

If the kingdom is here now, either as the Church or “in the hearts of men,” why would Christ command His servants to continually pray, “thy kingdom COME” (Matt. 6:9-10; Luke 11:2)? If at least the *beginnings* of the kingdom were here, or if the Church is the kingdom, wouldn’t Christ have commanded His followers to pray “thy kingdom *grow* and *spread*”?

SEVEN: Seeking the Kingdom

If God’s kingdom is here now, why would Christ tell His followers, “But *seek* you first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33)? If church members are already in the kingdom, why seek it? Again, would not Christ have told them to “first *spread* the kingdom”?

The Great Domino Effect

The Bible states that Satan is the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4). If he can convince you that God’s kingdom is here, then you will believe you are “born again.” And if you are “born again,” you must “already” be “saved.” If you are “saved,” you cannot sin. If you cannot sin and break God’s law (I John 3:4), you do not need to actually keep the law, because righteousness is being “imputed” by Christ. If you do not keep God’s law—which defines His way of life (Rom. 13:10)—you could not be a Christian (John 15:4-10, 14). This is exactly what Satan, your enemy, seeks.

Carefully examine the Bible for *all* that it says on every subject. Let it interpret itself. Only then will you grow in true biblical understanding!

spirit to wind. Wind, like spirit, is *invisible*. It cannot be seen. Therefore, those in the kingdom must be composed of spirit.

The Kingdom in the *Hearts of Men?*

Many choose to believe that the kingdom enters into people rather than people entering into the kingdom. We have seen that people must ignore the plain statements of Christ in order to draw this conclusion. They “spiritualize away” the coming very real kingdom of God, in order to turn it into an ethereal feeling in the hearts of men. Deceivers say that to have the Spirit of God is to have the kingdom within you. Many centuries of outright deception have caused millions to believe nothing more than fiction—instead of the plain truth of the Bible.

Since it is obvious to many that people *can* enter into the many modern-day countries of what was once the British Empire and that people *can* enter into a church, deceived religionists concocted the idea that the kingdom of God rests in the “hearts of men.”

I have often heard people express something similar to the following: “The kingdom of God can be established in the hearts of men if all Christians everywhere will just work together in love to bring about world peace and tolerance toward all.”

Where do they get this idea? From a *mistranslation* of Luke 17:20-21! In this passage, Christ *appeared* to speak of the kingdom of God “within you.” We need to examine this *mistranslation*. If this verse actually does say that the kingdom of God is “within” people, then it contradicts all the other scriptures we have examined. And if the Bible contradicts itself in such obvious ways, we can throw it away, for it cannot be the Word of God.

The Kingdom in the *Pharisees’ Hearts?*

Let’s now examine Luke 17:20-21: “And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, *when* the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God comes not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo *here!* or, Lo *there!* For, behold, the kingdom of God is *within you.*”

If you do not understand anything else about this verse, get this one point straight! Christ was speaking to carnal-minded, lying, hypocritical Pharisees. Even by the most vague and ethereal idea that the kingdom of God is something in men’s hearts, there is no way Christ could have been referring to it being in the hearts of these people!

The Pharisees were self-righteous and unconverted. They sought to tempt and accuse Christ at every turn. It is utterly silly and even ludicrous to say that the kingdom of God was “within” *them*. Do not lose sight of the fact that, when Christ responded, it states, “He answered *them*.” He addressed “them”—the Pharisees. Understand that the Pharisees were not in the Church, and the

Church of God was certainly NOT in the Pharisees. Actually, the New Testament Church did not yet even exist.

Notice what Christ did NOT state in this verse. He did not say, “the kingdom of God will be set up in the hearts of men” or “in your hearts.” What He did say is, “the kingdom of God IS...” It is important that we understand Christ was not describing, in this one instance, the kingdom of God as something in the future, but rather He spoke of it in the *present tense*.

Why?

I have said that this is a misrendering of the original Greek. The actual Greek words that Luke used here are much better translated “in the midst of you” or “among you.” A number of other alternate translations read this way, and most Bibles with marginal references include these phrases.

The Revised Standard Version states, “the kingdom of God is in the midst of you,” and the Moffatt translation offers even more insight. He translates these two verses as “He answered them, ‘The REIGN of God is not coming as you hope to catch sight of it; no one will say, “Here it is” or “There it is,” for the REIGN of God *is now in your midst*.’”

Let’s ask, what—or who—could it have been that Christ was speaking of? What—or who—was it that was “in the midst” of the Pharisees? What—or who—was “among” them?

The Son of God—Jesus Christ Himself—was standing in the middle of this group of Pharisees. Think of it this way: They were in the presence of a direct representative who will “reign” in the coming kingdom of God. It was *Jesus* who was standing “among” them. Clearly, Christ was speaking of the kingdom of God, *through Himself as its representative*, being right where they were standing.

Let’s understand! The Pharisees knew of the many Old Testament prophecies and scriptures describing God’s kingdom. They were well aware of the verses that we have studied from the book of Daniel. They would have understood why Peter would later say, “*ALL* the holy prophets” spoke of the “restitution of all things.” They were familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and many others. The Pharisees ignored the scriptures about Christ’s *First Coming* because they wanted to focus almost entirely on the many scriptures describing His *Second Coming*!

Obviously, the Pharisees did not believe the kingdom of God was a church. They certainly didn’t believe it was the British Empire—which the world was not to see for many centuries. And they did not believe it was more emotional sentiment in men’s hearts. They fully understood that it had to do with *government*—**RULERSHIP**!

The problem was that they did not understand **WHEN** the kingdom was to come or that its purpose was not merely to sweep away the Roman legions from Palestine. Had they understood Christ’s *First Coming*, they would have better understood the “when” of His *Second Coming*—and *why* it had to come much later. So, they were hoping for a conquering Messiah who would aid

them in their quest to reverse Roman rule by replacing the Romans with themselves, as their masters.

Jesus explained the fallacy of their thinking. He made it clear that the coming of the kingdom was not a local event, merely limited to rulership over where the Jews lived in Palestine.

The Jews were looking for a physical government located in a single nation—their own! *This* is why Christ told them not to think of it as being “over *there*” or “right *here*.”

Remember, in John 18:37, Christ had said that He was born to be a King. He knew that He would be the ultimate King over His Kingdom. (Daniel 7:17-18 and 23 demonstrate that the words for *kingdom* and *king* are interchangeable in the Bible.)

By simply continuing to read more of the context in Luke 17, we are left with *no doubt* as to what Christ was referring to. Read verse 24, where, like Matthew 24:27, it refers to, “For as the *lightning*, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be *in His day*.” Jesus was describing a stunning, world-shaking event that would be as visible as lightning when He relocates His Matthew 13 kingdom to Zion (Mic. 4). But, notice the term “in His day,” which shows that it is a yet future event. Take time to read Matthew 24:26-30 and how it describes the “day when Christ will be revealed.”

By no stretch of the imagination did Christ say that the kingdom of God was in the unrighteous, carnal, hateful Pharisees—who continually plotted His death—any more than He was saying it was a church.

Christ had previously indicted the Pharisees with a terrible warning. No doubt, it had made them angry, and it led them to try to catch Him saying something that was incorrect about either the kingdom of God or any other matter. In Luke 13:28-29, He warned them, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when *you* shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and *you yourselves thrust out*. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”

Christ was plainly telling the Pharisees that they were not going to be in God’s kingdom. They would not be allowed to *enter* it, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would—though these men have not *yet* entered it (Heb. 11:13, 39-40).

Kingdom of God “at hand”?

Someone will surely quote Mark 1:15, where Jesus had preached that “the kingdom of God is *at hand*.” There, recall that He had also gone on to add, “Repent you, and believe the gospel.” So some have concluded that when people repent and believe the gospel, thus becoming part of the church—they simultaneously enter the kingdom of God, which was, sort of, waiting for them—it was “at hand.”

As with Luke 17:21, people read into a verse what they want it to say. Christ did not say the kingdom of God had been set up or established—or that it was a church. These are all “traditions of men” that people observe in place of God’s plain Word (Mark 7:7).

Luke 16:16 shows that, from the time of John the Baptist, the kingdom of God had become something that was being “preached.” The kingdom had not arrived yet, but it was then being *preached*. Preaching the kingdom and having the opportunity to qualify to enter it certainly were then (and still are) “at hand.”

Saints Rule With Christ

Before returning to Luke, let’s examine more of what Daniel recorded about the kingdom of God.

Remember after His initial mustard seed coming, Christ will move to Zion like lightning shining from the east to the west (Matt. 24:27). This will be an earth-shattering event that no one could possibly miss. But will He come to rule the Earth by Himself—or will there be others with Him? We could ask: When Christ establishes His world-ruling government, who else might be part of the structure that He establishes? If the governments of men require the efforts of many, who assist a supreme leader, is God’s government different? No!

Daniel 7:13 speaks of Christ coming in the “clouds of heaven.” God officially grants Him the authority to rule the entire world. The next verse states, “And there was GIVEN Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (vs. 14).

Again, we ask whether Christ rules alone, or are others to rule with Him? Exactly how does God intend to manage all of the peoples and nations of the Earth?

Several more verses in Daniel 7 are critical to understand. Remember that the kingdom of God is prophesied to replace the four previously discussed world-ruling kingdoms, described in chapter 2. Now notice verses 17-18: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But *the saints* of the Most High shall *take the kingdom*, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.”

Believe this verse for what it says! The ultimate calling of Christians is to join with Christ in order to share rulership in the kingdom of God over *all* nations and *all* peoples. Truly, Christ is “KING *of kings* and LORD *of lords*.” These other kings and lords can be you or anyone who is willing to accept God’s terms for entering His kingdom.

Verses 19-20 shed additional light on what happens when the saints return with Christ. The *little horn* here is the RELIGIOUS KINGDOM/RULER of the same system that produces the woman who rides the beast of Revelation 17. This

religious government has ruled over all of the previous resurrections, or revivals, of the Holy Roman Empire, since AD 554.

Now read verses 21-22: “I beheld, and *the same horn made war with the saints*, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and *judgment was given to the saints* of the Most High; and the time came that *the saints possessed the kingdom.*”

Finally, Daniel’s long prophecy concludes with verse 27 further confirming the marvelous potential lying ahead for all the true saints of God. Notice: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, *shall be given to the people of the saints* of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

What could be plainer? No wonder Christ stated, “And he that *overcomes*, and keeps My works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall *rule them* with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father” (Rev. 2:26-27) and, a few verses later, added, “To him that *overcomes* will I grant to sit with Me in My throne...” (3:21).

The phrase “in My throne” is used because Christ understood that His throne is on this Earth, unlike the Father’s, which is in heaven. Luke 1:32 shows that Christ will first sit on the Throne of David before taking His own throne in Jerusalem. (Also see Matthew 5:5, Psalm 25:12-13 and 37:11.) There is no doubt that when Christ Returns, the saints will rule with Him—ON EARTH!

Let’s now examine a very important parable that Christ spoke so that people would understand the coming of the kingdom of God and the Christian’s responsibility to QUALIFY in order to be part of it.

The Parable of the Pounds

Luke 19:11-27 contains a parable written to illustrate what is at stake when the kingdom of God comes. In it, Christ compared Himself to a Nobleman who went to a “far country” (a type of joining the Father in heaven) for nearly 2,000 years, until His Return. The disciples believed that the kingdom of God would “appear immediately,” and Christ wanted to illustrate that much time would pass before it did.

In this parable, Christ completely dispels any idea that the kingdom would *immediately* appear in the form of His Church. And, of course, He has not yet returned to this Earth.

The “Nobleman” of the parable “called” his “ten servants” (a type of Christians being called out of this world by God) and instructed them to increase the worth of a “pound” (money) that He gave to each one of them for investment. The *pound* actually represented a kind of symbolic unit of basic spiritual worth or value. Remember that it was a parable, so Christ was not referring to any kind of literal money. He told His servants to “Occupy till I

come”—or to “grow” the pound into more money. While the Nobleman was gone, several of the servants said, “We will not have this man to *reign* over us.” It is important to understand the intent of this statement.

These “citizens” understood that the Nobleman (Christ) was coming to “reign” on Earth. They wanted no part of this and rejected His government (reign) over them—and, thus, their future part in it (vs. 27). They understood that the kingdom of God would be a GOVERNMENT ruling over the Earth. Remember, the parable had begun with the Nobleman (Christ) going to heaven to “receive for Himself a *kingdom* and to *return*.” (We have already seen in Daniel 7:14 that God confers supreme authority on Christ just before He returns to rule with the saints.)

Upon the Nobleman’s return, He called each of the servants into His presence to receive a report of how each man had increased the pound that he had been given. Some had gained five pounds, others ten, etc., but one servant had buried his pound in the ground and produced nothing with it. Christ wanted an accounting of how “each man had *gained*” while He had been away.

The first servant had gained *ten* pounds and Christ explained his reward by saying, “you good servant: because you have been faithful in a very little, have you *authority over ten cities*” (vs. 17).

The servant who had gained *five* pounds was put “*over five cities*.” Because the second servant *produced* half as much, his *reward* was half as much. So, these men were given “authority”—they were put into positions of rulership “over cities.” Their reward was to “reign” with Christ (Jude 14) in His world-ruling kingdom. How obvious!

The servant who buried his pound in a napkin had wasted a wonderful opportunity to qualify for rulership in the kingdom of God. It states, “And He [the Nobleman, Jesus] said to him, Out of your own mouth will I judge you, *you wicked servant*.”

This servant had not grown. He had not produced anything with his life and thus had not qualified for rulership over cities in the kingdom of God. Christ gave the wicked servant’s reward to the one who had gained ten pounds—so that the latter had even more than his own reward. The cities that this man’s conduct had caused him to lose would have to be ruled by *someone*. Otherwise, they would become abandoned, with no ruler assigned authority over them.

Some brief history is needed to better understand the setting of this parable. Christ was a Jew who was preaching this parable in the land of *Judah*. Judah was merely one of twelve tribes in ancient Israel. Ten of those tribes had become lost over 700 years earlier, because they had rebelled against Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. They had been taken into captivity by the ancient Assyrians and had later migrated into Northwestern Europe, becoming the democratic, primarily English-speaking peoples of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and certain other Western European nations. Only some of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi remained with the Jews, whose capital was Jerusalem.

(You are strongly encouraged to read our extensive book *America and Britain in Prophecy* to understand the big picture of what has been only most briefly described here.)

When the Parable of the Pounds speaks of the Nobleman's citizens "hating Him," and states that they said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," it is a reference to the Jews. History plainly records that they rejected the authority of Jesus Christ. This is what John 1:11 means when it states that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The "ten servants" (those Christians called today) are then a reference, in type, to the lost TEN TRIBES of Israel. Christ offered *them* an opportunity to rule, because the Jews rejected His authority over them.

Sadly, some do not want the true Christ of the Bible to tell them what to do. They *do not* want Him to rule over their lives and conduct. But they *do* want salvation—with no strings attached.

No one will be given rulership before he has proven that he *can be ruled!* No one can be part of God's *world-ruling government* unless he has learned to submit to the *government of God* and to be ruled by God and Jesus Christ in this life. This is the all-important lesson of the parable of the pounds!

When Christ called His servants into account, He was showing that all people will one day stand and give an account before the judgment seat of Christ. Like the reward of the twelve apostles, who will be put over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:27-28), some will be given tremendous AUTHORITY to rule over cities with Jesus Christ "in the throne of His glory."

WHEN Will the Kingdom Come?

All want to know *when* Christ will return. The disciples asked Him, "What shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3.)

The entirety of the next 48 verses in Matthew 24 is Christ's answer detailing many of the events, in sequence, that would precede His Coming to Jerusalem. In verse 36, referring to the exact time of His Coming to Earth, He stated, "But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

Just a few weeks later, in Acts 1:6-7, prior to Christ's final ascension back into heaven, the disciples asked Him a related question regarding the first phase of God's Plan. Notice: "...they asked of Him, saying, Lord, will You *at this time* RESTORE again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons*, which the Father has put in His own power." Christ gave them the same answer as in Matthew—"it is *not for you to know* the times or the seasons."

It is important to note that the New Testament Church would be established just *ten days* after this encounter (2:1). Why would Christ answer, "it is

not for you to know the times or the seasons” if the kingdom of God was going to be the Church, which was to be almost immediately established (on Pentecost)—just ten days later?

The same is true for us today. We cannot know exactly when Christ’s kingdom will come, but we can know a close approximation. In Luke 21:31, at the end of a long prophecy paralleling Matthew 24, Christ stated, “WHEN you see these things come to pass, know you that the kingdom of God is nigh [near] at hand [to Jerusalem].”

He *did* want them to know that “you shall receive *POWER*, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8), but *not* to know when the kingdom would arrive. The same is true for all who are converted today. We cannot know exactly when Christ will return, but we *can* know that we will receive *power* now to grow and overcome—and to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God until He does.

Men’s Efforts Cannot Bring the Kingdom

True Christians are not activists seeking to “make this world a better place”—thereby bringing the kingdom of God to Earth. They have their “*feet shod* with the preparation of the *gospel of peace*” (Eph. 6:15). They walk through life having their “feet” covered with the knowledge of how the true gospel spells the only way to all the good things that mankind longs for. They understand with certainty that the kingdom of God is coming. They know what lies ahead for this world. They do not go off to serve and kill in the endless, futile wars of men and nations, or participate in the governmental affairs of men.

They do not take matters into their own hands, and try to supposedly “spread the kingdom,” thereby attempting to neutralize God’s purpose, which is to show man that he is not capable of governing himself! (Take time to read our two booklets *War; Killing and the Military* and *Should Christians Vote?* to understand why.)

Notice what Paul was inspired to write: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a *thief in the night*. For when they [leaders and religionists] shall say, *Peace and safety*; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But *you, brethren, are not in darkness*, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (I Thes. 5:2-4).

All who understand the truths of this booklet need never again be “in the dark” about God’s Plan or their awesome potential role within it.

Citing Isaiah 52:7, Paul also recorded, “How beautiful are *the feet* of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings [the good news of the gospel] of good things” (Rom. 10:15). In verse 16, he went on to cite another passage from Isaiah: “But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel. For Isaiah said, Lord, *who has believed our report?*” (53:1).

Of course, most people will *not* believe “God’s report” of what lies ahead for civilization. They will *not* believe that they are unable to bring world peace through human effort. Many will shout “Peace, peace; *when there is no peace*” (Jer. 6:14; 8:11, 14-15), and most will continue eagerly believing their false predictions, even in the face of abject failure.

The professing Christians of this world will continue desperately striving to bring about the kingdom of God and world peace through human effort. Deceived religious leaders will tell them that this is their “Christian duty.” Many will see this as the sole mission of their church. Millions are looking for happiness, abundance, peace and security around every corner—but will be terribly disappointed in the *short term*. This is because world conditions, leading into a final devastating period of worldwide calamity, will get far worse before they ultimately get better.

“Thy Kingdom Come”

Most people are familiar with what is called “The Lord’s Prayer.” Many can recite it without effort, having practiced it without understanding that it is simply a *model* or *guideline* for how to pray. I learned it at age four. It begins, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. *Thy kingdom come*. Thy will be done in earth...” (Matt. 6:9-10). This short prayer continues for three more verses. But, of the millions who know and use it, how many actually think about the phrase “Thy kingdom come”—or God’s “will [His Master Plan] being done on Earth”? For 2,000 years, many may have basically sought to follow Christ’s instruction, praying, “Thy kingdom come” without ever really pondering the staggering meaning behind this small phrase.

Have you?

Only a few verses later, in the same chapter, Christ stated, “But seek you *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (vs. 33). Christians must be continually seeking the kingdom of God *FIRST*—above everything else—in their lives! How can they do this if they do not know *what* it is—or *when* it will come—or how it affects their own salvation?

But now YOU do!

The Kingdom MUST Come

The following quote comes from Herbert W. Armstrong’s booklet *Just What Do You Mean...Kingdom of God?* It is an extraordinary summary of the wonderful truth contained in the answer to the question, what is the kingdom of God? This appeared under the subhead “The Two Fateful Alternatives”:

“This world trouble began in 1914, with World War I. There was a recess from 1918 until 1939. We are in a second recess now...But now at last we have nuclear energy. We have hydrogen bombs stock-piled in such power and volume that they could blast all human life off this planet several times over. There

are two other destructive weapons today in existence, either of which could erase humanity from the earth.

“Today world-famous scientists say only a super world-government can prevent world cosmocide. Yet MEN cannot and *will not* get together to form such a world-ruling government.

“It’s time we face the hard, cold, realistic FACT: humanity has two alternatives: either there *is* an Almighty, all-powerful GOD who is about to step in and set up THE KINGDOM OF GOD to rule all nations with supernatural and supranational *FORCE* to bring us PEACE—or else all human life would be obliterated (Matt. 24:22).

“If the deceived religionists, who think the CHURCH is the Kingdom of God, were right, and there is not going to be any supernatural and all-powerful WORLD GOVERNMENT which is the Kingdom of God, then humanity is utterly without HOPE. All human life is in danger of extinction.

“But notice what Jesus Christ said!

“Can you BELIEVE Jesus Christ?

“Where is your trust—in the Word of God, or in paganized, empty, deceiving teachings falsely labeled ‘Christianity’—inherited as ‘Christian tradition’—which says the CHURCH is the Kingdom of God; or, that the Kingdom is merely a meaningless, frothy and ethereal sentiment ‘set up in our hearts’? It’s about time you come to know *who* are the false prophets, and WHO is speaking the true Word of God faithfully!”

The following literature expands on topics discussed in this booklet:

- America and Britain in Prophecy
- Are *These* the Last Days?
- Does the Bible Teach Predestination?
- *How* God's Kingdom Will Come — The Untold Story!
- Is There Life After Death?
- Should Christians Vote?
- War, Killing and the Military
- What Is Your Reward in the Next Life?
- Which Is the True Gospel?
- Who Is the Devil?
- *Who* or *What* Is the Beast of Revelation?

022317
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The Restored Church of God

1000 Ambassador Drive
Wadsworth, OH 44281
USA

P.O. Box 4064
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3
CANADA

Phone: (330) 334-2266
Fax: (330) 334-6513
E-mail: info@rcg.org
Web: rcg.org