

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Why such a study

Psalm 45:1 is *my* verse now: My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King (and His Kingdom); my tongue is the pen of a ready writer!

When was the last time you prayed “Thy Kingdom Come”? What did that mean to you? Are you aware that our prime pursuit is to be the Kingdom of God? (Matthew 6:33) Then should we not know what the phrase means?

In 1992 I felt I was being led to do research on the Kingdom of Man known as Babylon. That study led me into the history of the world, especially as it relates to religion. The study ends where the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord. But that is not the end of *kingdom* study. I am now being led into the glorious study of the Kingdom of Heaven, which knows no beginning, nor end.

### B. God’s Eternal Rule, and ancient plans

Lamentations 5:19, Acts 7:49, Psalm 9:4, 11:4, 89: 4, 14, 29, 36, 44 , 93:2, 45:6, 97:2, 103:19 , 145:11-13, are some of the many Scriptures that remind us that the Throne, hence, the Kingdom, belong to the Lord. Not just into eternity future but from eternity past. It’s HIS. Always. The Kingdom of heaven is just that, though it will intersect with earth often.

Even during the reign of Kingdom men, the Lord was firmly on the Throne of Heaven, where Micaiah and Isaiah see Him. I Kings 22:19, Isaiah 16:5.

### C. Intersecting Earth

#### 1. Adam

One could argue that a Kingdom of sorts was established here about 6000 years ago, through the man Adam, and later his helper Eve, who were given *dominion* over every living thing. (Genesis 1:28). God Himself fellowshiped with his “manager” and the “kingdom” on earth was doing the will of the Kingdom in heaven. Heaven and earth met. The tree of life was prominent in the midst of the garden God later planted, and man’s domain was secure, pleasant, and prospering.

Heaven and earth seem intersected in Genesis 1-3. In the New Jerusalem, where the Throne of God and the Lamb will abide, a similar scene appears, complete with the tree of life, hidden for all these years from Adam’s race. There will be the final and complete fellowshiping of these two realms.

But in between, thousands of years of the curse. Death. War. Self. And out of the midst of the mess man is making, a nation is formed, commissioned to receive and record the message of God for sinful man.

## 2. Moses' predictions

To the man Moses is given the task of leading the formed nation from its bondage in Egypt to a land that God will show Him. It is through Moses that we first understand God's desire and plan for a Kingdom, and not just a family (Although we can't ignore the precious promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, and Jacob in Genesis 35:10!). Jesus even declares to us, as we enter our inheritance (Matthew 25:34), that the idea of a Kingdom was in His mind from the foundation of the world. Albeit, it is to be a Kingdom on HIS terms, not Israel's.

So the nation forms. It is transferred from Canaan to Egypt. Bondage follows. Moses is called and begins his deliverance. The laws that govern the Kingdom come at Mt. Sinai. Every Kingdom must have laws.

And, in Exodus 19:6, we find that Israel is to be a kingdom of priests. Even more startling is the word given by Moses just before Israel crosses into the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Here the prediction is made that Israel will one day want a king that matches all the kings they have seen or heard of until now. It is startling because we always thought that God was surprised at that suggestion so many years later, when dealing with Samuel and Saul. Samuel was surprised and hurt, but God knew all along about the Kingdom. God tells them way back here in the wilderness, the true description of the King God desires. The ruler chosen of God is to be centered not on horses and wives and gold, but on the WORD OF GOD.

So God indeed had a plan to establish the Kingdom of Heaven, a rulership from God, on Earth, but it must be done with His men and in His way, and in His time.

## 3. Saul and the Spirit

With Saul, in I Samuel 8, comes the attempt at man's way. Israel wants a king. Samuel, the prophet of the day, senses that their heart is not right. They already have a king, God Almighty, and he is ruling them through Samuel's words. Samuel is hurt. God is hurt. But He is not shocked. And He allows Israel to learn a great lesson from this episode.

Saul, the one chosen of God for Israel, is a man in touch with heaven, albeit in spite of himself. God's true reign must have the touch of heaven on it, and God selflessly manifests His power in King Saul, until it becomes obvious to all that he is going to be a rebel against the purposes of God (I Samuel 9 and following). The Spirit of God comes on Saul, and He prophesies. He is victorious in battle, because God is with him. He overcomes his shyness and walks in great authority. But it all goes to his head, and he begins to rely on the arm of flesh and the decisions of his brain.

The kingdom has emerged. But when God cannot be the King of His own Kingdom, He must find a man after His own heart to do the job according to the plan. The stakes are too high to allow just anyone to be in charge. Where is a man who listens to God?

## II. THE LINE OF DAVID

### A. David

#### 1. In History

In I Samuel 15:28 we read that the kingdom is torn from Saul and given to David, a young shepherd who has established a relationship with the King of Kings out on his hillside, while keeping the flock (Psalm 23). Such a man is fit to rule the people of God, since God's rule will flow through Him. More than that, it is His family, the tribe of Judah, of the ancestry of Abraham, that had long before been chosen to bring the Christ into the world.

Immediately the Spirit of the Lord transfers from Saul to David, I Samuel 16:13, showing us the "intersection" of Heaven and earth once more in this Kingdom matter. Let no one tell us today that an "earthly" kingdom cannot also be a "heavenly" one. Israel is God's kingdom. Israel is filled with God. It is heavenly and it is earthly.

#### 2. In Covenant

II Samuel 5:12, David knew that it was the LORD who had established Him, and that HE had exalted the Kingdom for Israel's sake. This was confirmed to him by direct revelation from God, II Samuel 7: 8-16. The incredible Davidic covenant included several factors:

- a. God's people Israel will have a permanent place
- b. Rather than David building God a House, God is going to build David "a house".
- c. His own son (Solomon) will build the temple.
- d. God will establish the THRONE of David FOREVER!
- e. Though Solomon fail (and he did!) the MERCY of God will not be taken from David, so as to change the LINE of ancestry.
- f. David's HOUSE (family line) and THRONE (rule) are to be FOREVER

Forever is a long time. But because the house and the Throne of David. will culminate in the man Christ Jesus, forever is how long we will see this promise fulfilled. David had a son, who had a son, etc...

#### 3. In Prophecy

An astounding collection of texts conclusively proves the connection between David's Throne and Christ's, showing that the "intersection" is to remain, and be an eternal thing.

- a. Psalm 18:50 declares the mercy of God to David's descendants "forevermore".
- b. Psalm 89 is a pure anthem of testimony to the Covenant with David, saying God has SWORN that David's seed and David's Throne are secure forever, as surely as the sun and moon exist.
- c. Psalm 132:11 promises with another oath that the fruit of David's body will sit on David's throne!
- d. Isaiah joins in with His famous chapter 9, where in verse 7 he speaks of the endless government of the Son-Who-is-the-Father on the throne of DAVID. Also see Isaiah 16:5, compared to Matthew 25:31.
- e. Jeremiah's "Branch", 23:5, is to be of this house.
- f. Jeremiah 30:9 speaks of a raised-up David who will be their king after the Day of Jacob's Trouble.
- g. Jeremiah 33: 14-26 reports more oath-like confirmations of God's promise to raise from David's House a Branch, under whose shade Israel will be secure.
- h. Ezekiel boldly predicts that the one shepherd who shall feed Israel in the last days is actually David. 34:23-24, 37:24-25.

#### 4. In the Life of Christ Jesus

Jesus is soon and often called the "Son of David." By angels and blind men and sinners and saints, the connection is quickly made from the Old Covenant to the New. The Son of David. The New David. The King has come. Matthew 1:1, 1:20, 9:27, 15:22, 21:9. That was indeed the thinking of the apostles and those to whom Jesus ministered. Messiah is here. Only the religious leaders rejected this claim, for obvious reasons!

Jesus does not deny the title when dealing with them, but adds to it in his riddle to the Pharisees, Matthew 22: 41-46. He wants to know how the coming Messiah (Christ) can be called Son of David, and Lord at the same time. How could He be God and man? They not only had no clue, but they decided not to throw any questions Jesus' way any more.

The clearest New Testament reference to the transfer of the seat of His great ancestor to His greater Self is in Luke 1:32. (Jesus) will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest (God), and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father (ancestor) David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

#### B. Solomon

After the death of David, the kingdom is established in the hand of Solomon (I Kings 2:46). But a problem arises. The promises suddenly seem to be conditional, as God looks ahead into Solomon's life and sees things there that do not match up with a true spiritual kingdom, a fellowship with God and man. In I Kings 9:4, God makes the future of Solomon's kingdom

conditional on Solomon's behavior. Serious problem. Solomon's behavior did not measure up, to say it politely. The kingdom is to be taken from Solomon. The house of God is to be cast out. God will not spare. Now how will He do this, and keep the mountain of oaths regarding David?

I Kings 11:11 is where the sad news comes to David's son that the kingdom is to be ripped from him, in the next generation. But he is told that for the sake of his father, and we must believe for the sake of the Greater David to come, one tribe is to remain intact, the tribe of Judah. Small though it is, it will be called "the kingdom" also (II Kings 14:5)

#### C. Suspension

The fortunes of both Judah and the rest of Israel vary through the coming years, but the general direction, because of growing idolatry and disobedience of every kind, is down. Israel is taken captive by the Assyrians, never to regain its glory days. Judah follows the same route, and towards her end a horrible promise is made to one of the last kings of the line. (Jeremiah 22:30). Coniah (Jeconiah) will have sons, but they will not succeed him on the throne. He will *never* see a son or physical descendant of his on the throne of David. Yet Jeconiah is a true descendant of that noble King. Where are the promises of God? (see also comments about Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 36:30) Matthew 1's genealogy is a key to the answer, followed by Luke 3's.

David had another son. Nathan. Through Nathan eventually will be born Mary. Thus David's house *will* produce a Son who rules. Now, Coniah's blood line ends in Joseph (one angel even calls Joseph "Son of David"!) but by Jewish law Jesus is King by legal descent from David and fleshly descent from Mary.

To the point at hand, suspension, another promise is made by Hosea , in 3:4-5 of his prophecy: The children of Israel are to be without a king or prince, without sacrifice or any of the priestly trappings, for many days. Then Israel shall return, seek God, and DAVID! and fear the Lord in the "latter days." It must be clear to even the casual reader that this promise has not been fulfilled. It serves as the explanation of the rest of Jewish history even unto our day. It also serves as the final bridge between the Old Testament "throne of David" and the New Testament entity of that name. It should prove to those who feel God is "finished" with Israel that He has barely begun. For where David leaves off, Messiah will begin.

#### D. Promises Made

After recording the history of these things, the Bible turns to promises. We have already seen what some of these prophets foretold, and later in this narrative we will share many more of their words. But for now, we take the journey from the lesser David to the Greater, and see what was on His mind as He entered this world, and the Jewish nation, and the public eye.

### III. THE MESSIAH. THE KINGDOM IS HERE

#### A. The Kingdom is at hand

Gabriel's message to Mary (Matthew 1:33) in the first chapter of the New Testament, is that the Kingdom of Her Son will know no end! The first words

recorded of John the Baptist, only two chapters later: “Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” According to Mark’s first chapter, Jesus’ initial message is exactly the same! ( Mark 1:15) Jesus even tells his disciples, at the very beginning, to preach the Gospel of “the Kingdom.” (Matthew 10:7, Luke 9:2,60). The Greek for “at hand” is *engus*, which means “near” whether in time or place. The Kingdom is very close to you now, and about to get a lot closer. Heaven has touched earth. My rule continues, and for some, begins.

B. The Kingdom *is* the Message of Jesus

Jesus’ Good News centers in this Kingdom. This is what he and all the apostles, including Paul, preached (Matthew 4:23, 9:35 Mark 1:14, Luke 8:1, 9:11). It is this Gospel of the Kingdom that shall be preached in all the world just before the end comes (Matthew 24:14).

C. Jesus’ Description of Kingdom People

The beatitudes describe a meek lowly persecuted people who are in fact to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven ( Matthew 5). The meek here are not said to populate heaven at first, but to inherit the earth. We reign with Christ. Here. In this heavenly kingdom-come-to-earth, men who have honored God’s Word perfectly in our present condition shall be considered “great” in that Kingdom, while popular but error-serving teachers now will be shamed then. (Matthew 5:19) The formalities of righteousness will not be honored in that land, but only the inward graces. (Matthew 5:20) Those who in this life started out for the Kingdom but turned back, will not be considered “worthy” to enter (Luke 9:62) . Kingdom people are to be occupied with the kingdom fully, praying its soon coming, and seeking it above all else (Matthew 6:10, 33). The one least in this Kingdom of Jesus will be considered greater than the public prophet, like John the Baptist, though John, in men’s eyes, is the greatest who has “arisen” so far.

D. Jesus declares the Kingdom has actually arrived!

In Matthew 11:12, Jesus indicates that the “kingdom” being experienced by the Jews now, the defunct reign of David, is in the process of experiencing severe violence. He refers I believe to the violent dealings with the Baptist and Himself, two announcers of the Kingdom both persecuted for this daring word. He suggests in all of this that the Kingdom is alive, and He is its latest and greatest representative. In the next chapter an even bolder statement, arguing that His power over demons is a clear proof that the kingdom has come! Here He defines the Kingdom as the authority and power of God in the Name of Jesus. His continued power over disease, nature, and evil spirits, confirm His claim to be the King of Israel.

E. Stories of the Kingdom

Parables are said by Jesus to be none other than explanations of the mysteries surrounding the Kingdom of Heaven. Viewed in this manner, they soon take on a definable shape. They begin to seem very similar. Each story tells about life now, life later, and the connection between the two. We are told how God’s subjects live here, and the rewards they receive there. Disobedience and its punishment are also a part of many stories.

1. Matthew 13: 1-23.

The sower is sowing the word of *the kingdom*, now. The word prospers or fails, now, in the human heart. The results follow then.

2. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

The wheat and tares. Here the seed is the *kingdom man*. The weeds are Satan's folks. The sowing is now, in our world, in our church. Seeds are allowed to grow to maturity. Harvest is at the end. Justice takes place. His Kingdom will be stripped one day of these evil men, carried away by angels. Here is introduced a furnace of fire. Wailing. Gnashing of teeth. So the kingdom for now is merely sowing and waiting. There is confusion, strife. But in contrast, when the fulness of the kingdom comes, no evil is left. This like many of the kingdom parables finds its parallel in the reality of Matthew 25, when Jesus comes and simply divides humanity into two parts. It's that simple.

3. Mark 4:26-29.

The growing seed. Planting, growing, waiting, are all our duties in this present age. But at maturity of time comes the sickle. The harvest. The judgment. The pattern is the same.

4. Matthew 13: 31-32.

Mustard Seed. Now the planting, the growing, starting from nothing but later filling the garden, later still becoming a place of beauty and rest. Least becomes greatest. He was cut off, crucified, made the least. But one day He rules the world. Not the Medieval world. Not our present "One-out-of-every-3-people-is-a-Christian" world. The *whole world*.

5. Matthew 13:33.

Leaven. Small start. Huge ending. Slow progress but sure. The reason for the rising is hidden the whole time. Invisible now. Obvious later. The wind blows, but you can't see it...

6. Matthew 13:44.

Hidden Treasure. Hidden *now*. Found and rejoiced in when made public. Give up a little sacrifice *now* to enjoy the heavenly kingdom forever.

7. Matthew 13:45-46.

Pearl of Great Price. The finding of the pearl is *now*. The selling all for that pearl is now. Jesus is the pearl. Our life lived for Him now is the selling all. But the ultimate possession of Him is when he comes. Then we will know the fullness of what we have "bought."

8. Matthew 13: 47-50.

Dragnet. The fishing time is now. As we put out the net, we attract all kinds. And the church today is filled with all kinds of believers. That's now. But not then. The great division is coming. It's clearly called here the end of the age. Separation. A furnace. Wailing.

9. Matthew 13:51-52.

Old and New Treasure. Not officially a parable. But a simile. He compares the Jewish Scripture-writers who know about the Kingdom to a rich landowner that has a garage full of new AND old treasures. They know the law. They understand the OLD Kingdom of David and the promises God made. Now they see the NEW. They realize that it all points to Jesus, and later they will see Gentiles come in to this Kingdom, which now is governed fully by the Spirit.

10. Matthew 18: 21-35

Unforgiving Servant. In the Heavenly Kingdom now on earth and soon to be filled with God's Spirit, forgiveness is to be the rule. An actual "kingdom" story as a picture of the true Kingdom. At the end of the story, mention is made of the torturers as the application is made to reality. A future time. A division of the Kingdom between now and then. This story is preceded by a CHURCH story (15-20). Thus He shows us how we are to deal with forgiveness now, and because of Peter's question, He launches into a Kingdom story that tells the eternal significance of forgiving.

11. Matthew 19:23-20:16

Workers in the Vineyard. A discussion of "places" in the Kingdom triggers the parable of the workers. Notice that being "saved" and "entering the Kingdom" are used interchangeably in the introduction. (23-26) The point of the story, stated before (30) and after (20:16) is that last in order here will be first in order there, and first last. Many who have been saved only a short time will go into the Kingdom when Jesus comes, while persons "trying" to work for the "kingdom" in their own strength or in error will never be saved. The "first" here could refer to the Jewish nation as it often does in these stories. But the broader application could be anyone who was "ahead" of the pack but got there by the wrong method. The proper application of the blood of Christ to a simple humble soul calling on the name of the Lord is more effectual than all of man's efforts to get to heaven. As always, the theme is now vs. later. Enter the Kingdom HERE to enter it there.

12. Matthew 21:28-32

Two Sons. Does not begin, "The Kingdom of Heaven is Like," but has a familiar "Kingdom" theme, and leads to a clear Kingdom explanation. Our obedience/disobedience to the invitation of Christ NOW has eternal consequences THEN.

13. Matthew 21: 33-44

Wicked Vinedressers. Like the preceding, this parable does not have the familiar beginning. But it is all about a Kingdom! The interpretation is that the KINGDOM is being taken from the Jewish nation, and given to a nation bearing fruit. Note, extinction

is not taught, but rather change of ownership. So, NOW we care for the vineyard, then comes the inheriting of the King's property.

14. Luke 14: 15-24

Great Supper. Here the literal "eating of bread" in a future Kingdom is mentioned, and not denied by the Master, but instead explained further. The NOW part is the excuses of those who refuse Christ's invitation, and the ongoing invitation to whosoever will. But THEN is the ultimate rejection of all who have refused Christ.

15. Matthew 22: 1-14

Wedding Feast. Many are called to the Kingdom, that is, the Gospel is preached in all the world. Few are chosen. Few respond to the gracious invitation. The persecuting of believers is outlined. All of this outlines PRESENT activities regarding the Kingdom. The need for cleansing and the "garment of righteousness" is strongly urged. For LATER comes outer darkness, weeping, gnashing of teeth, when the true wedding feast begins. This is the time for inviting. Then is the time for violence and force.

16. Matthew 25:1-13

Wise and Foolish Virgins. NOW is the time for sleeping or watching or knowing the One who calls us. Then, "I never knew you."

17. Luke 19:11-27

Minas. This is a critical statement about our subject since it was given specifically to illuminate a Kingdom matter: the where and when of its coming. Jesus was near Jerusalem, and pondering the thoughts of His followers that the Kingdom of God would *appear* immediately. Not "begin" as the church, which was still future. Not "continue", though continue it would. But, "appear", be made visible to the world. Change phase. He tells then the story of a nobleman (Jesus) going into a far country (heaven) to receive a kingdom (the new Jerusalem, related to the old Jerusalem he now entered) and to return (to the earth). He then calls servants (disciples) and distributes to them money (gifts) and asks them to do His business (souls) until He returns. Upon that return He rewards those who have invested properly with actual reigning power ("if we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him"). Those who rejected His reign are then judged severely.

18. Matthew 25: 14-30

Talents. Much like the parable of the Minas above, with the end being in "outer darkness" with weeping and gnashing of teeth.

19. Luke 21:31.

The fig tree (or any tree). For a long time, there is nothing happening on the tree. But when you see the buds, it is near summer. Summer is the full fruition of the Kingdom (31). We are

in the Kingdom now, but not in its maturity. The generation that sees the fig tree blossom (spring) is the generation that will see summer!

20. Matthew 25:31-46.

Though not a parable, this is the passage toward which all the Kingdom parables point. Jesus comes. He sits on a Throne. All nations are “gathered”. Good and bad are divided (judgment). To the righteous Jesus says, Come... inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Jesus, when leaving the disciples (John 14) let them know He was going to prepare a place for them. The Kingdom was there. Jesus was preparing and is preparing particular places for those who are being saved. “In My Father’s House are many mansions!”

Though at first glance this simple incident seems easy enough to understand, a second look brings up some questions, at least to me:

- a. If, according to Zechariah 14, the Gentile nations just come right into the millennium, live natural lives, are invited to worship Messiah on a regular basis, how can there be this cut and dried division between those who go to the City and those who go to torment, *immediately*?
- b. Why does entry into the eternal kingdom seem to be based here on works, specifically our attitudes toward Messiah Jesus?
- c. Why are these believers so shocked that what they did was done to Jesus Himself? Do not most believers know that? Especially, the saints who have just come through the Great tribulation, would they not know that simple truth?
- d. Yet, if they are not the true church, are they merely the Gentile nations? But they are here and now given eternal life, something that many of those peoples will not have when all is said and done in this story.
- e. Are these merely believers in prospect? That is, could it be that there is a third group present? The CHURCH has already been caught up to be with Jesus, after all. They return with Him. It is obvious they are His, or they would not have been resurrected at this time. The 144,000 are here. The tribulation saints are here. Could it be that these are “good” Gentiles or even Jews, who risked their lives for Christians during the awful tribulation, but were not yet saved, and are just now receiving Christ’s invitation to Himself, based on their heart love for His people? Then they live a great life during the Millennium, like Old testament saints, they

die, and are resurrected in the last day, to live with Jesus forever?

- f. Or could it be that the wicked Gentiles are cursed at this time yet not sent to their actual punishment for 1000 years? After all, Jesus is to reign among His enemies, is He not? These evil ones will have children, and many of them will be allowed to seek after Jesus later. Daniel sees the antichrist given to the flames, but his fellow-nations' peoples have their lives prolonged awhile, long enough anyway for Jesus to reign over them, and for the Kingdom to get rolling.
- g. Is this story just a "story", meant to summarize the events that are to come? That is, the wicked shall indeed be punished, the righteous shall indeed be rewarded, but not necessarily according to the time-frame of this story.

F. Other Statements about the Kingdom in the life of Jesus

1. Luke 12:32-34.

Do not fear, little flock. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Invest in the Kingdom, be sure your treasure is there, so your heart will be there, too.

2. Matthew 7:21-23.

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. Many will say to me in THAT DAY...the day of the kingdom's COMING to earth. The Kingdom Coming Jesus has in mind here is not Pentecost, but the Mt. of Olives. Entrants are those who knew Him and worked righteousness, not those who knew how to "prophesy", cast out demons, and do wonders.

3. Matthew 8:11-12.

In response to the faith of the centurion, indicating that those who will enter heaven will be a surprise, He says, that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out... Here He tells us again of the LITERAL PHYSICAL nature of the Kingdom, its earlier Jewish residents, both saved and unsaved varieties, AND the opening of the door to Gentile converts.

4. Matthew 18:1-4

Who is greatest in the kingdom? You will not even enter the Kingdom unless you are converted and become as a little child.

5. Matthew 19: 28-30 and Luke 18:29-30

Seem to be parallel passages. One seems to promise a manifold return of blessing to the one who has forsaken all for Christ, in the "regeneration" or "renewal" of the earth, the other says "in this present time." If they are truly parallel, it seems to

indicate that even the renewed earth will be much like the present one, even as our resurrected bodies will be recognizable. The point: there IS a separate phase of existence coming, a time when the Kingdom reigns in a different setting. The Matthew passage also points out that the disciples will reign with Christ, sitting on 12 thrones! This, after the Son of Man sits on HIS THRONE, as in Matthew 25. So obviously a future manifestation.

6. Matthew 20:20-23.

Salome wants her boys James and John to be seated in special seats of honor in the Kingdom. Though the place is denied, the idea of such a Kingdom with such seats is not. Here is another place to deny the literal idea of the Kingdom altogether, but Jesus does not!

7. Mark 12:34.

Jesus here points out that to be filled with a spirit of wisdom regarding the Word of God and its proper meaning is to be “not far” from the Kingdom! This would be the present phase, filled with the King Jesus, obeying Him, waiting for the appearance of the Kingdom on earth.

8. Mark 15:43/Luke 23:51.

Joseph of Arimathea was “waiting for the Kingdom” as was every learned Jew. They understood the prophets to be telling them that David’s reign was to be carried on, on earth, someday. How they longed for the event!

9. John 18:33-36.

Pilate says, “Are You a King?” Jesus: “My Kingdom is not of this world.” True. It is the Kingdom OF (originating from) Heaven, not of men. But it is coming! And Rome and all the kingdoms of history will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ! Yes, I am a King! I came (this time) to bear witness to the truth. What He did not tell Pilate is that the next time He comes it will be to take over the world! Pilate did not need to know that any more than unbelieving Jews needed to know the time of the Kingdom. But for His own, clear parables and statements and time tables!

10. Luke 23:42.

The thief on the cross believed in the Kingdom and asked to be remembered when Jesus got to it. Jesus let Him know that “paradise” was the first stop. But Jesus will bring the thief with Him on that day. Because Paradise will come back to earth, when the tabernacle of God is with men.

G. Kingdom events in Jesus’ life

1. The Transfiguration, Matthew 16:28-17:5.

“Some” of the disciples (He seems to be addressing the 12 here) will not die until they see Jesus coming “in His Kingdom.” So it is in Mark and Luke, and the very next event is the

transfiguration. We are led by the flow of the text to believe that what the astounded Peter, James, and John witnessed was none other than the Christ of the future, the One who shall come with the rod of iron and rule in Jerusalem.

The predicted event could not have been Pentecost, for all “saw” Jesus in the Spirit there. What else could it be? All the disciples were dead 60 years later and the Kingdom had not come. This was a preview of coming events, where Old Testament and New Testament saints will mingle and fellowship and Jesus will be Lord of all.

Note the words heard during this event: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased. Nearly a direct quote from Isaiah 42:1, Behold My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom my soul delights! That Isaiah passage goes on to talk about the Justice that Christ will bring to the earth, confirming even more that this Transfigured Christ is the Reigning Christ to come, and Peter, James, and John were privileged to see Him *in His Kingdom* before they died.

2. The Triumphal Entry, Mark 11:10.

If Jesus did not want to talk to us about a physical kingdom-coming, He should have steered clear of the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, where the prophet sees Messiah coming into Jerusalem on a donkey, symbolizing the reign of the Kingdom being restored, David’s Throne in power again. And He could have silenced the people when they yelled out, Blessed is the Kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna (save now). Well, it was not to be *now*. It was to be much later. But the statement is clear. His actions, His silence at their conclusions. Remember that this Jesus had spent all these months simply touching people’s individual lives and teaching the ways of the Lord. Suddenly He is marching on the city. The people believed He was the Messiah. And He was. They didn’t know that they would allow Him to die in one week, and that His death and resurrection would expand the Kingdom’s boundaries to the ends of the earth.

3. The Paschal Feast (Lord’s Supper for now) Luke 22:15-18

What made Jesus desire this Passover celebration so much? It seems to be that it points to the time when He shall eat it anew, in His glorified Body, in the Kingdom. Notice He says He is going to drink physically, not just be present to us while we are drinking, which occurs in our simple communion services. You see Jesus eating bread and fish in the resurrection stories, but never sitting down to the Passover meal again. That will be, I surmise, at the great “wedding feast” still in our future. (Revelation 19:7-9)

4. The Kingdom Transfer, Luke 22:29-30.

Whether this happened at the moment or it is prophetic, we know that this action fulfils the promise to the religious Jews that He would take the Kingdom from them and give it to a “nation”, a people, bearing the fruit necessary. The text adds the additional promises of sitting at His table and judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

5. The final words: Acts 1:3,6.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the KINGDOM was still on His mind, and the minds of His followers. Never once is it whisked away by “spiritualizing” it.. They knew He had “given” them the Kingdom, yet they had no revelation about Gentile expansion in the Kingdom . Their natural question was, is it NOW we begin to rule and reign as you promised? You took the Kingdom from the Jewish leadership, and gave it to us. Where is it? Where is our national treasure? But Jesus, as He did to Daniel, has to turn off His disciples, for their timing is wrong. No more questions. It’s not time yet. For now, the Spirit is coming. A new kind of authority, and Power is coming. You are not to be lords now, but witnesses. Tell what you saw, and I will go with you. Nothing military. Yet.

H. The church predicted, and Keys to the Kingdom!

The Kingdom and the Church meet in Matthew 16, showing us they are NOT one and the same, but that they DO overlap in dominion. The Kingdom is in Jesus’ day about to be closed to the Jews, by their own decision. The scribes and Pharisees actually “shut up” the Kingdom of heaven against men (Matthew 23:13). Their hypocrisy and legalism turned people away from God and caused them not to believe Messiah when He appeared. The Gentiles have not yet had the door open to them. But all this is about to change. The fact that Jesus is the CHRIST, and also the SON of the LIVING GOD, is the foundation of a new institution, one that will reach out to Jew and Gentile alike, opening the Kingdom of Heaven to whosoever will. To Peter will be given the keys to this operation. It is of interest that Isaiah 22:22 speaks of the “key” of the House of David, a passage quoted by Jesus to the church at Philadelphia, Revelation 3:7. Jesus holds the key that opens and shuts doors to the Kingdom.

Studying Peter’s ministry in Acts is sufficient for us to understand that the preaching of the Good News of Jesus also opened wide the doors, and established the Church as a Kingdom-builder. The Church became the Headquarters of the Kingdom of God on earth, stirring up faith in Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit resident within.

It is so important to see that the Kingdom was already here and the Church is future in Matthew 16. Jesus builds His Church to open the doors of the Kingdom to Jew and Gentile. When the unsaved enter the Kingdom through this preaching, they are filled with the Spirit and become for now the Church, the called *out*, the invited guests. Yes, and the called *in*, to what? To the Kingdom. To the King. He has not abandoned the Kingdom! Fear not. It is still His desire to give it to us! He is merely in the

peopling stage of that Kingdom. And the Church is the agent for this task, *and this task alone.*

Kingdoms rule. Churches do not. Churches invites. Kingdoms demand. Churches humble themselves. Kingdoms take authority. The Church is a lamb, meek and gentle. Like Jesus when He was here before. The Kingdom is a lion, like Jesus when He will come with the rod.

Never has the Church been called to BE the Kingdom, only to ENTER it, and to open its doors to others to do the same. This is the “nation” that is to bear fruit pleasing to the Father, a task impossible to those without God’s Spirit. Hence, Pentecost.

#### IV THE CHURCH: OPENING THE DOORS to the KINGDOM

##### A. Acts.

What the Church Said and Did. 2:30 .The very first Christian sermon, by the Spirit of God, points to the Kingdom, as Peter declares that Psalm 16 is a clear reference to the reign of Jesus on the Throne of David! Already, says Peter, His resurrection means that He is exalted to be Lord and Christ! 8:12 tells of deacon Philip preaching the things of the Kingdom of God! And the name of Jesus (the King). Brand new Paul in 14:22 exhorts the church by letting them know that entering the Kingdom involves a lot of trouble. Don’t let it get you down. Now, Paul and the others are already in the Spirit phase of things, but they look for trouble to follow them until the glorious Kingdom of Jesus appears. Paul continues Kingdom preaching throughout his life, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, even in custody awaiting death, 28:31.

##### B. Epistles.

What the church is promised:

##### 1.The inheritance! The Kingdom THEN

It is not a new or rare concept. The Pentateuch and early history of Israel are filled with the idea of inheritance. God made a promise to them, and kept it. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all “heirs” of a promise, but the writer of Hebrews ties that promise to the “city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.” And God is the One Who has prepared that city for them, even as Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, Hebrews 11:8-16, and John 14:1-3. See also Deuteronomy 31:7, for the earthly counterpart to the heavenly calling, the land that was the first phase of this Kingdom promise.

By David’s day, but really from the beginning, the term “forever” is attached to this idea, Psalm 37:18, and the whole earth is in view, not just the borders of the Land itself, Psalm 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34, 25:13, 2:8. The heavenly glorious character of this Kingdom are also brought out, by the Spirit-filled Hannah, I Samuel 2:8. See also Psalm 69:36, 82:8.

The prophets chime in. Isaiah sees Israel in an end-time scenario as the Lord’s “inheritance.” (19:25) That which is promised by the Father to the Son, and thence to us. He sees a

hitherto “barren” people *inheriting* the nations! (541-3). This is to be forever (60:19-22). See also 65:9. Zechariah 2:12

Jesus uses the word in Matthew 19:29, 25:34 among other places. It’s in Acts 20:32 and 26:18, where the *inheritance* is among those who are set apart by God. It is ours. It is not a new inheritance, a different one. It is the same envisioned by all men of God of all time.

Hence the writers of the epistles carried on the theme to the end of the New Testament writings. Paul: The unrighteous shall NOT inherit the Kingdom (I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:21 Ephesians 5:5). Neither will flesh and blood. We must be clothed upon with our new bodies to enter that Kingdom in its fullness. Obviously then the full Kingdom glory is future. (I Corinthians 15:50). The whole subject of the grace-given Kingdom Paul calls “the inheritance” in Galatians 3:18, and dates its first mention to the time of Abraham! The Holy Spirit is the “guarantee” of our *inheritance*, the “down payment” as it were. If we have the fullness of the Spirit now, we know that we shall have even greater glory revealed in that day. Being full of the Holy Ghost keeps our eyes on that City! (Ephesians 1:11-18). We are even now partakers of the *inheritance* and the Kingdom, Colossians 1:12-13.

James says (2:5) that God has chosen the poor of this world to be “heirs” of the kingdom. Likewise Peter, I Peter 3:9.

Paul gives the order of events for the coming glorious phase in I Corinthians 15. First Christ rises. Done. Then we rise at His coming. The end, presumably after the 1000-year reign. Jesus reigns until all enemies are put under His feet, including death. It is only after the 1000 years that death is finally finished. The Kingdom is delivered to the Father, and the “eternity” that began 1000 years before with heaven on earth proceeds into territory about which the Scriptures are essentially silent.

To Timothy, Paul adds that the time of His appearing and His Kingdom are the same time, a time when He will judge (I Timothy 4:1).

## 2. The Kingdom NOW

The Kingdom is certainly not all in the future. Romans 14:17. It is to be our life now in the form of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, all to be preferred above food and drink, and the mundane things of this world. Citizenship in the Kingdom is built by love, not force. And, says Paul (I Corinthians 4:20), by God’s Power, not just words. Forgiveness and holiness are to be actual experiences of God’s people, not just nice theories. So the Kingdom now is Jesus in you, and Jesus in the Church, spiritual warfare, winning souls, personal holiness, and the pilgrimage to that City which even Abraham saw a long time ago.

The Kingdom now is a Kingdom of sheep, headed by the Lamb of God who gave Himself for the sins of the world. This Lamb is prominent in the scenes of Revelation. All of this is in clear contrast to the coming Kingdom, a reign of lions, with the Lion of Judah clearly in charge, actually imposing His will on mankind via His co-regent saints, the Church. All the Kingdom stories point to this division.

But the Kingdom now is a true reign, a reign over self by the Spirit, a test run to determine who shall reign over other persons in the coming phase. We are not militant. We bear no carnal weapon. We are harmless as doves. We turn the other cheek. We go the second mile. Who took from this clear description of Jesus the idea that we are to conquer and kill in His Sweet Name?

The Kingdom *now* sees a Throne still very much in Heaven, a Throne of grace for all men, especially those that believe. Hebrews 4:16, 8:1, 12:2. That Throne is described in detail in Revelation 4:2-10. And referred to in Revelation 5. So also in 6:16, 7:9-10.

## V THE KINGDOM COMES TO EARTH.

The DAY of the LORD!

No less than FIFTEEN Bible characters speak of a unique DAY that is to come at the end of this present age. All of their descriptions point to a time that has not begun as yet! They speak of an unrepeatable time, as exceptionally glorious later as it is exceptionally awful at its inception.

1. Isaiah (2:12, 13:6)

The day of the Lord of Hosts shall come...Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand!

2. Jeremiah (30:7)

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it. It is the time of Jacob's trouble...

3. Ezekiel (39:18)

It is coming and it shall be done...This is the day of which I have spoken...

4. Joel (1:15, 2:31)

Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction...the great and terrible day of the Lord.

5. Amos (5:18)

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!

6. Obadiah (v. 15)

The day of the Lord upon all the nations is near.

7. Micah (4:6)

In that day I will assemble the lame...

8. Zephaniah (1:7)

The day of the Lord is at hand, the Lord has prepared a sacrifice.

9. Zechariah (14:1)  
Behold the day of the Lord is coming...
10. Malachi (3:2, 4:1)  
But who can endure the day of His coming? The day is coming, burning like an oven...
11. JESUS (Matthew 10:15, Luke 21:34)  
...day of judgment, take heed, lest that Day come on you unexpectedly...
12. Paul (Romans 2:5, I Corinthians 1:8, II Corinthians 1:14, Philippians 1:6, 10 ; I Thessalonians 5:2, II Thessalonians 2:2, II Timothy 1:18, Hebrews 10:25)  
...day of wrath and revelation, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, the day of the Lord, that Day, the Day.
13. Peter (II Peter 2:9, 3:7-12)  
the day of judgment, the day of the Lord
14. John (I John 4:17, Revelation 6:17, 16:14)  
the day of judgment, the great day of His wrath, great day of God Almighty.
15. Jude (v. 6)  
the judgment of the great Day.

Though no one can call this “day” a 24-hour period, it is a specific time that God’s spirit has indicated to cleanse the earth of its evil, and get it ready for the reign of Jesus Christ.

A. And HOW does that dreadful day begin?

Once more the voices raised are unanimous. According to Daniel (9:24-27) a treaty signed by a certain “prince” in the last days signals a period of seven years, three and one half of which will be the looked-for “tribulation.” A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, Daniel 12:12. Jesus is talking about the same time period in Matthew 24:21. The broken treaty seems to lead to world war. Psalm 2 describes the raging of the nations, and Revelation 19:19 their gathering together to make war against the returning Christ. An invitation is made by God Himself to a great feast of flesh for the birds of Heaven: Ezekiel 39:17 and Revelation 19:17, 18. Then Jesus “touches down”, Zechariah 14: 3ff. Here we see His response to the challenging nations, headed by Satan’s Christ. Jesus returns in glory to the Mt. of Olives. He fights. While Jews run, the enemies are stricken with a force that dissolves their body parts immediately. This latter part of the Tribulation seems to be over in one day.

Mix together Armageddon, the Gog-Magog war (perhaps a part of Armageddon), the “vial judgments” of Revelation”, and this final touchdown, the wrath of God on the Jew first, then all the Gentiles who have come against the Jew, and you have the makings of near-total destruction, said by Jesus to be so close to annihilation as to trigger His return to spare earthlings their final gasps. The combination of horrors is outlined by another strong group of witnesses:

1. Fire.

Psalm 97:3, 5 A fire goes before Him... The mountains melt like wax...Isaiah 24:6, the inhabitants of the earth are burned...34:9, Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone. Its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day. Its smoke shall ascend forever...66:15, The Lord will come with fire...to render...his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the Lord will judge all flesh... Ezekiel 20:47, I will kindle a fire...and it shall devour every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. All flesh shall see that I the Lord, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched...Joel 2:3, a fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns...2:30, I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke... Malachi 4:1, The day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud...will be stubble. The day which is coming shall burn them up... II Thessalonians 1:8, The Lord Jesus [will be] revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God...Revelation 9:17, Out of [the horses'] mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three a third of mankind was killed...18:8, [Babylon] shall be utterly burned with fire.

2. Shaking.

Isaiah 2:19, He arises to shake the earth mightily...24:13, It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree...24:19, The earth is shaken exceedingly...shall reel to and fro like a drunkard...Joel 3:16 The heavens and earth will shake...Haggai 2:6,7, (and explained more fully in Hebrews 12:26) Once more, I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations...The greatest earthquake in all history occurs in Revelation 16:18.

3. Darkness.

Isaiah 24:23, Joel 2:31, 3:15, and Jesus in Matthew 24:29 all mention a darkening of the sun and a subsequent color-change in the moon. What they predict, John actually sees in Revelation 8:12, where one-third of the sun's and moon's output is cut off. Isaiah 60:2, The darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people... Jeremiah 4:23, I beheld the... heavens, they had no light...4:28, the heavens above [will be] black... Joel 2:2, A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains...Amos 5:20, Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?... Zephaniah 1:15, That day is a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness...Zechariah 14:6, In that day there will be no light; the

lights will diminish...Revelation 16:10, [the beast's kingdom] became full of darkness.

4. Desolation.

Isaiah 24:1-7, Behold the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants... The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered... those who dwell on the earth are desolate... few men are left...Jeremiah 4:23-27, The earth was...void, there was no man...the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down...the whole land shall be desolate, yet I will not make a full end...Joel 2:3, The land is like the Garden of Eden before them and behind them a desolate wilderness...Daniel and Jesus both speak of an abomination that makes desolate.(Daniel 11:31, Matthew 24:15) The signal of the beginning of all these desolations is something sitting in the Temple that ought not to be there. Babylon's desolation is graphically portrayed in Jeremiah 50:3 ff and in Revelation 18. (v. 19).

5. Universal Slaughter.

Isaiah 34:1, The indignation of the Lord is against ALL nations...He has given them over to the slaughter...Isaiah 66:16, The Lord will judge ALL flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many...Jeremiah 25:30, The Lord will roar from on high, He will roar mightily against His Fold, He will give a shout against ALL the inhabitants of the earth. A noise will come to the ends of the earth. For the Lord has a controversy with the nations. He will plead His cause with ALL flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword...The slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth...they shall become refuse on the ground...Joel 3:2, 11-12 I will gather ALL nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of my people, My heritage Israel...Assemble and come, ALL you nations, and gather together all around...There I will sit to judge ALL the surrounding nations...Zechariah 12:2-3, 9, I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for ALL peoples...I will seek to destroy ALL the nations that come against Jerusalem...Revelation 19: 15, 20-21, Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword that with it He should strike the nations...He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God...The rest [kings and their armies] were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

6. The days of vengeance.

Isaiah 34:8, For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion...Isaiah 61: 1-2, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me...to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God...Isaiah 63: 3-4, I have trodden the winepress alone...for

the day of vengeance is in My heart...Luke 21:22, these are the days of vengeance, that all things written may be fulfilled.

But the horrid day ends, the new day dawns, the Lord of hosts begins His glorious reign, the desert rejoices, the Lord arises, restoration is the work of the coming centuries, there is great deliverance, the past is forgotten. We shall now discuss the elements of this new day.

B. The 1000 Years.

With everyone talking about a “Millennium”, you would think that the word is sprinkled all over Holy Writ. In fact you will never find it. The prophets describe the age which we later identify as the 1000 years. Jesus ignores such a time frame altogether. Not until Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is there a hint in the New Testament that something comes between our day and the eternal one. In 15:20-28 is his classic delineation of the “resurrections.” Christ is resurrected first. Then come Christ’s people. Then , the “end” when Jesus delivers the “kingdom” (what kingdom?) to the Father. The explanation of *the kingdom* is that time when Jesus shall reign, destroying one enemy after the other, much like David did in His day. David is even associated with this Millennial reign by prophetic greats Jeremiah (30:9) and Ezekiel (34:23-24, 37:24-25). The last enemy to be destroyed is death, and yes, death and dying are part of this final reign(Isaiah 65:20).

But it is not until John, the last Bible writer, in one of his last chapters (Revelation 20:1-7), that the number “1000” is attached to the Kingdom as a time limit. Putting it all together, we have to go back into the text and realize that there is a special time on earth for the reign of Jesus, and an ensuing time for the reign of the Father, on a new earth! This can get so tricky at times that some researchers have preferred to write off a literal millennium altogether. I feel this is dangerous, and sets a man up to be rebuked by the Lord, for even the smallest aberration from the revealed truth will earn such rebukes

C. the Gap.

Knowledge of the 1000 years causes us to go back and insert it into passages we had before considered simple, and which were taught in simplicity to give an overall picture of the truth being communicated. Jesus’ talk of the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation in John 5, must be understood as separated. This style is in keeping with the Old Testament prophets who saw the first and second coming of Christ as nearly one event, hardly mentioning the long church age between. II Peter 3 says that it is in the “day of the Lord” that the heavens pass away, everything is burned up, and we look for a new heavens and earth. There’s 1000 years in that statement. Peter sums it up very neatly. Even Daniel saw that many who “sleep” (bodily) in the dust (souls-spirits are not in the dust!) will awake in that day, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting contempt (12:2). But John, bless his heart, puts those resurrections 1000 years apart!

All the Kingdom parables of Jesus, perhaps including the Gentile gathering of Matthew 25:31-46, with their simple endings of “good” going one direction, and “bad” another, must be taken in the light of a 1000 year reign in between. If the lake of fire is not to be consuming the enemies of

Christ until the second resurrection, we must see these parables as summaries of the fate of the lost, not a road map. Evil shall be punished. Good shall be rewarded. Later. That's what the parables taught. There is even a difference of order in some parables. Matthew 13's tares are burned up (gathered by angels and cast into a furnace of fire) and the righteous then shine. But the good fish of that same chapter are put into vessels first, *then the bad* are thrown away. The rich man seems to be suffering in the flames as soon as he dies, but John would tell us he does not even have a body to do that until the resurrection. Suffering we cannot rule out, but the torment of flames is a physical torment that demands a physical body.

D. Where?

In a classic passage of the return in victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the very place of His "touch-down" is recorded. Zechariah in chapter 14 gives in vivid detail the geography of our future. He says that the day of the Lord is coming. He repeats the oft-spoken theme that all nations will be gathered to battle against Jerusalem. There will be another captivity. After horrific plagues spoken of by other prophets, the Lord Himself descends and His feet touch the very Mt. of Olives where he had ascended so long before. The impact of that landing will split the mount in two, allowing a place for those who need to, to flee. Then there are the signs in the heavens, the river of life is opened, the Lord becomes King over all the earth. But from Jerusalem. At that time, adds Jeremiah (3:17) Jerusalem shall be called "The Throne of the Lord." All the nations shall be gathered to it! They will no longer walk after the stubbornness of their evil heart. The Gentiles will be gathered to the capital city of the earth, the new Jerusalem.

Jesus Himself indirectly mentions this very thing in John 14. He said that He was going to the Father's house to prepare a place for the disciples. Then He promised to come back, and receive them to Himself. Why come back? Why not just call them up? Because, when Jesus comes back, He brings the New Jerusalem with Him, gathering His elect from the four winds as He comes, and all His own are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as He returns.

The New Jerusalem is the logical outcome of the New Covenant, the expanded Israel which takes in whosoever will, Jew and Gentile alike. She is the reigning capital of the New Earth, but will reign over the kingdoms of the world that have real names that we recognize.

The host of Scriptures that point out Jerusalem as the center of this world's future begins with the Psalms (2:6). Yet have I set My King on My holy hill of Zion. The "hill" theme is consistent throughout. See Psalm 24:3 and Revelation 21:12 (on the new earth). The gates of Psalm 24:3 are also found in Revelation 21:12. Psalm 48 mentions the City of our God, and the holy mountain thereof. Psalm 99:9 invites us to worship at His Holy Hill. So Psalm 132:13-14. Then comes Isaiah talking about a "mountain" that shall BE established on TOP of the mountains, to which all nations shall flow. See Isaiah 25:6, 26:1, 35:10, 40:1, 52:1, and 66:12-13.

Then there is Ezekiel who also mentions a holy mountain (20:40 And in 40:2 he himself is taken to a very high mountain, to see the structure of a city and a special “house” inside of it. In 43 he sees the eastern gate, the inner court, the place of God’s Throne “where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.” Now Revelation 21:3, speaking of the new heavens and the new earth, likewise talks of the “tabernacle” or dwelling-place, of God being with man. I believe the same basic city will be visible at both times. I believe Ezekiel’s vision refers to the Millennium because of his mention of a temple, absent in the New Earth’s City, and his insistence on the literal David being present to reign under Christ.

Ezekiel is given a vision of the rest of the “holy land” of those days, roughly the size of David’s old Kingdom, with Jerusalem being 10-12 miles in every direction, according to Revelation. See Ezekiel 47-48.

The Revelation City, like Ezekiel’s, has high walls, 3 gates on each side (Ezekiel 40:6 ff, Revelation 21:12 ) with tribal names (Ezekiel 48:30, Revelation 21:12). There are healing waters and trees. One can imagine the need for the healing of the nations after the pollution of what seems to be a nuclear war on the planet. (Ezekiel 47:1-12, Revelation 22:1-2).

Ezekiel tells us further that the whole area surrounding the mountaintop is HOLY. No foreigners, uncircumcised allowed in, Revelation 21:27. There is a special place for the “prince” and the Lord, Ezekiel 44:1-3, 45:6-8. And for priests, 45:1-5.

Joel adds that Judah abides forever, 3:20, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. The Lord dwells in Zion, 3:21 !

Zechariah (2:10) I am coming. I will dwell in your midst...8:3, I will return to Zion and live in your midst.

It was over Jerusalem that Jesus wept. It was Jerusalem that Jesus entered. This is the place to which Jesus referred in John 14 when He said He was going to prepare a place for His disciples. It was outside Jerusalem that Jesus was crucified. It was Jerusalem where the Spirit of God fell and inaugurated the church of Jesus. This is the city which Abraham sought, the one with foundations built by God (Hebrews 11:10) the city which Jesus went to after His death to prepare for us, the city that shall reign over the Gentile nations of the earth one day, the city that will be transferred to Heaven itself, and descend at last upon a new earth created by God. This is the city to which you have come when you came to Christ- though you have no continuing city here- Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. (Hebrews 12:22, 13:14) We see the city being surrounded by the enemy one last time in Revelation 20:9, then, as the earth flees away, somehow Jerusalem is caught up to be with the Lord, then it descends out of God’s heaven to the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21. As a bride to a bridegroom, after this City and the Kingdom it headquarters is given up to the Father, it is given back to the Son as His eternal bride in this glorious new setting.

Is “New Jerusalem” identifiable by both John and Ezekiel? Ezekiel’s City has a temple, but not John’s. One has day and night, not the other. I believe Jerusalem which is above is the same city throughout, with variations that fit

the situation. Ezekiel saw her in her Millennial Phase. John saw her in her New Earth Phase. Right now she is in her heavenly preparation Phase. But the streets of gold are still there, along with the tree of life, the water of life, and whatever else is needed to make a heavenly city. Both John and Ezekiel saw these features. What a wonderful future is ours!

#### E. New Heavens/New Earth

Peter, (II Peter 3:7, 10-13) talks of how this present earth is reserved for fire, how the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with fervent heat, the earth and its works will be burnt up, the heavens will be totally dissolved, AND a new heavens and earth will replace all of the above! His statement of seeming immediacy has caused me, and I'm sure a few others some puzzlement, as John has later come along, in Revelation, and injected a thousand year reign between the original fire and the actual replacement.. In his narrative it seems that there are a thousand years that must pass before the new heavens and earth can come. People have asked, If all is melted and dissolved on the great day of the Lord, where could the 1000 year reign be held? !

When the New Heavens and New earth appear in chapter 21 and 22, AFTER the thousand years, coupled with the New Jerusalem, it is not quite as easy to believe that John and Isaiah (65) are saying the same thing as Peter and Jesus and the rest: Yes, this earth will be totally judged, and yes, replaced with the new world, as all things become new. But immediately? Well, not necessarily. See the previous discussion (C above) on the 1000 years, and "gaps" in general .

Will the new earth and heaven be recognizable as the present planet? There will be no sea, we know that. But the basic requirements of water and plant life and the like seem to be evident. Perhaps we can liken this distant period to the resurrection of our own bodies, wherein we will be recognized but vastly superior. This total new creation must be seen in contrast to the *renewed* earth of the Millennium, renewed in fact by man with God's power. The earth will recover from its devastation and desolation, at least in part, and will be healed in most every way, getting itself ready for its final presentation to the Father by the Son. Knowledge of this is interesting in the light of the presence of those among us now, even in the church, who are dressing things up for the return of Jesus, not knowing that His next visit is one of unimaginable wrath and fierceness.

In all, not much is said of the final state of mankind. Revelation 21-22, reminding us of portions of Ezekiel and Isaiah, are the most complete descriptions. I say *reminding*, because Ezekiel has the 1000 years in view, with the "prince" David under Christ, an actual temple, real sacrifices, a very Jewish restoration of the nation, which corresponds to the first phase of things. But in describing elements of the city, it becomes obvious that John saw the same city, in its final form, a city that has been lifted from earth before the earth is removed, transported to Heaven, then descending in the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of John's work.

In this final world, there is no more death. Not so in the millennium. Natural life will be greatly extended, but not eternal. Death itself is defeated once and for all and “cast into the lake of fire” only at the end of the 1000 years. Paul had said 30 some years earlier that He must reign until God has put every enemy under His feet. (I Corinthians 15) That is the purpose of that 1000 years. And when it is over, death is finished, along with pain, the temple, the sun, night, closed gates, the curse. Enter nothing but the glory of God, the water and tree of life.

Is the lake of fire still visible, perhaps as a star in the sky, wandering forever on that old earth in the “outer darkness”? Wherever it is, Isaiah 65:24 and Revelation 22:8 seem to say, yes, it will forever remind mankind of the justice of God. It is something God is aware of every minute, His judgment over evil, and He will give His people the grace to live with that constant, also.

I give here several reasons why I believe that the New Heavens and New earth FOLLOW the 1000 years, as opposed to being simultaneous with them, as I believed for a short while, and as many still do.

1. Its mention is in the last two chapters of both Revelation and Isaiah.
2. Isaiah 4:5 says that after the great tribulation is passed, the Lord will create a cloud and smoke by *day* and the shining of a flaming fire by *night*, protect His people (or the Gentile nations?) from storm and rain. Storms and Days and Nights are all a part of the old earth.
3. “logic” . There is a “sabbath rest” for the people of God, Hebrews 4:9. If there will be indeed exactly 6000 years of earth history before Jesus comes, a 1000 year rest-day would be in perfect order to complete that history.
4. The “rebuilding” project. Isaiah 61:4 and 49:8 suggests that people will be preserved to restore the earth after its devastating blow at “Armageddon” and the rest. See also Jeremiah 31:4 and Ezekiel 36:33-37. Desolate land will be tilled. God is here given credit for the restoration, but he uses man.
5. The “burial” project. After Armageddon, there will be seven months of burying the dead. This does not match with the instant recreating of a new earth.
6. If the earth is blown up, where will the people of God go? No mention is made of an off-planet hiding place. Jesus indicates that for the elect’s sake, He returns. The elect are waiting to take over the earth, and he will not disappoint them.
7. If the earth is immediately annihilated and replaced, how does the resurrection take place, the first, and especially the second? These wicked dead have been buried in the earth, and must be raised from that earth 1000 years after Jesus comes, per the apostle John.

#### F.WHO IS THERE?

It may be a shock to some to realize that there are several categories of persons who will be present on that great day of the Lord.

1. First and foremost will be Jesus Himself.

Yes, the Father is always present when Jesus is here, but these 1000 years will be especially the Son's, per I Corinthians 15. Only at the end of this Kingdom does the Son somehow give all to the Father. This is a mystery somewhat beyond us now, but we'll have 1000 years to learn how it will happen.

2. Jesus will be accompanied by the angels

So it says in every passage talking of His coming, Matthew 13:40,41, 24:31, 25:31, I Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 19:17, 20:1.

3. The holy people.

They are not only on the earth, but on the hill, in the City. Psalm 24: 3-6 takes on a new light as we see a literal hill before us, allowed to be ascended by only a literal people with clean hands and a pure heart, the generation of those who seek His face. It brings us to Revelation 21:27, talking of the same city in a new world, telling us that nothing that defiles will ever enter that place, only those who are in the Lamb's Book of Life. These are people that (22:14) do his commandments, and therefore have right to the tree of life, and to enter at will into the City.

This people is called in Isaiah the "daughter of Zion". (62:11,12) And they shall call them the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord, Sought Out, A City Not Forgotten! "The Righteous Nation That Keeps the Truth" is her awesome title in 26:2!

Jesus tells Nicodemus that the way to see the Kingdom of God is to be born again, John 3:3-5. He freely gives the Kingdom to His followers, Jew and Gentile, promises to come back for them in direct statements and parables, John 14:1-6, Matthew 13. In Matthew 24:31, on His way to earth, Jesus gathers His own from the four winds, and Paul adds that while they are being called up they are being changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, thus to be ever with the Lord. I Thessalonians 4. Revelation 19 shows that group of saints now at the earth as an invading army. But whatever their form, they are the "in" crowd, they are the redeemed, who come to Zion with singing, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.

The other "groups" of Revelation deserve some special note, for they are surely City-dwellers. I will pass on trying to identify the four living creatures and the twenty four elders, but there are some purely human groups that come to our attention starting in 6:9-11. If indeed most of Revelation describes the coming tribulation and wrath of God, then these martyrs crying out

after the fifth seal have just been killed by antichrist. These are Christians. They are given a white robe like all the saints of God. They were killed for defending the Word of God, and for their testimony. They are promised that some fellow-servants are going to join them soon, and indeed they do, in the next chapter. In chapter seven, more saints are before the Throne, and given a white robe. Their identification: just came out of the tribulation. Not by rapture. By death. The coming again of Jesus is later in the Book. They are safe now in the city, and will return with Jesus when he comes.

Daniel is told (12:12) that a blessed group of people will “wait and come to the 1335 days.” The end of the tribulation period. These are the ones who make it all the way. They are given special honor for special endurance. Who among us is worthy of this position, we who must have our comforts and our pleasures and our distractions?

Then there are the 144,000. A Jewish remnant. I start the tracing of this group in Isaiah 4:2. In that day the Branch (Jesus) shall be beautiful, the fruit of the earth excellent for those of Israel *who have escaped*. 1:9 talks about how the Lord in His mercy left us a very small remnant. If not, annihilation like Sodom. Isn't that what Jesus said, Except those days be shortened...but for the elect's sake, they shall be shortened. Is the Jewish remnant in mind here? There they are again in 10:20-23: The remnant of Israel will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the Lord. Saved Jews. At the end of all things. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them will return...An escaping remnant is likewise mentioned in 37:32 and 66:19. In that last passage the escapees are sent out to the nations to declare His glory to the Gentiles! They shall actually bring people physically to the City of God in that day! A rescued remnant used to preach for Messiah during the reign.

Micah sees such a people, the remnant of Jacob in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the Lord, like showers in the grass, like a lion among the other animals.

And Zephaniah (3:13) The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness, and speak no lies.

And don't leave out Ezekiel! (6:8-10) Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries. Those of you who escape will remember me among the nations where they are carried captive.

Just Old Testament imagery, not to be taken literally? In Matthew 24:15, Jesus tells those who happen to be living in Judea in that day, to flee! To escape! These are Jews. According to

Revelation 7:1-8, 144,000 Jews are marked out for a special dispensation of grace. Those Jews are, I believe, the same as the “woman” of Revelation 12:6, who flees into the wilderness, where she is protected by God miraculously, in the midst of the tribulation. It is this picture, and not a “rapture,” that corresponds perfectly to the deliverance of Lot, and of Noah in the Old Testament, men who were removed from the *trouble*, but not from the *planet*! We see the re-emergence of the 144,000 in Revelation 14, after the danger is past, safe with the Lord. Special people of God, Jewish. Yes, there is a Gentile elect, and yes, we are all one Body, but it is important to see here that God has not “given up” on the idea called “Israel.” God still has a very Jewish heart. Will grafted-in Gentiles be a part of this 144,000? Let’s wait and see on that one.

How is the group known as the 144,000 different from the rest of the Church? All we can appeal to is the purposes of God. The church in this age is called to suffer and give its life for Christ. The 144,000 is hidden and delivered. Could it be that the reason they are not killed off is because they are not yet saved? That it is in the wilderness that He speaks to His people of their sin, and causes them to love Him and accept Him? So while the church is being called to martyrdom, the 144,000 are called to salvation.

4. What about O T saints?

Are they a part of this first resurrection and this glorious reign in the City. Of course. Theirs was the first call, and those men who grasped and believed the promises of God are the original elect to whom the Kingdom was given. They were not given the Spirit in the measure given to His church, but the promises are theirs. Ezekiel 37:12-14 spells this out: In explanation of the rising of the dry bones, God says, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.

Get ready for it! This is going to be a VERY JEWISH kingdom! Not only will Abraham and Jacob and Moses and Joseph and David be there, but Jesus promised that His own Jewish apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the kingdom! Paul says that Old Testament saints did not receive the promise (Hebrews 11:39, 40) in their day, but only because God was waiting on the rest of us to come in! Don’t rule out the Jew. It is His Kingdom first, then yours. Nevertheless properly grafted Gentiles will be fully operational in that wonderful land of Immanuel. There the King and the Queen rule. The Queen, His bride, is YOU in Christ.

Notice how the “last” (Gentiles) become “first” in receiving the work of the Spirit in its fullness in this church age, while the first (the Jews) will not receive that until they are resurrected.

5. There’s life *outside* the city, too.

There are kings and their kingdoms, for the Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. They will somehow bring glory to the City. This reality demands a closer look and a discernment, to avoid blurring the two entities.

We begin with Daniel who in chapter 2 explains the king’s dream in terms of the nations to follow him, and even their end-time disposition. In 34-35, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have seen a stone cut without hands striking the image of the vision on its feet, representing end time nations. At this time, all the elements of the statue disintegrate. The stone? It becomes a great mountain and fills the world. For at the end of history, a bloody end mind you, the God of heaven sets up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (2:44) It shall break in pieces and consume all these nations. In 7:11-12, Daniel’s angel tells us that after the final kingdom is destroyed (we believe this to be revived Rome ruled by the man of sin) the other kingdoms (the rest of the world, I take it), though their “dominion” is taken away, their “lives” are prolonged. Gentile nations are allowed to enter, sans leadership, into the millennium.

The Father tells the Son (Psalm 2: 6-9) to ask Him, and He will give Him the *nations* for His inheritance, and the ends of the earth for His possession. He is in fact to rule these nations with a rod of iron. That’s why nations of today are warned (2:10-12) to get on God’s good side. Especially should nations be a friend to Israel. Though Israel will be punished by God through Gentile nations who are so disposed to hate her anyway, those nations will in turn be punished for touching her. Since just about every nation hates Israel in our day, the conflagration at the end will be nearly universal.

The mention of the rod of iron lets us know that the Gentile nations, though subservient to Christ, and yes, without Satan’s temptations, as he will be bound for the duration, are still not heart-followers of Jesus. Many of these citizens, we know not how many, yet they are as the “sand of the sea”, will, when once given the Satanic nod at the end of the 1000 years, turn against Christ and be damned forever.

Isaiah has interesting insights about the Gentiles of this day. (56:6-8). The sons (for they shall give birth) of the foreigner (Gentile nation) who joins himself to the Lord, of his own will, will be allowed to come to the “mountain” where Jesus and the

holy people reside. God comments that not only the “outcasts of Israel” but “others” will be gathered to Him in that day. Isaiah 2

The difference in people groups is brought out again in Isaiah 61:5. It is indicated that the “foreigner” will be servant to the people of God, who will be a special “priesthood”. The saved people will eat the riches of the Gentiles. Honor will be given to God’s people. That is why we must never seek it now.

The classic passage in Isaiah 2 is not for us, but for those special Gentiles allowed to live at this time. All nations will flow to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. Many will come and say, let us go up to the house of the Lord. He will teach us. We will walk in His paths. He shall then judge between the nations, and rebuke many people. Notice it is “many” not all. The invitation to come will be ignored even still by some, but these folks will not be in any way a threat to the security of the age. Jesus will rebuke them, and they will straighten up or else! All power will be in Jerusalem. Isaiah later adds in 26:9-14 that when God’s judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Oh yes, there were many other masters in centuries past, even trying to rule in the name of Jesus, but they and their memory are perished.

Out of Jerusalem will be sent those who will go to all the Gentiles and attempt to bring them to the City, Isaiah 66:20. Those who come will fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah 14:16-17, where it says that all who are left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King. And if they do not go up, there will be no rain on their land! Some, it seems, hold out to the end. The Gog-Magog confederation of Ezekiel is perhaps the “northern army” of Joel 2:20. It is this slaughtered army that is being buried for seven months. The remnant is pushed back to a barren and desolate land (as Siberia, for example). Here the hatred for Jesus Christ, it seems, is allowed to fester, and in the very last of days, at the end of the 1000 years, this nation will once more be instrumental in an assault against God’s priorities. (Revelation 20)

Individual nations are outlined in Isaiah 19:18-25, and 27:13. Assyria, that we see as extinct today, will be in “most favored” status in that day, along with Egypt “My people”, though according to Joel 3:19, Egypt will at first be a desolation, along with most of the world. Egypt is differentiated of course in this passage from Israel, “My inheritance.”

These nations will be willingly, for the most part, subservient to the Kingdom people. Psalm 47:3 and 8 foresee a time when God will subdue the peoples under “us”, sitting on His holy throne, reigning over “the nations.” Psalm 48 is a similar picture of the elevated Jerusalem having become the joy, and no longer the burden, of the whole earth, because it is the city of the

Great King. God is in her palaces now. Terrified kings are seen passing by and marveling! So in Psalm 72:11, and in the oft-quoted Psalm 110, where the Lord says to the Lord (Jesus) to rule *in the midst of His enemies!* These are the conquered Gentile nations, whose leaders have already been destroyed. Something like post-war Germany without Hitler. Terrified, conforming. For, vs. 5-6, He shall judge among the nations, and execute the heads of many countries.

Though conquered and serving, Zechariah puts the best face on it when he says in 2:10 and 11 that He is coming to dwell in our midst, and many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day. They shall become My people.

Also, could it be, there are sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, the crop of evil that Satan will use at the end of 1000 years to lead a rebellion against that City, after he goes on a whirlwind campaign around the earth to deceive the nations again! All this in Revelation 20:7-10. (Here dies the theory that says all unbelievers are dead until the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection, and that all the saints are with Christ in Heaven for that 1000 years.)

#### G. Lifestyle:

What will life on earth be like during the millennium? Let's allow several men to give us their vision of things, to add to the picture we have already drawn above.

##### 1. Solomon

(Psalm 72:2ff) tells us of a time of universal righteousness. Justice for the poor. Peace. No oppression. The needy will be delivered by crying out.

##### 2. Isaiah

(2:3) describes a constant flow of people to Jerusalem, all wanting to know the ways of the Lord. No more war. Agriculture will flourish. The house of the Lord the centerpiece of the world. (11:6ff) Rule by the rod. The wicked killed. Animals all get along. Children safe. The earth full of the knowledge of the Lord. (12:12ff) a place of constant praise. (27:6) fruit everywhere, supplied by Israel. (35:4ff) All blind see, all deaf hear, all lame leap, all dumb speak. The Highway of Holiness opened. Everlasting joy for the ransomed of the Lord. No sorrow, not even sighing. (54:13) All children taught BY the Lord. They shall have great peace. (55) Nature in harmony. No briers. (56:7) Burnt offerings restored. God's house a house of prayer for all nations. (60:5ff) The abundance of the sea will be ours, and the wealth of the Gentiles. People come by air and water to bring gifts to God. Thus Jerusalem's gates open day and night. Nations that refuse this honor to the Lord shall perish! Yet no violence in the land, for

matters will be dealt with immediately, quickly. The sun not our light now? A little one shall become a thousand, a new nation. Birth and death shall continue. (62:2) You will be considered “married” not forsaken (a bride adorned for her husband) (66:23ff) weekly and monthly worship, but able also to see a ghastly reminder of what sin will do.

3. Jeremiah

(31:5ff) Israel to be rebuilt, a people of the dance, a people of vines. Abundance. Some of the measurements of that City are mentioned.

4. Ezekiel

(28:25ff) Build houses, plant vineyards, be secure. (34:25ff) Animals tamed, people live in safety. Trees abundant. No longer a prey to the nations. A garden of renown to be there. (36:30ff) No famine. You will loathe yourselves as you remember your evil ways. The ruins shall be rebuilt. I will do it, you will pray to me about it. (39:12) First seven months, burial of Gog a type of employment. (40:38-43) a description of the new city and new temple, and sacrifices there. (43:13-27) the new altar (44:10-31) The new priesthood, as revelation 20:6 mentions that those of the first resurrection will be priests to God! (46:1ff) the Sabbath and the new Moon will be observed, with the other feast days.

5. Joel

(2:26ff) never shame again to the people of God. (3) No aliens pass through Jerusalem again. Much wine, milk, water.

6. Amos

(9:14) Waste cities rebuilt and inhabited. Vineyards, gardens. Never pulled up again.

7. Obadiah

(17) Deliverance and holiness

8. Micah

(2:12ff) So many “sheep” that they will make a loud noise. Led by the Lord and their King. (5) He is great to the ends of the earth. He feeds His flock.

9. Zephaniah

(3:19-20) The lame saved and those driven out, appointed to fame and praise.

10. Zechariah

(6:12) Messiah shall build the Temple. He shall rule on His throne, and be a priest also. Those “far away” shall likewise “build the temple”. (8:4ff) Old and young sit in streets of Jerusalem, very old. The vine and the ground shall prosper. Fasts to be kept at certain times. Inhabitants of one city shall go to another and say, let’s go to pray and seek the Lord! Many strong nations shall come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem! Ten Gentiles of ten nations will grab a Jew and say, let us go with you, for we have heard that God is

with you. (12:10ff) at the beginning, great mourning as Jews realize who they have rejected. (13:1 ff) Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Prophets not accepted. No need to prophesy now that the Lord is here! (14:8ff) living waters flow from Jerusalem. The Lord King over all the earth. Specific geographical note. Nations that came against Israel, remainders shall worship the Lord in person from year to year. No go, no rain! Holiness to the Lord will be the universal theme.

#### H. The Throne(s).

The center of the Kingdom of God has always been the Throne. Psalm 45: 6, Your Throne O God (says the Father to the King, Messiah) is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.

Isaiah says that the government (of this whole world) will be upon the shoulders of the Son Who is the Father. Of the increase of that government and of peace there will be no end upon the Throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it from that time forward even forever.(9:6-7) So the eternal (forward and backward) throne comes to earth, meshing with the Throne of David, and takes its forward thrust into eternity from there.

In Ezekiel 43:7, The Lord says to Ezekiel that the Millennial temple foreseen by the prophet is “the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of Israel forever.”

Daniel 7:9 makes mention of thrones, showing us the uniqueness of the reign of Christ as opposed to the reign of the Father to follow. Perhaps included here is the idea of the “prince”, David, not to mention the twelve thrones of the apostles. A lot of reigning going on in the New City, but no question as to who is in charge, like today!

Zechariah 6:13 mentions the throne of “the Branch,” Zechariah’s code name for Jesus.

Hebrews 8:1 gives us the present situation of the Throne in Heaven, with the Son at the “right hand” of the Father. And in Revelation 3:21 Jesus is sitting down with the Father in His Throne, as we are to sit with the Son in His Throne. (is this the same throne?) Jesus’ Throne is the Throne of David, that covers all things human. Jesus sits on that Throne, the heir apparent of all humanity. But He also sits in the Father’s throne, for He is God and over all things PERIOD. Revelation 7:15 , 8:5, 19:4, 20:11, 21:5-6, 22:1 all refer to the Throne. From chapter 4 of Revelation, The Lamb and the Throne are inseparable. The rule of God through Christ with us is thus well established .

## VI AFTER THE 1000 YEARS

Very little is recorded for us regarding the period after the reign of Christ. We have already seen that God will receive this beautiful product called the Kingdom at the hands of His Son and His Son’s bride. The earth will flee away along with the old “heavens” (Revelation 20:11) There will be no place for them. Then comes the final judgment of all earthlings except those who were raised 1000 years before and have already been reigning. This would include all the

unsaved dead of all time, including the last thousand years, plus the Gentiles still living on earth who have not accepted Christ's terms, and have once more yielded to the wiles of the Devil as he is released. Satan and all his followers are cast into a lake of fire. Is that lake on the old earth? Does it stay there? Is the earth then cast adrift? Would this explain the term "outer darkness" used by Jesus several times, and the "blackness of darkness" used by Jude? However it seems that this lake is visible, even in the new world, according to Isaiah 66 and Revelation 21-22. We'll have to wait and see on this one.

When the planet goes and the judgment is passed, all God's people are in Heaven, and soon descend from that heavenly state to a totally new planet that has no sea, no divisions of persons. This is what John sees in Revelation 21, the final status of the City. It is my belief that the City has been lived in for the thousand years, but is now making a new appearance for the new earth.

## VII IMPLICATIONS

The major heresies of our day can be exposed by a clear understanding of the foregoing pages. Nearly all the aberrant philosophies have as their goal a Kingdom of God NOW, before Jesus returns, and dictated by men's ideas. Rome has long been proving to the world what she does when given the power to do so. By acting in this way she exposes herself as a pagan religion, for authority *now* has always been the driving force of this world's political machines.

Joining her in this day is the liberal church, that is slowly evolving towards Rome, but that has always been more concerned about "injustice" and poverty and race than it has about who sits on the Throne in Jerusalem, Who alone can bring true justice to the world.

Add to this the charismatic offshoots, with their "kingdom now" philosophies, and their utter openness to physical unity. Today the idea of getting together is trumping all other ideas, including sound doctrine, the history of the Protestant martyrs, the sufficiency of the Word of God, the blood of Jesus, the Holiness of God. This much energy will eventually lead to a one-world church, complete with signs and wonders to deceive if it were possible, the very elect. More people are concerned today with a feeling or personal experience than they are with the revelation of Himself that God has given!

Even evangelical groups are joining the madness of forgetting. They blindly join with any group that seems to have evangelism in mind, regardless of whether that evangelism is Biblical or not. Worldwide goals for discipling whole nations and whole neighborhoods and great masses of people conceal the fact that the definitions of evangelism are being changed. No longer is a straight presentation of the Gospel acceptable, for acceptance is the aim, not faithfulness to the Truth. Books of strategies for church growth are everywhere. Games and gimmicks and programs abound. Much activity, even much growth, but the apostasy abounds even more as flesh produces flesh.

Blending in to the mix is the ever-present secular society, headquartered at the United Nations. World Peace may be their visible goal, but world domination must be their method before it is all over. Their sponsorship of the United

Religions movement lets us know how “spiritual” they have become, and how related to Satan’s huge end time scheme.

“Dominion” theology is the word of the hour. More and more Christians will make the world better and better and give us a stronger and stronger voice, more and more power, and...the end of this stream is obvious, and is so clearly removed from Christian thinking as to be preposterous. Jesus calls His Church to be faithful. To pray. To preach. To baptize. To teach. That is all.

Believers need to be on the outlook for “restoration” or “kingdom now” or “dominion” power plays, that make the Christian seem like any other power-seeker of this world. Beware of those who want to “win the world”, “save the world”, “make our influence felt”, “become a mighty church”. All these things are reserved for the Kingdom I have preached to you, revealed painstakingly in many pages of the Scriptures. This worldwide dominion of the Lord is coming. Jesus will make it happen Himself. This mighty church of Jesus will rule the world. When Jesus comes. Our influence will be felt in every neighborhood of this planet. Later. The world will be saved, then replaced! And no man will receive the credit for it.

Meanwhile, go into all your world, preach the good news to every member of creation that you can. Give them an alternative. Offer them forgiveness. If they say yes, get them together and teach them. If they say no, move on. Be faithful unto death, and yours will be the crown of life.