

## TILL KINGDOM COME

I believe that I first heard my Dad say that only a Baptist preacher would walk where fools and angels do not dare to go. I trust that I am not entering that territory by approaching the subject of this article. I am not writing to persuade anyone that I have discovered something new or that I have received an insight that has long been denied to others. This is an attempt to present an approach to the beginning of an answer for a question that has nibbled at my thoughts for nearly my entire ministry. The issue has certainly proved controversial, even divisive, for generations. It is the subject of many well-written and some most persuasive books. I have heard uncountable sermons, and even more allusions concerning this topic than any other doctrine of Scripture. Yet, I do not know of a subject that is less understood by preachers and congregations than this one. I refer to the KINGDOM. As I wrote the word, I could hear multiple voices asking, “Which one?” The divisions are so great and so deep that even the word itself brings discussion and controversy.

I do not profess to have some new idea to offer as “*THE ANSWER*” that has evaded all of my spiritual predecessors and my fellow students of the word of God. I think I may have assimilated from my readings of the understandings of others something that is worth sharing with my readers. All help in plugging the loopholes and/or in offering corrective responses will be welcomed—remember, this is a work in progress. I still have far more questions to which I do not know the solutions than answers that I think that I may be beginning to approach. Thus, I ask that you read with diligent thought (“*an inquiring mind*”) and an open Bible as I attempt to unfold this discussion in the sequence as it developed in my thinking.

### *Revelation 1*

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand. 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, **and the prince of the kings of the earth.**

That last phrase intrigues me for its unusualness of expression and for its placement in the context of all Scripture. While verses four and five contain one of the often overlooked references to the Triune Godhead [Him which is, and which was, and which is to come [God the Father], the seven Spirits which are before the throne [God the Holy Spirit], and Jesus Christ [God the Son], that doctrine is not the emphasis of the sentence. The wording directs our full focus upon the Son of God and does so by using His threefold titling. The LORD Jesus is portrayed in His prophetic office [the faithful witness], in His priestly office [the first begotten of the dead], and in His royal office [the prince of the kings of the earth]. Yet, here He is not titled,

King of kings. That title will be found later in Revelation (17:14 and 19:16). It is used of two Old Testament kings; both of whom are Gentiles: Artaxerxes and Nebuchadrezzar (Nebuchadnezzar); and the apostle Paul is moved to use the term in the magnificent benedictional charge found in *1 Timothy 6:13-16*.

I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, **who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords**; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

“There is a great day coming” when God the Father shall reveal the LORD Jesus as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Yet here, the Holy Spirit has John title the LORD Jesus as “the prince of the rulers of the earth” and not as the King of kings. One of the definitions for the English word “prince” is “the son of the sovereign.” That sense and flavor of meaning would be forefront among the reasons that would have prompted the translators of the Authorized Version to choose this English word to represent the original Greek. As the Son of the Sovereign, the LORD Jesus is placed as ruler over all the kings of the earth (All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, *Mathew 28:18, and 1 Timothy 3:16 quoted above*).

Certainly, the LORD Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God stands far above all the kings of the earth in both rank and power; and in that sense, He is the prince of the kings of the earth. However, this is the only time that the particular Greek word “arcwn” [Strongs #758], which lies behind the translation into English for us as “prince,” is applied to Christ. In its thirty-seven appearances in the Greek New Testament, “arcwn” is used to identify Nicodemus, Jairus, various other rulers of the Jews, Beelzebub, and even Satan [the prince of this world]. The flavor of the word is that the person being identified is the first or the chief ruler among those with whom he is being compared.

As I indicated above, I think that there must be something worthy of special consideration in the choice of the translators for the word “prince” in this verse rather than “chief ruler” or “ruler.” Be that as it may, there is certainly something of exceptional interest and great value in the selection by the Holy Spirit of this particular Greek word and His direction to place it into this verse, since this word is used many times in the Greek New Testament, but only in this one verse does the word refer to the LORD Jesus.

There is another Greek word for “Prince” that is found in the New Testament and that word is not only translated as “Prince,” but also as “Captain,” and “Author.” Now, it is important to know that this second Greek word, “archgov” [Strongs #747] the other word translated “Prince,” is **exclusively** used of the LORD Jesus and of no other.

*Acts 3:15* And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

*Acts 5:31* Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

*Hebrews 2:10* For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

*Hebrews 12:2* Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I make no claim to being a scholar of the Greek language nor am I attempting to give a Greek lesson. My knowledge of the Biblical languages is sufficient to permit my use of the dictionaries and lexicons in my library. Most of all, I wish it to be clearly understood that I am certainly not trying to use the Greek in a manner to correct something in the English of the Authorized Version that rests in your hands. I seldom call attention to the original words which have been translated from the Biblical languages into the oft-labeled “Elizabethan English” for us, but which have excellently stood the inflexible testing of a transient language such as our English language is—especially, the American version of English. However, in this instance, I believe there is good reason to focus on the word.

The word, “arcwn,” in verse 5 [And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.] is found 37 times in the New Testament and translated for us as “ruler” 22 times, “prince” 11 times, “chief twice,” “magistrate” once, and “chief ruler” once. It has a basic meaning of “a ruler, commander, chief, leader” in its use in the Greek language and, in that sense, is used of Satan and the rulers who gathered against Christ and the chief priests and even a Roman magistrate. To catch the particular flavor of this word [“that the person being identified is the first or the chief ruler among those with whom he is being compared”], consider Acts 7:27, where the word is given to us as “ruler.”

*Acts 7:27* But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

The challenge raised against Moses is the question of his authority to be a ruler—he had not been elected or acknowledged by Israel. Moses had not been sent by God or accredited by Pharaoh, nor was he recognized by Israel. Therefore, he was not accepted by this man as a ruler. The word has the connotation of one who has the authority to be the ruler, the commander, the chief, the leader. That person may be self-promoted (as when it is used of Satan), appointed by the people, or designated by a superior power; but it is the acknowledgment of the power behind his position by those he attempts to rule that makes him the ruler, the commander, the chief, the leader.

Our verse strangely (I use that word in the sense of “unexpectedly.”) identifies the LORD Jesus as the Prince of the kings of the earth.

*Revelation 1:5* And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of

the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

Obviously, the verse is not speaking of the kings of the past, the present kings of the earth, or of those kings in power when the LORD Jesus returns because, the kings of the earth are at war with Him—the kingdoms of this world have been at enmity with God throughout history. They continue in hostilities at the present hour and will remain so until the very last hour of Armageddon. (The rest of The Revelation discusses that continual war all the way through to the day of His coming in Power.) This truth is not a mystery hidden in the Scriptures, but it is a revelation that is repeatedly emphasized. The following three passages are but a sample of those that might be presented to show the conflict of the kings of this earth with the LORD Christ.

*Psalm 110:1-7* The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

*Psalm 2:1-12* Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. **Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.** I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

*Revelation 19:19* And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

I firmly believe that Scripture declares that no king (or queen) sits upon a throne, no president assumes the office, and no prime minister assembles a cabinet except by the express permission of the God of Heaven. Proverbs 8:15 [By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.], Psalm 75:7 [But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.], and Romans 13:1 [Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.], repeat the very lesson that the Most High God taught King Nebuchadnezzar [Daniel 4:17, 25, 32 ...know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will...].

Therefore, it seems apparent that we must read on in our passage to discover precisely who these kings are over whom the Son of God is Prince—the chief, the ruler, the commander, the leader.

*Revelation 1:6* Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The LORD Jesus is the Prince of those now described as kings and priests unto God and His Father. These are the same as those termed “a holy priesthood” and “a royal priesthood” by the Holy Spirit in 1 Peter 2:5 and 9. We believers find it easy to give mental ascent to the concept that we are *destined someday to become kings and priests*. Yet, the concept has very little reality for our daily living now. We think that perhaps this will be explained to us in the millennium or in eternity. However, the apostle is moved to record that this relationship [“kings and priests”] is a present position—“hath made us.” He does not write “will make us,” but “hath made us.” This phrasing is found elsewhere in the New Testament and refers to something which has already been accomplished.

*2 Corinthians 3:6* Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

*Galatians 5:1* Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

*Ephesians 1:6* To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

*Colossians 1:12* Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

While we have no difficulty in understanding the doctrinal or practical implications of these four verses, we seem unable to relate to the implications and consequences of the statement “hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.” The result is that this positional relationship of being “made kings and priests unto God” has little influence upon the daily life of believers.

This is tragic, because, if I may describe it so, this relationship is one of the sub-plots of the Book of the Revelation. The major theme is the Revelation of Jesus Christ—but there are several other themes that are threaded through the Book—and this grand theme of the Kingdom and the children of the Father being involved in that kingdom’s rulership is one of the predominant concepts. Simply as a matter of example, consider the following verses:

*Revelation 2:26-27* And he that overcometh, and keepeth 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.

*Revelation 3:21* To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I

also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

There are many references to similar promises made by the LORD Jesus during his earthly sojourn.

*Matthew 25:31-34* When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Luke 12:31-32 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

These references, I believe, make it certain **that the Kingdom is not some sudden replacement theology developed under the duress of the failure of a previous plan.** I wish also to write with emphasis that I do not believe that either the Father or the LORD Jesus, when the Jewish rulers refused to recognize Him as the promised "Messiah the Prince" (Daniel 9:25), was compelled by those circumstances to postpone the implementation of the kingdom rule and to place the Kingdom on hold. *The promises given in the Old Testament to Israel were not cancelled and reissued to the church in the New Testament.* The Kingdom, according to verse 34, has been central to the plan of God "from the foundation of the world."

I find it intriguing that no Scripture speaks of "the kingdoms" of God or of Christ—the term is always singular. I do not purpose to suggest that I am able in these few words to clarify the debate, discussion, and dialogue regarding the Kingdom nor do I claim to be able to end the confusion about alleged or real differences between the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of Christ. I do have some questions to suggest for consideration.

The following chart attempts to place the various terminologies in an arrangement showing the proper relationships to one another.

### **The Various Scriptural Titles For The Kingdom *or* The Kingdoms**

1) The Kingdom Of God

2) The Kingdom Of Heaven

3) The Kingdom Of The LORD

a) Thy (The Father) Kingdom

b) The Kingdom Of Israel

c) The Kingdom Of David, The Kingdom Of Our Father David

d) The kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord

e) The Kingdom Of His Dear Son

i) Thy Kingdom

ii) My Kingdom

iii) His Kingdom

iv) The Kingdom

v) A Kingdom Which Shall Never Be Destroyed

4) The Everlasting Kingdom Of Our Lord And Saviour Jesus Christ

5) The Kingdom Of Christ And Of God

6) The Kingdom of our God

I purpose that if we consider the Scriptures to say what they mean and to mean what they say, then we are confronted with the premise that there is but one kingdom, which has a variety of titles representing applications or segments of that singular kingdom. I would compare this to the terms used of the Gospel. Fifty-one times the New Testament identifies the Gospel by the simple phrase “the gospel.” However, twenty-nine times that term is followed by a prepositional phrase describing a particular aspect of the Gospel. Though many dispensationalists differentiate between these “gospels,” thereby postulating a variety of gospels; I do not find but one Gospel taught in Scripture. Hebrews 4:2 straightforwardly declares that both Testaments preached but one Gospel. To me, it is unwarranted to make each of the following terms to represent “a different Gospel”—unwarranted and unscriptural. Whether one creates eleven, seven, five, or two gospels, the damage to Scripture is the same, because one has then required that some individuals enter Heaven under different terms than do others. There is none who “climbeth up some other way” because “no man cometh unto the Father but by Me”—the LORD Jesus Christ. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” I believe that it is self-evident that all of the following phrases speak of the one Gospel.

1. the Gospel of the kingdom, Matthew 4:23, 9:35
2. the Gospel of the kingdom of God, Mark 1:14
3. the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, Mark 1:1
4. the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thessalonians 1:8

5. the Gospel of Christ, Romans 1:16, 15:19, 29, 1 Corinthians 9:12,18, 2 Corinthians 9:13, 10:14, Galatians 1:7, Philippians 1:27, 1 Thessalonians 3:2
6. the Gospel of God, Romans 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 1 Peter 4:17, Romans 15:16, 2 Corinthians 11:7
7. the Gospel of his Son, Romans 1:9
8. the Gospel of the grace of God, Acts 20:24
9. the Gospel of peace, Romans 10:15, Ephesians 6:15
10. the Gospel of your salvation, Ephesians 1:13
11. the Gospel of the uncircumcision, *the Gospel* of the circumcision, Galatians 2:7

I believe that the Kingdom, like the Gospel, requires many descriptive titles to reveal its multi-faceted qualities. *[This article is not a discussion of all of those distinctive aspects, but an attempt to focus on the central concept of the identity of the kingdom.]* I do not claim to understand fully the Kingdom—but I know better how to ask the questions now than I did fifty years ago—or even ten years ago. For instance, the LORD Jesus Christ, described (Matthew 25:34) the Kingdom as “the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” If this kingdom (Matthew 25:34) was “prepared from the foundation of the world,” then I should be able to find the Kingdom mentioned in Genesis. I believe that I can do so and do so very early in the Book.

*Genesis 1:26-28* And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

That word “dominion” implies rulership. The governmental use of the word “dominion” for the British Empire is “a self-governing nation of the Commonwealth of Nations other than the United Kingdom that acknowledges the British monarch as chief of state.” Thus, in the historical use of that word, the translators were showing that Adam was to have the authority of being self-governing while he was required concurrently to acknowledge that the LORD God [God the Son—Lord GOD is God the Father] was the Monarch, the King. The inference of that usage is that Adam had the freedom of choice from that moment of creation. That is a most significant and weighty word choice for the translators to have used. Lest some reader misunderstand and accuse me of believing in the inspiration of the word choices of the translators, I hasten to call attention to the basic fact that an honest translation effort seeks to find words in the new language that accurately reflect the nuances of the original word. The Hebrew [Strong's #07287 *hdr*, has the basic concept of ruling and, while translated “dominion” nine times, it is given as



“rule” 13 times, “take” twice, “prevail” once, “reign” once, and “ruler” once. In selecting the term “dominion,” the translators were plainly conveying that Adam’s rule was under the authority of the LORD God, his Creator.

The Kingdom is not a minor theme in Scripture. That wonderful promise of Genesis 3:14-15 loses some of its forcefulness when we tend to describe this passage only in the terms of being “the Proto-evangelium,” emphasizing thereby no more than that this is the first mention of the Gospel. While the Gospel is surely (and wonderfully) included in the prophecies of Genesis 3:14-15, the declaration is a promise of the coming of a “Seed”; and that term, in this passage and others, is a direct reference to “the Christ” [Compare with Galatians 3:16.]. These verses present the first recorded promise for humanity of the coming of the anointed king of God—see Psalms 2 and 110 cited above. Genesis 3:14-15 is “the Proto-regnum,” the beginning of the prophecies of the coming King and the Kingdom. The promise of a king strongly implies (Indeed, it requires!) the pledge of the existence of a kingdom. Genesis 3:14-15 is in full agreement with the revelation of Matthew that the kingdom was promised from the foundation of the world.

The inference of a coming kingdom in Genesis 3:14-15 is stated plainly later in the writings of Moses in terms that unmistakably require a king ruling a literal kingdom upon this earth, but that also imply that the kingdom and its king are greater than any of those on the earth.

*Genesis 49:10* The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

The passage straightforwardly promises that the kings of the kingdom rising from Judah shall culminate in the coming of “Shiloh,” “and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” Shiloh is another title for the “Seed” of Genesis 3:14-15. In a wonderful display of the power of God, the rebellious prophet Balaam is used to deliver the detailed prophecies of Numbers 24.

7-8 He [Jacob, Israel verse 5] shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows.

Then he continues to describe that king:

17-19 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

In his last messages to Israel, Moses instructed the nation as they were entering the land that he knew that the day would come when Israel would desire to have a physical king sitting upon an earthy throne ruling over them.

*Deuteronomy 17:14-15* When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

Moses had, in effect, operated as a king on the journey from Egypt—Deuteronomy 33:5 (And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.). Providing a line of succession, at the instructions of the LORD, Moses appointed Joshua that he might rule the nation upon his death. Joshua was to rule as one who received his authority and his instructions from the LORD. Where Moses had received that instruction “face to face,” Joshua would receive his directions through Eleazar the priest—the picture of Adam’s dominion was continued.

*Numbers 27:18-23* And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

However, when Joshua died, no individual was designated to be the governmental leader. This does not appear to be a lapse on the part of the LORD to recognize the need for leadership, nor is it a failure on the part of Joshua to prepare for his own departure. It is recorded that Joshua left the nation in capable hands of elders who had the written word of God that we know as the Law of Moses. Not only did the elders have the word of the LORD, but every home was to have the word of the LORD (at least portions of it) written throughout the home and on the doorposts. The nation was neither illiterate nor without the Scriptures. Israel was to follow the word of God as their ruler of all matters of faith and practice. They failed.

*Judges 2:7-23* And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them

into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

Following Joshua, Scripture records that the people chose to set aside the word of the LORD and to live as they individually chose. The record of those dark days is found in the Book of Judges and is summarized in four verses:

*Judges 17:6* In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

*Judges 18:1* In those days there was no king in Israel ...

*Judges 19:1* And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel ...

*Judges 21:25* In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

In that time of self-rule without the boundaries of the word of God, the nation was a pathetic residue of what it had been under Moses and Joshua. The Judges that JEHOVAH raised were both deliverers and rulers in the pattern of Moses, but none ever set in leadership over the entire nation. Samuel, a priest that was recognized by the people as a prophet, comes closer than any one since Moses and Joshua to being a national leader. In 1 Samuel 7:6, he is acknowledged as a Judge and begins to rule the nation by becoming a circuit priest/prophet/Judge. Twenty years of relative stability accompanies Samuel's ministry; however, as he grew old and began to make plans for a transfer of power, a major flaw was revealed. In response, the nation desired then to ask for that king of which Moses had spoken.

## 1 Samuel 8

1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beersheba. 3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: **now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.** 6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.** 8 **According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.** 9 **Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.** 10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. 11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers. 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even the best of them*, and give *them* to his servants. 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

Samuel attempts to dissuade the people by describing what will happen to the nation when a bad king ascends to the throne, but his warnings fall on deafened ears.

**19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.** 21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. **22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Harken unto their voice, and make them a king.** And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Sometimes, in our haste to blame the nation of Israel for her conduct, we forget to read the passage in its entirety and, therefore, fail to see that God literally gave the nation the very man of their desires. After the selection was announced, the nation did not overtly rebel and demand a man different from the one the LORD gave. They were, indeed, rebellious, and God gave them the very man whom they desired in their rebellion. It is important to notice that Saul was the best

that the nation had to offer. Literally and figuratively, he stood “head and shoulders” above any other man in the nation.

*1 Samuel 9:1-2* Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name *was* Kish, ... And he had a son, whose name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.”

I do not wish to minimize the wrong motivation of the people of Israel in desiring that God would give them a king. As with many of us in our prayer requests, Israel’s desires showed both a measure of faith and a terrible lack of faith at the same time. They were asking JEHOVAH to grant them a king of flesh so that king might “fight our battles.” They showed that they understand that JEHOVAH was ruler in the affairs of Israel in asking Him to answer their prayer and to give them a king [faith], but they were demonstrating a lack of faith by implying that the invisible JEHOVAH was insufficient to fight their battles. They did not seem to doubt His victories in the past, but the times must have seemed to require new methods. [I chose not to devote space to the abundant parallel with the contemporary Christianity of the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Bible Fellowship, and others, but the pattern is obvious.]

Israel wanted to be like the other nations. A desire that was completely out-of-character with the calling given by God to Israel. Israel was called to be a people peculiar unto the LORD. The LORD had stated plainly [Deuteronomy 17, cited above] that there would come a time when Israel would want a king of flesh and He had reserved the right to select that king. In that sense, the nation was following the word of God, but their motivation was wrong in their request. I find that it is interesting to note that, in answering their prayer, God, in His mercy, gave them the best possible choice available in the whole nation.

Follow the Scriptural text and observe the developments that I have tried to call to your attention by underlining and the size of the font.

*1 Samuel 9*

**15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, 16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. 17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.** 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer’s house *is*. 19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart. 20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. **And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee,** and on all thy father’s house? 21 And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me? 22 And

Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold that which is left! set *it* before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. 25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house. 26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27 *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) **but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.**

### 1 Samuel 10

**1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?** 2 When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? 3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: 4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. 5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: 6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. **7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.** 8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do. 9 And it was *so*, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets? 12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul also among the prophets? 13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place. 14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel. 15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what

Samuel said unto you. 16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not. 17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; 18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you: 19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. 20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. 23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. **24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. 25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.** 26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. 27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

Exodus 19:6 had described Israel as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” unto God. Now, Israel is a kingdom with a king of flesh. Samuel will remind the nation of this.

*1 Samuel 12:12* And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, *Nay*; but a king shall reign over us: **when the LORD your God was your king.**

While space does not permit the full discussion of the events, David replaces Saul on the throne of Israel. However, the kingdom is specifically described in terms that we do not usually consider to be applicable. The Scriptures state that David was placed upon the throne of the Kingdom of the LORD by the LORD and that Solomon followed him on the Throne of the LORD. Even so, the kingdom remains **the kingdom of the LORD**. This is generally either ignored or missed. Frankly, I was not taught to think of David as sitting on **“the throne of the kingdom of the LORD”** and I have found few commentaries that devote attention to the use of those terms.

*1 Chronicles 17:14* But I will settle him in mine house **and in my kingdom** for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.

*1 Chronicles 28:5* And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit **upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD** over Israel.

*1 Chronicles 29:11* Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; **thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.**

*1 Chronicles 29:23* Then Solomon sat **on the throne of the LORD** as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.

*2 Chronicles 7:18* Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

*2 Chronicles 9:8* Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.

**Long past the days of David and Solomon, the portion of that kingdom that remained in the hand of the sons of David is still called “the kingdom of the LORD.”**

*2 Chronicles 13:8* And now ye think to withstand **the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David**; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.

The prophecies, both of the Old and the New Testaments that we quote at Christmas (but seem to forget the rest of the year), describe that same kingdom as the kingdom that the LORD Jesus was promised as His Own.

*Isaiah 9:6-7* 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 for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

*Luke 1:32-33* 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**: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

The LORD Jesus never occupied—never even attempted to occupy—the throne of the kingdom of the LORD during the days of His flesh (Hebrews 5:7). On the day that we describe as His triumphant entry, when the LORD Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the Christ did not go to the palace of Herod or to the hall of Pilate, He went to the Temple. He arrived in Jerusalem that day, not to expel the usurper, King Herod, and to seek the throne of David, but to present Himself there at the Temple as the Lamb of God in the exact and precise fulfillment of the type from the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:3-6).

*Luke 9:51-56* And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he



stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem ... For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Four days later, His face still set stedfastly, the LORD Jesus spoke words that ought to be understood by all who read them. He indeed was a king and He was surely destined for the throne of a kingdom; however, the purpose of His incarnation was not "to obtain" a throne [He was promised the throne before the foundation of the earth.], but to "bear witness of the truth."

*John 18:36-37* Jesus answered, **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**. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. **To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth**. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

The throne of that kingdom ruled by David and his sons is not occupied on the earth today, but it is that very throne that the LORD Jesus will occupy when He returns for the millennial reign (Psalm 110, Psalm 2).

As to His purpose in bearing witness to the truth, one need only read John 17 to understand that the entire earthly sojourn of the LORD Jesus was centered on that work. Of all the passages of Scripture of which I detest printing only a portion, John 17 is chief; yet space demands such editing for our purpose in this article. Notice as you read (1<sup>st</sup>) that the LORD Jesus declares that, at this time and before the cross, He has "finished the work" given Him by the Father, (2<sup>nd</sup>) that He describes that finished work as His have given the disciples the "words" of the "word" of God, and (3<sup>rd</sup>) that the LORD Jesus sends His disciples into the world exactly as the Father had sent Him. They are to deliver the word—certainly not to die as additional lambs of sacrifice for the sins of the world.

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: **I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do**. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. 6 **I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word**. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. **8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ... 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. **18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world**.

However, the kingdom of God on this earth does not have a king sitting on the throne today. [Compare that statement with the parables of the kingdom.] The LORD Jesus continues to be described as the Lamb in Revelation chapter 5, verses 6 and 7. In fact, it is not until chapter 19 that the LORD Jesus comes to earth to take His seat on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD.

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, **behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one** [GOD THE FATHER] **sat on the throne.** 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. ... 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God [GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT]. ... **10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, [GOD THE FATHER] and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

Revelation 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne [GOD THE FATHER] a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. **6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb [GOD THE SON, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST] as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.** 7 **And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.** 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, **Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, [GOD THE FATHER] and unto the Lamb [GOD THE SON] for ever and ever.** 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and

worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

*Revelation 19* ...5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, **Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.** ... 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: **and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:** and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.** 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

*Revelation 20:1* And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. ....**

We return in verse 11 of chapter 19 to that throne that was set in Heaven in chapter 4. Chapter 19 now records where the completion of the glorious passage of 1 Corinthians 15 is set chronologically.

1 *Corinthians 15:24* **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.** 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

*Revelation 20:11* And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

*Revelation 21:1* And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 **And he that sat upon the throne** said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death ...

It is now, and only now, that the throne of God and of the Lamb finds mention.

*Revelation 22:1* And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of **the throne of God and of the Lamb**. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but **the throne of God and of the Lamb** shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. 6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God

of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. ...20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Every reader has used or has heard someone use the expression “till kingdom come.” The Merriam-Webster Dictionary reports that this expression comes from the phrase “Thy kingdom come” in the lesson on prayer that the LORD Jesus taught His disciples (Matthew 6:10) and entered the dictionary as a common expression in 1785. The dictionary terms the two-word-phrase as a noun and labels it as a synonym for “Heaven.” I appreciate my Merriam-Webster Dictionary, but I have found that it is neither inerrant or infallible. [Because it is not inspired!] In this definition, the editors are giving a colloquial usage that distorts the biblical text. The verse has two sentences: (1) Thy kingdom come, *and* (2) Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. By any rule of interpretation, the first sentence cannot be used as a synonym for “Heaven,” because the second sentence distinguishes between Heaven and earth and is actually the definition of the first. The kingdom that is coming will be the imposition of the will of the Father on earth as it is in Heaven.

The Dictionary's definition fails at another point. The majority of those using the phrase are not thinking of either Heaven or the will of God being done on earth. Instead, they have some nebulous concept of the next world (“*Blow them to kingdom come.*”) or the end of time (“*You can argue till kingdom come, but I will not change my mind.*”) Sadly, the average person walking down the street has no understanding of the Biblical teaching of the kingdom. What is even sadder, the average believer—whether sitting in the pew or standing behind the pulpit—has no more grasp of the Biblical concept of the kingdom than does that unchurched man or woman on that street. If the subject is not ignored, it is presented in the unscriptural terms of Reformed Doctrine, Covenant Theology, or ultra-dispensationalism. The result is that multiplied numbers of believers “labor and are heavy laden” under the “tradition of men” mandate that is “grievous to be borne” to “build the kingdom” or “to bring in the kingdom.” That error is as much a “doctrine of devils” as is the teaching of “seducing spirits” that JEHOVAH is finished with Israel and she is replaced by “the Church.”

The Kingdom will come, (Hallelujah, Amen!) and that coming is detailed in those passages from The Revelation given above. In trying to explain this “coming of the kingdom,” I think that it is best to say that the kingdom will come when God brings it, not when we establish it. “You build it; He will come.”—is not biblical truth. ***Scripturally, while I am not given anything to do to bring in or build up the Kingdom, I am instructed to pray “Thy kingdom come” and to wait patiently “till kingdom come.”***

—Pastor Manley