

3. THE KINGDOM OF GOD THE FATHER

Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for **the kingdom of God** is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14.16-17 NASB)

For **the kingdom of God** does not consist in words but in power. (1 Corinthians 4.20 NASB)

And the seventh messenger did sound, and there came great voices in the heaven, saying, **'The kingdoms of the world did become those of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign to the ages of the ages!'** (Revelation 11.15 YLT)

Then cometh the end, when **he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;** when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. **For he must reign,** till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (1 Corinthians 15.24-25 KJV)

To understand the purpose of the eons, one must understand the concept of kingdoms as presented in Scripture, for the plan of God is worked out through kingdoms and is consummated in His kingdom when the Son delivers up the kingdom to God the Father so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15.23-28).

The word *kingdom* appears many times throughout both Hebrew and Greek Scripture and is without doubt a major tenet of Scripture. Depending on the translation, *kingdom*, in its singular and plural form, appears in the Bible over 400 times. Instead of the word *kingdom*, the Young's Literal Translation most often uses the word *reign*, which appears 300 times.

The word *kingdom*, as translated from the Greek word *basileia*, means "reign." It most often refers to the reign of a king, or "the realm ruled by a king or the territory, people, or sovereign power pertaining to it." By dividing the word into its two components, we see that it is made up of *king* and *dom*, which is the abbreviation for *dominion*, which means "rule or power to rule; sovereign authority; sovereignty." Thus, the word *kingdom* means that a king rules over a realm. There can be no kingdom without a king. Years ago there were many kingdoms on earth but many have been replaced with other forms of sovereignties in which the people rule through elections and set their own laws, rather than through a king who is sovereign and without equal in his realm. Generally, in a kingdom the king is the law.

Throughout Scripture, there are many types of kingdoms. For example, there is the kingdom of Nimrod [Babylon] (Genesis 1.10), a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19.6), the kingdom of Israel (1 Samuel 13.13; 15.28; 24.20), the throne of his (David's)

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kingdom (2 Samuel 7.13), the throne of the kingdom of the LORD (1 Chronicles 28.5; also Psalm 22.28), the kingdom of the house of Israel (Hosea 1.4), the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem (Micah 4.8), the kingdom of the heavens (Matthew 3.2; 4.17; 32 times in Matthew), the kingdom of God (Matthew 12.28; 66 times in the New Testament), the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13.43), the kingdom of the Son of Man (Matthew 16.28), My Father's kingdom (Matthew 26.29), His (Christ's) kingdom (Luke 1.33; Hebrews 1.8), Satan's kingdom (Luke 11.18), My (Christ's) kingdom (Luke 22.30; John 18.36), the kingdom of Christ and God (Ephesians 5.5), the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1.13), His (God's) own kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2.12), the celestial (heavenly) kingdom (2 Timothy 4.18), the eonian kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1.11), a kingdom and priests to our God (Revelation 5.10), the kingdom of the world (Revelation 11.15), the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11.15), the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ (Revelation 12.10), and the kingdom of the beast (Revelation 16.10).

We must be careful that we do not lump all these kingdoms into one as if they are the same, particularly the ones that refer to God, the Son and the heavens. They are related but there are differences that once understood will bring God's purpose and plan into sharper focus. For example, kingdoms can be spiritual or political, eternal or temporal, moral or wicked, inclusive or exclusive, universal or earthly, invisible or visible, angelic or human, and in heaven or on the earth. For this reason, we need to discern the context of each expression that refers to a kingdom.

In addition, in the New Testament we discover seven expressions of the kingdom: **sons** of the kingdom (Matthew 8.12; 13.38), the **gospel** of the kingdom (Matthew 4.23; 9.35; 24.14; Luke 16.16), the **word** of the kingdom (Matthew 13.19), **mysteries** of the kingdom (Matthew 13.11; Mark 4.11; Luke 8.10), a **disciple** of the kingdom (Matthew 13.52), the **keys** of the kingdom (Matthew 16.19), and **heirs** of the kingdom (James 2.5; also Matthew 25.34). Although not expressed exactly in this form, one could add **children** (Matthew 18.3; 19.14; Mark 10.14, 24; Luke 8.16, 29) and **parables** of the kingdom (Matthew 13.3; Mark 4.11; Luke 8.10).

The subject of kingdoms is such a major tenet of Scripture that one chapter is not enough to do it justice. However, what follows is presented as a framework by which to understand how God's kingdom is progressively manifested on earth in light of the purpose and plan of the eons. God's plan to achieve His purpose is a progressive plan that begins, continues, and is consummated in His Son when He takes possession of all things in creation by subjecting all to Himself and abolishing death. We see the principle set forth when ancient Israel was called to enter the land. The Lord declared that He would drive out the enemies ***little by little***, until *you become fruitful and take possession of the land* (Exodus 23.30).

God's plan has progressed through the eons and will continue to progress through the oncoming eons until all things in the heavens and on the earth are subjected to the Son of God, so that He alone is the King and the Sovereign of the entire

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creation of God. The Son's mission is to see that God's will is not only done on earth but that it is done throughout all God's creation. Everything is working toward this one purpose when Christ will head up all in the heavens and on the earth that will lead to the abolishment of death and the reconciliation of all to God, whether in the heavens or on the earth. It is only when all has been subjected to Christ and all sovereignty and all authority and power have been nullified that the Son will subject Himself to His Father, so that God may be *All* in all. See 1 Corinthians 15.20-28; Ephesians 1.10; Colossians 1.20. This is when the Son will give up the kingdom to His God and Father, and His will *will* reign supreme. This is the kingdom of God the Father, for He will be in relationship with all creation as a father is to his family.

Beyond the eons, the kingdom of the Father is a united kingdom of love that is unlike any kingdom that mankind has ever seen or experienced. It will be a kingdom of *familial* relationship. It will be a *paternal* kingdom, for God will be the *paterfamilias*, the Father of a glorious family. I believe Paul saw this verity as he wrote: **For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole [every] family in heaven and earth is named** (Ephesians 3.14-15 KJV [ALT, ASV, DNT, LITV, NASB]). This speaks of familial relationship.

Men will never again rule over men, for all creation will be subjected to God and will be in the perfect will of God. Sin and death will reign no more. The weight of sin will be cast off for the weight of glory. The laws of God will be written on the hearts and minds of all mankind. Everyone will know exactly what to do; how to live righteously and to love fully. Can any of us imagine what it will be like to be bathed in the love of God and to be doing the will of God naturally and joyously, never living in fear and doubt again?

We need to keep in mind that most of Scripture pertains to God's purpose and plan in relation to mankind and the earth as worked out during the eons that He makes through His Son (Hebrews 1.2 *cv*). Today, so many Christians stress "going to heaven" as if this is God's purpose for them; however, God, through His Son, our Lord Jesus, is working to bring heaven to earth and to establish His rule in the heart of all mankind, so that ultimately, He (God the Father) may be all in all throughout His entire creation. To do this, today, the Father is calling out a special company of people, a body, which is the ecclesia that is joined to Christ the Head, and it is through this body that He will sum up or head up all things in the heavens and on the earth (Ephesians 1.10). The body of Christ is the complement or fullness of the One who fills all in all (Ephesians 1.23) so that the Father may be all in all. The body of Christ is destined to be a spiritual and celestial body that transcends both the physical and the spiritual or celestial realms. So, "going to heaven" is not our goal if we belong to Christ; our goal is to be like Christ in glory (Philippians 3.21; 1 John 3.2), conformed to His image (Romans 8.29) as His complement, so that we can be that vessel through which He will sum up, gather up or head up all things in the heavens and on the earth.

It is hard to imagine what this will be like, but we know that it will be glory.

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Now, let us consider the kingdom of God.

The universal kingdom of God.

According to Appendix 114 of *The Companion Bible* compiled by E.W. Bullinger, there are eight essential characteristics of the kingdom of God.

1. It has God for its Ruler.
2. It is in heaven over the earth.
3. It is unlimited in scope.
4. It is moral and spiritual in its sphere.
5. It is inclusive in its character (embracing the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham, “the heavenly calling,” and the “Church” of the Mystery).
6. It is universal in its aspect.
7. It is (in its wider aspect) the subject of New Testament revelation.
8. And will be eternal in its duration.

I would add to number 6 that today it is also **individual** in its aspect, as opposed to national.

Although Scripture refers to many kingdoms, we need to be clear that when it comes to God, there is really only one kingdom; it is the *universal* kingdom of God, for God alone is the Supreme over all His creation. He reigns over all. It matters not if some of God’s creatures do not bow the knee to Him. Even the most rebellious of His creatures are under His reign. He operates all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1.11 cv), for out of Him and through Him and for Him is all (Romans 11.36 cv). There is *one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him* (1 Corinthians 8.6 cv). All that has occurred and will yet occur is in the counsel of God’s will.

In a pure sense, the kingdom of God refers to the absolute rule of God throughout His entire creation, whether on earth, among the celestials or anyplace in the vastness of His universe. His kingdom extends throughout the eons but is not restricted to the eons as we know them, for it is without end. Everything in God’s creation is in His kingdom, and He reigns over His creation. As David wrote: *Thou art my King, O God* (Psalm 44.4).

There is no one higher than God and no one who rules beyond God, for He is Supreme. *For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods* (Psalm 97.9 NKJV). All power and dominion belong to God alone. God rules over all and absolutely nothing happens in His creation apart from His rule. There is no place in this vast universe that is outside His realm. He knows all that is going on in His universe and He is Supreme over all that is going on. Most importantly, He is working all things in His universe according to His purpose and plan.

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The kingdom of our Father.

The kingdom of God has no end; it is eternal. However, the kingdom of God will progress into the kingdom of our Father. Today, the kingdom of God speaks of a spiritual and moral kingdom, but in the consummation of the eons it will **also** become a familial kingdom, that is, a kingdom with one Father over one family.

The eons were and are made by the Son to lead all creation into the adoration, love, worship and will of God, not through coercion or force but by God's law and grace. Even the most hardened and unrighteous heart will, one day, willingly bend the knee, all to the glory of God (Isaiah 45.23; Philippians 2.10-11). When this is fully accomplished and the kingdom of Christ is delivered to the Father, it will not only be the kingdom of God, but it will be the kingdom of the Father.

What does the kingdom of the Father represent? The unchallenged will of God in all! It is the *all* of God! The kingdom that will be manifested at the consummation of the eons means that God is *All*! He will be all to His family. It will be ever expanding in the will and love of God, even as the celestial (heavenly) and the earthly (physical) realms become one.

In the kingdom of the Father, the eight characteristics noted above take on a slightly different set of characteristics from the kingdom of God. [These are not found in *The Companion Bible*; they have been modified by the writer.]

1. It has **God as the Father of all.**
2. It is **heaven fills the earth, the celestial and the physical realms are no longer separated.**
3. It is unlimited in scope.
4. It is moral, spiritual, **and love** in its sphere.
5. It is inclusive **and relational** in its character (**embracing all in the heavens and on the earth; all mankind**)
6. It is universal and **individual** in its aspect.
7. It is **the revelation of the entire Bible, especially Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22.**
8. And will be eternal in its duration.

Throne—a canopy or covering.

Another way to express the thought of a kingdom is through the word *throne*. David declared: *The Lord has established His throne in the heavens and His sovereignty (kingdom) rules over all* (Psalm 103.19 NASB). A throne is the seat of authority. It is the place from which the rule comes forth. In the Hebrew language, *throne* conveys the thought of a canopy or a covering, implying protection. Thus, from the throne comes the rule over a realm, and it is this rule that provides protection to the realm over which it presides.

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God alone is the one who rules over the universe in which our earth is located. It is His throne, His realm, His kingdom; and His throne is the canopy or protection over His entire realm. All rule comes from His throne, which is in heaven.

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for **all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; yours is the kingdom**, O LORD, and **You are exalted as head over all**. Both riches and honor come from You, and **You reign over all**. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. (1 Chronicles 29.11-12 NKJV)

“O LORD, the God of our fathers, art Thou not God in the heavens? **And art Thou not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations?** Power and might are in Thy hand so that no one can stand against Thee.” (2 Chronicles 20.6 NASB) ¹

So, when our hearts might begin to falter as we see upheaval, uncertainty and storm clouds forming upon the earth or in our personal lives, let us not be dismayed, discouraged or disheartened. God is in control, and all is being worked out according to His purpose and plan. His throne is everlasting and indestructible, and His canopy is over all!

Let it be set in our hearts that in God’s creation there really is only one kingdom. All other kingdoms and those who rule in them are subordinates in the kingdom of God. All kingdoms exist at the discretion of God alone. Although the character of the kingdom of God never changes and is endless, the kingdoms within His kingdom do change, as well as the administrators or rulers of these kingdoms. We see this in the history of the kingdoms of our world; kingdoms rise and fall. The Lord Himself declares that He uproots and plants kingdoms. All kingdoms have a life cycle; simply, they come and go as God wills; all in accord with His precise timing and His purpose and plan.

“At one moment **I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it**; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment **I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it**; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.” (Jeremiah 18.7-10 NASB)

Even the kingdom of Christ has limits since it will end at the consummation when Christ gives up the kingdom to God the Father, so that God may be *All* in all. However, there is a vast difference between Christ’s kingdom and all other

¹ For other Scriptures, see Deuteronomy 10.14; 32.39; Jeremiah 27.5, 6; Daniel 4.17.

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kingdoms. Christ's kingdom is not a failure. It is a kingdom of righteousness and justice, for He loves righteousness and justice (Psalm 33.5; 89.14).

When the Son gives up the kingdom to His God and Father it is for one reason alone. The Son will have done all the Father has asked in heading up all in the heavens and on the earth. When He has accomplished His mission, He must give up the kingdom to God, for this is in accord with the purpose of the eons. In no way does this diminish the Son's place in God's creation. Do not even entertain such a thought! He is forever the Son of God, the Head of the new creation. Giving up the kingdom gloriously means that He will have accomplished all the work the Father gave Him to do. When all is subjected to the Son, then the Son will subject all to the Father. Further, the administration or governing of God's kingdom will change from a hierarchical, command type form of governing to a familial, paternal form of governing, like a father's relationship to his children. Again, all will know what to do; they will know the heart of God, for His laws will be upon their hearts and written in their minds (Hebrews 10.16). God the Father will lead His family of love. Praise God!

In all places of His dominion.

Now, David, as the Psalmist, adds to the comprehensiveness of God's kingdom as he declared: "*Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion*" (Psalm 103.22 NKJV).

In making this declaration, it seems that David did not restrict himself to the earth, for he looked out beyond the sky of our earth and included all the works of God in all places of His dominion, which must include all God's creation.

From our vantage point on earth, we might think that we are the only beings in God's vast universe apart from His angels (messengers) and other celestial beings. Truly, God has undertaken a mighty work on this earth through the creation of mankind, but are we to assume that this earth is the sum total of all the action in God's vast universe? Do we live on the only planet in God's vast universe that has created beings in residence? If earth is the only inhabited place, then the extent of God's actual rule is restricted to one minuscule planet floating in an immensely huge universe. Earth is so small that it does not even measure up to one speck of dust.

Is earth all there is? According to David, it is not!

Considering the dimensions of the universe, God must have countless *places of His dominion*. Although man has long studied the universe and through recent advances in technology has begun to scan the vastness of the universe, he still does not know the full dimensions of God's creation. How many places of His dominion are there? We do not know, and we are not told. However, one of the oldest books of the Bible, Job, does give an indication that there are other inhabited places of His dominion in the universe.

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Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, **“From where do you come?”** So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” (Job 1.6-7 NKJV)

God’s question to Satan, “From where do you come?” implies that the sons of God came from various places in the universe. What are we to conclude from this question?

In Scripture, *sonship* refers to *rulership*. The sons of God represent rulers in God’s kingdom, which is the reason for them appearing before the throne. Consequently, within the kingdom of God, there most likely are kingdoms ruled by rulers (messengers, angels) appointed by God. These are kingdoms within God’s kingdom, which could be called provinces or places of dominion. It is very similar to what we see in countries throughout the world. Most countries are divided in some manner, whether the division is called a province, state, region or some other designation. In each division, there are authorities who report to higher authorities in the country. God’s kingdom most likely is divided in a similar fashion, and the earth is within one of these divisions or provinces. Actually, the Son of God is the one who created all authority, so it only makes sense that what we see on earth today, although it has been corrupted by Satan and fallen mankind, is in some measure a reflection of God’s creative genius. Speaking of the Son, the word tells us: *For by Him all things were created, {both} in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him* (Colossians 1.16 NASB).

Another proof that there are many places of His dominion is the fact that Christ is going to head up all in the heavens and on the earth (Ephesians 1.10). If there are no other dominions, then there is nothing for Him to head up outside the earth. Since there are other places of His dominion, we are left to wonder how Christ is going to head up all in the heavens. As we search Scripture, we do not have to wonder very long, for Paul has revealed to us that the body of Christ is seated together among the celestials, in Christ, and is being saved for His celestial kingdom (Ephesians 2.6; 2 Timothy 4.18).

Today, the body is among the celestials in spirit, to be manifested literally in the next eon. The body of Christ is the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1.23 cv), and the body has been brought forth as the vessel to carry the evangel of Christ throughout the universe, that is, among the celestials and on the earth. Those who belong to the Lord are to be the complement or the fullness of Christ, and as the complement they will be part of Christ’s work to complete the all in all. What a glorious destiny!

Now, with these foundational but essential truths, let us trace some aspects of the kingdom as revealed in Scripture, beginning with Satan’s kingdom and progressing to the kingdoms of the earth. In doing so, we need to keep two thoughts in mind.

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First, the kingdom of God is progressively manifested on the earth. In other words, it comes in phases, and it builds until the glory of God fills all the earth. Throughout the eons, the glory of the kingdom is mostly veiled from the sight and experience of mankind. However, the kingdom begins to shine brighter and brighter in the oncoming eons as the conquerors of Christ are revealed and then Christ Himself is revealed to the nations of the earth. It does not come about all at once but in phases as the veil is gradually pulled back and mankind begins to enter the holies of the holies, that is, into the presence of God.

As mentioned previously, one way to look at it is along the lines of the feasts that the Israelites were called to celebrate, particularly the fall feasts of the Trumpets and the Tabernacles. According to this thought, there was the *Passover Age* from Moses to Christ's crucifixion, the *Pentecostal Age* from Pentecost to the presence (*parousia*) of Christ and the *Tabernacles Age*, which is when heaven comes to earth. God has been steadily and precisely moving toward His purpose of the eons, all in accord with His perfect plan.

Second, although there is only one true kingdom, individuals must enter into this kingdom to come under its reign. In other words, we must enter the kingdom of God, which means we must become willing subjects of the King and submit to His will. We must be born of water and spirit to see and enter the kingdom of God (John 3.3, 5), and through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14.22). Entering the kingdom is both an initial entrance when we believe on Jesus and receive the spirit of God, and a future entrance through resurrection and transfiguration when we receive a glorified spiritual body at the commencement of the oncoming eon.

All mankind will eventually enter in but not all at the same time. There are some who are chosen and predestined to enter as firstfruits to God who, in turn, will lead others into the kingdom in the eons of the eons.

The prince of the power of the air.

Now, in order to understand something of the history of the kingdoms of this earth, we need to be clear that the instigator behind the kingdoms of men is the adversary, Satan, the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2.2) who has a kingdom that influences, if not directs the kingdoms of men. Jesus said: "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; **how then will his kingdom stand?**" (Matthew 12.26 NASB). Thus, according to one who knows all truth, Satan, the adversary, has a kingdom. Without contradiction, we could say that Satan's kingdom is the antithesis of God's kingdom and was brought into being for that very purpose. Like God's kingdom, it too is a spiritual kingdom but not a moral or righteous one, but one of darkness, wickedness, and unrighteousness. Paul revealed that the body of Christ is in spiritual warfare with this kingdom of dark forces.

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For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, **against spiritual wickedness in high places.** (Ephesians 6.12 KJV)

Also, according to Daniel there are princes of darkness that rule over kingdoms associated with geographical areas on earth or, we could say, the kingdoms of men on earth (Daniel 10.13).

Under Satan's jurisdiction, the kingdoms of the earth can be best characterized by hatred that has led to war and killing of the masses. The adversary is the instigator of war among men, for when he is bound for a thousand years, war will cease; but when he is released from prison, he will deceive the nations to gather for one final battle, which God will promptly end by pouring fire (i.e., His judgment) upon the deceived nations (Revelation 20.1-3, 7-9).

We discover further proof of the adversary's jurisdiction over the earth with Satan's failed attempt to tempt Jesus by offering Him the kingdoms of the earth.

And, leading Him up into a high mountain, **the Adversary shows Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a second of time.** And the Adversary said to Him, "To you shall I be giving all this authority and the glory of them, for it has been given up to me, and to whomsoever I may will, I am giving it. If you, then, should ever be worshiping before me, it will all be yours." (Luke 4.5-7 cv)

Satan is good at taking a portion of truth and twisting it to his advantage. In this case, it is true that the kingdoms of the inhabited earth were given up to him, but it was not a willing gesture on the part of man, for it was taken by deceit, not by honest gain. It appears that the adversary revealed all the kingdoms of time to Jesus, indicating that he is a force behind all the kingdoms throughout the history of mankind. Thank God; Jesus saw through the deceit of the adversary and dismissed him, and soon He will conquer the kingdoms of this world when, as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, He will slay the lawless with the breath of His mouth and remove all the tares from His kingdom (Matthew 13.36-43; 2 Thessalonians 2.8).

In the Revelation, we discover that a day is coming when all heaven will proclaim with a loud voice: ***"The kingdom of this world became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons! Amen!"*** (Revelation 11.15 cv). Praise God!

At times, it might appear that the adversary has had the upper hand in the kingdoms of men, but whatever the appearance might be, we need to be assured that all that has occurred and will yet occur in the history of mankind is in accord with God's purpose of the eons.

There are two truths that we should keep in mind.

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The first is that Christ is the mighty victor over the works of the adversary. The victory of the cross of Calvary is an absolute, 100% success. There is no defeat whatsoever in the finished work of the cross (see Matthew 16.8, Hebrews 2.14; 1 John 3.8).

The second is that Satan, as the adversary, is one of God's greatest means by which to bring about His purpose and plan. Although Satan might be the chief of the jurisdiction of the air (Ephesians 2.2 cv) over this earth, he rules only by the will of God. Let us not forget that he is a subject in God's kingdom. Do we think for a moment that if God did not want Satan to be in a place of rulership that he would be in that place today? Of course not; with one stroke God could remove Satan from ruling. In His wisdom and according to His purpose and plan, God has not only chosen not to remove him, but He has intended it to be this way from before the disruption of the world. In fact, Satan was created to be the adversary, so that God could accomplish all that He has purposed.

The serpent.

This point is so important to our understanding of God's purpose that we need to consider the origin and created nature of Satan.

It is a sure thing that most of us have been taught that Satan was created a perfect, beautiful angel, but his pride got the best of him, and he fell into sin when he sought to rise above the throne he was given, even to rise to the level of God. This teaching is based on Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. However, a careful study of these texts presents some difficulties that cannot be resolved if they are left to apply to Satan.

Ezekiel 28 is about the king of Tyre, a human being and not an angel. The Lord God stated: "*Will you still say, 'I am a god,' in the presence of your slayer, though you are a man and not God, in the hands of those who wound you? You will die the death of the uncircumcised*" (Ezekiel 28.9-10a NASB). Scripture clearly states that he is a man who was created and is subject to death, something to which angels are not subject. The king of Tyre has gone the way of all mankind. Further, an argument could be made that this describes Adam who, before his fall, was perfect in beauty walking in the garden of Eden. He was a covering cherub because he possessed the throne (canopy) over the earth at that time.

Isaiah 14.12 is often incorrectly translated as referring to Lucifer, son of the morning, which most people believe speaks of Satan before his supposed fall. However, the word *Lucifer* is not the proper translation from the original Hebrew. The word should be rendered *howl: Howl, son of the dawn!*

On careful examination of Isaiah 14.9-17, it should become apparent that this does not refer to Satan and some fall in the past but most likely refers to the lawlessness of man that has gone forth in an attempt to conquer the world (Revelation 13.1-6). *Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the*

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world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home (Isaiah 14.16-17 NASB)? This is not a description of Satan but of *lawless mankind* energized by Satan's power. This is the man of sin, the man of lawlessness, the son of stubbornness.

And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. (Revelation 13.2 NASB)

Today, Satan is the prince of the air associated with this earth. As such, he is still in the heavenly places (not in a fictitious *hell*) as the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12.10). In *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, John perceived a battle between the dark angelic forces in heaven and the Lord's angelic hosts. John saw this battle fought in heaven and Satan and his host not prevailing but being cast down to earth.

And the great dragon was cast out, **the ancient serpent** called Adversary and Satan, who is deceiving the whole inhabited earth. It was cast into the earth, and its messengers were cast with it. (Revelation 12.9 CV)

In this description of Satan, we discover the key to his origin. He is called *the ancient serpent*. In Job, considered one of the oldest writings of Hebrew Scripture, there is a reference to the serpent. Three translations of the same verse are presented.

His Spirite hath garnished the heauens, and his hand hath formed **the crooked serpent**. (Job 26.13 GB)

By his spirit hath He arched the heavens, His hand hath pierced **the fleeing serpent**. (Job 26.13 REB)

By His spirit He makes the heavens seemly, His hand travails with **the fugitive serpent**. (Job 26.13 CV)

Through Job we are given a contrast of God creating two things.

First, by His spirit, God made the heavens. There were no hands involved and no effort on His part. We are given the impression of something that occurred with ease. The word *seemly* means "pleasing in appearance, suitable, proper, or fitting." This is how the heavens were created, and we could say that it was a pleasing sight.

Second, by His hand, God made or formed the crooked, fleeing serpent or fugitive. It was not done by His spirit but by His hands, which implies an effort on the part of God. We labor with our hands and when we do, the object of labor is at a slight distance from our body. In like fashion, God labored over the serpent, keeping it at a distance. In other words, God travailed in forming the serpent. The forming of this creature was not suitable or seemly; it was, we could say, dirty work.

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Why would God travail over the making of the serpent? There is only one answer that makes any sense; the serpent was not something pleasant. In the garden of Eden, we could say that the ancient serpent was odious, something unpleasant. John the apostle gives us the answer.

He who is habitually guilty of sin is a child of the Devil, because **the Devil has been a sinner from the very beginning**. The Son of God appeared for the purpose of undoing the work of the Devil. (1 John 3.8 WNT)

He who is doing the sin, of the devil he is, because **from the beginning the devil doth sin**; for this was the Son of God manifested, that he may break up the works of the devil.... (1 John 3.8 YLT)

He who sins is of the devil, for **the devil has been sinning from the beginning**. To this end the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3.8 HNV)

In this one verse, as presented in three translations, there is little doubt that the devil, who is the ancient serpent, was a sinner from the very beginning. But there is more.

You are of your father, the Adversary, and the desires of your father you are wanting to do. He was **a man-killer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, for truth is not in him**. Whenever he may be speaking a lie, he is speaking of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8.44 cv)

In other words, the ancient serpent was created a sinner, and this is why God had to form him from a distance with His hands and why it was such travail to God. Satan was created a sinner and a man-killer to be the adversary of God and of mankind.

Jehovah declared to Isaiah: *I have created the waster to destroy* (Isaiah 54.16 ASV; also CV/KJV/JPS/ LITV/MKJV); and *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things* (Isaiah 45.7 ASV; also DNT/GB/HNV/LITV/MKJV). ²

With these verses, there should be little doubt that God created evil itself and created the serpent to be the administrator of evil.

In the day of the Lord, the Lord will come and deal with the man-killer, the ancient serpent, the dragon (monster). Isaiah was given a prophecy of that day.

² For other Scriptures, see Judges 9.23; 1 Samuel 16.14, 15, 23; 18.10; 19.9; 2 Samuel 12.11, 12; 1 Kings 14.10; 21.29; 2 Kings 21.12; 2 Chronicles 34.24, 28; Proverbs 16.4; Isaiah 31.2; Jeremiah 11.11; 14.16; 18.11; 19.3, 15; 23.12; 26.3, 13; 32.42; 35.17; 36.3, 31; 40.2; 42.10, 17; 44.2; 45.5; 49.37; 51.64; Lamentations 3.38; Ezekiel 6.10; Amos 3.6; Micah 1.12; 2.3.

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For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed, and will no longer cover her slain. In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan **the fleeing serpent**, with His fierce and great and mighty sword, even Leviathan **the twisted serpent**; and He will kill **the dragon** who lives in the sea. (Isaiah 26.21-27.1 NASB) ³

In that day the Lord with his sore and great and mightie sword shall visite Liuiathan, that **pearcing serpent**, euen Liuiathan, **that crooked serpent**, and he shall slay **the dragon** that is in the sea. (Isaiah 27.1 GB)

When all these Scriptures are looked at together, it becomes apparent that they refer to one and the same being: *And **the great dragon** was cast out, **the ancient serpent** called Adversary and Satan, who is deceiving the whole inhabited earth* (Revelation 12.9 cv). If he was created by God to be evil and a sinning adversary from the beginning, then his creation is in accord with the purpose of the eons. Thus, Satan's rulership of his kingdom of wickedness, which by the way is within the universal kingdom of God, has purpose, and that purpose is to provide the perfect contrast to God and His nature.

At this point, one might wonder how a kingdom of wickedness could be in the universal kingdom of God that is moral and spiritual. My opinion on the matter is this: *First*, if God is to be the King over His entire creation, then all kingdoms must be within His kingdom regardless of their character. *Second*, whether a kingdom within God's rule is moral or wicked does not change the character of God. *Third*, God is the Creator of evil, and He has allowed a kingdom of wickedness to contrast His very character to bring about His purpose. Oh, the wisdom of God!

It is clear that God uses Satan to bring about His purpose and plan. One example is Paul, the apostle who was given abundant revelations from God. Most likely, to keep Paul from exalting himself and creating a "ministry" centered on himself, God sent a messenger (an angel) of Satan to buffet Paul the rest of his life (2 Corinthians 12.7). Paul asked for the messenger to be taken out of the way, but the Lord answered: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power (My power) is perfected in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12.9 NASB). Thus, God used Satan to keep Paul from relying on himself.

In Job's life, we also see the same principle at work. In both cases, it is important to note that Satan was limited in what he could do. In Job's case, God first told Satan he could not touch Job's body, and then He gave him permission to touch his body but not to kill him (Job 1.12; 2.6). In the end, God received the glory from Job's life. *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees Thee; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42.5-6 NASB).

³ In Scripture, the word *sea* can refer to nations. In these verses, *sea* most likely refers to the nations of the earth, over which Satan has exercised jurisdiction.

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We must keep a proper perspective. Satan cannot work outside the will of God and is used by God to bring about His purpose. However, let us not make the mistake of giving credit to Satan for everything bad or evil. We must not forget that man partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man can create his own mischief without the aid of Satan and the demonic host.

I trust that this provides some clarity regarding the adversary. I also realize that this might challenge some, for what has been presented goes against the grain of the theology of our day.

The Most High rules in the kingdom of men.

As a reminder, regardless of Satan's authority, or regardless what a kingdom looks like here on earth, or regardless what created being is in charge, one principle does not change: God rules in the kingdom of men, for the heavens do rule. This principle of God's rule is most clearly demonstrated in Daniel's account of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar was given dreams and Daniel was called upon to interpret them because in him was the Spirit of the Holy God (Daniel 4.8). In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar was told that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men.

The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that **the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men**, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men. (Daniel 4.17 ASV)

Then, Daniel was called upon to interpret the dream, at which time he revealed the second part of this great principle—*the heavens do rule*.

And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that **the heavens do rule**. (Daniel 4.26 ASV)

God has not relinquished His rule over any part of His creation, most of all over earth and mankind. The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, for the heavens do rule, was the lesson learned by Nebuchadnezzar, but it is a lesson that seems to have been lost down through the history of mankind's rulers. However, the principle is very simple and straightforward. God is in the heavens and He rules; thus, the heavens do rule, and He extends this rule into the kingdom of men. The Psalmists confirm this fact.

Jehovah hath established **his throne in the heavens**; and **his kingdom ruleth over all** (Psalm 103.19 ASV). But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever he pleased (Psalm 115.3 ASV).

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Through this dream, Nebuchadnezzar was warned to break off his sins by being righteous and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor (Daniel 4.27). If he did not turn from his ways, his kingdom would be cut off from him for a season until he realized that the heavens do rule. Instead of heeding the warning, the king glorified himself, giving himself honor. When he exalted himself above God (denying God's rule over his kingdom), his kingdom was taken from him. Seven periods of time passed over him until he knew that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men.

Seven is God's number of perfection. It is the perfect completion of that which is in view. In this case, it was the completion of Nebuchadnezzar's chastisement, which is an encouragement that God's chastisement has limits and is not eternal or without end. It is also prophetic of the coming of God's Son to rule over this earth in the seventh day, the sabbatical rest day of 1,000 years.

When Nebuchadnezzar returned to his senses, he declared: And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and **I blessed the Most High**, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever; for **his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation**; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4.34-35 ASV).

Another compelling proof of this principle is brought to light through Jesus' own words when He was in the custody of Pilate and about to face the cross.

Pilate therefore said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, **unless it had been given you from above**; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has {the} greater sin." (John 19.10-11 NASB)

Consequently, all authority on earth comes from the throne of God. Paul later confirmed this same principle to the Romans.

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God**, and those which exist are established by God. (Romans 13.1 NASB)

In other words, no individual in a place of governmental authority in the heavens or on the earth holds a ruling position apart from the sovereign will of God. This may be difficult for us to understand; but whether the ruler believes in God or does not believe, is righteous or unrighteous, is good or evil, is just or unjust, that ruler exists because of God. If this were not true, then God would not truly be the

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Supreme of His kingdom. After all, all authority, visible or invisible, heavenly or earthly, is created by God's Son. ⁴

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, **whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities**—all things have been created by Him and for Him. (Colossian 1.16 NASB)

Let us not forget that our Lord Jesus Christ has been given *all* authority *in* heaven and *on* earth (Matthew 28.18). On the cross He disarmed principalities and powers (Colossians 2.15). He is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2.10). God raised His Son from among the dead and seated Him at His right hand among the celestials far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come (Ephesians 1.20-21). *Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father* (Philippians 2.9-11 NASB).

We do not see His authority *fully* manifested over this earth at this time except, in some measure, in the ecclesia, which is His body. Praise God; the day is coming soon when He will rule through His conquerors and then in person, no longer hidden from man's view. God's King, along with the sons of the kingdom, is coming!

Have dominion.

Now, let us look at the kingdom of men, that is, the kingdoms of the earth. In Scripture, the first mention of the concept of kingdom or rule in relation to mankind is what was spoken by God as He created man.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over the whole earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. (Genesis 1.26 DNT)

Some translations use the word *rule* and another simply uses the word *over* instead of *dominion*. The point is that man was brought forth to rule over, to have dominion over or to be over the creatures of God's earth. Some call this the *dominion mandate*. This is a very important point, for it lays down an unchanging principle that is foundational to God's purpose of the eons; that is, through God's

⁴ *Power* and *authority* are two different matters. One who has power delegates authority. The one who has power is in control, simply because there is no one beyond the person with power. In like fashion, God is the Supreme, the ultimate power of the universe. He does not need authority, for He has the power. Consequently, He alone dispenses or delegates authority in His universe.

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Son mankind is destined to reign, not only over this earth and the future earth, but also among the celestials.

Of course, we know that the perfect order that was restored in six days was brought into ruin through the one transgression of Adam, which gave Satan, the usurper, jurisdiction over the world. The whole creation has groaned and suffered ever since that fateful day (Romans 8.22) as it waits for the seventh day of rest.

The kingdoms of the earth.

It wasn't until after the deluge of Noah's day that Scripture records the first kingdom or form of government to appear on earth, and it came through the three sons of Noah.

When the flood had subsided, Noah drank of the wine and uncovered himself inside his tent. His son, Ham, saw his nakedness, and on account of this sin, his son Canaan was cursed to be the servant of his brothers.

He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, **the God of Shem**; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant." (Genesis 9.26-27 NASB)

Because of this blessing and curse, two forms of government or, we could say, kingdoms formed on the earth. One was man-centered and the other was God-centered.

The first recorded man-centered kingdom on earth came through Nimrod, a descendant of Ham.

And Cush begot Nimrod: he began to be mighty on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Jehovah; therefore it is said, As Nimrod, the mighty hunter before Jehovah! And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (Genesis 10.8-10 DNT)

Nimrod and his people became mighty and fierce conquerors that settled in the land of Shinar instead of heeding God's command to multiply and fill the earth. Nimrod's kingdom was the kingdom of Babel, which was also called **Babylon**. *Babel* means "confusion," which is what occurred when God confused their language, so that they stopped building and were scattered across the face of the earth (Genesis 11.1-9).

Babylon has continued in some form or fashion throughout the long history of mankind. In fact, God used the descendants of Nimrod to chastise His called-out nation, Israel, by allowing them to be exiled to Babylon. This same chastisement has occurred again in our day as God's people and the nations are in Babylonian captivity, awaiting deliverance by the coming of the kingdom of Christ.

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Just as confusion came upon the land of Shinar, so has confusion come upon the nations of the earth as our present eon is being brought to its rightful end.

The reign [kingdom] of the heavens.

The God-centered government followed the line of Noah's son, Shem, and progressed from Peleg to Terah and then to Abraham, the Hebrew, until it broke forth through the sons of Israel as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt as a **theocratic** nation under the one, true God—a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exodus 19.6), chosen to lead all the nations of earth to God. The reign of the heavens was to be manifested through the nation of Israel. Thus, we begin to see a progression of the kingdom in the history of the nations, starting with the descendants of Shem.

However, this progression was halted through the failure of God's chosen people that resulted in the glory of God being removed from the nation. Although there were times of glory for the Israelites, their history is marked by much failure as they turned from their God and became apostate lovers, harlots (Hosea 1.2), with the kingdoms of the world. They became the tail instead of the head (Deuteronomy 28.13). In a sense, they joined with the Nimrods of the world, which placed them under Canaan and opposed to God's divine law (see Genesis 9.25-26).

A 400-year period starting with the time of Malachi fell upon the Israelites in which there was no word from the Lord through His prophets. The Jews that returned to Jerusalem were the tail under the head, which was the rule of Rome. In the fullness of these times, the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, appeared on the earth proclaiming *the reign of the heavens*.

From that time began Jesus to proclaim and to say, 'Reform ye, for come nigh hath **the reign of the heavens.**' (Matthew 4.17 YLT)

And as ye go, preach, saying, **The kingdom of heaven is at hand.** (Matthew 10.7 KJV)

So answering, He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets [or, mysteries] of **the kingdom of the heavens**, but to those [ones] it has not been given." (Matthew 13.11 ALT)

The New Testament (Greek Scripture) begins with the book of Matthew, which uniquely contains the phrase *the reign of the heavens* or *the kingdom of the heavens*,⁵ which occurs thirty-two times, and was the message of John the baptist, Jesus and His first disciples. Their message was directed exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not to the unbelieving nations.

⁵ In the Greek, *heaven* is in the plural and should read *heavens*. Unfortunately, most English translations do not use the plural form.

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Personally, I like the phrase *the reign of the heavens*, for it speaks of the action, which is *reigning* or *ruling*, and from whence the action emanates, which is *the heavens*. The heavens do rule!

Before proceeding, it is important to understand what *the kingdom of the heavens* represents. As with *the kingdom of God*, Appendix 114 of *The Companion Bible* compiled by E.W. Bullinger, lists eight characteristics of *the kingdom of the heavens*.

1. It has Messiah for its King.
2. It is from heaven; and under the heavens upon the earth.
3. It is limited in scope.
4. It is political in sphere.
5. It is Jewish and exclusive in character.
6. It is national in its aspect.
7. It is the special subject of the Old Testament prophecy.
8. And, it is dispensational in its duration.

By comparing the eight characteristics of *the kingdom of God* with the previously cited characteristics of *the kingdom of the heavens*, it is easy to see that the latter kingdom is a political and national kingdom that will rule over the earth as heaven rules on earth.

When the Son of God came to this earth over 2,000 years ago, He came seeking the lost sheep of the house of Israel and proclaiming that the kingdom of the heavens was **at hand**, which meant that it was drawing near or approaching. The very kingdom that the prophets had spoken of was about to come upon the earth, but there had to be national repentance for it to be manifested. Instead, the Jews rejected their Messiah and His message, and demanded His death. As a nation, they became a withered fig tree that bore no fruit, even a cursed fig tree that will not bear fruit, only leaves (Matthew 21.18-19; 24.32). With their rejection, the very kingdom that they longed for was withdrawn from them and has gone into abeyance for the last 2,000 years, awaiting the return of Messiah. The Israel we see in the Middle East today has only leaves; it has borne no fruit, nor will this apostate Israel ever bear fruit, although all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11.26).

Consequently, Jesus declared: ***“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it”*** (Matthew 21.43 NASB). The promise of the kingdom moved to the nations of the earth and a people called out from among the nations, along with a believing remnant from the commonwealth of Israel, that are called to bear fruit to the glory of God. However, this offer of the kingdom is not the political kingdom of the heavens that is in abeyance and that will come in the next eon. It is the spiritual kingdom that is for all who believe in Jesus in this eon. These are the ones who sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts (1 Peter 3.15).

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The key to understanding *the kingdom of the heavens* is found through Daniel the prophet as he unfolded the revelation of four earthly kingdoms, followed by God's kingdom that will crush all the previous ones and rise for the eons, as well as through references to the throne of David and the Son of Mankind coming in His kingdom.

“In the days of those kings the God of the heavens is setting up a kingdom which shall not be pawned for the eon. And the kingdom shall not be left to another people. **It is crushing and terminating all these kingdoms, and it shall rise for the eons.**” (Daniel 2.44 cv)

In Daniel 7.13-14, we are given a glorious picture of Christ as the Son of Mankind standing before the Transferrer (Ancient) of Days and receiving jurisdiction (dominion), esteem (glory) and a kingdom with eonian jurisdiction that will not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be confined. In Luke's account, we are given further reinforcement of this fact.

“He shall be great, and Son of the Most High shall He be called. And the Lord God shall be giving Him **the throne of David**, His father, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the eons. And of **His kingdom there shall be no consummation.**” (Luke 1.32-33 cv)

Notice that this kingdom is in direct relation to the promise to David to have a son sitting on his throne, which reveals the progression of the kingdom that will come upon this earth. Daniel's view was limited in some respects, for he only saw his people, the Hebrews, coming into this kingdom. In his mind, what was revealed to him referred to his people *only* (Daniel 9.24; 10.14; 11.14; 12.1), but we know that it refers to the true sons of Israel, the ones who have circumcised hearts, *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God* (John 1.13 NASB).

A careful study of Daniel 7 will reveal that the kingdom in question is an earthly kingdom, for it is a kingdom that has jurisdiction under the entire heavens (not in it or throughout it) (Daniel 7.27). In other words, it has jurisdiction over the entire earth. Further, this kingdom will be given to the saints, which, again, to Daniel referred to his people.

The Israelites expected the God of the heavens to bring His rule down to earth, and this is the primary meaning of *the reign of the heavens*. This was their expectation, and it will be fulfilled when Jesus as the Messiah sets up His kingdom over this earth.

Most notably is the fact that the twelve apostles of Christ were seeking and expecting the kingdom to be restored to Israel as well. After speaking to His disciples about the seven parables of the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, Jesus asked them if they had understood them, to which they responded that they had. Since, at this point in their walk with the Lord, they knew nothing of the body

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of Christ seated among the celestials that was revealed to Paul at a later point, their understanding had to be in line with the Hebrew prophets and the expectation of the Israelites for Messiah to come and set up His kingdom on earth.

When Simon Peter's brother Andrew first discovered that Jesus was the Messiah, he ran to his brother Simon and declared: "*We have found the Messiah*" (John 1.41). This is what they were looking for, and it was based entirely on what the Hebrew prophets had foretold.

After His resurrection, Jesus walked among His disciples and for forty days spoke to them that which concerns the kingdom of God (Acts 1.3 cv). Just before He was taken up in a cloud to ascend back to His Father in heaven, Jesus was questioned by His disciples: "*Lord, art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?*" *Yet He said to them, "Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction"* (Acts 1.6-7 cv).

At His first advent, Jesus came to preach *the kingdom of the heavens* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10.6; 15.24) and His parting words to His disciples confirm this fact. What was the perspective of the out-called (*ecclesia*) of Israel? Their expectation was for Messiah to appear on the earth and bring the rule of the heavens to the earth. They had no aspiration of "going to heaven." For them, the heavens do rule meant that the sovereign rule of God will finally come to the earth when Messiah is seated on the throne of David, executing the will of God on earth. This is why Jesus told His twelve disciples to pray: *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6.10).

This all refers to the kingdom of the Son of Mankind that will come upon this earth in fulfillment of Jesus' own words.

"For **the Son of Man [Mankind]** is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see **the Son of Man [Mankind] coming in His kingdom.**" (Matthew 16.27-28 NASB [CV])

"But when **the Son of Man [Mankind]** comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on **His glorious throne.**" (Matthew 25.31 NASB [CV])

Thus, when the reign of the heavens comes upon this earth, it will be the manifestation of the kingdom of David and the kingdom of the Son of Mankind.

Now, through the interpretation of a dream given to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel prophesied of the eonian kingdom of Christ.

'And in the days of these kings raise up doth the God of the heavens a kingdom that is not destroyed—to the age, and its kingdom to another people

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is not left: it beateth small and endeth all these kingdoms, and it standeth to the age [confirmed for the eons].’ (Daniel 2.44 YLT [CVI])

At the end of our present age or eon, the God of the heavens will raise up a kingdom on earth that will not be destroyed but will last to the end of the eons. All other earthly kingdoms will not stand in the day of this kingdom, for this will be the day in which the heavens do rule on earth. ⁶

A kingdom of righteousness, justice, peace, and lovingkindness.

When the heavens do rule on earth, the inhabitants of this earth will finally experience that for which their hearts have longed. The foundation of the kingdom over the earth will be righteousness and justice, which will usher in peace and lovingkindness throughout the earth. When He comes to establish His kingdom over this earth, Christ will judge in righteousness. Under His reign there will be no end to peace. He will uphold His kingdom with justice and righteousness. He will act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. His lovingkindness will fill the earth. The very foundation of His throne is righteousness and justice, for He loves righteousness and justice.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called **Faithful and True**, and **in righteousness He judges and wages war**. His eyes are a flame of fire, and **on His head are many diadems**; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called **The Word of God**. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and **He will rule them with a rod of iron**; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”** (Revelation 19.11-16 NASB)

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and **He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land**. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, **“The LORD our righteousness.”**” (Jeremiah 23.5-6 NASB)

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace**. There will be **no end to the increase of His government or of peace**, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and **to uphold it with**

⁶ In the history of the nations on the second earth, the average life span of the great civilizations that have arisen to date has been about 200 years.

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justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore [lit. henceforth and age-abiding, or eonian]. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9.6-7 NASB [REB/CV])

“In those days and at that time I will cause **a righteous Branch of David** to spring forth; and **He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.**” (Jeremiah 33.15 NASB)

He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the loving-kindness of the LORD. (Psalm 33.5 NASB)

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; lovingkindness and truth go before You. How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O LORD, they walk in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all the day, and by Your righteousness they are exalted. For You are the glory of their strength, and by Your favor our horn is exalted. (Psalm 89.14-17 NASB)

A throne will even be established in **lovingkindness**, and a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; moreover, **he will seek justice and be prompt in righteousness.** (Isaiah 16.5 NASB)

War will cease and the Lord will judge the nations and settle all disputes according to God’s law. The nations will even desire to learn the ways of the Lord. This is in full keeping with another word from Isaiah: *For when the earth experiences Your judgments, **the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness*** (Isaiah 26.9 NASB).

This kingdom will last for 1,000 years and will end with the onset of a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3.13; Revelation 21.1). Much could be written about the millennial reign of Christ, but this is beyond the scope of this chapter.

At this point, I must change gears, so to speak, and return to the spiritual kingdom of God in relation to Christians (believers in Jesus) of our present eon. At the end of the chapter, I will bring it all together under the kingdom of Christ.

The spiritual kingdom of God.

God is spirit (John 4.24), and as such, God’s kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. Of course, our world system or *kosmos* [orderly arrangement] does not recognize the spiritual nature of God’s rule, for the kingdoms of men are mainly built upon the temporal and the physical, that is, what is transitory and what can be seen and felt.

Israel’s failure as a nation was due to its lack of faith (Hebrews 4.2), which ultimately comes from the lack of knowing that God’s kingdom is a spiritual

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kingdom. They viewed the whole matter of earthly kingdoms as the rest of the world does, which is clearly seen in the encounter Nicodemus had with Jesus.

Jesus answered and said to him, 'Verily, verily, I say to thee, If any one may not be **born from above**, he is not able **to see the reign of God...**' (John 3.3 YLT)

How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (John 3.4 KJV)

Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say to thee, If any one may not be **born of water, and the Spirit, he is not able to enter into the reign of God...**' (John 3.5 YLT)

To this day, the attitude as evidenced by Nicodemus remains unchanged among those that call themselves Jews. However, in the next eon, the true Israel of God, the ones with a new heart and spirit, will be revealed to the nations, and the world is led into the renascence. ⁷

A new heart also will I give you, and **a new spirit** will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you **a heart of flesh**. And **I will put my Spirit within you**, and **cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances**, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36.26-28 ASV; also Hebrews 8.7-12)

But the good news is that those who have believed in Jesus and His finished work on the cross in this eon have been born of water and spirit, and have already received an earnest of the spirit of God, and their uncircumcised hearts are being circumcised. They are coming into the renascence, or we might say that they taste the true renascence to come. They have not received the full anointing of the spirit of God, which will be manifested in spiritual bodies, and God's laws have not been fully put upon their hearts and written in their minds, so that they are as natural to them as breathing. But praise God; Christ's body is being built as a temple of God; each believer is a temple of the spirit of God.

Now **we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God**, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2.12-13 NASB)

⁷ Yet Jesus said to them, "Verily, I am saying to you, that you who follow Me, in **the renascence** whenever the Son of Mankind should be seated on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19.28 CV)

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Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that **the Spirit of God dwells in you?** (1 Corinthians 3.16 NASB)

Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and **given the earnest of the Spirit** in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1.21-22 KJV; [*earnest* in ASV, CV, DNT, GB, LITV, WEB, YLT])

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us **the earnest of the Spirit.** (2 Corinthians 5.5 KJV; [*earnest* in ASV, CV, DNT, GB, LITV, WEB, YLT])

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise**, who is given as a **pledge [earnest]** of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1.13-14 NASB [*earnest* in ASV, CV, DNT, GB, KJV, LITV, WEB, YLT])

Notice that for us who believe in this eon we receive the spirit of God as an earnest or a pledge of what is to come, which points to the promise of eonian life in the eons to come, as well as immortality. Paul revealed the true nature of the body of Christ as an entirely new creation, not merely a regenerated man, but a transfigured, spiritual man (body) that is destined to be constituted to reign among the celestials (1 Corinthians 15.44-57; 2 Corinthians 5.17) for the eons of the eons.

Writing to believers from among the nations, Paul encouraged their hearts that they are growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

So, consequently, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the holy ones and [members] of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being [the] cornerstone, in whom [the] entire building having been joined together is growing into **a holy temple in [the] Lord**, in whom also you [plural] are **being built together into a habitation for God in the Spirit.** (Ephesians 2.19-22 ALT)

Is there anything greater than being built together into a habitation for God in the spirit? This speaks of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God that is in accord with the purpose of the eons.

A spiritual house.

The spiritual kingdom is a spiritual house of living stones.

And coming to Him as to **a living stone** which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood**, to offer

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up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2.4-5 NASB)

King's of old lived in stone castles that were often cold and dark. The castles had no life, for they were made of inanimate stones. But God's King is a living stone, and His kingdom is made up of living stones that are being built together in Christ into a spiritual house. The living stones are to become a holy priesthood in the age to come. Those found worthy to attain to the first resurrection will be priests unto God.

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20.6 NASB)

Who are the ones that will become a royal priesthood? They are the ones that know and unashamedly declare who Jesus, the Son of Mankind, is.

Simon Peter answered, **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** (Matthew 16.16 NASB)

This is the Rock upon which this spiritual house is being built to the glory of God. Jesus is the Son of the living God who is building a living house of living stones. There is no death in this house, for its living stones are destined for the first resurrection, immortality and eonian life.

Those who conquer through the love of Christ, walking in a manner worthy of the kingdom, not defiling themselves with the things of this world, will enter into the coming kingdom as priests of the order of Melchizedek. They are like the sons of Zadok who will minister both in the sanctuary to the Lord (celestial realm) and in the outer court (physical realm) to the mortals (see Ezekiel 44).

Christ will be the King-Priest on the order of Melchizedek. His priesthood is not of the order of Aaron.

So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; just as He says also in another passage, **"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."** (Hebrews 5.5-6 NASB; see Hebrews 5.6, 10; 6.20; chapter 7)

Melchizedek of old who met Abraham is a type of Christ the King-Priest.

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils,

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was first of all, by the translation of his name, **king of righteousness**, and then also king of Salem, which is **king of peace**. (Hebrews 7.1-2 NASB)

When He comes to this earth, Christ will come as the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, and His kingdom of king-priests will administer righteousness and peace throughout His kingdom. In their glorified, spiritual bodies, they will be able to move freely between the celestial and the earthly (physical) realms.

The celestial kingdom.

For those who believe in Jesus in this eon, that is, the ones who are members of the body of Christ, the *celestial* kingdom awaits them.

According to Paul, we could say that the message of the kingdom encompasses far more than just the earth or the physical realm. It also encompasses the celestial realm, or what is called *the celestial kingdom* or *celestial reign*. Paul is the one through whom the secret of the celestials was revealed, and this secret refers to the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ.

Spiritually speaking, today, the predestined are blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, and are seated together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1.3; 2.6 cv). This is a present spiritual reality pointing toward a future manifestation when the conquerors of Christ will enter the celestial and spiritual realm. The day will come, and we pray soon, that the anointed firstfruits will enter the celestial kingdom and reign with Christ as He heads up all, both in the heavens and on the earth (Ephesians 1.10).

At the end of his life, Paul joined the celestial kingdom with the oncoming eons.

Yet the Lord stood beside me, and He invigorates me, that through me the heralding may be fully discharged, and all the nations should hear; and I am rescued out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will be rescuing me from every wicked work and will be saving me for **His celestial kingdom**: to Whom be glory for **the eons of the eons**. Amen! (2 Timothy 4.17-18 cv)

In the spiritual sense, Paul saw himself already among the celestials, but he also saw the coming eon in which he, along with all who attain to the *out-resurrection* (Philippians 3.11), will enter the celestial kingdom as a new creation in Christ with a spiritual body.

There are **bodies celestial** as well as **bodies terrestrial**. But a different glory, indeed, is that of **the celestial**, yet a different that of **the terrestrial**, another glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star is excelling star in glory. Thus also is **the resurrection of the dead**. It is sown in corruption; it is roused in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is roused in glory. It is sown in infirmity; it is roused in power. It is sown a soulish body; it is roused **a spiritual body**. If there is a soulish

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body, there is a **spiritual also**. Thus it is written also, The first man, Adam, “became a living soul:” the last Adam a vivifying Spirit. But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon **the spiritual**. The first man was out of the earth, soilish; **the second Man is the Lord out of heaven**. Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as **the Celestial One**, such are those also who are celestials. And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of **the Celestial**. Now this I am averring, brethren, that flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption. (1 Corinthians 15.40-50 cv)

This celestial kingdom comes into full view for all the saints at the presence of the Lord when He comes to resurrect those who have believed and trusted in Him, obeyed His word (law), and conquered through His love. In that glorious day, the saints will be wearing the image of the Celestial and enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, which is also the celestial kingdom for which Paul longed, and for which we are waiting.

Until that day, the body of Christ is in spiritual warfare with the dark forces among the celestials. Paul pealed back the curtain on this warfare and the way to fight the battle.

Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary, for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness **among the celestials**. Therefore take up the panoply of God that you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked day, and having effected all, to stand. (Ephesians 6.11-13 cv)

Why is there so much conflict between the body of Christ and these unseen, dark powers? There is only one possible explanation, and that pertains to who will reign among the celestials. Today, these dark, celestial forces have jurisdiction over this earth, influencing the nations and kingdoms of the world. But the day is coming when they will be cast out and replaced with a people, namely, the body of Christ, whose reign under the Headship of Christ will extend throughout the universe. They will rise in rank above the angels in the kingdom of God, and they will be charged with setting things right (judging) with the angels. This is the multifarious wisdom of God that is being made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, in accord with the purpose of the eons (Ephesians 3.10-11 cv).

Beloved in Christ, entering the celestial kingdom of Christ and being joined with Christ as He heads up all in the heavens and on the earth is to be our fondest hope or expectation (Ephesians 1.10). It is what we are to be striving to enter. Our hope is not about rising in the air as so many preachers stress in our day. Do not put your hope in what many call the *rapture*. Our hope is to be transfigured into the body of His glory and to always be with our Lord, which is intimately connected with the celestials and the work to be done on earth in the oncoming eons.

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Are you looking to “go to heaven,” or are you waiting for the Son of God to come out **OF** heaven, so that you can meet Him and escort him back to this earth, so that He can begin to reign over the kingdom of this earth? Where will Christ be reigning during the oncoming eon? He will reign over the earth. Where will His body-bride be while He reigns? Paul tells us to comfort ourselves that we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4.17). Where He is, we will be. We will be forever in His presence once we come into His presence at the end of this eon, whether He is heading up all on the earth or in the heavens. We will be engaged in His business, which is in both the physical and the celestial, spiritual realm. This includes ministering to God.

Our hope is to reign over the earth and among the celestials, which is a realm beyond our expectations. This is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Although the word *celestial* means “on-heavens” or “that part of the universe which is higher than all the heavens,” perhaps it is best to think of the celestials as another dimension rather than a specific place. What if the throne of God is not billions of miles away but in our midst, hidden by the limits of our physical dimension? Something to think about!

The kingdom of the Son of His love.

Today, the only ones who have entered the spiritual kingdom of God, the spiritual house of God, and are in varying degrees under the reign of this kingdom as they sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts, are the members of the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ. Paul adds to this glory by declaring that God transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, which speaks of a relational kingdom, just as the kingdom of the Father is a relational kingdom.

Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear, do not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God; being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy; at the same time giving thanks to the Father, Who makes you competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light, Who rescues us out of the jurisdiction of Darkness, and **transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love**, in Whom we are having deliverance, the pardon of sins.... (Colossians 1.9-14 cv)

We have been brought into the very love of God in His Son and given to us through the Holy Spirit.

Hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.** (Romans 5.5 NASB)

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We cannot see with our natural eyes the kingdom of the Son of His love any more than we can see the jurisdiction of darkness. But we know it in our spiritual heart. We know they exist because we have been given the spirit of God that allows us to discern that which is spiritual and to love all around us, including our enemies. The kingdom of God is a present spiritual power that operates in our lives. It is within us.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:** Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you.** (Luke 17.20-21 KJV)

For **the kingdom of God is** not eating and drinking, but **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.** (Romans 14.17 NASB)

For **the kingdom of God** does not consist in words but **in power.** (1 Corinthians 4.20 NASB)

What is the source of this power? Is it not the grace of God, which is the overwhelming power that takes the ugly and transforms it into the joyously beautiful, **and** the love of God? In his first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote: *Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 1.14 cv). The power of grace overwhelms us with the faith and love of Christ. It is not our faith and love any more than it is our grace. It is all of God. But what is the greatest of these? Is it not love (1 Corinthians 13.13)? The power of God is the power of love. This is why Jesus emphasized love while He walked on this earth at His first advent and why the apostles stress love in their epistles.

We who have believed are experiencing a foretaste of the kingdom of the Son of His love. It is God's love for His Son that has made it possible for us to enter the kingdom of God, which is not only a spiritual kingdom but also a kingdom of love. It is the love of Christ into which we have been transported.

Today, Christ walks among His body on earth dispensing His blessings of love and manifesting the kingdom as a present spiritual power driven by grace, which overwhelms with faith and love. Our Beloved Lord is not trillions of light years from us, for the word is *Christ among (in) the nations, the expectation of glory!* By faith and with great expectation we wait for the presence of the Lord when He will peel back the veil to welcome us into His celestial kingdom of glory.

Paul never lost sight of the coming celestial kingdom and pressed on toward it. Until the glory of that day, let us be like Paul.

Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, **I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 3.13-14 ASV)

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What is the goal unto the prize? It is entering the coming kingdom and glory through the *out-resurrection* (Philippians 3.11 W&E) or *first* resurrection reserved for those who walk worthy of the God who calls into His own kingdom and glory. It is not man's kingdom; it is God's kingdom. It is not man's glory; it is God's glory.

The kingdom and glory.

You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would **walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.** (1 Thessalonians 2.10-12 NASB)

Paul saw the goal set, not only before him, but before all the brethren in Christ, and he encouraged the brethren in Thessalonica to walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls *you* into His own *kingdom and glory*. This is the same thing as pressing on toward the goal for the prize. The call is an invitation to enter God's kingdom and glory in the next eon and to be part of the work of Christ in heading up all until all is filled with His glory.

The Psalmist expressed the desire of his heart as one who saw the day when the whole earth would be filled with His glory.

And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may **the whole earth be filled with His glory.** Amen, and Amen. (Psalm 72.19 NASB)

However, glory will not be manifested all at once as if the whole earth will explode with glory. No; the kingdom and glory will take root in the earth and be progressively manifested until not only the earth, but the entire creation of God is filled with the glory of God.

Today, the glory of God can be seen in some measure in the creation around us, some of which is breathtaking in its beauty and magnificence. This form of glory is in the physical realm, but there is a glory in the spiritual realm that is veiled in our day. It is the glory of Christ that is being formed in the called-out vessel, the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ. Christ *in* you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1.27)!

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror **the glory of the Lord**, are **being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3.18 NASB)

But **we have this treasure in earthen vessels**, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.... (2 Corinthians 4.7 NASB)

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The glory of the Lord will come in a people before it is manifested in the earth. In fact, the glory of the Lord will be manifested to the nations of the earth in His people. Today, it is hidden in earthen vessels, waiting to be manifested in spiritual, celestial bodies.

Habakkuk the prophet stood on his guard post to keep watch to see what the Lord would speak to him. The Lord answered by telling him to record the vision, *for the vision yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay* (Habakkuk 2.1-3 NASB). The Lord continued to speak to Habakkuk five specific woes. In the third woe, the Lord declared that He makes the nations grow weary for nothing, **“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”** (Habakkuk 2.14 NASB; also Isaiah 11.9).

All of man’s fading glory must be brought to naught, so that the glory of the Lord will go forth.

The writer of the Hebrews epistle brought this prophecy to light as pertaining to the coming of the Lord, *for yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay* (Hebrews 10.37 NASB). The world to come is the subject of the Hebrews epistle (Hebrews 2.5), and within this context is the promise of bringing many sons to glory through the One who is now crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2.9-10).

When Christ, the Son of Man, comes to reign over this earth in the next eon, He will come in His glory and sit upon the throne of His glory.

When the Son of man shall come in **his glory**, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon **the throne of his glory**.... (Matthew 25.31 KJV)

As he beheld the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple, Isaiah the prophet heard the seraphim calling out to one another (Isaiah 6.1-2 NASB).

And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, **the whole earth is full of His glory.**” (Isaiah 6.3 NASB)

When the Lord sits on His throne of glory, the whole earth will be filled with His glory. But take note that when He does come to sit upon His throne over this earth, He will be glorified in His saints on that day.

These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day**, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1.9-10 NASB)

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This is the beginning of the glory of the Lord being manifested in the earth and through a people that will progress until it has filled the whole earth, which will occur during the Kingdom or Tabernacles Age, the next eon (Numbers 14.20). However, as glorious as this eon will be, I do not believe that it will be the culmination of glory. It is not until the earth upon which we live enters its own lake of fire to be purged of all wickedness that glory will truly fill the earth upon which mankind lives. This does not occur until the last eon, the eon of the eons, God's day, the eighth day, in which all is new and the glory of God comes down out of heaven as the city-bride, a people conformed to the image of the Son, envelopes the entire earth. This is God's purpose and plan!

We could also say that glory does not fill all until God the Father is *All* in all. When He is all there is only one word to describe it, and that word is *glory*. The glory of God will shine brighter and brighter until it bursts forth out of heaven to fully envelope the new earth.

A bride having the glory of God.

John, the apostle who received the Patmos vision, *The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*, saw a new heaven and a new earth and the glory coming down out of heaven.

Then **I saw a new heaven and a new earth**; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And **I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband**. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, **the tabernacle of God is among men**, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them...." (Revelation 21.1-3 NASB)

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the **holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God**. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. (Revelation 21.10-11 NASB)

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb**. (Revelation 21.23 NASB)

The nations will **walk by its light**, and **the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it**. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and **they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it**; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21.24-27 NASB)

Today, there is much talk about the Jerusalem that now sits on the land in what is presently the state of Israel, as if this is where the Lord and His people will reside

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in the oncoming eons. However, this Jerusalem has been judged and is mystically called Sodom and Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified (Jeremiah 19.10-13; Revelation 11.8 NASB).

Paul, the apostle of the nations, sheds light on the matter in his epistle to the Galatians.

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now **this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.** But **the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.** For it is written, “REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.” And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? **“CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.”** So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman. (Galatians 4.22-31 NASB)

Carefully follow Paul’s thought. The Jerusalem on earth corresponds with the old covenant and Hagar, which means the city we see on earth called *Jerusalem* is not our city. We are not children of the bondwoman and her son; they must be cast out. In other words, the Jerusalem of our day must be rejected. We are to be sons of the free woman. Paul declares that the Jerusalem above is our mother. We have no Jerusalem on earth in our present eon or in the one to come. We are born from above!

We are to be heirs of the Jerusalem that is above, New Jerusalem that will come down out of heaven having the glory of God. This is the bride of the Lamb, a city-temple of glorified people *in* spirit, all in the image of the Son of Glory. But take note that the glory of the city will illuminate the earth and the kings of the nations will bring their glory into the city. What is the source of the nations’ glory? It is the city of God!

The celestial and the physical realm will become one, and the new earth will be the center of the affairs of God’s vast creation and universe as all mankind will continue to be brought into the holy of holies.

THE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE EONS

The kingdom of Christ.

Now, there is one more expression of the kingdom and that is ***the kingdom of Christ***, which, in the coming eons, is expressed as the kingdom of the heavens, the kingdom of the Son of His love, the kingdom of our Lord, His kingdom, the celestial kingdom, the eonian kingdom of our Lord and Savior, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ. Essentially, all the expressions of the kingdom related to God will be brought together in Christ. The kingdom of Christ speaks of when Christ rules, not only in the heavens but on the earth, not only in the spiritual realm but in the physical realm, not only in hearts but in nations, and not only in love but in righteousness.

The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of the eons of the eons. The kingdom of God is endless; however, the kingdom of Christ is of the eons (*eonian*). A day will come when loud voices in heaven will declare that ***the kingdom of this world became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons*** (Revelation 11.15 cv). The absolute reign of Christ that extends from the earth to the far reaches of the universe encompasses the oncoming eons.

The kingdom of Christ will be consummated with the kingdom of God the Father. The purpose of the eons is for God's Son to head up all, and when He has accomplished this work, the Son will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, so that He may be *All* in all. [I realize that I am repeating this point, but I want to make sure that you don't miss it, for if you do miss it, then you miss the purpose of God.] The kingdom does not end at this point, but its character does change. All sovereignty, all authority and power will be nullified, and death will be abolished (see 1 Corinthians 15.20-28). Government as we know it will change as all creation becomes one family with one Father. The kingdom of Christ will become the kingdom of God the Father.

It appears that this truth is lost in a sea of confusion among the innumerable sermons preached throughout Christendom. We might be tempted to think that Christ's abdication of the throne of the kingdom is something of a defeat, disgrace or abasement to Christ. Quite the contrary; it is the height of victory and for the greatest glory of God. If Christ does not give up the kingdom to God the Father, then His reign will not be a success, and He will have failed in His mission.

The purpose of the eons is for God to be *All* in all, and the accomplishment of this purpose has been given to the Son of God. His primary work is to head up all, so that God may be all. If the Son does not subject Himself to the Father, then He will not have accomplished the work that He has been given to do. The Son's desire is to do the will of His Father. Scripture is filled with the proof of this desire.

But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." ... "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me." (John 5.17, 36 NASB)

THE KINGDOM OF GOD THE FATHER

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me." ... "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." (John 10.25, 37-38 NASB)

"Father, glorify Thy name." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12.28 NASB)

"Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." (Luke 22.42 NASB)

When He was on earth, Jesus finished the work His Father gave Him to do (John 17.4). He was obedient to the point of death on a cross. The finished work of the cross was and is an absolute success. When He finished this work, there was nothing more to do to bring salvation to all mankind. Consequently, when the work of heading up all for God is finished, there is nothing else to do. He cannot proceed beyond this work and be obedient to the will of God. When all is subjected to Him and death is abolished, then the work is finished, and He must deliver the kingdom to His Father. In that glorious day, all mankind will be reconciled to God as well. Can you imagine anything more glorious than Jesus bringing salvation and reconciliation to all mankind, so that God may be *All* in all?

Dear brethren, may the eyes of your heart be enlightened to see the glory of the work given to the Son and to come into the realization that all the saints of all eras will one day join Christ as He heads up all in the heavens and on the earth. When Christ has accomplished His work, the reign of all the saints who will have reigned with Christ will end as well.

They shall be reigning for the eons of the eons. (Revelation 22.5 cv)

Let us not fear that all will end and we will cease when all is headed up in Christ. ***And of His kingdom there shall be no consummation*** (Luke 1.33 cv). Believers are on the leading edge of the greatest kingdom that mankind and all God's creation have ever known, beginning with the eons of the eons and moving beyond the consummation of these eons into the magnificent, endless glory of God. God has great things planned for those who love Him in our present eon, and in the consummation of the eons, all will love Him, not out of coercion or force but out of true heart-felt love for the Father of all. Can you imagine anything greater than being bathed in the love of God and never again having to deal with sin and death? This is glory!

But there is great news for those who believe in this day; as new creations in Christ, the conquering believers of Christ will enter the kingdom of Christ in the next eon and experience that which all mankind will eventually experience. Today, we can only taste it, but then we will live it! Hallelujah!

THE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE EONS

The word of the kingdom.

In conclusion, as He walked among the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Jesus proclaimed *the reign of the heavens*, but He also spoke of *the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens* through parables, so that only His closest disciples understood. In fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, most of the Jews did not understand them, for their hearts had become dull to the things of God. In the context of *the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens* (Matthew 13.11, 13), Jesus referred to the going forth of *the word of the kingdom* as a message to be sown in the heart of the hearer.

When any one heareth **the word of the kingdom [reign]**, and understandeth it not.... (Matthew 13.19 KJV [YLT])

In the strictest sense, *the word of the kingdom (reign)* refers to the political kingdom of the heavens that will overtake the nations of the earth; however, it is actually much bigger than this. *The word of the kingdom* encompasses the vastness of the kingdom of Christ that is to come not only on earth, but also in the heavens in the oncoming eons as Christ heads up all. Not only will all kingdoms be gathered up, summed up and headed up in Christ, but **everything** in the heavens and on the earth will be gathered together in Christ. This was the secret of God's will revealed to Paul.

Having disclosed to us the secret [or, mystery] of His will, according to His good pleasure which **He Himself purposed** [or, planned] **in Him**, with respect to the administration of **the fullness [or, completion] of the times**, to gather together [or, to unify] all [things] in Christ, the [things] **in the heavens and the things on the earth**.... (Ephesians 1.9-10 ALT)

During the coming eons (the eons of the eons), Christ will head up all in the heavens and on the earth until He has subjected all to Himself, and He fills all in all. The most amazing truth is that He will do this through the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ; His complement that is seated among the celestials in what Paul called *the celestial kingdom*. His body is **the complement (fullness) of the One completing the all in all** (Ephesians 1.23 cv). If you belong to Jesus, then do not let this glorious truth pass you by; meditate on it until it floods your heart with joy. You have been chosen to bring about the purpose of God in Christ.

God the Father has purposed that when the times have been completed, which refers to the consummation of the eons, the work of Christ will have been done. When He has accomplished the mission given to Him by His Father, then He will deliver up the kingdom to His Father, so that **God may be All in all**. At the consummation of the eons, **all mankind**, without exception, will enter **the kingdom of God the Father** to be enjoyers of God's love. This is the all-encompassing word of the kingdom.

Praise God!