

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*The Reason Christ Created Man,
Became Man, and Is Coming Again*



SAM MCVAY, JR.
&
SPENCER STEWART

*The Kingdom of God:
The Reason Christ Created Man, Became Man, and Is Coming Again*
Copyright © 2010 by Sam McVay, Jr., and Spencer Stewart

Project one28 Publishing
P.O. Box 531
El Dorado, KS 67042

www.ProjectOne28.com

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good news Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked NIV are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked NASB taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:	
Defining Kingdom	2
SECTION ONE:	
A King about His Kingdom	3
SECTION TWO:	
Competing Kingdoms	7
SECTION THREE:	
The Close of the Age at the Return of the King	10
SECTION FOUR:	
Hastening the Day	15
BENEDICTION:	
Come, Lord Jesus!	18

INTRODUCTION

The central theme of the Scriptures is the Kingdom of God. Controversy over God's Kingdom defines our age – the period of time from Genesis 1:2 until Revelation 21:1. The Kingdom is God's purpose in the creation of Man. The reality of the Kingdom of God is what gives coherent meaning to Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, outpouring, and return.

What does *kingdom* mean? As modern Americans, we may first think of kingdom in geographic terms: a realm or a nation ran by a king, such as the United Kingdom. We may think of a place like heaven. Scripturally, the definition is more dynamic and interpersonal than physical locations.

For example,¹ Daniel 5:26 speaks of the kingdom of Belshazzar coming to an end. Clearly, the land of Babylon did not cease to exist, but Belshazzar's *reign* ended and was given to another.

Perhaps the clearest definition of kingdom in Scripture comes from Jesus' parable in Luke 19:12, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return." He did not go to get land; he went to get *authority to reign*, the right to rule. This is the simple, scriptural definition of the Kingdom of God: *the rule of God*.

The modern American church has often framed the main goal of Jesus' ministry as getting people out of hell and into heaven. Unfortunately, this has stunted, or even preempted, the discipleship of many converts who are just waiting for heaven. In truth, believers go to heaven only until Jesus brings them back to *earth* at His second coming.² We proclaim Jesus is our Savior – and more than a Savior. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16), and we should share His primary concern: bringing the Kingdom of God on *earth*.

We pray this brief study will contribute to the gospel of the Kingdom being preached to our neighbors and all nations (Mt. 24:14), producing sons and daughters of the Kingdom (13:38), who hasten the return of the King (2 Pet. 3:12).

¹ Grateful to George Eldon Ladd for these two scriptural examples and the following basic definition. *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 20-21.

² 1 Th. 4:14, Rev. 19:14, 21:1ff., expounded in Sections Three and Four of this booklet.

SECTION ONE: A KING ABOUT HIS KINGDOM

THE BIRTH OF THE KING

When the angel Gabriel prophesied to Mary about the birth of Jesus, he said, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and *of his kingdom there will be no end*" (Lk. 1:32-33). This announcement of Christ's birth³ included fulfillment of the Old Testament anticipation for a King to reign forever.

Perhaps the greatest shift in expectation during the Old Testament occurred when King David desired to build a house for God to dwell on earth (a permanent temple, rather than the portable tabernacle). The prophet Nathan declared David would not build it: "I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (2 Sam. 7:12-14a). In its natural, partial fulfillment, this prophecy spoke of Solomon, who would build the temple. But to reign forever, the true King could not die and stay dead, as Solomon did. Hebrews 1:5 explains that the fullness of this passage speaks of Jesus Christ, who is building the Church, the true spiritual house of God.⁴ The title "Son of David," implied by the angel and spoken by Jesus' disciples,⁵ shows they believed Jesus fulfilled 2 Samuel 7:12-14, a King who would reign forever.

Isaiah also prophesied the birth of this coming King with amazing clarity. In 7:14 he said, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (fulfilled in Mt. 1:22-23). *Immanuel* means "God with us." This Child would be God Himself, born of a virgin, living among us.

Then Isaiah added more specifics in 9:6-7, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and

³ Notice also the Magi's faith in Mt. 2:2, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?"

⁴ Mt. 16:18, 1 Pet. 2:5, 1 Cor. 3:16-17

⁵ Mt. 1:1, 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30, 21:15.

with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.” This Child would be Mighty God in flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14), reigning on earth forever.

THE MINISTRY OF THE KING

After His baptism, “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent,⁶ for the kingdom of the heavens⁷ has drawn near” (lit., Mt. 4:17). Rebellious sinners were bent on running their own lives, or giving their lives to the rule of human kings or false gods. Jesus declared they would have to change their understanding of the world and their purpose in it, turning from worthless, temporary things to the eternally worthy God.

Jesus *proclaimed* the good news of the Kingdom, and He also *demonstrated* the powerful rule of God over anything in opposition to it. Matthew 4:23-24 reads, “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them.”

Jesus taught the Kingdom in the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens” (lit., Mt. 5:3). “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens” (lit., 5:10). Jesus’ parables repeatedly taught about the nature of the Kingdom, “The kingdom is like... the kingdom is like....”⁸ He called them “the secrets of the kingdom” (13:11).

Jesus *proclaimed* the Kingdom, and He also *demonstrated* the Kingdom.⁹ “For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power” (1 Cor. 4:20). Matthew summarized Jesus’ ministry a second time in 9:35, “And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.” The rule of God controls nature, so Jesus calmed storms (Mk. 4:39). The rule of God is righteous, so Jesus overcame temptation without sinning (Mt. 4:10, Heb. 4:15). The

⁶ The Greek word translated “repent” means to change your understanding.

⁷ The “kingdom of the heavens” proves synonymous with the “kingdom of God” by Jesus’ interchange of terms in Mt. 19:23-24. “Of the heavens” is a reverent Jewish manner of implying “God” without saying it, to protect against breaking the Third Commandment, taking God’s Name in vain (Ex. 20:7). It is called a circumlocution (e.g. Lk. 15:18, 21). “Heavens” here is clearly plural in the Greek (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2).

⁸ See Mt. 13:24-52, 20:1-16, 21:28-22:14, 25:1-31.

⁹ Notice also Luke’s repeated couplet, “to hear him and to be healed” (5:15, 6:18).

rule of God shows no favoritism, so Jesus loved the poor and outcast. The rule of God sustains life, so Jesus multiplied bread miraculously to feed thousands (Mt. 14:21, 15:38). The rule of God is sovereign over demons, so Jesus cast them out (Mt. 12:28). Sickness and death will not exist in the fullness of God's Kingdom, so Jesus healed diseases and raised the dead.¹⁰ He brought the future into the present by bringing the authority and power and life of God from heaven to earth.

Jesus called twelve disciples, trained them in the reality of the Kingdom (Mt. 13:52), and sent them out with the right to rule in His Name. He "gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction" (Mt. 10:1). "And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons" (lit., 10:7-8a).

Later, Jesus commissioned seventy-two others, "Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Lk. 10:9). "The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!' And he said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you'" (10:17-19).

Clearly, the central issue in Jesus' ministry was the Kingdom of God.

THE TRIAL OF THE KING

After Jesus' betrayal, He stood on trial before the Jewish Council. "The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.' 'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Mt. 26:63-64 NIV). The high priest tore his clothes and charged blasphemy, and the crowd began to beat Jesus and to mock Him.

Their response showed they understood His reference to Daniel 7:13-14, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one *like a son of man*, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not

¹⁰ Mt. 11:5, Mk. 5:41-42, Lk. 7:14-15, Jn. 11:43-44

be destroyed.” Jesus answered He was indeed the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man prophesied by Daniel to receive the Kingdom of God and the worship of all nations!

Still on trial, Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” (Jn. 18:33). Jesus dialogued, eventually explaining His right to rule did not come from men on earth. “‘You are a king, then!’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying *I am a king*. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me’” (18:37 NIV).

THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE KING

Even in His death, Jesus was declared to be King (however backhanded). “Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews’” (Jn. 19:19).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE KING

Acts 1:3 reveals that, after His resurrection, Jesus spent forty days teaching His disciples. The content of His lessons? Still the Kingdom of God. Before Jesus ascended, He prefaced the Great Recommission¹¹ with these words, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me” (Mt. 28:18). Jesus, the Son of Man, had presented Himself to the Ancient of Days and received the right to rule. Jesus is King, establishing His Kingdom in heaven and on earth.

THE ASCENSION OF THE KING

The prophecy from Daniel 7, alluded to in Matthew 26:64, explains the ascension of Jesus in the clouds (Acts 1:9-11). Peter later preached that Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33, cf. Heb. 1:3). John opened Revelation by praising the exalted Jesus as “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5 NIV), “to him be glory and dominion into the ages of the ages” (lit., 1:6).

This brief overview shows Jesus’ primary concern was the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God gives meaning to His birth, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and as we will see, His outpouring and His return. We have seen God’s solution. In the next section, we will explain the problem. We will see the explicit reason the Son of God became Man.

¹¹ Section Two (page 8) explains the original Great Commission.

SECTION TWO: COMPETING KINGDOMS

Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father in the heavens, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (lit., Mt. 6:9-10). Obviously, something is wrong with earth. On earth, the Name of God is not regarded as holy, the Kingdom is not received, nor His will obeyed *as it is in heaven*. Earth hosts a competing kingdom, countering the purposes of God.

God has an enemy. In the beginning, a perfect angel became proud because of his splendor and rebelled against God, seeking to establish a throne like God’s for himself.¹² He was first a bearer of light, but in judgment, God cast him to earth in darkness. Satan deceived one-third¹³ of the angels to join his rebellion, who are now demons, evil spirits. This is the primary problem with earth: the presence of angelic enemies.

Satan has a kingdom (Mt. 12:26), a dominion of darkness (Col. 1:13). He is called the “god of this age,” the “ruler of this world,” and the “ruler of the authority of the air.”¹⁴ Satan was not bluffing when he tempted Jesus: “And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, ‘To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will’” (Lk. 4:5-6). This is why we use the term “age.” For this period of time,¹⁵ our sovereign God has delayed His final destruction of Satan and allowed him limited authority as the “god of this age.”

WHY CHRIST CREATED MAN

The dominion of darkness through Satan’s competing kingdom on earth set the context for the creation of Man. Many people answer that God created Man in order to love us. God *is* love, amen. *But God plainly speaks the reason for our creation in Genesis 1:26 and 1:28 – to subdue and rule over all the earth as fruitful Image-bearers.* God chose to judge rebellious creatures through faithful creatures in His Image. We are God’s partners on earth. We are God’s answer to an enemy denying His glory.

¹² Isa. 14:12-15, Ezek. 28:12-19, Lk. 10:18, 1 Tim. 3:6. The name for Satan before his fall has been traditionally known as “Lucifer,” from the Latin translation of the Hebrew in Isa. 14:12. *Helel* means “shining one,” used there as a proper noun, a taunting name.

¹³ Rev. 12:4; Ezek. 28:16, 18

¹⁴ Respectively, 2 Cor. 4:4 and Jn. 12:31, 14:30, 16:11 and Eph. 2:2.

¹⁵ Scripture speaks of the ages to come (Mt. 12:32, Eph. 1:21, 2:7). The translation “forever” is from the Greek “into the ages” (e.g. Rev. 1:6). God is “King of ages” (1 Tim. 1:17).

Psalm 8:2 states this explicitly: “Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength *because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.*” God created Man to stop His enemy.

The word “subdue” in Genesis 1:28 carries great significance. Some have tried to redefine this word to suggest gardening or caretaking, but its usage throughout Scripture consistently and clearly means forcing into subjection something hostile to control.¹⁶ Soon after Genesis 1:1,¹⁷ one-third of the angels refused to submit to God’s rule, and so God created Man to bring them under submission and to rule earth in God’s authority. In this first Great Commission, God “blessed” Adam and Eve, which in the Hebrew means to endue with power to accomplish a specific task.¹⁸

Yet in the temptation of Genesis 3, Adam and Eve relinquished their God-given power and authority over Satan. Genesis 1:26 and 1:28 both expressly state Man could rule over “every living creature that moves on the ground.” Satan came as a serpent, moving on the ground. They could have rebuked him, subdued him, and continued their commission to multiply ruling Images of God throughout the earth. Instead, they disbelieved the word of God and sinned. Now Satan is the “deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 Jn. 5:19). The spirit of Satan’s kingdom is at work in those who are disobedient (Eph. 2:2). Those who do not believe in Jesus have been “captured by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:26) as “sons of the evil one” (Mt. 13:38, cf. Jn. 8:44).

WHY CHRIST BECAME MAN

The sovereign God declared Man in His Image would subdue and rule the enemy. Tragically, Man agreed with the enemy and became themselves enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). But God cannot fail! God’s word in Genesis 1:28 would not fail!¹⁹ This is why the Word became flesh. This is why the Son of God became a Man – to accomplish Project 1:28.²⁰ “The reason the Son of God appeared was to undo the works of the devil” (lit.,

¹⁶ John N. Oswalt, “*kābāsh*,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 430.

¹⁷ “From the beginning” in Jn. 8:44 and 1 Jn. 3:8 harkens back toward Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning.” See the booklet, *Light Shines in the Darkness*, for timing (projectOne28.com).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, “*bārak*,” 132.

¹⁹ Rom. 9:6, Jos. 21:45, 23:14, 1 Ki. 8:56, Isa. 55:11, Jer. 1:12

²⁰ Jesus epitomized Gen. 1:28 – blessed (Lk. 1:42), fruitful and multiplying (Jn. 12:24), filling the earth (Eph. 1:23), subduing (1 Pet. 3:22), and ruling (Acts 10:36).

1 Jn. 3:8). Adam was a type and foreshadow of Christ (Rom. 5:14). Adam was in the Image of God; Jesus is the exact Image of God and the radiance of His glory (Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:15). Adam was created to subdue and rule the enemy; Jesus actually did subdue and rule the enemy.

GREATER THAN THE REDEMPTION OF MAN

Jesus came to redeem sinners. Redeem means to buy back for the original purpose. Jesus died in our place; His blood forgave our sins and ransomed us.²¹ Many think the redemption of Man is the central theme of the Scriptures, but that perspective remains too small and too limited. The true story tells much bigger. Jesus died “to reconcile to himself *all things*, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). Jesus did not die to get *only* Man back. Jesus died to get everything back! God subjected the creation to bondage (Rom. 8:20-22) as the jail cell of the rebellious angels. Jesus came to liberate all things from the pollution of the enemy, so that all things may fulfill their original purpose, displaying the glory of God!²²

Jesus redeemed Man as the first step to getting back on the track of Gen. 1:26-28. Jesus died as the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45), putting an end to the species of sinful Man (for those who believe). In His resurrection, Jesus became the “second Man” (1 Cor. 15:47, cf. Acts 13:33), the Firstborn of a new species who could subdue and rule. On the Cross, Christ disarmed the evil rulers and authorities, triumphing over them (Col. 2:15). Dying to be raised to new life, Christ abolished him who held the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). Exalted to the right hand of God, far above all rule and authority, Christ has subdued the rebellious angels (1 Pet. 3:22, Eph. 1:20-23). Those who believe Jesus was raised back to life and confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:9-10). “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13-14 NIV). Believers in Christ can receive the *life* and *authority* purposed to subdue and rule.

The Scriptures do not stop at the redemption of Man, but speed forward with anticipation to the final destruction of God’s enemies and the redemption of *all things*. In Section Three, we will examine what Jesus called the “regeneration.”²³ God plans to redo Genesis 1:1, so He can live with His reigning Son and believers on an incorruptible, new earth.

²¹ Eph. 1:7, Heb. 9:12, Rev. 5:9, 1 Cor. 6:20, Mt. 13:44-46

²² Rom. 1:19-20, Ps. 19:1, Num. 14:21, Ps. 72:19

²³ Mt. 19:28. The Greek *palingenesiai* literally means regeneration or regeneration. Cf. Acts 3:21.

SECTION THREE: THE CLOSE OF THE AGE AT THE RETURN OF THE KING

John 6:15 reads, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself." Does this mean Jesus does not want to be King on earth, but only in heaven? No. The issue is timing.

The Jewish crowd awaited a King to subdue and rule, but their worldliness posed the Roman political authorities as their primary enemy. Most Old Testament prophecies were not about Christ's first coming; the vast majority foretold His second coming.²⁴ They did not see two comings of the Christ. He came first as a suffering Servant to defeat the spiritual-realm enemies of sin, Self, Satan, and death (e.g. Isa. 53, Lk. 17:25).

The delay between Christ's first and second comings stems from God's patience and from His passion to have partners ruling the earth with Christ. God does not desire that any should reject His Son and perish, and so He is giving more time for repentance.²⁵ But God will not endure this wicked age forever. There will come a time when it is too late to repent, when Jesus returns to judge the earth in righteousness.²⁶ Then the new heaven and earth will come together (Rev. 21:1-3), and Christ will be King over all creation (Zech. 14:9, Rev. 22:3).

Daniel interpreted a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, a Babylonian king over all the earth: "...a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them...But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth...In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever" (2:34-44 NIV). The Rock cut out, but not by human hands, speaks of the virgin birth of Jesus. The earth will see many kingdoms come and go, but in the end, the Kingdom of Christ will crush them (Mt. 21:44) and fill the earth (at Rev. 11:15, below).

Jesus reiterated this truth from Daniel. In the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus taught that His Kingdom starts small, but grows to rule over

²⁴ We present very few here. For more, listen to Disciple Training Center audio: NewLifeEquip.com/audio/kingdom3.mp3 and [/kingdom4.mp3](http://kingdom4.mp3)

²⁵ 2 Pet. 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4, Rom. 11:25

²⁶ Ps. 96:13, Isa. 11:4, Acts 17:31

all the creatures of earth (Mt. 13:31-32).²⁷ In the parable of the leaven, Jesus taught His Kingdom advances until it spreads through all the earth (13:33).

The majority of Christ's parables concerned the close of the age, removing His enemies from the earth and bringing salvation to His believers. In many parables,²⁸ Jesus spoke of two groups of people:

1. Sons of the Kingdom:
Believers who voluntarily receive His rule with child-like faith
2. Sons of the Evil One:
Unbelievers who do not want Jesus to reign

In the end, both groups will submit to King Jesus. When Christ returns, in power and glory, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (Isa. 45:23-24, Phil. 2:10-11, Rom. 14:11). But only the group who preemptively submits to His rule will enter into the joy of His eternal Kingdom (Mt. 25:21, 34). Jesus proclaimed now is the year of the Lord's favor when He quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 (Lk. 4:17-21). He intentionally left off what we now proclaim – the end of the phrase in verse two, “the day of the vengeance of our God.” Now Jesus is baptizing in the Holy Spirit for salvation, but soon He will baptize with fire for judgment (Mt. 3:11). On that day, the sons of the evil one will be gathered out of His Kingdom and thrown into the fiery furnace (Mt. 13:40-42). To believers, the return of the King will be an answer to prayer, a Day of glory; to unbelievers, it will be a hostile takeover, an unbearable Day of wrath.

THE CLIMAX OF KINGDOM CONFLICT

The lead-up to that Day and the close of the age will be the unfathomably intense climax of kingdom conflict.²⁹ God has His Christ; Satan will empower his Antichrist. Christ has His faithful Bride, the Church; the Antichrist will feign love with Harlot Babylon (Rev. 17). Christ is the Prince of Peace; the Antichrist will masquerade as a man of peace (1 Thess. 5:3), making a treaty with all nations to be king over all the earth (Dan. 9:27). All nations will hate the Church, persecuting believers with tribulation and death (Mt. 24:9). Satan will intensify his

²⁷ Cf. Ezek. 17:23, 31:6; Dan. 4:12

²⁸ Such as the weeds (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43), the net (13:47-50), the two sons (21:28-32), the tenants (21:33-44), the wedding feast (22:1-14), the ten virgins (25:1-13), the talents (25:14-30), the sheep and goats (25:31-46), and the ten minas (Lk. 19:11-27).

²⁹ Let not your hearts fear; God's perfect love toward us drives out all fear (1 Jn. 4:18). Greater is Christ in us, than Satan in the world (4:4).

work in unbelievers, lawlessness will increase, false prophets will deceive, and under the circumstances, many will fall away from the faith (Mt. 24:11-12, 13:21; 2 Thess. 2:3, 1 Tim. 4:1).

Three-and-a-half years after the Antichrist's world treaty, his mask will come off. He will set himself up in the temple in Jerusalem, claiming to be God and demanding to be worshiped.³⁰ The Antichrist will perform miracles by the power of Satan (2 Thess. 2:9), and everyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life will worship the Antichrist (Rev. 13:8).

At this rise of wickedness, God will begin to release His final judgments on the enemy and those who worship the enemy. These are the seals, trumpets, and bowls in the book of Revelation (prophesied throughout the Old Testament and by Jesus Himself). Believers will be protected during these plagues, but the wicked will begin to receive what they deserve.³¹ Even these judgments form God's amplified call to repentance, and some will turn to believe in Jesus during this time.³² But staggering proportions of the earth will die in the justice of God or the hatred of Satan.³³

Jesus prophesied, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mt. 24:29-30). All the lights in the universe will go out in darkness at the Sixth Seal.³⁴ Then the Seventh Trumpet will sound; Christ will appear; the dead in Christ will rise; and the living believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air.³⁵ All the tribes will mourn – some in repentance, many in shame and fear.³⁶ This is the expiration of God's patience, when loud voices in heaven sing, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

³⁰ This act and his idolatrous image are the "abomination of desolation" (2 Thess. 2:3-4; Mt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27, 11:36-37, 12:11; Rev. 13).

³¹ Respectively, Rev. 7:3, 9:4; Ex. 8:22-23, 9:4, 9:26, 10:23, 12:23; Isa. 32:18-20, 60:2; Ps. 91, 33:18-20, 37:19 and Rev. 16:5-6, 22:12

³² Rev. 11:13; Ezek. 14:21-23; Zech. 12:10, 13:9; Mt. 23:39, Rom. 11:26-27

³³ Respectively, Rev. 6:8, 8:11, 9:15, 11:13 and 13:7, 15; 9:1-11

³⁴ Rev. 6:12-13, cf. Isa. 13:10-13, 34:4; Joel 2:30-31

³⁵ The last trumpet, 1 Cor. 15:52, Rev. 11:15, 1 Thess. 4:16-17

³⁶ Respectively, Zech. 12:10, 13:1 and Rev. 1:7, 6:15-17

Then the Lord Jesus will descend with thousands upon thousands of His saints and angels to inflict vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). This Day was prophesied as early as Enoch (Jude 14-15), the seventh from Adam! Jesus will march through Edom (modern day Jordan, east of Jerusalem): "Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.' Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come'" (Isa. 63:1-4, cf. 34:5-6).

This passage corresponds with Revelation 19:11-16, "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords" (see Ps. 45:3-5, 2:8-9).

King Jesus will stand on the Mount of Olives, directly east of Jerusalem.³⁷ The Antichrist will gather the kings of the whole world and their armies to Armageddon for war against Christ and His saints.³⁸ King Jesus will kill the Antichrist with the breath of His mouth,³⁹ throwing him and his false prophet into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20). The rest of the armies will be slain by the sword from His mouth (19:21, cf. Ps. 110).

After Armageddon, Satan will be bound in the abyss for 1,000 years, while King Jesus reigns with His saints from Jerusalem over the whole earth (Rev. 20:1-6). After the 1,000 years end, Satan will be released from the abyss to deceive the surviving unbelievers, to gather them for battle against Jerusalem (20:7-8). Fire will fall from heaven and consume them

³⁷ Zech. 14:3-4, Ps. 24:7-10, Mt. 23:39

³⁸ Rev. 16:14-16, 17:14, 19:19

³⁹ 2 Thess. 2:8, Isa. 11:4

(20:9). Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented day and night forever (20:10). Then the second resurrection will bring unbelievers to the throne of judgment; Death, Hades, and anyone not written in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (20:11-15).

By this process, King Jesus will prepare a new earth, fit for His Father to come down and dwell in the midst of His creation.

REGENESIS FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE KINGDOM

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (21:1). The New Jerusalem will come down from heaven, and God will dwell on earth with Man forever!⁴⁰ This completely corrects the conflict with Satan and rebellious Man. Everything Jesus began in first coming will be fully realized. Christ will conquer all His enemies, hand over the Kingdom to His Father, and God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). There will be no more pain, no more death, no more sea, no more darkness, no more sun or moon, for the glory of God will give light through the Lamb (Rev. 21:1, 4, 23; 22:5). Eternal joy – let it be so!

The new heaven and new earth inaugurate the “ages to come,” in which God will show immeasurable riches of kindness to us (Eph. 2:7). Of the increase of Christ’s rule and of peace there will be no end (Isa. 9:7). We will enjoy the pleasures of God and ever-increasing experiences of Him. It will take eternity without end to learn the glories of our infinite God!

These catastrophic confrontations “must take place”⁴¹ for the God of justice and mercy to fulfill His eternal purposes in glory. An astounding amount of prophecies were fulfilled literally, physically, in Christ’s first coming.⁴² Why not believe the same of the prophecies about His second coming, which are dramatically more abundant? “As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us” (Hos. 6:3 NIV).

As we will see in the last section, our role is astonishing. We will hasten the Day, execute the Day, and inherit the earth.

⁴⁰ Rev. 21:2-3

⁴¹ Rev. 1:1, Mt. 24:6, Mk. 13:7, Lk. 21:9, cf. Dan. 2:28-29, 45

⁴² See the booklet *Why Trust the Bible?* at projectOne28.com for scores of these prophecies, including over thirty fulfilled in the last twenty-fours of Jesus’ pre-resurrection life.

SECTION FOUR: HASTENING THE DAY

Every good movie stirs us with its story of love, danger, villains, heroes, and happily ever after. We long to be the heroes. We long to experience love like that. Why? Because we are created for it! We are the damsel in distress; we are the hero. We are created to have the life and love of God fill us, so that we overpower the evil on this earth and live happily ever after with our Lover.⁴³ O Church, we need to be awakened to the glory destined for us!

Jesus said, “I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (Mt. 16:18-19 NASB). This marks Jesus’ first recorded use of the word “church.” The Church is people called out of Adam and the dominion of darkness and gathered into Christ and His Kingdom of light, assembled for battle.⁴⁴ In this first use, Jesus defined the identity and purpose of the Church in terms of the Kingdom conflict. His life and authority in us will overcome deadly captivity as we advance on enemy territory (cf. Mt. 11:12, Gen. 22:17, 24:60).

Our destiny is to inherit the Kingdom and to possess it.⁴⁵ Earlier we looked at the amazing Daniel 7 passage about the Son of Man receiving dominion, glory, and a Kingdom from the Ancient of Days (v. 13-14). God extended the interpretation to include us: “the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever” (v. 18, cf. 22). This will happen in fullness at the second coming, but the firstfruit of inheriting the Kingdom is the King depositing His Spirit in our hearts (Eph. 1:13-14). To receive the Kingdom is now to receive the rule of Christ by His Spirit. The Spirit is Lord (2 Cor. 3:17), exercising the reign of Christ in us. We must receive the rule of God like little children (Mk. 10:15), willing to do what the King wants us to do, because He is sovereign and good, and we love Him for it.

⁴³ Thank you, Rick McNary. Also John Eldredge, *Epic: The Story God is Telling* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004). Unbeknownst to us, Eldredge hit the import of this booklet’s content with, “We won’t begin to understand our lives, or what this so-called gospel is that Christianity speaks of, until we understand the Story in which we have found ourselves” (15).

⁴⁴ *Ekklesia* means assembly, comprised of *called* and *out* (see 1 Pet. 2:9, Col. 1:13). It was used to *call* the army *out* of their camps to *assemble* for battle. Lothar Coenen, “Church, Synagogue,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 1:291.

⁴⁵ Mt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Dan. 7:18, 22; Mk. 10:15; Lk. 18:17. We even inherit the earth (Mt. 5:5; Ps. 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34; Isa. 57:13).

Jesus said He would send the Spirit to clothe us with power, so that *anyone* who believes can do greater works than He did (Jn. 14:12, Lk. 24:49, Acts 1:8). Everything Jesus did as a Man, He did by faith through the power of the Spirit.⁴⁶ Because we have the same Spirit, we can do the same things. He overcame temptation and sin; we can overcome temptation and sin. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom with authority; we can declare the truth of the Kingdom with authority. Jesus demonstrated the Kingdom with power; we can, too – to an even greater degree!

We must see our lives, every one of us, as purposed to wage spiritual war.⁴⁷ “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:10-12). Christ created us and recreated us, in an age of spiritual war, to be fruitful, multiplying, filling, subduing, ruling Images.

We hasten the Day of God as we live holy by the Holy Spirit, proclaiming and demonstrating the Kingdom (2 Pet. 3:10-12). Jesus is coming back to marry a Bride (the Church)⁴⁸ who “has made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7). This underscores our need to be equipped, operating in our giftings and maturing collectively to the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13). One specific act that clearly hastens the coming of Christ is preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations (Mt. 24:14). As we have seen, this is bigger than the gospel of grace; it includes the reality that the King is coming again to judge the world. We must warn all nations that only two kinds of people exist: those who want Jesus to be King and those who do not.

Now and through the Tribulation, it is our honor to pray and to prophesy to everyone the praises of God and the written judgments (Ps. 149:6-9). It is our blessing to be counted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus.⁴⁹ Our prayers and our suffering store up judgment against the enemy (Rev. 6:9-11, 8:3-5). Then Christ will come mighty to save us from the surrounding wickedness, and once we meet Him in the air, “*we will*

⁴⁶Isa. 11:2-3, 61:1; Lk. 4:17-21, 5:17; Mt. 12:28; Jn. 3:34; 5:19-20, 30; 7:16; 8:28-29; 12:49-50; 14:10-11, 24, 31; Acts 10:38

⁴⁷ The reality of violent Muslim jihad compels us to add the disclaimer that we are not militant. “...we are not waging war according to the flesh...” (2 Cor. 10:3-4) nor against flesh (Eph. 6:11 above). We win this war by faith (1 Jn. 5:4-5, Rev. 12:11), expressing itself through love (Gal. 5:6, Mt. 5:44, Rom. 12:14, 19-21). Vengeance belongs only to God (Rom. 14:19).

⁴⁸ Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7-9, 21:2, 9; Jn. 3:29; Mt. 22:1-14, 25:1, 10; 2 Cor. 11:2

⁴⁹ Mt. 5:10-12, 1 Pet. 4:12-15, Acts 5:40-41

always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). This means in everything we read Jesus doing in His second coming, we will be there, participating with Him. We will ascend Mount Zion as "deliverers."⁵⁰ We will be His army at Armageddon.⁵¹ In the 1,000 Year Reign, we will serve Him as priests and rebuild the cities devastated by the Tribulation.⁵² Jesus is coming back to be glorified *in us* (2 Thess. 1:10, 12; cf. Rom. 8:18 NIV).

Because the Church becomes One with Christ, we even participate in the great judgment. The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son (Jn. 5:22, 27, 30), and even to us, who are in the Son. "Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ...Do you not know that we are to judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2-3, Rev. 20:4).

King Jesus will rule over New Earth from New Jerusalem, and He *will share His reign with us*. Jesus promised, "The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, *to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father*" (Rev. 2:26-27, referencing Ps. 2; cf. Rev. 3:21, 20:4).

According to our faithfulness in this age, we will be rewarded with authority over cities in His Kingdom (Lk. 19:11-27). Paul taught "if we endure, we will also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12). Jesus is called the King of *kings* and Lord of *lords*. We are the kings! We are the lords! We actually are made a Kingdom (Rev. 1:6, 5:10) because His rule will so perfectly fill us in our faithful submission. It is His heart that His rule be expressed through us.

We should be sobered by the gravity of this crisis - enemies defying the glory of God - and by the amazing partnership God wants with us. The reality of Christ's coming Kingdom should affect our priorities (Mt. 6:33), personal holiness (2 Pet. 3:11), prayers (1 Pet. 4:7, Mt. 6:10), fellowship (Heb. 10:24-25), and evangelism (Mt. 24:14). We should feel the weight of Matthew 6:33, "But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness." Is the Kingdom of God your number one priority? Do you want Jesus to be King of kings more than you want anything else? Do you long to rule and reign with Him? Are you getting ready for the wedding? Do you love the hope of His appearing? Or are you content with the vanities of this evil age? Beautiful crowns await those who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).

⁵⁰ Plural in Obadiah 1:21, Christ with His Church

⁵¹ Rev. 17:14, Ezek. 37:10

⁵² Isa. 61:4, 54:3, 58:12; Amos 9:14

BENEDICTION: COME, LORD JESUS!

Father, we know in these last days, people are lovers of self, money, and pleasure, rather than lovers of You – and it is going to get worse (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Stir up Your affection in our hearts. Lord, You deserve a Bride who courts You with love, instead of obligation to law. Strengthen our spirits and give us power together in our hearts to know Your love (Eph. 3:16-19), that we would be lovers of You, that we would love You with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, with all our strength (Mk. 12:30)! God, You are a consuming fire; burn lukewarmness out of us (Heb. 12:29, Rev. 3:14-21). Fill us with Your Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Shepherd us to abundant life (Jn. 10:10). Beautify Your Bride (Rev. 19:8) because You are so beautiful and glorious (Isa. 4:2).

God, make us lovers of You and haters of what is against You. Raise up Your army (Ezek. 37:10). Shine the light of Christ on us to wake us up from our slumber (Eph. 5:14). Help us to stop acting like there is no enemy. Sober us that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy (Jn. 10:10). Make us lovers and warriors. Equip Your Bride. Move her from being a business to a Body, from an audience to an Army. Send her out for ministry. Send us to the nations with the pure gospel of the Kingdom. Seek and save the lost! Give us spirits of wisdom and revelation to know Your power that is at work toward us who believe (Eph. 1:17-19). We want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10). Clothe us with power to be Your witnesses. Teach us our authority. Embolden us, while You stretch out Your hand to perform signs and wonders that confirm Jesus is the Son of God, Lord of all (Acts 4:29-30). We've heard of Your miraculous works of old. Renew them in our day (Hab. 3:2). Show us greater works (Jn. 14:12).

Glorify Your Name! May Jesus be the most honored Name in our cities! May the people on earth sing, "Holy, holy, holy!" Kingdom, come on earth as it is in heaven! Rule in our hearts. Humble us to desire Your will above ours. We praise You as the One with all authority in heaven and on earth. We praise You, King of glory – Jesus, strong and mighty (Ps. 24:8)! Come back with vengeance in Your heart (Isa. 63:4) to repay the wicked for denying Your glory and killing the Images of Your glory. Come back to destroy Your enemies (Ps. 110). Come back with justice for the innocent. Come back to marry us and fill us in every way (Eph. 1:23).

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!⁵³

⁵³ Rev. 22:20, 1 Cor. 16:22

Additional Discipleship Booklets



*The Basics:
The Beginning, the Gospel of God's Grace, and the New Beginning*

*Spirit, Soul, Body:
Created to Relate to the Holy Trinity by Faith*

*Light Shines in the Darkness:
Scripture Interpreting the Spiritual Drama of Genesis 1:2-3*

Why Trust the Bible?

How to Read the Bible

*Day and Night Prayer:
Fire Will Burn on the Altar Until the Return of King Jesus*

Free at www.projectone28.com