

## SPECIAL STUDY: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Perhaps the most important question affecting the interpretation of Matthew 13, is, "To what aspect of the Kingdom of God does Jesus refer?" Unless this problem receives a proper answer, unnatural interpretations will be forced upon the stories He told to describe the Kingdom. The essential aspects of a kingdom are themselves multiple, consisting of a king, a territory over which he rules, his subjects, the constitutional expression of the king's will, and the boundaries, or limits, of citizenship in his kingdom. There may be other essentials perhaps, however this multiplicity of essentials forewarns us that, in order to reveal the full nature of His Kingdom, Jesus might make use of various parabolic illustrations to clarify the various features. A system so many-sided as God's Kingdom is just incapable of exhaustive treatment by a single illustration or symbol! If this were untrue, Jesus could have told one, all-inclusive parable and dismissed the crowds that day! (Mt. 13) Let us, therefore, begin by examining the concepts of the Kingdom of God which God had taught Israel to understand, because this instruction served as background for Jesus' use of the same terminology.

## GOD'S UNIVERSAL RULE

It would be instructive here to recall that God's Sovereignty over heaven and earth proceeds in an orderly manner since before the creation of the earth and man upon it. (Dt. 4:32, 39; Psa. 47:2, 7, 8; 93; 95-97, 99; Isa. 66:1, 2) As Ruler, Judge, Sustainer and Creator of the universe, His Lordship is an eternal Sovereignty which He will surrender to none. (2 Kg. 19:15-19; Psa. 83:18; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 23:24; Zech. 4:14; 6:5; 14:9; Mt. 11:25; 1 Co. 10:26; Rev. 11:4) In this sense, then, God has always reigned and always will. The Kingdom of God in this sense is nothing less than His eternal sovereignty over the universe and all it contains.

## GOD'S KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Nevertheless, there is also a sense in which God began to reveal a new expression of His rule on earth among men. This He initiated

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by establishing a covenantal agreement with Israel when He freed that nation from Egyptian slavery. (Ex. 19:6) Whereas in the civil legislation God had foreseen the desire for a human king for the orderly exercise of kingdom (Dt. 17:14-20), God Himself remained tacitly the real Ruler of Israel, as also of the rest of the world. (1 Sam. 8:7, 8; 10:19; 2 Sam. 23:3) The political principle is true even here: the king-maker is really king, for God remained Sovereign over the monarchs of Israel. (Dt. 17:15: "You may indeed set as king over you him whom the Lord your God will choose.") And every time those kings forgot the sovereignty of God, they and the whole nation of Israel paid the price of their insubordination.

Nevertheless, all the development of the Kingdom of God in Israel has as its final purpose the readying of a people through whom the coming of God's Anointed might enlarge the bounds of God's earthly rule so as to embrace all men. Predictions picturing this new expression of God's rule began to fork out in two directions:

1. God Himself is coming to earth to rule over Israel. (Zech. 2:10, 11; 8:3; 9:9; 11:12, 13; 12:10; 14:3, 4, 9) He will do this through His suffering Servant and Shepherd. (Zech. 13:7; Mal. 2:17—3:2, 5; 4:3) He would be born as a child upon whose shoulders the government would rest and whose titles, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace," identify him as truly "Immanuel, God with us" (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 40:9-11; 42:1-4)
2. During the last of the great world empires, God, who continues to rule in the affairs of men, would "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. 2:44) The Anointed King over the Kingdom of God would be one

coming with the clouds of heaven like a son of man to the Ancient of Days . . . and to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall never pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed, . . . and the time came when the saints received the kingdom. . . . And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High . . . (Dan. 7:13, 14, 22, 28)

This Kingdom of God, thus, is to be an empire that would surpass the glory of all preceding ones, and, whereas the Kingdom of God in Jewish thought had been limited to Israel, it now becomes increasingly clear that God's design includes the whole world in its scope. (Dan. 2:35)

So, within Israel and beyond it, among the nations of the world, God's Kingdom would grow, wherever His rule be acknowledged or makes itself effectively felt. A Son of David, yet David's Lord (Psa. 110:1; 2 Sam. 7:11-16) would reign over God's Kingdom, yet not over Israel alone, but growing out of Israel, His authority would extend over the last man on earth. (Cf. Psa. 18:50; 117:1; Isa. 11:1, 10; 49:6)

As is evident from this briefest of sketches, "the Kingdom of God" is an expression which was already a complex subject before Jesus ever used it with the original hearers of this great sermon in parables. If any simplistic application of that expression to a limited phase of God's rule would have missed Jesus' meaning, i.e., were a Jewish listener to have applied the message of Jesus in any given parable to, say, the nation of Israel exclusively, he would have totally misunderstood the Lord, to what extent would we blunder, were we to assume that "the Kingdom of God" must always refer exclusively to the Church?

#### EVIDENCES THAT "THE KINGDOM OF GOD" AND "THE CHURCH" ARE NOT STRICTLY SYNONYMOUS NOT TO BE STRICTLY IDENTIFIED

In the overall picture presented by the parables it must be admitted that in the Parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven, of the Hid Treasure and of the Precious Pearl, Jesus seems to be talking about the effective growth of the Church in the world, as well as about her surpassing value because of the truth she proclaims. Nevertheless, even this much precision of identification is modified by emphases evident in other parables:

1. **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND SOILS.** If it be legitimately assumed that this entire parable pictures the inauguration of the Kingdom of God in the world as well as its continued progress through the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world,

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then it may be said that the true Church is represented by the good soil alone; those who fall from grace, by the rocky and thorny soil. But the way-side soil—or the indifferent individual,—is also part of the total picture of God's Kingdom, in the sense that the Gospel of grace was offered to him too, but he turned it down, not really caring to understand it. In the final judgment, not specifically mentioned by this parable, he will be among the evil who will not be saved (Lk. 8:12), a detail that is, however, covered by other parables. Nevertheless, this non-church member was ever under God's control or Kingdom.

2. **THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS.** The Kingdom is compared to the whole picture of a man who sowed good seed in his field, in which also his enemy sowed weeds. (Mt. 13:24)
  - a. *The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom*, the true Church, the saints. But they are only a portion of the total picture of God's government which includes the field, the sower(s), the reapers, the concerned servants, the harvest. God reigns over the whole situation, not permitting anyone the right of precipitate and final judgment. His Kingship is over more than just the sons of the Kingdom, since His Word governs also those who would destroy the wicked. His gracious and sagacious determination to "let them grow together until the harvest" permits time for the wicked to become sons of the Kingdom, and for the sons of the Kingdom to mature.
  - b. The harvest is intended not merely to destroy non-church members, but to "gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evil-doers." Since God's Kingdom includes the Church, wicked men will be removed from the Church too, but since the Kingdom is larger than the Church and includes the world also, the final separation will snatch all the sons of the devil from every quarter, be they in the world or in the Church.
  - c. Should we interpret the Kingdom as precisely equal to the Church, this parable could not but forbid church discipline, inasmuch as the order to "let them grow together until the harvest" would effectively prohibit any congregation of the Church to "drive out the wicked person from among you." (Cf. 1 Co. 5:13) It would also force the saints "to associate with immoral men . . . who bear the name of brother." (1 Co. 5:9, 11; Mt. 18:15-18; 2 Th. 3:6ff, 14, 15)
3. **THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET.** The Kingdom is again compared

to an instrument which gathers together men of every moral condition, the righteous and evil alike. Again, as in the Parable of the Weeds, the separation of the good and bad is pictured as the work of God's angels. The impression is left by the parable, although not specifically stated, that the net made one great sweep of the sea, inexorably taking with it all the fish therein, leaving none unnetted. Then, after the fishermen had separated the catch, there is no mention of further fishing to bring in those fish not previously caught. If this be important, then the implication is that the Kingdom of God includes the whole world in its scope, ruling over both Christians and non-Christians alike. The final judgment will distinguish them. Again, the Kingdom-net is greater in scope than either the Church-fish or the world-fish.

4. THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS (Lk. 19:11-27). The kingly authority of the nobleman included even those citizens who hated him, who proved to be his enemies, because they "did not want him to reign over" them.

There could be other "Kingdom-parables," but let us now examine . . .

### THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

As promised in the prophecies, in the days of the Roman empire there arose in Israel in the person of Jesus of Nazareth a royal heir to David's throne who set in motion the very principles which would guarantee the success of God's government on earth. Eventually, the message He proclaimed and the movement He inaugurated developed into a reasonably well-trained corps of genuine disciples ready to evangelize the world. But this is not yet "the Church," for that will be OFFICIALLY inaugurated on Pentecost. But first we must see . . .

### THE EVIDENCES OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM BEFORE PENTECOST:

1. The announcement: "Repent for the Kingdom of God has arrived," when made either by John the Baptist, Jesus or His disciples' preaching, is always expressed in the perfect tense, i.e., expressed as a fact that has taken place in the more or less recent past and

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- its effect continues until the present time. It is always expressed by *ëngiken*: Mk. 1:15; Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; [cf. Lk. 9:2] Lk. 10:9, 11; [cf. Lk. 9:60].
2. Jesus continually announced the good news of the Kingdom of God from the very outset of His earthly ministry. (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 13:19; Lk. 8:1)
  3. "Since the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and men of violence take it by force." (*biázetai*, see on Mt. 11:12; Lk. 16:16) There must be some sense in which, even in the days of Jesus' ministry before the cross, that these words are true.
  4. Jesus' miracles evidence the reality of "the Kingdom of God come upon you." (Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20; *ëfthasen ef'humàs*: "arrived clear up to you, overtook you, has already reached you," cfr. Rocci, 1952; Arndt-Gingrich, 864) The defeat of Satan and his demons is evidence, says Jesus, that the Kingdom of God is not merely on its way, but, rather, evidence in every demoniac's deliverance, that God's royal government has already arrived. In fact, the defeat of Satan must actually precede the plundering of his house in the sense that God's Kingdom must have already been manifest before the demonized could be freed as Jesus Himself was liberating them. (Mt. 12:29)
  5. To hear with understanding the message of Jesus preached in Galilee is "to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 13:11, 19; Lk. 8:10) Although such explanations could well be given before the actual inception of the Kingdom, the disciples themselves were even then witnesses to the actual functioning of the Word of the Kingdom, the Word of God in men's hearts. (Cf. Mt. 13:16, 19; Lk. 8:11)
  6. The Kingdom consists of such as are like children in Jesus' day. (Mt. 18:1-4; 19:14; contrast Mk. 10:14, 15 with 23-25) "Publicans and harlots precede you (Pharisees and lawyers) into the kingdom of God, because John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and harlots believed him . . ." (Mt. 21:31, 32; cfr. Lk. 7:28-30) The Kingdom is the possession, says Jesus, of those who grasped its fundamental message. (Cf. Mk. 12:34; Lk. 6:20; Mt. 5:3, 10; Lk. 12:31, 32; 18:16, 17) Is it conceivable that some people understood this and so entered into this new relationship with God before Pentecost?

7. The scribes and Pharisees before Pentecost "shut the Kingdom of heaven in men's faces," "not entering yourselves, you forbid the ones who are entering to do so." (*oudè tous eiserchomévous afiete eiseltheîn*) Were there some actually in the process of entering the Kingdom before the cross? (*tous eiserchomévous*)
8. "The Kingdom is not coming with observation," i.e., in such a way that its rise can be observed, because, "Take note, the Kingdom of God is:
  - a. "within you," i.e., inward or spiritual, not material, in nature;
  - b. or, "among you," i.e., already present in the personal presence of God's Messianic King Jesus, standing in front of the Pharisees. (Lk. 17:20, 21; cf. Jn. 18:36: "My Kingdom is not of this world.")
9. "Sons of the Kingdom" existed before Pentecost, because they had already left (*aféken*) possessions and loved ones "for the sake of the Kingdom of God." (Lk. 18:29; cf. Mt. 19:29; Mk. 10:29 "for my name's sake, for my sake and for the gospel")

None of the foregoing statements, of course, must ever be thrown into conflict with the even clearer descriptions of the external and formal realization of the Kingdom of God on earth in the Church. In fact, until the King is on His throne, there can be no formal Kingdom, however many are the loyal supporters who swear and prove their loyalty to Him by acts of service rendered even before His coronation. Further, whatever special problems arose in Jesus' earthly ministry and found their solution in the on-the-spot decisions of the King-designate, these solutions must be interpreted in the light of the King's constitutional law, once His will is ratified at His formal ascension to the throne and that will is now expressed through His new covenant with His people.

A mistaken application arising out of a misunderstanding of this evidence for the real existence of the Kingdom during, and expressed by, the personal ministry of Jesus, is that fostered by the "faith-only" branch of Christendom which urges, on the basis of examples of salvation of single individuals simply pronounced by Jesus, that such examples remain normative for the Church also after the personal ministry of Jesus, after Pentecost. They deny, thus, to baptism any relationship to salvation, simply because Jesus did not apparently require it for the salvation of any of these personal converts. (This is, of course, arguing from silence, since no "faith-only" teacher can

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prove that even one of these people had never been immersed by Jesus' disciples.) This rite, however, being a term of pardon expressed in the ratified will of the King upon the formal establishment of His Kingdom at Pentecost, is normative and universally to be required of believers to express their obedience, on the basis of which they too will be saved. It should be noted that, even thus, the terms of pardon in the Kingdom are unchanged, ever the same in every age since the time of Abel's offering: faith and obedience to *whatever* God requires—firstfruits, an ark, blood on the doorposts, the offering up of Isaac, looking at a serpent on a pole, being baptized, whatever God requires. This is why Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets and righteous men from the four corners of earth's geography and history are in the Kingdom of God, because they faithfully obeyed what was required of them in their historic situation. (Mt. 8:11, 12; Lk. 13:28, 29) And **THIS** is the Kingdom.

## THE INAUGURATION DATE OF THE KINGDOM

In very precise language, Jesus established the date for the inauguration of God's Kingdom on earth:

1. The preparation for the Kingdom was made by John the Baptist, Jesus and His Apostles. (Mt. 3:2; 9:35; 10:7; 11:11, 12; 12:28; 21:31; Lk. 4:43; 10:9, 11; 16:16)
2. The Kingdom was to begin during the personal absence of Jesus. (Mt. 26:29; Lk. 22:16, 18 all in connection with Jn. 14:16-18, 25-28; 16:4b-7; Ac. 1:3; cf. Lk. 19:11, 12, 15)
3. The Kingdom was to begin during the lifetime of the Apostles themselves. (Mt. 16:19, 28; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 9:27)
4. The Kingdom was to begin just a few days after the suffering, resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven. (Cf. Mt. 17:9; Lk. 19:11, 12; 24:46-49; Ac. 1:6; cf. Lk. 22:16, 18? Mt. 26:29?)
5. The Kingdom was preached throughout the world during the apostolic ministry as a realized fact even then in existence. (Mt. 24:14 [= Col. 1:6, 23]; Ac. 8:12; 19:8ff; 20:25; 28:23, 31; 2 Th. 1:4, 5?; 12:28)
6. Christ now reigns in His Kingdom. (Mt. 28:18-20; 13:37-43; 1 Co. 15:24, 25; Col. 1:13; 1 Th. 2:12?; Rev. 1:6, 9; Heb. 1:8) He shall reign until "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11:15; 12:10)



## HARMONIZATION OF THE TWO CONCEPTS

Thus far, we have the Kingdom of God as manifested in His universal government, and we have the Church sometimes thought of as an expression of His Kingdom. Someone might object: "But if the Kingdom of God is everything, what is the use for the Church then?" Edersheim (*Life*, I, 269) answers:

"The Kingdom of God," or Kingly Rule of God, is an *objective fact*. The visible Church can only be the *subjective* attempt at its outward realization, of which the invisible Church is the true counterpart.

Ideally, then, the Church of Jesus Christ is nothing less than a colony of the Kingdom of God on earth. (Cf. Phil. 3:20) Christ's true congregation (*ekklesia*) consists of those who submit to the rule of the King. Anyone else is a rebel against our Sovereign's government while camping on His land and taking ungrateful advantage of His benevolence. Also, because of the prevalence of evil in the world and its corruption even of people who have formally sworn allegiance to become subjects of the King, the boundary lines of the Kingdom are only imperfectly represented by the church-membership rolls.

The definition, which harmonizes these concepts, then, and explains how the great Kingdom of God is to be found in the heart of the Church and how anyone in the Church is a citizen of the Kingdom, is included in the following observations: The Kingdom is the total replacing of self with the will of God, even to the point of losing our lives in the service of God, losing all that matters of our lives. All that we could amass is bound up in our life, so Jesus urges us to give up our lives to receive what God would give us in its place. While our faith is important because it does things for God, it finds its highest value in what it is willing to receive from God. (Lk. 12:32 in its context!) This is a blow to man's pride, but the Kingdom is entered by self-renunciation and is often resisted by self-assertion. Asceticism, *per se*, is not submission to the King, because it may be nothing but a willful abuse of the gifts intended to be pressed into His service, and becomes but another form of self-assertion. Finally, the ultimate rebellion against the Kingdom is the demand for self-rule, motivated by self-interest, to arrive at self-complacency. But God's Kingdom is not His power over the material world manipulated for our advantage, but primarily God's control over our wills for

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His advantage. This is the Kingdom, and the reason why many Church members are not in it.

## SUMMARY

Edersheim's helpful summary bears restudy. (*Life*, I, 269ff; see his work also for Jewish views of the Kingdom.) His analysis of 119 passages in the NT where the expression "Kingdom" occurs—to which have been added eight more—, shows that it means:

1. THE RULE OF GOD: Mt. 6:33; 12:28; 13:38; 19:24; 21:31; (22:1); Mk. 1:14; 10:15, 23, 24, 25; 12:34; Lk. 1:33; 4:43; 9:11; 10:9, 10; 11:20; 12:31; 17:20, 21; 18:17, 24, 25, 29; Jn. 3:3; (18:36); Ac. 1:3; 8:12; 20:25; 28:31; Ro. 14:17; 1 Co. 4:20; Col. 4:11; 1 Th. 2:12; Rev. 1:(6), 9.
2. WHICH WAS MANIFESTED IN AND THROUGH CHRIST: Mt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 5:3, 10; 9:35; 10:7; Mk. 1:15; 11:10; Lk. 8:1; 9:2; 16:16; 19:12, 15; (Jn. 18:36); Ac. 1:3; 28:23; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:9.
3. IS APPARENT IN THE CHURCH: Mt. 11:1; 13:41; 16:19; 18:1; 21:43; 23:13; (26:29?); (Mk. 14:25?); Lk. 7:28; (Lk. 22:16, 18?); Jn. 3:5; (Jn. 18:36); Ac. 1:3; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:(6), 9.
4. GRADUALLY DEVELOPS AMIDST HINDRANCES: Mt. 11:12; 13:11, 19, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52, 18:23; 20:1; 22:2; 25:1, 14; Mk. 4:11, 26, 30; Lk. 8:10; 9:62; 13:18, 20; (Jn. 18:36); Ac. 1:3; Rev. 1:(6), 9.
5. IS TRIUMPHANT AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST ("the end"): Mt. 16:28; (sic!); Mk. 9:1 (sic!); 15:43; Lk. 9:27 (sic!); 19:11; 21:31; 22:16, 18; (Jn. 18:36); Ac. 1:3; 2 Ti. 4:1; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9. (See the special study "The Coming of the Son of Man," Vol. II, 430ff, for my dissent from Edersheim's interpretation.)
6. AND, FINALLY, PERFECTED IN "THE WORLD TO COME": (Heb. 2:5) Mt. 5:19, 20; 7:21; 8:11; 13:43; 18:3; 25:34; 26:29(?); Mk. 9:47; 10:14; 14:25(?); Lk. 6:20; 12:32; 13:28, 29; 14:15; 18:16; 22:29(30); (Jn. 18:36); Ac. 1:3; 14:22; 1 Co. 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 2 Th. 1:5; (2 Ti. 4:18); Js. 2:5; 2 Pt. 1:11; Rev. 1:9; 12:10; (11:15).

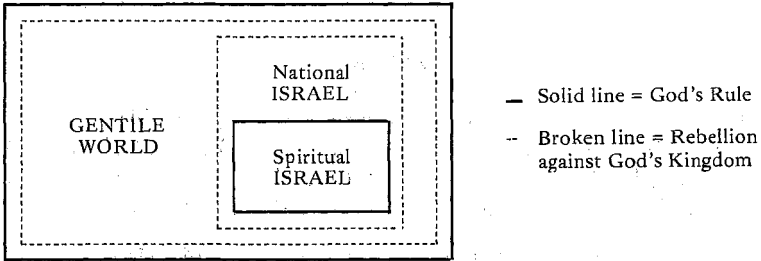
These conclusions may be represented graphically in the following way:

KINGDOM

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEFORE CHRIST

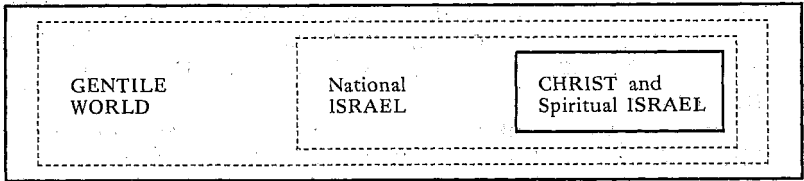
Ro. 3:29



God's Kingdom rules over the entire earth and all humanity, Jews and Gentiles alike. (2 Kg. 19:15; Dan. 4:2, 17, 25, 32-35; 6:26; Jer. 10:7, 10; 27:5; Isa. 43:13; Psa. 22:28; 47:2, 7, 8; 95:6; 96:10; 103:19; Mal. 1:14) However, within national Israel, there was always a remnant of believers who acknowledge God's rule. (Cf. 1 Chron. 17:14; 28:5; Ro. 9:6-8; Gal. 3:7-9, 29; Lu. 2:25, 38; 3:8, 9; 13:16; 19:9; 23:51; Isa. 1:9; 4:3; 10:20f; 11:11, 16)

THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEFORE PENTECOST

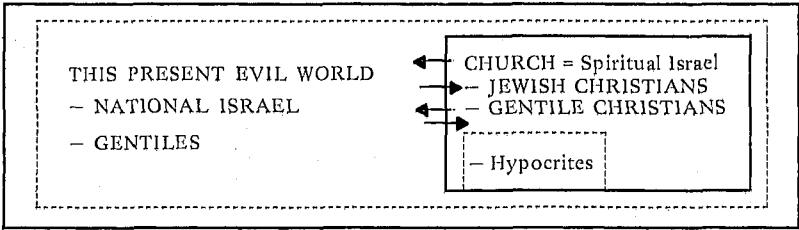
Ro. 4:16



In the time of the last world empire God set up a worldwide Kingdom under the rule of the Son of man, a Kingdom of the saints, the spiritual throne of David. (Cf. Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:13, 14, 28; Jn. 18:36; Lk. 1:32, 33; Ac. 2:30-36) But the Messianic King arose from within Israel, not from the pagan world. (Mt. 15:24)

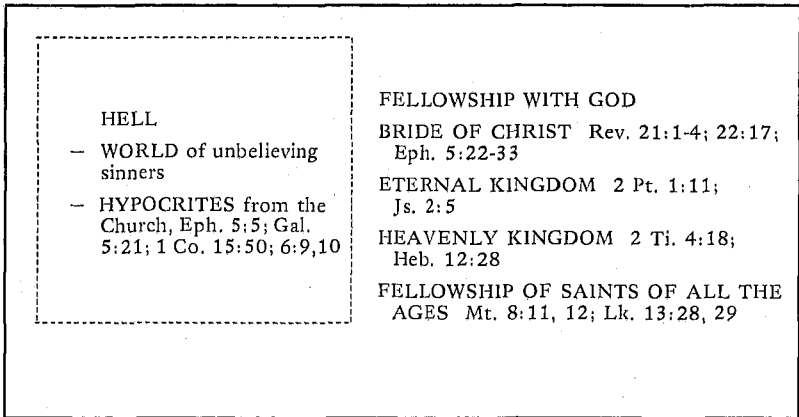
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THE KINGDOM OF GOD AFTER PENTECOST UNTIL JUDGMENT



While God controls the entire world, yet by His permissive will men are permitted to choose good or evil. Most choose evil to remain in it, while a minority choose to enter that subjective expression of God's Kingdom, the Church. (Mt. 13:24-30; 47, 48; Jn. 3:3-5; 1 Co. 1:18—2:16; 3:18-23; Col. 1:13)

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ETERNITY AFTER JUDGMENT  
1 Co. 15:24-28



(Zech. 14:9; Dan. 7:22, 27; Mt. 13:40-43, 49, 50; Rev. 1:5; 11:15; 15:3)

The first thing to notice about each of these diagrams is the solid line of the Kingdom of God around every single diagram: God is ALWAYS on the throne! The next thing to observe in the first three diagrams is the broken line surrounding the world within the Kingdom

of God, the dotted line of evil, because the whole world lies in the evil one, but only by the permissive will of a sovereign God who has the last word. (1 Jn. 5:19) But the third thing to notice is crucial: within the evil world God has established a beachhead: spiritual Israel = the Church today. The fourth detail is the final and permanent separation of all evil doers into one place reserved for them: even Hell is positive proof of the power and reality of God's government. Note, contemporaneously, the glorious revelation of the people of God enjoying the perfect rule of the eternal Kingdom of God.

For further notes on the Kingdom and the great sermon in parables, see especially Seth Wilson's Special Study, *Mark* (Bible Study Textbook Series, pp. 499-506: "What the Kingdom is Like" and "Treasures of the Kingdom") and R.C. Foster's *Middle Period*, pp. 79ff.

## Section 32

### JESUS IS REFUSED BY HIS OWN AT NAZARETH.

TEXT: 13:54-58  
(Parallel: Mark 6:1-6)

54 And coming into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. What is so significant about the amazement of these people, given the fact that it is caused by the miracles and message of Jesus?
- b. Why do you think that the Nazarenes did not know the answer