

## STUDY XIV

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Prominence of the Subject--The Character of the Kingdom--The Kingdom During the Gospel Age--False Views Corrected by Paul--Results of False Ideas of the Kingdom--Two Phases of the Kingdom of God--The Spiritual Phase and its Work--The Earthly Phase and its Work--Their Harmonious Operation--The Glory of the Earthly Phase--The Glory of the Heavenly Phase--The Covenant Root from which These Branches Grow--The Earthly Phase of the Kingdom, Israelitish--The Lost Tribes--The Heavenly Jerusalem--Israel a Typical People--Israel's Loss and Recovery--The Elect Classes--The Heirs of the Kingdom --The Iron Rule--An Illustration of the Object of the Millennial Reign--The Kingdom Delivered to the Father--God's Original Design Fully Accomplished.

ANY who have not carefully examined this subject, with concordance and Bible in hand, will be surprised, on doing so, to find its prominence in the Scriptures. The Old Testament abounds with promises and prophecies in which the Kingdom of God and its King, Messiah, figure as the very center. It was the hope of every Israelite (*Luke 3:15*) that as a people God would exalt their nation under Messiah; and when the Lord came to them, it was as their King, to establish the long promised Kingdom of God upon the earth.

John, the forerunner and herald of our Lord Jesus, opened his mission with the announcement, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (*Matt. 3:2*) The Lord commenced his ministry with the same announcement exactly (*Matt. 4:17*); and the apostles were sent forth to preach the same message. (*Matt. 10:7; Luke 9:2*) Not only was the kingdom the topic with which the Lord began his public ministry, but it was really the main topic of all

#### A274

his preaching (*Luke 8:1; 4:43; 19:11*), other subjects being mentioned merely in connection with or in explanation of this one subject. The majority of his parables were either illustrations of the kingdom from various standpoints, and in different features, or else served to point out entire consecration

to God as essential to a share in the kingdom, and to correct the Jewish misapprehension that they were sure of the kingdom because natural children of Abraham, and hence natural heirs to the promises.

Our Lord Jesus in his talks with his followers strengthened and encouraged their expectations of a coming kingdom, saying to them, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging [ruling] the twelve tribes of Israel." (*Luke 22:29,30*) And, again, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (*Luke 12:32*) And when, instead of being crowned and enthroned, their recognized king was crucified, his disciples were sorely disappointed. As two of them expressed it to the supposed stranger on their way to Emmaus after his resurrection, they *had "trusted* that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel"--delivering them from the Roman yoke, and making of Israel the Kingdom of God in power and glory. But they were sadly disappointed by the changes of the few days previous. Then Jesus opened their understanding by showing them from the Scriptures that his *sacrifice* was needful first of all before the kingdom could be established.

*Luke 24:21,25-27*

God could have given to Jesus the dominion of earth without redeeming man; for "The Most High ruleth over the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he pleaseth." (*Dan. 4:32*) But God had a grander design than could have been accomplished by such a plan. Such a kingdom

## **A275**

could have brought blessings which, however good, could have been of only a temporary character, since all of mankind were under condemnation to death. To make the blessings of his kingdom everlasting and complete, the race had first to be ransomed from death and thus legally released from the condemnation which passed upon all in Adam.

That in explaining the prophecies Jesus revived the disciples' hope of a coming kingdom is evident from the fact that afterward, as he was leaving them, they inquired, "Lord, wilt thou at *this time* restore the kingdom to Israel?" His answer, though not explicit, did not contradict their hopes. He said, "It is not for *you* to know the *times and seasons* which the Father hath put in his own power." *Acts 1:6,7*

True, the disciples at first, in common with the entire

Jewish nation, had an imperfect conception of the Kingdom of God in supposing it to be exclusively an earthly kingdom, even as many today err in an opposite direction in supposing it to be exclusively a heavenly kingdom. And many of the parables and dark sayings of our Lord Jesus were intended in due time to correct these misconceptions. But he always held forth the idea of a kingdom, a government, to be established *in the earth* and to rule among men. And he not only inspired in them a hope for a share in the kingdom, but he also taught them to pray for its establishment --"Thy kingdom *come*; thy will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven."

To the worldly-wise among the Jews, our Lord seemed an impostor and fanatic; and they considered his disciples mere dupes. His wisdom and tact, and his miracles, they could not well gainsay, nor reasonably account for; yet, from their standpoint of unbelief, his claim that he was the heir of the world, and would establish the promised kingdom which should rule the world, and that his followers, all

#### **A276**

of them from the humbler walks of life, would be joint-rulers with him in that kingdom, seemed too absurd for consideration. Rome, with its disciplined warriors, its able generals and immense wealth, was the master of the world, and was daily growing more powerful. Who, then, was this Nazarene? and who were these fishermen, without money or influence, and with but a meager following among the common people? Who were these that they should talk about establishing the kingdom long promised to be the grandest and mightiest earth had ever known?

The Pharisees, hoping to expose the supposed weakness of our Lord's claims, and thereby to undeceive his followers, demanded of him--When will this kingdom which you preach begin to make its *appearance*?--when will your soldiers arrive?--when will this Kingdom of God appear? (**Luke 17:20-30**) Our Lord's answer would have given them a new thought had they not been prejudiced against him and blinded by their own supposed wisdom. He answered that his kingdom would never appear in the manner in which they expected it. The kingdom which he preached, and in which he invited his followers to joint-heirship, was an invisible kingdom, and they must not expect to see it. "He answered them, and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with *observation* [outward manifestation]; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for the Kingdom of

God is [to be] in your midst."\* In a word, he showed that when his kingdom should come, it would be everywhere present and everywhere powerful, yet nowhere visible.

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\*The Diaglott and Rotherham's translation render this "among you," which is synonymous with "in your midst." It certainly would agree with no theory to insist that the kingdom which Jesus claimed to be about to establish would be within the hearts of the Pharisees, whom he styled hypocrites and whited sepulchres. But this kingdom, when established, will be "*in the midst of*" or "*among*" all classes, ruling and judging all.

## **A277**

Thus he gave them an idea of the spiritual kingdom which he preached; but they were unprepared and received it not. There was a measure of truth in the Jewish expectation concerning the promised kingdom, which will in due time be realized, as will be shown; but our Lord's reference here is to that spiritual phase of the kingdom, which will be invisible. And as this phase of the kingdom will be *first* set up, its presence will be unseen, and for a time unrecognized. The privilege of heirship in this spiritual phase of the Kingdom of God was the only offer then being made, and has been the one hope of our calling during the entire Gospel age, which then began. Hence Jesus referred to it exclusively. (**Luke 16:16**) This will be more clearly seen as we proceed.

It was probably because of this adverse public sentiment, especially among the Pharisees, that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, being anxious to solve the mystery, yet apparently ashamed to acknowledge publicly that such claims had any weight upon his mind. The conversation between the Lord and Nicodemus (**John 3**), though but partially recorded, gives a somewhat further insight into the character of the Kingdom of God. Evidently the main points of the conversation are mentioned that from these we may readily gather the drift of the whole, which we may reasonably paraphrase as follows:

Nicodemus--"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Yet some of your statements seem very inconsistent to me, and I come to ask an explanation. For instance, you and your disciples go about proclaiming, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"; but you have neither an army, nor wealth, nor influence, and to all appearance this claim is untrue; and in this you seem to be deceiving the people. The Pharisees generally regard you as

## A278

an impostor, but I am sure there must be some truth in your teachings, "for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." The object of my visit is to inquire of what sort, when and whence is this kingdom you proclaim? and when and how is it to be established?

Jesus--Your request to have a full understanding concerning the kingdom of heaven cannot now be answered to your satisfaction; not that I do not know about it fully, but that in your present condition you could not understand or appreciate it, if I would fully explain. "Except a man be *begotten*\* from above, he cannot *see* [Greek, *eidon*,+ know, or be acquainted with] the kingdom of God."

Even my disciples have as yet very indistinct ideas of the character of the kingdom they are proclaiming. I cannot tell them, for the same reason that I cannot tell you; and

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\*The Greek word *gennao* and its derivatives, sometimes translated *begotten* and sometimes *born*, really contains both ideas, and should be translated by either one of these two English words, according to the sense of the passage in which it occurs. The two ideas, begetting and birth, are always in the word, so that if the one is stated, the other is always implied, as birth is the natural consequence of begetting, and begetting the natural antecedent to birth. When the active agent with which *gennao* is associated is a male, it should be translated *begotten*; when a female, *born*. Thus in **1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,18**, *gennao* should be *begotten*, because God (masculine) is the active agent.

Sometimes, however, the translation is dependent on the nature of the act, whether masculine or feminine. Thus used in conjunction with *ek*, signifying *from* or *out of*, it should be translated *born*. So in **John 3:5,6**, *gennao* should be translated *born*, as indicated by the word *ek*--"out of water," "out of flesh," "out of spirit."

+This same Greek word is translated *consider* in **Acts 15:6**. "The apostles and elders came together for to *consider* [know or understand] this matter." The same word is rendered *behold* in **Rom. 11:22**. "*Behold* [consider, understand] therefore, the goodness and severity of God"; also in **1 John 3:1**--"*Behold* [consider, know, understand] what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us."

## A279

they could not understand, for the same reason. But, Nicodemus, one peculiarity of God's dealings is that he requires obedience to the light already possessed before more light is

given; and in the selection of those who shall be accounted worthy to share the kingdom, a manifestation of faith is required. They must be such as are willing to follow God's leading, step by step, often seeing only the one advance step clearly. They walk by faith and not by sight.

Nicodemus--But I do not understand you. What do you mean? "How can a man be begotten when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Or do you mean that the repentance preached by "John the Immerser," and signified by baptism in water, is somehow a symbolic *birth*? I notice that your disciples preach and baptize similarly. Is this the new birth necessary to those who would see or enter your kingdom?

Jesus--Our nation is a consecrated nation, a covenant people. They were all baptized into Moses in the sea and in the cloud when they left Egypt. God accepted them in Moses, the mediator of their covenant, at Sinai; but they have forgotten their covenant, some are openly living as publicans and sinners, and many others are self-righteous hypocrites; hence John's preaching and that of my disciples is *repentance*--a return to God and to a recognition of the covenant made; and the baptism of John signifies this repentance and reformation of heart and life, and *not the new birth*. But unless you have more than this you will never see the Kingdom. Except in addition to the reformation symbolized by John's baptism you receive a begetting and birth of the spirit, you cannot see my Kingdom. Repentance will bring you back to a justified condition; in that condition you will be able readily to recognize me as Messiah, the antitype of Moses; and thus consecrating to me you will be *begotten*

## **A280**

of the Father to a new life and the divine nature, which, if it develop and become quickened, will insure your being *born* a new creature, a spirit being, in the first resurrection; and as such you shall not only see but share the Kingdom.

The change to be wrought by this new birth of the Spirit is truly great, Nicodemus; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Wonder not, then, at my first statement, that you must be *begotten* from above ere you can understand, know and appreciate the things of which you inquire. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The difference between your present condition, born of the flesh, and the condition of those born of the Spirit, who shall enter into or constitute

the kingdom I am preaching, is very great. Let me give you an illustration by which you will gain some idea of the beings who, when born of the Spirit, will constitute this kingdom: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth--so is every one that is born of the Spirit." As the wind blows here and there, you cannot see it, though it exerts an influence all about you. You know not whence it comes nor where it goes. This is as good an illustration as I can give you of those born of the Spirit in the resurrection, those who will "enter into" or constitute the Kingdom which I am now preaching. They will all be as invisible as the wind, and men, not born of the Spirit, will neither know whence they came nor whither they go.

Nicodemus--How can this be?--invisible beings!

Jesus--"Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"--that spirit beings can be present, yet invisible? Have you, who attempt to teach others, never read about Elisha and his servant, or about Balaam's ass? and

#### **A281**

the many instances in the Scriptures which illustrate this principle, that spirit beings can be present among men, yet invisible? Furthermore, you are of the Pharisees, who professedly believe in angels as spirit beings. But this illustrates what I told you at first: Except a man be begotten from above, he cannot see [know, become acquainted with, or understand as reasonable] the Kingdom of God and the various things connected with it.

If you would enter into and become a joint-heir with me of that kingdom which I am announcing, you must follow the light, step by step. As you do so, more light will come, and this as rapidly as you will be prepared for it. I have been preaching these things now due which you can understand, and performing miracles, and you acknowledge me to be a teacher come from God, but you have not acted out your faith and openly become my disciple and follower. You must not expect to see more, until you live up to all you do see; then God will give you more light and evidence for the next step. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that *we do know*, and testify that we have seen, and ye [Pharisees] receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" It would be useless for me to attempt to tell you of heavenly things, for you would not be convinced and my preaching would seem the more foolish to you. If what I

have taught, which has been of an earthly character, or illustrated by earthly things, which you could and do understand, has not brought conviction enough to your mind to lead you openly to become my disciple and follower, it would be no more convincing to you if I were to tell you of heavenly things, of which you know nothing; for no man has ever ascended into heaven, hence none could corroborate my testimony. I, who descended from heaven, alone

## A282

understand heavenly things. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man."\* A knowledge of the heavenly things can be received only after the begetting of the Spirit; and the heavenly things themselves, when born of the spirit, spirit beings.

Thus it required patience on the Lord's part, in declaring the nature of the kingdom to those whose prejudices and education hindered their seeing anything except distorted views of the earthly phase of it. Nevertheless the selection of a proper class to share Messiah's kingdom proceeded, though but a few were selected from Israel, to whom exclusively it was offered for seven years. As God had foreseen, through their unreadiness for it, and their failure to grasp and comply with the conditions presented, the privilege of sharing in Messiah's kingdom passed from them as a people, only a remnant of whom received it, and came to the Gentiles to take out of them also "a people for his name." And among these also only a remnant, a "little flock," appreciate the privilege and are counted worthy of joint-heirship in his kingdom and glory.

Serious has been the error introduced into the nominal Christian Church, which misinterprets this promised kingdom to mean merely the Church nominal in its present condition, and its work merely a work of grace in the hearts of believers; and to such an extreme has this error been carried that the present unholy alliance and reign of the Church nominal with the world is believed by many to be the reign of the Kingdom of God on the earth. True, there is a sense in which the Church is now the Kingdom of God, and a work of grace is now going on in the hearts of believers; but to consider this all, and to deny a veritable future Kingdom

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\*The words "*which is in heaven*" (**verse 13**) are not found in the most ancient and reliable MSS.

## A283

of God yet to be established under the whole heavens, in which the will of God will be done as it is in heaven, is to make void and meaningless the strongest and most pointed promises recorded by our Lord and the apostles and prophets, for our encouragement and help in overcoming the world.

In the parables of our Lord, the Church is frequently called the kingdom; and the Apostle speaks of it as the kingdom over which Christ now reigns, saying that God hath translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. We who accept of Christ now recognize his purchased right of dominion, and render him grateful and voluntary obedience before he forcibly establishes it in the world. We recognize the difference between the laws of righteousness, which he will enforce, and the kingdom of darkness supported by the usurper, at present the prince of this world. Faith in God's promises thus changes our allegiance, and we reckon ourselves subjects of the new prince, and, by his favor, joint-heirs with him in that kingdom yet to be set up in power and great glory.

But this fact by no means disannuls the promises that ultimately Christ's kingdom shall be "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (*Psa. 72:8*); that all nations shall serve and obey him; and that unto him every knee shall bow, of things both in heaven and on earth. (*Dan. 7:27; Phil. 2:10*) Rather, on the contrary, the selection now of the "little flock" confirms those promises.

When the parables of our Lord are carefully examined, it will be found that they clearly teach that the coming or setting up of the Kingdom of God in power is future; and, as a matter of course, not until the King comes. Thus the parable of the young nobleman going into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return, etc. (*Luke 19:11-15*), clearly locates the establishment of the Kingdom at the return of

## A284

Christ. And the message sent by the Lord to the Church long years afterward was, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (*Rev. 2:10*) From this it is evident that the kings who will reign with him will not be crowned nor reign as kings in *this* life.

The Church at present, therefore, is not the Kingdom of God set up in power and glory, but in its incipient, embryo condition. And so, indeed, all the expressions of the New

Testament with reference to it teach. The kingdom of heaven now suffers violence at the hands of the world; the King was maltreated and crucified; and whosoever will follow in his footsteps shall suffer persecution and violence in some form. This, it will be observed, is true only of the *real* Church, and not of the nominal one. But the promise is held out that if now we (the Church, the embryo kingdom) suffer with Christ, we also, in due time, when he takes to himself his great power and reigns, shall be glorified and shall reign with him.

**James (2:5)**, in harmony with our Lord's teaching, tells us that God has chosen the poor and despised according to this world's standards, not to reign now, but as "*heirs* of the kingdom which he hath *promised*." The Lord says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." (**Mark 10:23**) It is evident that he does not mean the nominal Church, which is now reigning with the world; for the rich are pressed into it. Peter exhorts the heirs of the kingdom to patience, perseverance, virtue and faith, saying: "Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

#### **2 Peter 1:10,11**

Paul's statement in **Romans 14:17** is supposed by some to refer to a *figurative* kingdom; but when examined in the light of the context, it is evident that the passage means

#### **A285**

simply this: We, brethren, translated now into the kingdom of God's dear Son, have certain liberties as to our food, etc., which we had not as Jews under the law (**verse 14**); yet let us rather not use this liberty if it cause brethren who do not yet realize it to stumble and violate their consciences. Let us not, by our liberty as to our food, ruin our brother for whom Christ died; but let us remember that the privileges of the kingdom, both now and in the future, consist of much greater blessings than liberty as to food; namely, in our liberty as to right-doing, our peace toward God through Christ, and our joy in participating in the holy Spirit of God. These liberties of the kingdom (now and ever) are so great that the minor liberty as to food may well be sacrificed, for the present, for our brother's good.

Thus, no matter from what scripture standpoint we look, the idea that the kingdom promises are mythical deceptions,

or that our present conditions fulfil these promises, is contradicted.

With the early Church, the promises of kingdom honor and joint-heirship with the Master were strong incentives to faithfulness under present trials and persecutions, which they had been forewarned to expect; and in all the words of comfort and encouragement in the Apocalypse, given to the seven churches, none shine out more clearly and forcibly than those which declare, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne"; and, "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations."

These are promises which could not reasonably be misconstrued to apply to a present work of grace in the heart, nor yet to a reign over the nations in the present life; since they who would overcome must do so by *death* in the service, and thus gain the kingdom honors. **Rev. 20:6**

#### **A286**

But human nature seeks to avoid suffering and is ever ready to grasp honor and power; hence we find that even in the apostles' day some in the Church were disposed to appropriate the promises of future honor and power to the present life, and were beginning to act as though they thought the time had already come for the world to honor and even to obey the Church. The Apostle Paul writes, correcting this error, knowing that such ideas would have an injurious effect upon the Church by cultivating pride and leading away from sacrifice. He says to them, ironically, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich; ye have reigned as kings without us." And then he adds, earnestly, "I would to God ye did reign, that we [persecuted apostles] also might reign with you." (**1 Cor. 4:8**) They were enjoying their Christianity by trying to get out of it and with it as much honor as possible; and the Apostle well knew that if they were *faithful* as followers of the Lord they would be in no such condition. Hence he reminds them that if indeed the long-looked-for reign had begun, *he* also would be reigning no less than they, and of the fact that he by faithfulness was a sufferer for the truth's sake, which was a proof that *their reign* was premature, and a snare rather than a glory. Then, with a touch of irony, he adds, "We [apostles and faithful servants] are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised." I do not write these things merely to shame you:

I have a better and a nobler object--TO WARN YOU; for the path of present honor leads not to the glory and honor *to be* revealed; but present suffering and self-denial are the narrow path to glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship in the kingdom. Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye *followers of me*. Suffer and be reviled and persecuted now, that you may share with me the crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at *that day*; and not to me only,

**A287**

but unto all those that love his appearing. *1 Cor. 4:10-17*;  
*2 Tim. 4:8*

But, after a great deal of persecution had been faithfully endured by the early Church, theories began to spread to the effect that the mission of the Church was to conquer the world, establish the kingdom of heaven on earth and reign over the nations *before* the Lord's second advent. This laid the foundation for worldly intrigue, pomp and pride, ostentatious show and ceremony in the Church, which was designed to impress, captivate and overawe the world, and which led step by step to the great claims of Papacy that as God's kingdom on earth it had a right to command the respect and obedience to its laws and officers of every kindred, nation, and people. Under this false claim (and they seemingly deceived themselves as well as others) Papacy for a time crowned and uncrowned the kings of Europe, and still claims the authority which it is now unable to enforce.

The same idea through Papacy has come down to Protestantism, which also claims, though more vaguely, that somehow the *reign* of the Church is in progress; and like the Corinthians its adherents are "full" and "rich," and reign "as kings," as graphically described by our Lord. (*Rev. 3:17,18*) Thus it has come to pass that the merely nominal members of the Church--those not really converted, not really wheat, but tares, mere imitations of the wheat--far outnumber the true disciples of Christ. And these are much opposed to every real sacrifice and self-denial, do not suffer persecution for righteousness' [truth's] sake, and at most hold to only a form of fastings, etc., instead. They are really reigning with the world and are not in the line of preparation for sharing in the real kingdom which is to be set up by our Lord at his second presence.

To any careful observer, there is a manifest incongruity between this view and the teaching of Jesus and the

A288

apostles. They taught that there can be no kingdom until the King comes. (*Rev. 20:6; 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:12*) Consequently the kingdom of heaven must suffer violence *until* that time, when it shall be set up in glory and power.

### Two Phases of the Kingdom of God

While it is true, as stated by our Lord, that the Kingdom of God *cometh not*--does not make its first appearance--with outward show, in due time it is to be made manifest to all by outward, visible and unmistakable signs. When fully set up, the Kingdom of God will be of two parts, a spiritual or heavenly phase and an earthly or human phase. The spiritual will always be invisible to men, as those composing it will be of the divine, spiritual nature, which no man hath seen nor can see (*1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18*); yet its presence and power will be mightily manifested, chiefly through its human representatives, who will constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God.

Those who will constitute the spiritual phase of the kingdom are the overcoming saints of the Gospel age--the Christ, head and body--glorified. Their resurrection and exaltation to power precedes that of all others, because through this class all others are to be blessed. (*Heb. 11:39,40*) Theirs is the *first resurrection*. (*Rev. 20:5\**) The great work before this glorious anointed company--the Christ--

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\*In this verse the words "*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*" are spurious. They are not found in the oldest and most reliable Greek MSS, the Sinaitic, Vatican Nos. 1209 and 1160, nor the Syriac MS. We must remember that many passages found in the modern copies are *additions* which do not properly belong to the Bible. Since commanded not to add to the Word of God, it is our duty to repudiate such additions as soon as their spurious character is established. The words indicated probably crept into the text by accident, in the fifth century; for no MS of earlier date (either Greek or Syriac) contains this clause. It was probably at first merely a *marginal comment* made by a reader, expressive

A289

necessitates their exaltation to the divine nature: no other than divine power could accomplish it. Theirs is a work pertaining not only to this world, but to all things *in*

*heaven and in earth*--among spiritual as well as among human beings. *Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:10; 1 Cor. 6:3*

The work of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God will be confined to this world and to humanity. And those so highly honored as to have a share in it will be the most exalted and honored of God among men. These are the class referred to in Chapter VIII (A145), whose judgment

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of his thought upon the text, and copied into the body of the text by some subsequent transcriber who failed to distinguish between the text and the comment.

However, the repudiation of this clause is not essential to the "Plan" as herein set forth; for the rest of the dead--the world at large--will not *live* again in the full sense, in the perfect sense that Adam *lived* before he sinned and came under the sentence "*dying* thou shalt die." Perfect life without weakness or dying is the only sense in which God recognizes the word *life*. From his standpoint all the world has already lost life, is dying, and might now be more properly described as *dead* than as *alive*.  
*2 Cor. 5:14; Matt. 8:22*

The word *resurrection* (Greek, *anastasis*) signifies *raising up*. As related to man, it signifies *raising up* man to that condition from which he fell, to full perfection of manhood--the thing lost through Adam. The perfection *from which* our race fell is the perfection *to which* they will gradually rise, during the Millennial age of restitution or resurrection (raising up). The Millennial age is not only the age of trial, but also the age of blessing, and through resurrection or restitution to *life* all that *was lost* is to be restored to all who, when they know and have opportunity, gladly obey. The process of resurrection will be a gradual one, requiring the entire age for its full accomplishment; though the mere awakening to a measure of life and consciousness, as at present enjoyed, will of course be a momentary work. Consequently it will not be until the thousand years are finished that the race will have fully attained the complete measure of life lost in Adam. And since anything short of perfect life is a condition of partial death, it follows that, although the above words are no part of the inspired record, it would be strictly true to say that the rest of *the dead* *will not live* again (will not regain the fulness of life lost) until the thousand years of restitution and blessing are complete.

## **A290**

day was previous to the Gospel age. Having been tried and found faithful, in the awakening they will not be brought forth to judgment again, but will at once receive the reward of their faithfulness--an instantaneous resurrection to perfection as *men*. (Others than these and the spiritual class will be *gradually* raised to perfection during that

Millennial age.) Thus this class will be ready at once for the great work before it as the human agents of the Christ in restoring and blessing the remainder of mankind. As the spiritual nature is necessary to the accomplishment of the work of Christ, so perfect human nature is appropriate for the future accomplishment of the work to be done among men. These will minister among and be seen of men, while the glory of their perfection will be a constant example and an incentive to other men to strive to attain the same perfection. And that these ancient worthies will be in the human phase of the kingdom and seen of mankind is fully attested by Jesus' words to the unbelieving Jews who were rejecting him. He said, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God." It should be noticed also, that the Master does not mention that he or the apostles will be visible with Abraham. As a matter of fact, men will see and mingle with the earthly phase of the kingdom, but not with the spiritual; and some will, no doubt, be sorely vexed to find that they rejected so great an honor.

We are not given explicit information as to the exact manner in which these two phases of the heavenly kingdom will harmoniously operate; but we have an illustration of the manner in which they *may* operate, in God's dealings with Israel through their representatives, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, the prophets, etc.--though the coming manifestations of divine power will far exceed those of that typical

## **A291**

age; for the work of the coming age comprises the awakening of all the dead and the restoration of *the obedient* to perfection. This work will necessitate the establishment of a perfect government among men, with perfect men in positions of control, that they may rightly order the affairs of state. It will necessitate the appointment of proper educational facilities of every character, as well as philanthropic measures of various kinds. And this noble work of thus elevating the race by sure and steady steps (under the direction of the unseen spiritual members of the same kingdom) is the high honor to which the ancient worthies are appointed, and for which they will come forth prepared soon after the final wreck of the kingdoms of this world and the binding of Satan, their prince. And as the divinely honored representatives of the heavenly kingdom, they will soon receive the honor and cooperation of all men.

To gain a place in the earthly phase of the kingdom of

God will be to find the gratification of every desire and ambition of the perfect human heart. It will be a glorious and satisfying portion from the first entrance into it, and yet the glory will accumulate as time advances and the blessed work progresses. And when, at the end of a thousand years, the great work of restitution is accomplished by the Christ (in great measure through the agency of these noble human co-workers); when the whole human race (except the incorrigible --*Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:9*) stands approved, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, in the presence of Jehovah, these who were instrumental in the work will shine among their fellowmen and before God and Christ and the angels, as "the stars forever and ever." (*Dan. 12:3*) Their work and labor of love will never be forgotten by their grateful fellowmen. They will be held in everlasting remembrance. *Psa. 112:6*

## **A292**

But great as will be the accumulating glory of those perfect men who will constitute the earthly phase of the kingdom, the glory of the heavenly will be the glory that excelleth. While the former will shine as the stars forever, the latter will shine as the brightness of the firmament--as the sun. (*Dan. 12:3*) The honors of heaven as well as of earth shall be laid at the feet of the Christ. The human mind can approximate, but cannot clearly conceive, the glory to be revealed in the Christ through the countless ages of eternity. *Rom. 8:18; Eph. 2:7-12*

It is through these two phases of the kingdom that the promise to Abraham is to be verified--"In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "Thy seed shall be as the sand of the sea, *and* as the stars of heaven"--an earthly and a heavenly seed, both God's instruments of blessing to the world. Both phases of the promises were clearly seen and intended by God from the beginning, but only the earthly was seen by Abraham. And though God selected from the natural seed the chief of the spiritual class (the apostles and others), and proffered the chief blessing, the spiritual, to all of that nation living in the due time for that heavenly call, this was just so much beyond what Abraham ever saw in the covenant--favor upon favor.

Paul (*Rom. 11:17*) speaks of the Abrahamic covenant as a root out of which fleshly Israel grew *naturally*, but into which the Gentile believers were *grafted* when the natural branches were cut off because of unbelief. This proves the double fulfilment of the promise in the development of the

*two seeds*, earthly (human) and heavenly (spiritual), which will constitute the two phases of the kingdom. This root-covenant bears these two distinct kinds of branches, each of which in the resurrection will bear its own distinct kind of perfect fruitage--the human and spiritual classes in kingdom power. In order of development it was first the natural

#### **A293**

(earthly), afterward the heavenly rulers; but in order of grandeur of position and time of instalment, it will be first the spiritual, afterward the natural; and so there are last which shall be first, and first which shall be last. ***Matt. 19:30; Luke 16:16***

The promise made to Abraham, to which Stephen refers (***Acts 7:5***), and in which Israel trusted, was earthly: it related to the *land*. God "promised that he would give it to him for a possession," said Stephen. And God said to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the *land* which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (***Gen. 13:14-17***) Stephen shows that this promise *must yet* be fulfilled; for he declares that God gave Abraham "none inheritance in it [in the land], no, not so much as to set his foot on."

The Apostle, writing of this same class of ancient worthies --Abraham among others--agrees with Stephen's statement that the promise to Abraham has not yet been fulfilled; and he goes further and shows that those earthly promises cannot and will not be fulfilled until the still higher heavenly promises concerning the Christ (Head and body) are fulfilled. He says of them: These all died in faith, not [i.e., without] having received [the fulfilment of] the promise, God having provided some better thing for us [the Christ], that *they* without *us* should not be made perfect. (***Heb. 11:13,39,40***) Thus is shown again that the Redeemer and Restorer is spiritual, having given up the human a sacrifice for all, and that from this spiritual class when highly exalted all blessings must proceed, whoever

#### **A294**

may be honored as its instruments or agents. ***Rom. 12:1;***

**Gal. 3:29**

The earthly phase of the kingdom is thus seen to be Israelitish; and around this fact cluster those many prophecies which relate to the prominence of that nation in God's plan for the future blessing of the world, when their tabernacle, fallen in the dust, shall be restored, and Jerusalem shall be a praise in the whole earth. We find statements by both prophets and apostles which clearly indicate that in the times of restitution Israel as a nation will be the first among the nations to come into harmony with the new order of things; that the earthly Jerusalem will be rebuilt upon her old heaps; and that their polity will be restored as in the beginning under princes or judges. (*Isa. 1:26; Psa. 45:16; Jer. 30:18*) And what could be more reasonably expected than that Israel should first of all rejoice to recognize the prophets and patriarchs? and that their acquaintance with and long discipline under the law should have prepared them for tractability and obedience under the authority of the kingdom? And while Israel will be the first of the nations to be recognized and blessed, it is written also of Israel that "The Lord shall save the tents of Judah first."

We do not deem it of importance to enter into a discussion as to where the "lost tribes" of Israel are to be sought. It may or may not be true, as some claim, that those "lost tribes" are traceable to certain civilized nations of the present day. But though some of the suggested proofs are not unreasonable, yet, as a whole, it is largely inference and guess-work. But should it yet be clearly demonstrated that some of the civilized nations are descendants of the lost tribes, it would prove *no advantage* to them under the "heavenly" "high calling," which, since their national rejection, knows no difference between Jew and Greek, bond and free. Should such evidence ever become

**A295**

clear (which as yet it is not), it would be in perfect harmony with the prophecies and promises relating to that nation yet awaiting fulfilment in and under the earthly phase of the kingdom.

Natural attachment, as well as a still surviving measure of trust in the long unfulfilled promises, and all their natural prejudices, will be favorable to Israel's general and speedy acceptance of the new rulers; while their habits of measurable obedience to the law will also be favorable to their speedy harmony with the principles of the new government.

As Jerusalem was the seat of empire under the typical Kingdom of God, it will again occupy the same position, and be "the city of the Great King." (*Psa. 48:2; Matt. 5:35*) A city is a symbol of a kingdom or dominion, and so God's Kingdom is symbolized by the New Jerusalem, the new dominion coming from heaven to earth. At first it will consist of only the spiritual class, the Bride of Christ, which, as seen by John, will gradually come down to earth; that is, it will gradually come into power as the present empires break in pieces, during the Day of the Lord. In due time, however, the earthly phase of this city or government will be established, parts or members of which will be the ancient worthies. There will not be two cities (governments), but one city, one heavenly government, the one for which Abraham looked, "a city which hath foundations"--a government established in righteousness, being founded upon the sure rock foundation of the righteousness of Christ the Redeemer, the value of man's ransom which he gave, and the firmness of divine justice, which can no more condemn the redeemed than it could previously excuse the guilty.

***Rom. 8:31-34; 1 Cor. 3:11***

Glorious City of Peace! whose walls signify salvation, protection and blessing to all who enter it, whose foundations

## **A296**

laid in justice can never be moved, and whose builder and designer is God! It is in the light which will shine from this glorious city (kingdom) of God that the nations (people) will walk on the highway of holiness, up to perfection and to full harmony with God. ***Rev. 21:24\****

When mankind reaches perfection at the close of the Millennial age, as already shown, they will be admitted into membership in the Kingdom of God and given the entire control of earth as at first designed--each man a sovereign, a king. This is clearly shown in the symbolic prophecy of John (***Rev. 21:24-26***); for in vision he not only saw the people walk in the light of it, but he saw the *kings* enter it in glory; yet none could enter who would defile it. None can become identified with that city (kingdom) who has not first been thoroughly tested; none who would work, or love to work, deceit and unrighteousness; only those whom the Lamb will write as worthy of life everlasting, and to whom he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

It should be remembered, then, that though undoubtedly the literal city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and though

probably it will become the capital of the world, yet many prophecies which mention Jerusalem and its future glories refer, under that as a symbol, to the Kingdom of God to be established in great splendor.

Concerning the future glory of the earthly phase of the kingdom as represented in Jerusalem, the prophets speak in glowing terms, saying: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted

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\*The following words are omitted from this verse by the most authentic ancient manuscripts, viz., "*of them which are saved,*" also "*and honor.*" The latter words are also lacking from **verse 26**.

## **A297**

his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her,...that ye may be delighted with the abundance of her glory; for saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered unto it." "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion [the spiritual phase] shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"--the earthly phase.

**Isa. 52:9; 65:18; 66:10-12; Jer. 3:17; Isa. 2:3**

When considering the many precious promises of future blessing made to Israel, and expecting an accurate fulfilment of them to that people, it is proper that we should remember that as a people they are typical, as well as actual.

In one aspect they are typical of the whole world of mankind; and their Law Covenant, of obedience and life, was typical of the New Covenant to be established with the world during the Millennial and future ages.

The blood of atonement under their typical covenant, and the priesthood which applied it to that nation, typified the blood of the New Covenant and the Royal Priesthood which will, during the Millennium, apply its cleansings and blessings to the whole world. Thus their priesthood typified the Christ, and that nation typified all for whom the real sacrifice was made, and to whom the real blessings will come--"every man," "the whole world."

Then let us remember that though the future blessings, like the past, will be to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile,

it will be in the matter of time only that the Jews will have the precedence to divine favor; and this we have shown would be a natural consequence of their training under the

#### **A298**

Law, which in due time will serve its purpose to bring them to Christ. Though it brought only a remnant of them at the first advent, it will bring them as a people at the second advent, and as a people they will be a first-fruit among the nations. Ultimately every blessing promised to Israel, except those pertaining to the elected classes, will have, not only its actual fulfilment in that people, but also its antitypical fulfilment in all the families of the earth. Under that government "God will render to every man according to his deeds--glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." **Rom. 2:6,10,11**

The Apostle Paul calls our attention specially to the sureness of God's promises to Israel in the future, and shows what favors they lost by unbelief, and what favors are still sure. He says that it was because of pride, hardness of heart and unbelief that Israel as a people had *not obtained* that for which they sought--the chief place in divine favor and service. Paul's reference here is not to all the generations of Israel, from Abraham down, but to those generations living at the time of the first advent; and his words would apply to all their generations which have lived during the Gospel age, the age wherein the chief favor has been offered--the high calling to the divine nature and joint-heirship with Jesus. This favor Israel as a people has failed to recognize and lay hold of. And though God visited the Gentiles and called many of them through the gospel, they, like fleshly Israel, will fail to obtain the heavenly prize. Nevertheless, a class, a remnant, a little flock from among all the called ones, heeds the call, and, by obedience and self-sacrifice, makes its calling and election sure. Thus what Israel as a people failed to obtain, and what the nominal Christian Church also fails to obtain, is given to the elect or selected class, the faithful--"body of Christ"--elect or chosen (according

#### **A299**

to the foreknowledge of God) through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. **2 Thess. 2:13;**  
**1 Pet. 1:2**

But though, through the rejection of Messiah, Israel did

lose all this special favor, yet Paul shows that this did not prove them entirely cut off from favor; for they still had the same privilege of being grafted into Christ and the spiritual favors which the rest of mankind enjoyed, if, during the time that call was being made, they accepted in faith; for, argues Paul, God is as able to graft them in again as to graft in wild branches, and as willing, if they continue not in unbelief.

**Rom. 11:23,24**

Moreover, Paul argues that though Israel lost the chief blessing, "which he seeketh for," the chief place in God's kingdom, yet it remains that great promises are still due to be fulfilled toward that people; for, he reasons, God's gifts, callings, covenants and promises are not to be turned aside unfulfilled. God knew the end from the beginning; he knew that Israel would reject Messiah; and his unequivocal promises to them in view of this knowledge give us assurance that Israel is yet to be used of the Lord in service, as his agency in blessing the world, though "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for"--the chief favor. Paul then proceeds to show that God's covenant promises to Israel were of such a nature as to leave it open and indefinite whether as a people they would be the heavenly or the earthly seed--whether they would inherit and fulfil the higher or the lower service mentioned in the promises. God kept secret the higher spiritual favor until due time, and the promises made to them mentioned the earthly favor only, though He favored them by the first offer of the spiritual favors also, and so offered them more than he had ever promised. In a word, the heavenly promises were hidden in the earthly. These promises, says Paul, cannot fail, and the

**A300**

offering of the hidden favor first, and Israel's blind rejection of it, in no way invalidates or disannuls the other feature of the promise. Hence he declares that though Israel as a nation is cast off from favor during the time the Bride of Christ is being selected from both Jews and Gentiles, yet the time will come when, the Deliverer (Christ, Head and body) being complete, divine favor will return to fleshly Israel, and the glorious Deliverer will turn away ungodliness from Jacob,\* and so all Israel will be saved [recovered to favor], as it is written by the prophet. The Apostle's words are:

"Brethren, that you may not be conceited with yourselves, I wish you not to be ignorant of this secret, that hardness in some measure has happened to Israel *until* the fulness

of the Gentiles may come in [until the full number selected from the Gentiles has been completed]. And then all Israel will be saved, as it has been written, 'The Deliverer [Christ, Head and body] shall come out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' And 'This is the covenant with them from me, when I shall take away their sins.' In relation to the GLAD TIDINGS, indeed, they are enemies on your account; but in regard to the election they are [still] beloved on account of the fathers, because the gracious gifts and calling of God are not things to be repented of. Besides, as you [Gentiles] were once disobedient to God, but have now obtained mercy by their disobedience; so also, now, these have disobeyed so that they may obtain mercy through *your* mercy [at the hands of the glorified Church]. For God shut up together all, for disobedience, that he might have mercy on all. [Compare **Rom. 5:17-19**.] O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God."

**Rom. 11:25-33**

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\*Spiritual Israel is never called "Jacob."

**A301**

### Heirs of the Kingdom

"Who shall ascend into the hill [literally *mountain*, symbol of kingdom] of Jehovah? or who shall stand in his holy place [temple]? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

**Psa. 24:3,4**

The city of Jerusalem was built upon a mountain top--a double top; for it was separated by the valley Tyropoeon into two parts. Still it was one city, surrounded by one wall, with bridges connecting the two divisions. On one of these mountain tops the Temple was built. This might be understood to symbolize the union of the kingly and the priestly qualities in the glorified Church; or, the one Kingdom of God with its two phases--the spiritual temple, not of earthly origin, but of a new, heavenly or spiritual nature (**Heb. 9:11**), separate from, yet united with, the earthly phase.

David appears to refer to the two places. It was an honor to be of the city at all, and a still greater honor to ascend into the holy temple, into the sacred precincts of which only the priests were permitted to enter. And David shows that purity of life and honesty of heart are necessary to any who would attain either honor. They that would be of the Royal

Priesthood are exhorted to purity, even as the high priest of our profession is pure, if they would be accounted worthy of joint-heirship with him. And he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. This, as already shown, is a purity of *intent*, reckoned to us as absolute or actual purity, Christ's imputed purity supplying our unavoidable deficiency, and compensating for our unavoidable weaknesses, while we walk *after* the spirit and not *after* the flesh.

But let it not be forgotten that purity, sincerity, and entire consecration to God are essential to all those who would enter the Kingdom of God in either phase. It was thus with those ancient worthies who will inherit the earthly phase of

### **A302**

the kingdom under Christ. They loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and were deeply grieved and penitent when overtaken by a fault, or stumbled by a weakness or besetment. So, too, it has been with the faithful of the Gospel age; and so it will be with all in the Millennial age, when the spirit of God, the spirit of truth, is poured upon all flesh. The overcomers of that age will also need to strive for purity of heart and life, if they would have a right under God's arrangement to enter into the city--the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world--the original dominion restored.

### **The Iron Rule**

Many erroneously suppose that when Christ's Millennial Kingdom is inaugurated every one will be pleased with its ruling. But not so. Its regulations will be far more exacting than those of any previous government, and the liberties of the people will be restricted to a degree that will be galling indeed to many now clamoring for an increase of liberty. Liberty to deceive, to misrepresent, to overreach and to defraud others, will be entirely cut off. Liberty to abuse themselves or others in food or in drink, or in any way to corrupt good manners, will be totally denied to all. Liberty or license to do wrong of any sort will not be granted to any. The only liberty that will be granted to any will be the true and glorious liberty of the sons of God--liberty to do good to themselves and others in any and in every way; but nothing will be allowed to injure or destroy in all that Holy Kingdom. (*Isa. 11:9; Rom. 8:21*) That rule will consequently be felt by many to be a severe one, breaking up

all their former habits and customs, as well as breaking up present institutions founded upon these false habits and false ideas of liberty. Because of its firmness and vigor, it is symbolically called an iron rule--"He shall rule them with

### **A303**

a rod of iron." (Compare *Rev. 2:26,27; Psa. 2:8-12 and 49:14.*) Thus will be fulfilled the statement, "Judgment will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet. And the hail [righteous judgment] shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters [truth] shall overflow the hiding place," and every hidden thing shall be revealed. *Isa. 28:17; Matt. 10:26*

Many will feel rebellious against that perfect and equitable rule because accustomed in the past, under the rule of the present prince, to lord it over their fellow mortals, and to live wholly at the expense of others without rendering compensating service. And many and severe will be the stripes which a present life of self-indulgence and gratification will *naturally* demand and receive under that reign, before such will learn the lessons of that kingdom--equity, justice, righteousness. (*Psa. 89:32; Luke 12:47,48*) The lesson on this subject comes first to the living generation, and is near at hand. *James 5*

But, blessed thought! when the Prince of Life has put in force the laws of righteousness and equity with an iron rule, the masses of mankind will learn that "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." They will learn that God's plan and laws are best in the end for all concerned, and ultimately they will learn to *love* righteousness and hate iniquity. (*Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9*) All who under that reign have not learned to love the right will be counted unworthy of lasting life and will be cut off from among the people. *Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:9; Psa. 11:5-7*

## **The Kingdom Everlasting**

"Jehovah shall be King over all the earth in that day." (*Zech. 14:9*) The kingdom which Jehovah will establish in the hands of Christ during the Millennium will be Jehovah's kingdom, but it will be under the direct control of

### **A304**

Christ, as his vicegerent, in much the same manner as the Southern States were dealt with after the Rebellion by the

United States government. The Southern States for a while were not permitted to govern themselves by electing their own officers, lest they should not conform to the Constitutional laws of the Union; but governors, with full power to act, were placed in control for the purpose of reconstructing those state governments and bringing them back into full harmony with the central government. Thus the special reign of Christ over the affairs of earth is for a limited time and for a particular purpose, and it will terminate with the accomplishment of that purpose. Man, through rebellion, forfeited his God-given rights--among others, self-government in harmony with Jehovah's laws. God, through Christ, redeems all those rights, and secures the right for man not only to return personally to his former estate, but also to return to his former office as king of earth. But to bring man back, as God designs, in the way best suited to impress the lesson of present experience--namely, by requiring him to put forth effort toward his own recovery --will require a strong, a perfect government. And this honor of completing man's recovery, the right to which he died to secure, is conferred upon Christ; and "he must reign *until* he hath put all enemies under his feet"--until none exist who do not recognize, honor and obey him. Then, having accomplished his mission as regards the reconstruction or restitution of mankind, he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and mankind will deal directly, as at first, with Jehovah--the mediation of the man Christ Jesus having accomplished fully and completely the grand work of reconciliation. *1 Cor. 15:25-28*

The kingdom, when delivered up to the Father, will still be the Kingdom of God, and the laws will always be the

### **A305**

same. All mankind, then perfectly restored, will be capable of rendering perfect obedience, in letter as well as in spirit; while now, the spirit of obedience or endeavor to observe God's law is all of which men are capable. The full letter of that perfect law would condemn them at once to death. (*2 Cor. 3:6*) Our acceptableness now is only through Christ's ransom.

Until actually perfect, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (*Heb. 10:31*) Now, and until actually perfect, none could stand before the law of exact justice: all need the mercy provided freely under Christ's merit and sacrifice. But when Christ delivers up the kingdom to the Father, he will present them *faultless* before him, fit and

able to enjoy everlasting blessedness under Jehovah's perfect law. All fearfulness will then be gone, and Jehovah and his restored creatures will be in perfect harmony, as at first.

When, in the end of the Millennial age, Christ delivers up the dominion of earth to the Father, he does so by delivering it to mankind as the Father's representatives, who were designed from the first to have this honor. (*1 Cor. 15:24; Matt. 25:34*) Thus the Kingdom of God lasts forever.

And so we read in our Lord's words: "Then shall the King say to them on his right hand [those who, during the Millennial reign, will have attained the position of favor by harmony and obedience], Come, ye blessed of my Father [you whom my Father designs thus to bless], inherit the kingdom *prepared* FOR YOU from the foundation of the world."

This kingdom and honor prepared for man should not be confounded with that still higher kingdom and honor prepared for the Christ, which were "ordained *before* the world unto *our* glory" (*1 Cor. 2:7*), and to which we were chosen in Christ *before* the foundation of the world. And though the *special* intervention and reign of the Christ over

#### **A306**

earth will close, as foreshown, we must not conclude that Christ's glory and dominion and power will then cease. Nay, Christ is associated forever with all the divine glory and power at the right hand of Jehovah's favor; and his Bride and joint-heir will forever share his increasing glory. What wondrous works in other worlds await the power of this highly exalted agent of Jehovah, we will not here surmise, further than to suggest the infinitude and activity of divine power, and the boundlessness of the universe.

Truly, then, in whatever phase of the kingdom our interest centers, it is "the desire of all nations"; for under it all will be blessed. Hence, all may earnestly long for that time; and all may well pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is for this that ignorantly the whole creation has long been groaning and waiting --waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God, the kingdom which will crush out evil and bless and heal all nations.

***Rom. 8:19; 16:20***