

Subjects of the Kingdom

Introduction

Besides the King, every kingdom must have a territory and a population. The territory is easy—everything that God has ever created as a habitat for His created beings, both in the heavens and in the earth, is the territory of the Kingdom of God. As we saw in our previous lessons, Lucifer's rebellion “fractured” the Kingdom and a portion was, in one sense of the word, 'separated' from the will and purpose of God. This became what we call the kingdom of darkness where the will (desire) of God is not done and neither is His purpose fulfilled. The kingdom of darkness pursues the desire of Satan in opposition to the plan and purpose of God.

Ultimately the will of God is inviolate. Nothing, no being of any kind, can make the will of God ineffective for God is God. However, temporarily, it may appear that the kingdom of darkness is resisting the will of God. This is simply not true. God, in His manifold wisdom, is doing some things that relate to that which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world. He is also dealing with the rebellion and 'fractured kingdom' issue. In doing this, God has given the Devil some latitude and not simply 'slapped him out of existence' as He could have easily done. God has allowed the kingdom of darkness to continue to operate in order to provide a testing and training ground for His sons to mature and come into the fullness of their sonship so that they could learn to reign as joint-heirs with Christ. We are being trained for the throne and this process involves the Lord giving the enemy permission to tempt and test us. We must learn obedience to the Spirit in order to walk in the Kingdom of God.

Which brings us to the question, “who are the subjects of the Kingdom of God”. The simple answer is every created being that does the will of God. This would leave out those who are not doing the will of God, that is, those who are walking in lawlessness. Jesus said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”*¹ For rebellious man to enter the Kingdom of God will require him to learn obedience and do the will of the Father.

Our institutional church teaching has applied this to the 'church' ignoring the concepts of the Kingdom completely. The 'church' and the 'kingdom' are not the same thing. The 'church' is a sub-set of the Kingdom, which means the Kingdom is 'bigger' than the Church. Not every being that is in the Kingdom is in the Church²; however, everyone who is in the true Church is in the Kingdom. I say true Church because the requirement is to do the will of the Father, not religious work. The institutional system is not the true Church and there are many workers within the institutional system that are not citizens of the Kingdom of God. That is not a very popular statement. As a matter of fact, it makes

1 Matthew 7:21

2 Read Revelation looking at the scenes around the throne room. There are many 'living beings' described that are obviously not human but who serve God and do His will; therefore, they are subjects of the Eternal Kingdom of God and will continue to be subjects throughout Eternity.

many 'church members' angry.

Dispensationalists have made the 'kingdom' to be a part of the dealings of God with Israel and say that it doesn't apply to anyone but the Jews. They say we are in the 'church age' and when the 'church age' is finished then God completes His 'kingdom' work with Israel, which is basically relegated to the Tribulation period. This form of dispensational thought makes it easy to categorize the Scriptures in a manner that is conducive to natural thinking and reasoning and results in 'doctrines' that are at best erroneous and at worst pure deception.

What we are doing in this series of lessons on the Kingdom of God is looking at the eternal purpose of God and how He is unfolding His purpose in our space-time continuum. The purpose of God is not fragmented into different 'dispensations' that have little or no relationship with each other. Instead, the purpose of God is a unified whole that finds expression within time to bring to completion the intent of God and complete His work to restore His Kingdom and replace within His Kingdom the functions vacated by Lucifer and the fallen angels, which is our future job placement assignments.

The People of God

Forget for the moment any designation of 'church' and let's just consider the idea of the 'people of God'. God has always had His people in the earth. We know from the Scriptures that Enoch was one of the people of God. We know that Noah was one also. We also know that between the fall of Adam and the promise to Abraham, there were few that could be called the people of God. However, we know that one part of the purpose of God is to bring many sons to glory.³ This would require more than a few righteous who would walk with God.

Within the purpose of God, the eternal counsels of His manifold wisdom, God called Abraham and made a promise to Him.

Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. (2) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

In this God promises, 1) a lineage of children, and 2) an inheritance for that lineage, which results in a great nation and through him a blessing to all of the families of the earth.

We saw in our last lesson that THE SEED of Abraham is Christ Jesus⁴ and He is the blessing to all the families of the earth. Since the lineage promised in the natural is fulfilled in the spiritual,⁵ we can expect the natural inheritance to have a spiritual fulfillment and the natural nation to also have a spiritual fulfillment.

3 Hebrews 2:10

4 Galatians 3:16

5 Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 3:7, 29

It is my understanding from the Scriptures that the spiritual fulfillment of this promise of inheritance and a great nation is the Kingdom of God. While Jesus was speaking in the Temple, He told the Chief Priests and Elders of Jerusalem that He was taking things to a new level, the natural was over with.

Matthew 21:43 NKJV "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

That 'nation' is the spiritual version of the 'nation' promised to Abraham. It is the nation of God, the Kingdom of God.

We can see from this that God's program for Israel and God's program for the Church are not two different programs, but, are actually one flowing process that unfolds in time to fulfill God's ultimate intention. The things of the Old Testament are given to us as examples, types and shadows of spiritual truth. We cannot understand fully the New Testament without seeing God's purpose and the way that He began to implement that purpose in the Old Testament. This can only be done through the revelation brought to us by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:14-17 NKJV (14) But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. (15) But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. (16) Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. (17) Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

There is a veil over the mind when the Old Testament is read that is only taken away in Christ. It is the Spirit that removes the veil so that our understanding may be enlightened.⁶ Notice that the veil is on the mind and the heart. Scripturally, the heart is where we understand spiritual truth. The mind implements *what* we think. The heart is *how* we think, the very structure of our thinking process⁷. It is the heart that should drive our thinking processes not the mind.

When the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke in parables, He said, "...I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."⁸ He had already told His disciples this:

Matthew 13:11 NKJV He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

To know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God requires that we be a disciple because understanding is *only given to disciples*. This isn't the weak, watery version of discipleship that is preached today. Jesus gave us the criteria for being a true disciple of His.

John 8:31-32 NASB So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then you are truly disciples of Mine*; (32) and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

6 Ephesians 1:17-19

7 For further study of the heart and mind and our thinking processes see the "Renewing the Mind Audio Series", which is available at www.lifestreamteaching.com.

8 Matthew 13:13

The Jews that Jesus was speaking to had already believed Him, *then*, they had to continue (or abide) in His word. This would make them a disciple that would know the truth and would be made free. If there is not a *continuing* in the word and the *application* of that word to our life, then we are not disciples of Jesus. Our preaching of an easy believism without the cost of discipleship is costing us our understanding about the Kingdom of God. *Only* disciples understand the mysteries of the Kingdom and this by the intent of God.

Because of our lack of understanding about the Kingdom of God, a huge portion of the people of God have bought into the dispensational concepts that were made popular by Scofield in his reference bible notes. This has caused God's people to separate Israel and the Church into different categories that God deals with differently. But, is that what the Scriptures say?

Paul told us in Ephesians that, at one time, we “*were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*”⁹ However, God, in His mercy and grace has done something for us. We “*who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*”¹⁰

Ephesians 2:14-16 NASB For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, (15) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace, (16) and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

What are “both groups” mentioned here? They are Israel and non-Israel, that is, Jews and Gentiles. In Christ is brought together all descendants of Abraham who are sons of Abraham by faith.¹¹

Galatians 3:28-29 NKJV There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Now, to begin to put this into proper perspective from the viewpoint of the Kingdom of God, we need to look at the House of Israel to see the beginning of the unfolding of God's purpose.

The House of Israel

God unfolded another piece of His 'mystery' covenant at Mount Sinai to the people who He had delivered from Egypt.

Exodus 19:3-6 NKJV And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: (4) 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. (5) Now therefore, if you will

9 Ephesians 2:12 NKJV

10 Ephesians 2:13 NKJV

11 Galatians 3:7

indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. (6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

There are several important things in what God said to Moses in these Scriptures. First, if they are obedient they will be 1) a special treasure, 2) a kingdom of priests, and 3) a holy nation. Look at how the Apostle Peter applies this:

1 Peter 2:9 NKJV But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Peter says that we are 1) a special people, 2) a royal priesthood, and 3) a holy nation. Obviously, Peter saw what God was doing with the Jews and the Gentiles as a continuation of what God started at Mount Sinai, a further unfolding of His 'mystery' covenant.

From this we can determine that it was God's intention from the beginning to produce a holy nation made up of a special people that would be a kingdom of royal priests, that is, to bring forth the Kingdom of God in the earth.

Now, the second thing that we need to look at in what God said to Moses was the fact that God referred to both the house of Jacob and to the children of Israel. Why did God make two categories out of the people? Were not all of them children of Israel?

Before we answer that question, it might be helpful if we look at the origin of Jacob and Israel. In the natural, Jacob and Israel are both names for the same person. Jacob was the son of Isaac, the child of promise of Abraham. It was God, however, that gave Jacob the name Israel.¹² After that he is referred to in the Scriptures sometimes as Jacob and sometimes as Israel. It appears to me that since there is a natural component and a spiritual component to the descendants of Abraham, when the Scriptures refer to Jacob they are referring to the natural descendants and when the Scriptures refer to Israel they are referring to the spiritual descendants, that is, the *whole* Israel of God.

In light of this, what did God mean when He referred to the house of Jacob and the children of Israel when He spoke to Moses? It would appear to me that He was referring to both natural and spiritual descendants of Abraham. If that is the case, then who were the children of Israel; that is, spiritual Israel?

We know for sure that gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai were the natural descendants—the house of Jacob—and we know that with them was also a 'mixed multitude' of non-jewish people that came out of Egypt with them¹³. Peter tells us that God is not a respecter of persons.

Acts 10:34-35 NKJV Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. (35) But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

¹² Genesis 32:28

¹³ Exodus 12:38

So, the mixed multitude saw the judgments of God in Egypt. They apparently believed and sought to go with the people of God as they left Egypt and to journey with them to the land of Canaan. The Bible never tells us how many there were of this group but the fact that “multitude” is used to describe them implies that there was a large number. Apparently then, at Mount Sinai we have the two groups—the house of Jacob and the children of Israel, which would include those of the mixed multitude who had believed the God of Abraham. This is a foreshadowing of the people of God under the New Testament.

Israel Divided

After Sinai and eventually after coming into the land promised by God, Israel/Jacob was established as a nation—a special people unto God. The Scriptures record cycles of apostasy and idolatry within the nation where they tested the longsuffering of the Lord. When David found favor with the Lord, more of the covenant was unveiled and the promise is made to David that he would always have a descendant on the throne as we saw in our last lesson.

However, David's son, Solomon, had a good beginning as the king but had a sorry end. Solomon departed from the commandments of the Lord and had his heart turned after other gods because of the influence of many of his wives.

1 Kings 11:1-6 NKJV But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— (2) from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. (3) And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. (4) For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of his father David. (5) For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. (6) Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David.

The Lord became angry with Solomon and His longsuffering came to an end. After the Lord appeared to him twice and warned him about the idolatry.

1 Kings 11:9-13 NKJV So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, (10) and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. (11) Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. (12) Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. (13) However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give

one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

When Solomon died, the kingdom was split between Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and Solomon's servant, Jeroboam. This was done by the hand of the Lord according to His word to Solomon.

The Kingdom Torn

God gave Jeroboam ten tribes and he became king over Israel. God gave Rehoboam the tribe of Judah and he became king over Judah. This was done *"that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there."*¹⁴

The result of all of this is a divided people—the kingdom is split between the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. However, in doing this, God did not change nor make allowance for any change in worship procedures. Neither did He change the place, method, ritual, or order of worship.

Even though the people were divided, His requirements for worship were not divided nor modified. Jerusalem was the place that the Lord had put His Name and He had left Judah, which included Jerusalem, with the son of Solomon for the sake of His promise to David and for the sake of Jerusalem.

The required feasts were to be eaten before the Lord in Jerusalem. The priests served in the Temple, which was in Jerusalem and they served according to the ordinances established by Moses, which he had received from God. Jerusalem was still the spiritual center of the Lord's work and service. This presented a problem to Jeroboam.

1 Kings 12:26-30 NKJV And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: (27) If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah." (28) Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" (29) And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. (30) Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan.

Jeroboam's solution was to create two new places to worship, Bethel and Dan. He made two golden calf idols and put them with his new altars and told the people of Israel that these were the gods who had brought them out of Egypt. In other words, he called the golden calves Jehovah. But, he didn't stop there. He made a complete system of worship for Israel

1 Kings 12:31-33 NKJV He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. (32) Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that *was* in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the

14 1 Kings 11:36

calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. (33) So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

All that Jeroboam did was patterned after the real thing in Jerusalem. He didn't re-invent the wheel but duplicated what he knew of the worship of Jehovah and, probably, what he knew of the idols that Solomon worshiped with his many wives.

Jeroboam created and established:

1. a false god that he called Jehovah;
2. a false altar of worship;
3. false places of worship;
4. false priests;
5. false feasts; and
6. false rituals and methods of worship.

He did all of this for the *convenience* of the people and *to maintain his own power and position*.

The Northern Kingdom was called the following names in the Bible:

1. The house of Israel (I Kings 12:21, Jeremiah 31:31)
2. The house of Joseph (I Kings 11:28)
3. Samaria (Hosea 7:1, 8:5-6, 13:16)
4. Ephraim (Hosea 4:17, 5:3, 7:1)

The Northern Kingdom, also called the house of Israel, was taken captive by the nation of Assyria.¹⁵ In the fullness of time, they lost their identity as the house of Israel and became assimilated into all the nations of the world.

The False/Idolatry Judged

We have the details of God's judgment on the house of Israel and the house of Judah in Hosea. God told Hosea to do some things that would be a prophetic picture of the situation with His people and would illustrate His judgment. Hosea was to take a prostitute as a wife and have children with her.

Hosea 1:3-9 NKJV So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. (4) Then the LORD said to him: "Call his name Jezreel, For in a little *while* I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. (5) It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." (6) And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then *God* said to him: "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away. (7) Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, Will save them by the LORD their God, And will not save them by bow, Nor by sword

¹⁵ II Kings 17:7-23

or battle, By horses or horsemen." (8) Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. (9) Then *God* said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you *are* not My people, And I will not be your *God*."

The names that Hosea was to give to the children, the offspring of his prostitute wife, prophetically speaks of God's attitude toward His people.

- *Jezreel* means "God will sow, God will scatter"
- Lo-Ruhamah means "no mercy or no compassion"
- Lo-Ammi means "not my people"

Through this, that is, the meaning of the children's names, God says to the house of Israel, "I will scatter you; you are not my people and I will show no mercy or compassion to you and will not be your God." Yet, God says to the house of Judah that He will show mercy and compassion and save them, Himself.

The forefathers of the Northern Kingdom (house of Israel) along with the Southern Kingdom (house of Judah) were called together the house of Jacob, which entered into a marriage covenant¹⁶ with the God of Abraham at Mount Sinai. At that time, they became a called out people unto the Lord God as an assembly [*Hebrew = kahal (assembly), Greek = ekklesia (church)*]. In doing so, the rights of this covenant gave the house of Jacob an eternal inheritance if they were obedient in keeping the covenant¹⁷. However, by them breaking the terms of the covenant that God made with His people, the Lord God is now telling the Northern Kingdom (house of Israel) that they are no longer His people and He will no longer have mercy upon them. By doing this, God divorced the Northern Kingdom (house of Israel). In Jeremiah it is written:

Jeremiah 3:8 NKJV Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

In giving the Northern Kingdom (house of Israel) a divorce, they lost the inheritance that was rightfully theirs by being a member of the family of the God. God declared that they would not be His people and that He would have no mercy upon them. Therefore, they were cut off from the natural olive tree.

However, in terms of God's unfolding purpose, there will come a time when God will bring back the house of Israel that was lost among the Gentiles as His people again and will join them with the house of Judah.

Jeremiah 3:18 NKJV "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

This points to a time when spiritual Israel and natural Israel come together as the people of God with Jesus as King and Lord. Scripturally this occurs during the Millennial Kingdom reign of the Lord.

Jeremiah 3:17 NKJV "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to

¹⁶ Jeremiah 2:1-3

¹⁷ Exodus 19:5-6

Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

Of course, from the Kingdom perspective, this is occurring now. We are citizens together (all who have recognized Messiah) of the Kingdom now with New Jerusalem as the capital city. It is there that the Throne of the Lord is being established now for His rule during His 1000 year earthly reign.

We have become participants in this unfolding plan of God.

Hosea 2:23 NKJV Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on *her who had* not obtained mercy; Then I will say to *those who were* not My people, 'You *are* My people!' And they shall say, 'You *are* my God!' "

Hosea 1:10-11 NKJV "Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You *are* not My people,' *There* it shall be said to them, 'You *are* sons of the living God.' (11) Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great *will be* the day of Jezreel!

Paul very clearly applies these Scriptures to both Jew and Gentile who walk with the Lord according to faith in the righteousness of Christ Jesus.

Romans 9:22-26 NKJV What if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, (23) and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, (24) even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (25) As He says also in Hosea: "I WILL CALL THEM MY PEOPLE, WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, AND HER BELOVED, WHO WAS NOT BELOVED." (26) "AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

Recap

This lesson contained a lot of information. So, let's recap to highlight the key points:

1. God's unfolding purpose has always involved the restoration of His Kingdom;
2. God's unfolding purpose has always involved a people for Himself;
3. The beginning of this was revealed at Mount Sinai when God established His people as part of His 'mystery covenant' made with Himself before the foundation of the world;
4. The house of Israel was divorced by God and dissipated amongst the Gentile nations;
5. The house of Jacob continued to receive mercy from God;
6. The house of Judah became the lineage of our Lord and the continuation of God's unfolding purpose;
7. God will call forth His people out of the Gentile nations, who are sons by faith;

8. God will unite His people under One Head, even Christ Jesus, making of the two—one new man;
9. God fulfills His purpose by the One New Man with Christ Jesus as the Head who rules until all enemies are put under His feet.

*The next lesson in the Kingdom of God Series will be
“The Coming of the Kingdom”; its manifestation in the earth and
the effect on the natural olive tree and the grafting in of the wild branches.*