

The Kingdom of God and Christ

According to the Scriptures

by Bob Allgood

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching **THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, and saying "The Time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" Full Text: Mark 1:9-15

The Kingdom of God is no small subject. Much of the New Testament is devoted to teaching about **THE KINGDOM**. Volumes have been written about the Kingdom. Primitive Baptist who have been blessed with an understanding of **THE KINGDOM** write many articles teaching the **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY** of **THE KINGDOM**. The subject is inexhaustible, and I do not have the ability or knowledge to do more than touch the hem of the garment. But in the few short articles I hope to write, I will give you a perspective of **THE KINGDOM, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES**, as a converted Premillennialist sees it. For fifteen years (1960 to 1976), I preached the "Future Thousand Year Kingdom Theory". And then, by grace, God opened my eyes to the truth of His Word. I know I will not **REVEAL** anything new, for there are **NO NEW REVELATIONS** being revealed to man outside the inspired Word of God.

THE "GOSPEL OR GOOD NEWS" ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS THE FIRST MESSAGE THE JEWS HEARD AFTER WHAT IS BELIEVED A FOUR HUNDRED YEAR PERIOD OF SILENCE FROM GOD'S PROPHETS. That is the approximate time between the last writings of the Prophet Malachi in the Old Testament and the Message of John the Baptist, who was "the forerunner or Herald of the King", as he came on the scene preaching "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:1-2). John the Baptist was ordained by God while yet in the womb to "go before him (Christ) in the spirit and power of Elias --- to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Lk. 1:13-17). His message was clear "I am not the Christ -- I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord -- I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am unworthy to unloose. -- And seeing Jesus coming unto him, he said "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD" (John 1:19-29).

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WAS THE FIRST MESSAGE JESUS PREACHED AFTER HE BEGAN HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY. Jesus began his earthly ministry after: First being baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11); and Second

being tempted by the Devil "in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Matt 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Hebrews 4:15). Jesus was about thirty years old at the time he was baptized and the Spirit of God descended upon him and his heavenly Father said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3: 21-23). John the Baptist bare record, saying "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which shall baptize with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (read John 1:19-34)

There are some who teach that Jesus was mistaken when he said (see text) **THE TIME IS FULFILLED, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND** (at hand means nigh or near). There are two (2) Postponed Kingdom Theories propagated by man. One theory is about a **FUTURE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST ON EARTH**. This one is taught mostly by "Armenian Dispensationalist" who are also known as "Premillennialist". Now I am not throwing stones, for I used to be one of these strange creatures. Their "ideas" about the Kingdom are so "strange" they honestly can be called "SQUIRRELLY".

However those folks are not the only people out there with strange ideas about the Kingdom. There is another "POSTPONED KINGDOM THEORY" propagated by some closer to home who call themselves Primitive Baptist. They claim that The Kingdom of God was not established until 70 AD. Both of these so called THEORIES are "UNSCRIPTURAL" to say the least. Theories are man-made ideas. Any "idea" that will not hold up under the scrutiny of the Inspired Word of God soon becomes **STRANGE DOCTRINE**. I heard one notable Elder say, "The best way to test an idea is to set it up and shoot some Scripture at it. If it doesn't stand, you had best leave it alone and let it die". This is what I hope to do by teaching **THE KINGDOM ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES**. To paraphrase the late Elder S. A. Paine concerning false doctrines, "I plan to put these (false theories) in a bottle, drive the cork so tight they will smother to death, if indeed there is any life at all in them".

FIRST let's establish some facts according to Scripture (i.e. King James Version). Please check me out, and let me know if I have erred. The terms "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" are New Testament terms and they do not appear in the Old Testament. Jesus said "The Law and The Prophets (i.e. Old Testament Scriptures) were until John (the Baptist); since that time the kingdom of God is preached ---" (Luke 16:16). The word "KINGDOM" appears in the New Testament 158 times in 150 verses, including the times it appears in the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God". The Term "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" appears 33 times in 32 verses - all in

the Gospel of Matthew. The term "KINGDOM OF GOD" appears 70 times in 69 verses; 5 times in 5 verses in the Gospel of Matthew; 15 times in 15 verses in the Gospel of Mark; 33 times in 32 verses in the Gospel of Luke (the same as does the Kingdom of Heaven appear in Matthew); 2 times in 2 verses in John; and 15 times in Acts through Revelation.

The word KINGDOM appears in the Old Testament 184 times in 166 verses and is used to speak of "many kingdoms" of various nations. However the New Testament KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH is foretold in prophecy many, many times in "The Law and The Prophets and The Psalms". In the course of this subject we will look at several of these Old Testament prophecies, especially those in Isaiah 9:6-7 and Daniel chapters 7 and 9. We will see that these were all "FULFILLED" in Christ according to God's sovereign will. Many of the Armenians have confused the FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL concerning these O.T. prophecies with the "rejection of Christ the King by the natural unregenerate Jew". Doing this, they have tried to "reconcile" their confusion with "timely" prophecies about a "natural kingdom in a natural world". I know, I used to do this, and it was not until God opened my eyes to SOVEREIGN GRACE did I see His SOVEREIGN KINGDOM IN CHRIST. God has always been SOVEREIGN and always will be SOVEREIGN in heaven and on earth - none can stay his hand. THE KINGDOM GOD IS GOVERNED BY JESUS THE CHRIST, THE SOVEREIGN KING.

In the New Testament the word "Kingdom" and the terms "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" are often synonymous and interchangeable. Some have the "strange idea" that they are not, but the Scriptures proves this true. In our text it says "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came in- to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God". In Matthew 4:12 we read "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee --". Matt. 4:17 says "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". These are the exact same events. Matt 4:23 adds, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom". A 3rd grade student would understand that both Matthew and Mark are speaking of the same thing, but using different terms.

The terms are interchanged in Matthew 19:23-24: Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God". It is obvious that Jesus is talking about the same kingdom, but as strange as it may be, some preachers go to College to get some professor to help them to misunderstand this. We could go on and give

several more examples, but I do not believe this point needs further proof.

God does not leave us in darkness to depend upon man's theories or ideas as to what is the Kingdom of God. **GOD TELLS WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS !** Jesus said "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation -- for behold the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21). The word "observation" comes from the Greek word "parateresis" and means "inspection or ocular evidence". This teaches that the **KINGDOM OF GOD** can not be seen with the physical eye. Jesus then says "**BEHOLD** the kingdom of God is **WITHIN** you".

The word "**BEHOLD**" (in this case) means to **SEE WITH SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**, just as it does in many passages, for example I Cor. 15:5 and I John 3:1. The word "**WITHIN**" is the Greek word "entos" meaning "**INSIDE**" you. Paul the Apostle tells us that "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; (or that which can be seen with the eye - [ba]) but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:17). **REMEMBER -- IN THE HOLY GHOST !!**

Jesus Christ is the personification of the Godhead; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; "For in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9), and he is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person (substance) - see Heb. 1:3. Jesus said to Philip "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Again in the same place he said "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS: I WILL COME TO YOU**" (John 14:16-18). Remember what John said that God told him about Jesus Christ? He said "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, **THE SAME IS HE WHICH BAPTIZETH WITH THE HOLY GHOST**". Before Jesus was crucified he promised his disciples he would send "another Comforter - which is the Holy Ghost".

When Jesus had, by himself, purged our sins, he ascended back to glory to be glorified with the glory he had with the Father before the world was - and He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. God the Father at that time said to the Son (read this carefully) "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the **OIL OF GLADNESS** above thy fellows" (read Heb. 1:3-13). That **OIL OF GLADNESS** speaks of the **HOLY SPIRIT OF TRUTH --THE COMFORTER** promised by Jesus - which **HOLY SPIRIT** was poured out on the Church (which existed from the days of John

the Baptist) and "THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST" TEN DAYS AFTER JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST -- PROVING (giving evidence) THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS FROM THE "COMING OF THE MESSIAH" -"THE SON OF MAN" (Daniel 9:24-27 with 7:13-14 & 27) AND THAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WOULD NEVER END.

Peter said on the day of Pentecost that these things were the fulfillment of the O.T. PROPHECIES of Joel and David, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God HATH MADE (past tense) that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:36). LORD AND KING ! MESSIAH ! LORD AND THE ANOINTED ONE ! HALLELUIAH !!

"The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 10:5-15) "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:3-12) Also read Matt 4:17 and Mark 1:14-15.

The Arminian Dispensationalist would have us to believe that when John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and the Apostles preached "The Kingdom of Heaven" is at hand, they spoke MAINLY of an Earthly One Thousand Year Messianic King- dom. BUT when they preached "The Kingdom of God" is at hand or nigh, they spoke of a Universal Spiritual Kingdom, which included a "mystical, parenthetical" Church Age that was required due to the UNEXPECTED rejection by the Jews of Jesus as King and His offer of the Kingdom of Heaven.

WHAT THEY TEACH IS - The John Darby (Plymouth Brethren) DISPENSATIONALIST THEORY of 1830, which was promoted by Darby's convert, C. I. Scofield, a Freemason, in his Scofield Reference Bible and other books like Chafer's Systematic Theology. THEY TEACH: The Kingdom was announced as being "at hand"; this consisted of A LEGITIMATE OFFER to THE NATION OF ISRAEL of the promised earthly Davidic kingdom; however the JEWISH NATION rejected their King and the Kingdom; Because THE JEWS rejected Christ, God postponed the Millennial Kingdom; but it will be instituted on earth after the return of Christ; The earthly Kingdom, when rejected and postponed, entered a "MYS- TERY FORM" (Matt 13) for the present age; This Mystery is included in the term Kingdom of God; The Kingdom of God includes The Parenthetical Church Age which exist only until the Earthly Kingdom is established; The EARTHLY KINGDOM OF HEAVEN will be re-announced by a Jewish remnant of 144,000 at the beginning of THE GREAT TRIBULATION, (Matt 24) which occurs immediately before the return of Christ; The Church will then be RAPTURED away from the earth and go to be with Christ; After which an election of Jews will be sealed by God to proclaim the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - that is the EARTHLY DAVIDIC KINGDOM is about to be set up; The Millennial Kingdom will then be established as Christ returns in power and glory and

CHRIST WILL REIGN IN A "PHYSICAL" TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS.

These teachings are not only **SQUIRRELLY**, but **BLASPHEMOUS** in the light of **SCRIPTURE** when one "rightly dividing the word of truth". In 1976 while in search of the truth concerning **MAN'S DEPRAVITY** and **ETERNAL LIFE**, my eyes were opened to the doctrines of **SOVEREIGN GRACE**. God also opened my eyes to the Truth of His "**SOVEREIGN KINGDOM**" in **JESUS THE CHRIST**. The two are very much related! Those who deny the **SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**, are for the most part, the ones who teach that God had to postpone an **OFFERED KINGDOM**. They believe that **MAN'S WILL** to is greater than **GOD'S WILL**. They believe that man must "**LET or ALLOW GOD**" to do His will. They say "God wants" to save you if you will just **LET or ALLOW** him to do so. This Vain Philosophy is the root cause for their misunderstanding so many Scriptures.

THE ARMINIAN DISPENSATIONALIST POSTPONED KINGDOM THEORY CAN NOT STAND IN THE LIGHT OF A SOVEREIGN GOD WHO DOETH ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? This **THEORY** fails in the light of **A SOVEREIGN GOD** Who hath **CHOSEN US** and **PREDESTINATED US** "according to the good pleasure of his will; according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord - that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, **NOT OF THE JEWS ONLY, BUT ALSO OF THE GENTILES**". The "Doctrine of Election" (Eph 1 and Rom 9) slams the cork into the bottle which holds this **DAMNABLE HERESY**.

Now our battle is not against the "Armenians" as such; "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, the rulers (kosmokrator or world ruler) of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness (wicked spirits) in high places" (Eph 6:12). The ministers of Satan, who are transformed as ministers of righteousness are the ones who teach that God is subject to the will of man! "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (II Cor. 11:13-15). "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom **THE WAY OF TRUTH** shall be evil spoken of" (II Pet 2:2). "Armenianism", the doctrine that Man's will is greater than God's will is a Satanic doctrine which began in the garden of Eden when the Serpent said to Eve "Thou shalt not surely die"; thereby saying God is inferior to man.

DOES THE SCRIPTURE TEACH THAT THE "MESSIAH" WOULD EVER SET ON THE NATURAL THRONE OF DAVID AND RULE HIS

KINGDOM FROM THE PHYSICAL TEMPLE IN EARTHLY JERUSALEM ? or DOES SCRIPTURE TEACH THAT THE "MESSIAH" WOULD ESTABLISH A "SPIRITUAL KINGDOM" AND RULE OVER HIS PEOPLE AND REIGN WITH HIS SAINTS IN A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM ON EARTH UNTIL THAT KINGDOM BE DELIVERED UP TO ETERNAL GLORY? The answer to the first question is NO. The answer to the second question is YES. But we must prove it from Scripture or surely the cork will pop from the bottle. This will take more space than what we have remaining, but we will begin. Please read the Scripture references.

GOD RULES FROM HEAVEN! GOD DWELLS NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS! This is a well established fact, but THE POSTPONED KINGDOM THEORIST have failed to understand it. Solomon who built the first Temple, (David, being a man of war could not build it - See: I Chron. 22) said, "Will God indeed dwell on earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? (I Kings 8:22-30). The Temple in earthly Jerusalem was to be a HOUSE OF PRAYER, not the dwelling place of God. Jesus cast out the moneychangers who sold doves and defiled the Temple and said "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mat 21:12-13).

Steven, the Deacon, who was stoned by Christ rejecting Jews who trusted in the Temple, said "Solomon built him (God) a house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all the things? YE STIFFNECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (See: Acts 7:37-53 and Cf Romans 2:28-29). These unregenerate or apostate Jews had put their emphasis in TEMPLE WORSHIP, and did not understand TRUE WORSHIP which is IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH (Jere. 7:1-16, John 4:23-24). God has never desired or delighted in animal sacrifices or burnt offerings on a natural altar in a physical Temple. Those "Burnt Offerings" were only types and shadows to point men to Jesus the Christ (Ps. 51:16-17, Jere. 7:21-24, Heb. 9:19-28, Gal. 3:19-25). We are to worship the Lord from the heart in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 29:2, Matt 22:36-38, Phil 3:3).

Paul, the Apostle, who preached ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD - THE WHOLE TRUTH - ALL OF THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD - BOTH OLD AND NEW -(Acts 20:26-27), said; "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, DWELLETH NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS; Neither is worshipped with men's hands --" (Read: Acts 17:22-31). NOW IF GOD DWELLS NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS, AND IS NOT WORSHIPED WITH MEN'S HANDS,

HOW SAY SOME THAT GOD IN CHRIST IS COMING BACK TO THIS EARTH TO DWELL IN A NATURAL MADE TEMPLE ? For Christ is God with Us !

Paul wrote to Timothy "These things have I written unto thee -- that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the HOUSE OF GOD, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim 3:14-16).

At one point in our Lord's ministry "When Jesus therefore perceived that they (The Jewish people) would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15). Does that sound like someone who "offered himself" as a King but was rejected? Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world: if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my Kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36-37). That doesn't sound like someone who could not have been King on Earth had he wanted to. Christ was God manifest in the flesh. He could have called twelve legions of Angels to install him as an earthly king, had that been his will (See Matt. 26:53). NO FORCE ON EARTH COULD HAVE KEPT HIM FROM BECOMING A KING ON EARTH AND REIGNING FROM AN EARTHLY THRONE HAD THAT BEEN THE PURPOSE OF GOD. But that was not God's "eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord".

No man took his life from him, he had the power to lay it down and he had the power to take it again, BECAUSE HE AND THE FATHER ARE ONE. (See John 10:14-18, 24-31). He gave his life for his sheep - the elect children of God - chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world - AND "when he had by himself purged our sins, SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH -" and God the Father said to God the Son -"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever -- Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Hebrews 1:1-13). PRAISE GOD, HE REIGNS TODAY !

The Kingdom: A Spiritual Dominion

The rejection of Christ as the Messiah by some Jews could not force an Omnipotent God to postpone His Kingdom ! The resurrected and glorified Christ is sitting on His throne of glory and reigning over His kingdom NOW. The Scriptures do not teach that Christ will come back to this physical earth and sit on a physical throne in a physical temple in the physical city of Jerusalem and reign for 1000 literal years !

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he (Jesus) answered them and said, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, Lo there ! for, behold the kingdom of God IS within you" (Luke 17:20-21).

If we can believe anyone, surely we can believe the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely we can believe John the Baptist, Peter and Paul the apostles, and Daniel the Prophet. We may not believe a preacher, or a politician, or even the President -- especially the President, but surely we can believe the Son of God. Surely we can believe John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater". Surely we can believe Peter who was the spokesman for the church on the day of Pentecost, and devoted his life to the faith. Surely we can believe Paul who wrote most of the New Testament letters, and was beheaded for his Testimony. Surely we can believe Daniel who received a revelation about the Kingdom that was SURE. Don't take my word for it, just believe the Scriptures.

The Kingdom of Christ (of God, of Heaven) is a spiritual dominion and can only be "spiritually discerned". "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God". – "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:9-16). In order to spiritually understand the Kingdom of Christ it is helpful to look at the Prophecy of WHEN it would begin. Daniel wrote, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (read Dan. 2:31-45). And in the days of these kings is referring to when the Roman Empire ruled the then know world at the time Christ, the stone cut out without hands, came and the God of heaven set up a kingdom.

I personally believe the kingdom of Christ, the Messiah, began when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2, 13-17, Luke 3:21-23). Jesus was born the Prince of Peace, predestined to sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom (Isa. 9:6-7) as the King of Kings (Matt. 2:2) which is what the title Christ or Messiah means (John 1:41, 49, 4:25). But his Baptism seems to be the time which fulfilled the words

of Daniel "unto the Messiah the Prince" (Dan. 9:25). Mark tells us, Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;" (read Mark 1:9-15). The words "the time is fulfilled" refers back to Daniel's prophecies. The words "at hand" means near or nigh - or about to happen.

There are some who teach that The Kingdom of Christ is a future blessing for the Jewish Nation. They say it will be an earthly materialistic physical reign, in the physically restored Temple, in the natural city of Jerusalem, to be observed in literal time as man knows time, in fulfillment to the promise made the Jewish Nation with regards to the land of Canaan, and to king David, as recorded in Psalms 132:11 and Isa. 9:6-7, etc. etc.. However, Peter told "the house of Israel" on the day of Pentecost, that promise was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ who IS now sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on High (Acts 2:29-36).

The question IS, did Jesus know what he was talking about when he said "The time IS fulfilled, the kingdom of God IS at hand". The futurist say Jesus offered himself to the Jews as their King, but because he was rejected, God had to postpone the Kingdom, in order to fulfill the promise. Thus this man-made theory of a Postponed or future Millennial Kingdom, which according to time would have now been postponed two thousand years, is derived from man's inability to spiritually discern the things of God. When man-made theories call into question the credibility of the words of The Son of God and great servants of God, we should be put on notice, and take heed, lest we be deceived.

In the New Testament the word "Kingdom" and the terms "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" are often synonymous and interchangeable. Mark 1:14 says "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God". Matthew 4:12 reads "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee --". Matt. 4:17 reads "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say Repent for the kingdom of heaven IS at hand". These are the exact same events. Matt 4:23 adds, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom". Obviously both Matthew and Mark are speaking of the same thing, but using different terms. The terms are interchanged in Matthew 19:23-24: Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God". It is obvious that Jesus is talking about the same kingdom, but as strange as it may be, some preachers go to

College to get some professor to help them to misunderstand this.

The Gospel or Good News about The Kingdom was the first message the Jews heard after what is understood to be a four hundred year period of silence from God's prophets. That is the approximate time between the last writings of the Prophet Malachi in the Old Testament and the Message of John the Baptist, who was "the forerunner or Herald of the King", as he came on the scene preaching "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven IS at hand" (Matt 3:1-2). John the Baptist was ordained by God while yet in the womb to "go before him (Christ) in the spirit and power of Elias - to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Lk. 1:13-17). His message was clear "I am not the Christ -- I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord -- And seeing Jesus coming unto him, he said "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD" (John 1:19-29). Are we to assume that John did not know what he was talking about when he said The kingdom of heaven IS at hand. John knew what IS meant !

The Gospel of the Kingdom was the first message Jesus preached after he began his earthly ministry. Jesus was not ignorant when he began his ministry. He knew he was to be about his Father's business. After being baptized at about thirty years old, the Spirit of God descended upon him and his heavenly Father said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3: 21-23). Jesus was then tempted by the Devil "in all points like as we are, yet without sin". He overcame Satan by the word of God. (Matt 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Heb 4:15). He went into the synagogue and read a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-2, and then announced "This day IS this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21).

God does not leave us in darkness to depend upon man's theories or ideas as to what is the Kingdom of God. God tells What the Kingdom of God IS ! Jesus said "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation -- for behold the kingdom of God IS within you" (Luke 17:20-21). The word "observation" comes from the Greek word "parateresis" and means "inspection or ocular evidence". This teaches that the Kingdom of God can not be seen with the physical eye. Jesus said "BEHOLD the kingdom of God IS within you". Jesus said, "My kingdom IS not of this world". Are we to believe that Jesus did not know what the word IS meant ?

When Jesus had by himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of his Father on high, who said to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom" (Heb 1:8). Paul wrote, "For the kingdom of God IS NOT meat and drink (is not that which can be observed with the eyes or touched physically - ba); but

righteousness, and peace, and joy IN the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). The kingdom of Christ IS His Spiritual Domain.

The Kingdom: Christ Reigns

In my last effort on the subject of The Kingdom I tried to show that The Kingdom of God, of Heaven, and of Christ, are all terms referring to the same kingdom. The Kingdom under consideration does not refer to the sovereign rule of God over his creation, but to the "spiritual dominion" of Christ over his elect people. "God that made the world and all things therein" is and has always been sovereign over his creation. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else". The true and living sovereign God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). The all powerful, merciful God says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me – I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil (RA = judgment): I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. 45:5-7). Before the omnipotent God that liveth forever "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doeth thou?" (Dan. 4:35). This is not to say that Christ is not sovereign in His kingdom. For he is. But "The Kingdom of Christ" is not of this world. The kingdom of God cometh not by observation. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy IN the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

The kingdom of God is spiritual, even though it has both a visible and an invisible aspect to it. The visible aspect is seen in the individual "earthen vessel" in which dwells the Holy Spirit of God, and in the Assembly of the true New Testament Church of which Jesus Christ is the head. Paul wrote, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" and again, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19-20, also see II Cor. 6:14-18). Take this truth beyond the individual and apply it to an Assembly of called out believers who have been scripturally baptized in water and you have a New Testament Baptist church over which Jesus Christ is the head (king or reigning). This is what I call the "church kingdom" with Christ reigning over her. All of God's elect are spiritually "baptized" into Christ and will make up the Bride when she is presented to him "without spot and wrinkle" in eternal glory. All of God's elect are in the invisible kingdom of God, but not all of God's elect are in the visible Church Kingdom here in time. I will deal with this in more detail in a later article, the Lord willing.

As we approach the end of the 20th century and another thousand years of human history, much talk is being made about the New Millennium. This has provided fuel for the Futurist to dispense their unbiblical theory that Christ will return physically to this earth and restore the Davidic kingdom they call the "Millennial Reign on earth". This heretical theory got its foothold back in 1830 under the direction of John Darby and with the help of the Scofield Reference Bible spread like a canker throughout many religious orders until it now dominates most schools of Eschatology (the doctrine of final things). One can not listen to religious television without soon hearing of the secret "Rapture of the Church" to be followed by the "One Thousand Year Kingdom of Christ on Earth". Sadly many so called Baptists, and especially the Calvinist Sovereign Grace Baptists, with whom the "Philippines Effort" got started, have been "caught up" in this heresy. Without a doubt, the Futurist Theory has gotten a foothold among liberal Primitive Baptists. But this is another subject for a different article at another time.

Many are not able to discern the ministry of Jesus the Christ as "prophet, priest and king". When he walked on this earth, most look on him as "one of the prophets" (Matt. 16:13-14) whom God was with (John 3:2), because he preached and performed miracles. Many today think of him as "just a good man, who was a good teacher, who set an example for us". Without a doubt those who were not of God could not hear his word (John 8:47), while there were others whose eyes and ears were closed due to the hardness of their hearts (Matt 13:10-17). But there were some who were blessed with seeing eyes and hearing ears to know the mysteries of the kingdom. Peter tells us of one thing they understood. When Jesus said "But whom say ye that I am", Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:18). Take note of all the THE's in Peters answer. Jesus is not A Christ, or A son of A living God.

The sum of the whole matter is that Christ came to redeem and to save his people and then reign over them throughout eternity. The Bible makes it clear that "he shall save his people from their sins" and "he shall reign -- and of his kingdom there shall be no end". The angel of the Lord said to Joseph concerning Mary and the birth of Christ "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall SAVE his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:18-21 - emphasis on save). The same angel said to Mary, "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt 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 for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 30-33 - emphasis on reign). These two passages were in fulfillment of the words of the Lord given to the prophet Isaiah who wrote,

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us)" and again "For unto us a son is given: and 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, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of host will perform this" (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7).

Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of man, came to deliver his elect people from the condemnation of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-2), from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13), and the power of sin (Rom. 6:14), from the wrath of God (I Thess 1:10), and one day, Praise God, will deliver us from the very presence of sin (I Cor. 15:51-57, I Thess. 4:13-17). The man Christ Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh came to die for his elect people and save them from their sins. He was the only one ever born into this world without the nature to sin, and the only one who ever lived without sin, and the only one who could offer himself as the ONE sacrifice that would perfect for ever them that are sanctified (the elect) AND "This man, after he offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. 10:12-13). Jesus Christ is sitting today on His throne of Glory reigning over His people Israel (Gal. 6:15-16).

While some say the kingdom was postponed, and for almost 2,000 years, others say the kingdom was not established until 70 AD. They say that the New Covenant did not begin until the Old passed away with the Destruction of the Temple. But with no undue disrespect, that is a false perception of the truth. 70 AD is an important historical event that ended a forty year probationary period for the Jewish Nation. But it was not the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Covenant. God forbid that the sacrifice of Christ should be set aside for 40 years. Paul did not teach this in the book of Hebrews.

The kingdom of Christ began when John came preaching in the wilderness (Luke 16:16) for there is none greater IN the kingdom than John, except for the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 11:11-15). For three and one half (3 1/2) years The Christ, Messiah, King, Saviour, our Lord was here among his disciples teaching them the way of righteousness. Then when "His hour was come" (John 12:23), he was delivered for our sins and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25) "because it was not possible" that he should remain in the grave (Acts 2:22-27). When He came forth from the grave (fifty days before Pentecost) He ascended unto his Father. That's right beloved, the perfect sacrifice for sins could not be held back, for the time was determined before hand (Gal.4:4, Dan. 9:24-27).

Christ had been crucified on Wednesday evening, the 14th of Nisan, just before 6 P.M.. He had spent three days and three nights "in the heart of the earth" (Matt 12:40. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had come to the tomb, "In the end of the sabbath, (after 6 pm Saturday) as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" (Matt. 28:1) --"early in the morning, while it was yet dark" (John 20:1). "There was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone, from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightening, and his raiment white as snow" (Matt 28:2-3). Mary found the "stone taken away from the sepulchre" and she ran and found Peter and John, (that disciple whom Jesus loved) and said to them "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre". John out ran Peter to the tomb, but when they got there they found only "the linen clothes" in which Jesus had been wrapped. It appears Peter and John returned to the rest of the waiting disciples, while Mary Magdalene remained at the tomb.

Mary was weeping, and as she stooped down, she saw two angels sitting inside the tomb "where the body of Jesus had lain" (John 20:11-12). Jesus was standing outside the tomb, but it was so dark Mary did not recognize him. She thought he was the gardener in charge of the cemetery, until Jesus said "Mary". Oh, beloved when he calls your name, you will know it is Him. Yes, it was the first day of the week – but it was yet dark – Jesus had already risen from the grave. There was no Babylonish sunrise service to be found in the resurrection of Christ (John 20). When Mary recognized Jesus standing outside the tomb, he said, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). TOUCH NOT him who must enter into the heavenly sanctuary and the eternal Most Holy Place through the veil of his flesh to present to the Father the ONE sacrifice that would perfect forever them that are sanctified. Oh no, don't touch him yet. Touch him only after he had offered himself to his Father.

How long, O Lord, must we wait to feel that gentle touch of the Master's hand ? Just a moment, for he can ascend in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ! And he did ascend that morning while it was yet dark ! Shortly after that Jesus met both Mary's and said "All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him" (Matt. 28:9). Now you can touch him! Now the sacrifice has been safely presented to the Father. It is recorded twice that He appeared to Simon Peter (Luke 24:34, I Cor. 15:5). Later that same day, THIS SAME JESUS can be found on the road to Emmaus walking and talking and dining with two of his disciples (Luke 24:13-35). Then later that same day, in the evening Jesus appeared to his disciples, entering into the room without opening a door, but Thomas was not there (John 20:19). After eight days, over a week after

his resurrection, Jesus appeared again to his disciples, and "doubting Thomas" was there. Jesus said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing – And Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God" (John 20:26-28). Mary could not touch him because he had not yet ascended, but after he ascended he walked and talked with his disciples and was touched and handled (I John 1:1) by his disciples.

We find where Jesus appeared to his disciples at least ten times during a forty day period after his resurrection, before he ascended "in the clouds" according to Acts 1:9-11. But we have no record of where Jesus stayed on earth during the forty days after his resurrection. Did he spend all that time upon the earth or did he "ascend and descend" to and from heaven ? I have reason to believe he "ascended and descended" to and from heaven. Some might say, How could this be? Remember Jesus had seen Nathaniel sitting under the fig tree, and knew his name before they ever met. When Nathaniel learned this, he said to Jesus, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel". Jesus said to Nathaniel, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these. – Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:47-51). Remember also the ladder Jacob saw at Bethel (God's house), which was "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. 28:12).

Beloved, the resurrected Christ could ascend and descend, come and go, as he pleased. The expressions "the angel of God" and "the angel of the Lord" can refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve" (Acts 27:23). IF that is not Christ, who is it ? Peter had a similar experience, "The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth –" (Acts 5:19). Christ can come and go as he pleases, but he will never reign on this earth for a thousand years.

The reign of Christ began "when He (as the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world) had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" - and God the Father said to God the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom – Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Heb. 1:3-13). We read in this passage that the Father said to the Son, God to God, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows". It is my humble opinion that this Oil of Gladness speaks of the

Holy Spirit that was poured out upon the Church on the Day of Pentecost, and the kingdom of Christ was given to the Saints of God.

The "pouring out of the Spirit" was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost when he said, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose – But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: -- and upon my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy –". Jesus had said to the disciples, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you" (John 14:15-18). Before Jesus ascended back to heaven, he breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22).

Peter went on in his message on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:29-36).

Jesus now reigns at the right hand of the Father on his throne of Glory. Daniel, the prophet wrote, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 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" (Dan. 7:13-14). I have often wondered if the "clouds of heaven" do not represent "the angels of God" who were ascending and descending to and from heaven. Daniel continued "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" 15-18).

Stephen saw the Reigning Christ standing by his throne in heaven. As Stephen was being stoned, the Jews laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul (later to be changed to Paul). As they gnashed on Stephen with their teeth, he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man (Christ - the Messiah) standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:54-60). The young man Saul, who later became known as the apostle Paul wrote, "For he MUST reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25-26).