

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Newsletter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 KJV)*

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## Spiritual War Series

### The Coming of the Kingdom Part 2

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#### Previously

In our last issue we began to look at the time of the coming of the Kingdom of God. It couldn't come until the King was established. We defined the Kingdom as the government of God (Isa. 9:6-7) with the characteristics of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy spirit (Rom. 15:17). We saw that the ministry of John the Baptist was the transition between the old and the new (Luke 16:16) so that even the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John, even though up to that point John was the greatest of those born of women (Matt. 11:11-13). We also saw that the Kingdom produces conflict, both externally and internally, as the government of God comes into opposition with the ways of the world.

#### The Kingdom Comes

As we saw in our last issue, John the Baptist came preparing the way for Jesus by preaching "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2) and Jesus began His public ministry with the same message (Matt. 4:17). Jesus spoke more about the Kingdom than He did any other subject including the new birth; however, He spoke in mystery form with parables so that only those who could see and hear spiritual Truth would understand (Mat. 13:10-17).

The Jews thought that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Israel were the same and they expected the Messiah to restore the Kingdom to Israel. They expected Messiah to free them from Roman control and re-establish the throne of David with Messiah reigning. However, Jesus kept explaining to them about the Kingdom of God and that their expectations were not reality.

The question of when the Kingdom of God was coming was central to all of their thoughts, including those of the pharisees (Luke 17:20). Jesus answered this plainly when He said this in Mark:

And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power." (Mark 9:1 NASB)

From this statement we learn several things:

1. The Kingdom had not yet come in power, even though Jesus had told the Pharisees that the Kingdom was in their midst (Luke 17:21).
2. Some of those that were standing there with Him would be alive to see the Kingdom of God come with power.
3. Although Jesus had been speaking and teaching about the Kingdom, shortly, within the lifetime of some of them, there would be a visible manifestation of the Kingdom coming with power.

To determine when this occurs, we have to take these words of Jesus about the Kingdom and add to them the definition of the Kingdom given to us by Paul.

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NASB)

He tells us that the location of the Kingdom in its current form is in the Holy Spirit and that its characteristics are righteousness, peace and joy.

In the first part of the first chapter of Acts, the Scriptures tell us that Jesus appeared to the disciples over a period of 40 days after His resurrection and that He was speaking to them things concerning the Kingdom of God. He told them to wait until they received the promise of the Father because the Holy Spirit was coming on them with power. We know, of course, that this occurred on the day of Pentecost and is detailed in the second chapter of Acts.

I submit to you that this was the coming of the Kingdom in power since the Kingdom is in the Holy Spirit. After the day of Pentecost, look at how the Kingdom is mentioned in the book of Acts.

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. (Acts 8:12 NASB)  
After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:21-22 NASB)

And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading *them* about the kingdom of God. (Acts 19:8 NASB)

"And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. (Acts 20:25 NASB)

When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. (Acts 28:23 NASB)

The message of the book of Acts dealt with the Kingdom of God. Reading these verses suggests that our current evangelistic efforts leave out one of the primary points of the Gospel, the Kingdom of God with Jesus as King.

## Adjustments

If what is listed above is true, and I believe that it is, then there are some serious adjustments that we need to make in our thinking and in our doctrine. One of those adjustments is the need to separate the concepts of Church and Kingdom. They are not the same. *[For further teaching on this see “Fulfilling the High Call of God” and “Going to Work” available on the website.]* The Scriptures refer to us in two different ways.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ([Ephesians 2:19 NASB](#))

We are “fellow citizens” in the Kingdom and we are members of “God's household”. There are differences between the rules and requirements of a citizen and those of a family member. These two areas have a very different focus. We “grow up” in the family; but, we “go to work” in the Kingdom.

The values and standards of the family become the basic building blocks of a good citizen. *[For further teaching on this subject see “Lesson 2: Building Blocks of God's Government” in the “Government of God Series” available on the website.]* Any society is only as good as the families that are its components.

These two areas also comprise different types of work. With the family, we do “chores” such as taking out the garbage, mowing the lawn, or doing the dishes. The nature of the chores are things that are necessary to maintain an orderly family environment. However, when we “go to work” we go out into society and do work that produces a benefit to the society. We become a productive citizen when we produce more than we consume.

Most of the type of work that we do in society is not done alone but in conjunction with other workers. The nature of this work is quite different from our chores at home.

By confusing Church and Kingdom we have also confused the nature of our work. Much of the work done by the Church is not Kingdom work but rather “chores” to maintain the family and its facilities. We have done very little “real” work, which is done “in the field” and not in the family household.

Another area of thinking that may require adjustments is our understanding of end time events. For example, we have all heard teaching about a revived Holy Roman Empire ruled by the Antichrist that is destroyed by the return of Jesus and the setting up of the Millennium Kingdom. The basis for this teaching is the interpretation in Daniel of the king's dream of the giant statue with the head of gold and the feet of iron and clay.

"The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and

the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. ([Daniel 2:32-35 NASB](#))

Daniel then interpreted the dream by the understanding of the Lord to declare what was to be in the future.

. . . You are the head of gold. "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. "As the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of pottery, *so* some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy." ([Daniel 2:38b-45 NASB](#))

In light of the earlier Scriptures in this lesson, the Kingdom of God as the rock cut out from the mountain without hands struck the Roman Empire on the Day of Pentecost. We know from previous Scriptures that, once established, the Kingdom of God continues to increase and is established forever. Historically, this is true. It was Christianity that was the downfall of the Roman Empire. The Kingdom of God has crushed all other kingdoms—the kingdoms of the world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

Based on this, there is no need to conjure up a Revived Roman Empire during the last days. The King's dream has already been fulfilled. Consider for a moment. If you remove the need of a Roman Empire during the last days, what does that do to your understanding of the end times prophecy that you have been taught? Maybe we need to take a fresh look and ask the Lord to open our eyes and ears to the Holy Spirit.

*[The next issue will begin a new series on the Kingdom of God in its present form and the coming Kingdom in its physical form and how this affects us.--Art Nelson]*

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